



Looking East from Denny Hill

Date

1800

Primary Maker

Ralph Earl

Medium

oil on canvas

Description

Looking East from Denny Hill is a wide prospect view with a sky colored in bands of soft blue and rose that lend a halcyon quality to the entire scene. A large tree frames each side of the composition, and the near distance is further divided by small groves of trees at left and just right of center. In the foreground at left, three men dressed in white shirts and pants and black hats cut rows of hay with scythes. The tool is visible only in the hands of the figure nearest the viewer. But all three men extend their arms in the same manner, and each one leans into his work. Behind this trio and to the left, two cows butt heads, and four others graze in a fenced area. Two women in white dresses and hats decorated with coral-colored ribbons stroll across the open field. The woman nearest the viewer also wears a blue sash at her waist. To the right, another group of six farmers rake hay and load it onto a cart that is drawn by two oxen. These men wear similarly cut clothes, although one man has on a blue vest, another, a red vest. A third wears a red tie or scarf. The latter figure is clad in dark blue pants, and the man with the red vest wears brown pants. Behind these farmers is a field of uncut hay and a darker patch that appears to be planted in neat rows. The men are variously engaged. The three figures on the left side of the group rake; the next one lifts hay onto the nearly full cart; the fifth man stands atop the cart and receives the pitched load; and the last man walks toward the cart with his tool on his shoulder. Stone walls that are interrupted at the right by a white gate enclose this field. The hay in the field on the other side of this wall has already been cut and piled into regular haycocks that are surrounded by shrubs or small trees. The middle distance at left includes a group of four houses and two steeples in a line that is continued by a road that emerges from the tree line and winds toward another public building of some sort and at least seven more houses. The densely wooded area between the two steeples is beginning to show autumn foliage. The middle distance in the center of the painting is further divided by stone walls and woods and contains grazing sheep and cows. Farmhouses, fenced fields in varying shades of green, and alternately open and wooded land continue on the right side of the painting. The horizon is similarly divided into farms and woods. A second road forms a short diagonal at about one-third the width of the painting from the left edge, along which are several houses and a large, probably public, building. This image of rural and village life continues across the horizon and is punctuated by a white building that appears to be a church, just inside the large, framing tree on the right side. In all, the painting includes at least sixty-five structures, including meetinghouses, dwellings, and outbuildings.

Dimensions

canvas: 116.2 x 201.6 cm (45 3/4 x 79 3/8 in.) framed: 137.6 x 224.8 cm (54 3/16 x 88 1/2 in.)