



Rocky Neck Historic Art Trail

Gloucester, Massachusetts

Trail Site 9 2 Clarendon Street

Hopper's Mansard Roof House

Edward Hopper (1882-1967) described Rocky Neck as "The residential district where the old sea captains had their houses." He painted *The Mansard Roof* here in 1923. It is an elegant building with an asymmetrical composition, corner tower, mansard roof and, "a dynamic balance of rope trim, bracketed cornices and pediments, and porch and stair balustrades." The "Hopper House" was originally part of the large estate of Augustus Wonson, a founder of the Tarr and Wonson Copper Paint Manufactory. The Paint Factory can be seen down the hill, at the mouth of Gloucester's inner harbor, to the left of the "Hopper House".

Edward Hopper remains one of America's most honored and beloved artists. He was born in Nyack, New York, on the Hudson River. He studied to be a commercial artist at the New York School of Illustrating but transferred to the New York School of Art to study fine art. His teachers there included William Merritt Chase and Robert Henri. Although he sold an oil painting called *Sailing* at the famous international Armory Show of 1913, he did not achieve immediate success. Hopper spent nearly twenty unsatisfying years working as an illustrator before his 1923-24 watercolors, painted in Gloucester, catapulted him to fame.

While vacationing in Gloucester in 1923, Jo Nivison, whom Hopper later married, suggested he try working in watercolors. These paintings brought him his first real acclaim. The Brooklyn Museum purchased *The Mansard Roof* after it was featured in their 1923 watercolor show. This was followed by a one-man show at Frank K.M. Rehn's Gallery in New York City, which included sixteen of Hopper's watercolors and was a sell out. This turning point in his career established him as a quintessential American realist.

Hopper spent nearly every summer in New England and wintered in New York City. His first visit to Gloucester was in 1912 and he returned in 1923, 1924, 1926 and 1928. His compelling images of urban scenes often provided momentary glimpses into the lives of strangers, such as his well known paintings *Nighthawks*, *Chopsuey* and *Automat*, while his summer scenes were frequently plays of light and shadows on houses and lighthouses.

The Mansard Roof, 1923, by Edward Hopper. Watercolor over graphite, 13 1/4 x 20 in. Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY. Museum Collection Fund (23.100)



DIRECTIONS:

From the end of Rte. 128 (second traffic light) go straight up over hill. Follow East Main Street about 1.1 miles, turn right onto Rocky Neck Avenue. Bear right at the fork in front of Sailor Stan's Restaurant. Go .1 mile, turn left onto Stevens Lane, then immediately right onto Wonson Street. No. 2 Clarendon Street is at the top of the hill.



Below: Current site photo of the Mansard roof house at 2 Clarendon St.

