



1826

Oil on canvas
32 7/8 x 41 3/4 inches
(83.5 x 106 cm)

EDWARD HICKS
American

Bequest of Charles C. Willis,
1956, 1956-59-1

LET'S LOOK

What is going on in this picture?

Which animals and people seem close? Which seem farther away?

If you could step into this landscape, how would it feel?

What kind of relationship do the people and animals share? How can you tell?

LET'S LOOK AGAIN

How are the trees and ground different in the two scenes? Why might that be?

How did Hicks draw our eyes from one scene to the next? What separates the two scenes?

How do the words in the border relate to the images?

Edward Hicks also painted signs for a living. How is this picture like a sign? How is it different?

THE PEACEABLE KINGDOM

Gentle animals gather around a barefoot young child in this wooded landscape. Behind them, a large ship floats in a tranquil river. On the grassy riverbank, a group of people meets under a branch of an elm tree. Look closely at their clothing and you'll notice that the men on the right are British colonists and the men on the left are American Indians. What could they be discussing?

Both of these scenes tell stories of peace. The child and animals in the foreground illustrate a passage from the Bible. In this story, the prophet Isaiah predicts that one day all of the world's creatures will live peacefully together:

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid . . . and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. . . . They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain.

(Isaiah 11:6–9, King James Version)

To describe Isaiah's vision, Edward Hicks painted the animals described in the text. Both predator and prey exist peacefully together. The gray wolf rests beside a small lamb. A leopard lays his head between his two muscular front legs, showing no aggression toward the goat beside him. The lion nuzzles his head against the child.

The colonists and American Indians in the background of the painting tell a parallel story of peace from Philadelphia history. Here William Penn (1644–1718), the English Quaker who founded Pennsylvania, meets peacefully with American Indians. A legend tells that Penn signed a treaty of friendship with leaders of the Lenni Lenape tribe ("LEN-nee Luh-NAH-pay," also known as the Delaware Indians) in 1682, under the shade of an elm tree. The story holds that

Penn proclaimed:

We meet on the broad pathway of good faith and good-will; no advantage shall be taken on either side, but all shall be openness and love.

William Penn and the Lenni Lenape tribe agreed to coexist peacefully. Hicks, a fellow Quaker, painted this picture almost one hundred and fifty years after the event occurred. However, the story of the harmonious relationship between Penn and the tribe continued to inspire him.

Hicks linked the stories together with words in the decorative border around the painting. Three of the sides paraphrase the Bible verse and the fourth refers to the treaty. Hicks wanted to show that peace could be achieved, even in a world filled with conflict. By reminding viewers of Isaiah's vision and the treaty between William Penn and the Lenni Lenape, Hicks implied that all adversaries can find reconciliation.

ABOUT THIS ARTIST

A native of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, Edward Hicks (1780–1849) learned to paint as an adolescent when he was apprenticed to a coach maker. In 1803, he married Sarah Worstall, with whom he had three children. Hicks supported the family through his business painting signs, coaches, houses, and furniture.

In the early 1800s, Hicks became a minister with the Religious Society of Friends, a prominent group in Philadelphia's early history whose presence remains strong today. During Hicks's lifetime, many members of this Christian denomination, known as Friends or Quakers, believed in living a simple life



Edward Hicks was born and lived all of his life in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, right outside Philadelphia. This map also shows other counties near Philadelphia.

and considered ornamental painting to be inappropriate. This religious belief presented a problem for Hicks, whose livelihood depended on decorative painting. As a solution, he focused on painting signs for shops and other buildings. Hicks thought this kind of painting was acceptable because it served a function and featured rather plain decoration.

Hicks also continued to paint canvases with religious themes such as *The Peaceable Kingdom*, which reflected his spiritual devotion. As a Quaker, he believed in promoting peace

throughout the world and therefore felt a special connection to the Biblical prophet Isaiah’s vision of peace and William Penn’s treaty with the Lenni Lenape. Hicks painted over sixty paintings with this theme of a “peaceable kingdom.” He felt it was wrong to earn money by selling these pictures, so he gave them away as gifts to friends and family members. These paintings continue to represent an enduring hope for peace today.

SAME STORIES, DIFFERENT ARTISTS

The stories of William Penn’s treaty and Isaiah’s prophecy inspired artists before and after Hicks painted *The Peaceable Kingdom*. Benjamin West, an American-born artist who lived most of his life in London, depicted the signing of the treaty in a large painting in 1771. West’s image became well-known through widely distributed printed reproductions. Hicks based his figures of Penn and the Lenni Lenape on a print of West’s painting, similar to John Hall’s engraving seen here. What similarities and differences can you find between the print and Hicks’s painting?



*William Penn's Treaty
with the Indians*
1775

Engraving

Image: 24 7/16 x 19 1/16 inches
(62.1 x 48.4 cm)

JOHN HALL
British

Gift of Henry Goddard Leach,
1939, 1939-34-1

Over a hundred years after Hicks painted *The Peaceable Kingdom*, Horace Pippin, an African American artist from West Chester, Pennsylvania, created several pictures about Isaiah’s prophecy, including *Holy Mountain III* (use Google image searches or ARTstor* to view this painting). Similar to Hicks, Pippin painted a peaceful scene of animals and humans in the foreground. However, the background features violent images, such as a figure hanging by his neck, airplanes dropping bombs and crosses marking gravestones, and military figures and a tank. These images speak to Pippin’s experience as a soldier in World War I (1914–18) and to the extreme racial violence against African Americans in the United States at that time. How else are Pippin’s and Hicks’s paintings similar and different?

*ARTstor is an online image database with high-resolution images of works of art. Educators may register for a free subscription at the Philadelphia Museum of Art’s Wachovia Education Resource Center.

CONNECT AND COMPARE

- How were the Europeans’ and the Lenni Lenape’s concepts of land ownership different? How might

that have affected their land agreements? Do you think land should belong to one person or to all who live on it?

- Research the relationship between Quakers and American Indians in the years following their treaty. What other treaties were made? How and why were the Lenni Lenape forced to leave their homeland?
- Research the history and culture of the Lenni Lenape tribe through the present day.
- Research the life of William Penn. What were his life experiences? What were his religious and political beliefs? What values did he promote in Pennsylvania?

RELATED ART PROJECT

Create peaceful paintings inspired by the work of Edward Hicks. First, look at art reproductions in print or online to find harmonious color palettes. Which seem most peaceful? Select a color palette and experiment mixing colors to achieve this palette. Then examine printouts of Hicks's painting. Using a small viewfinder (paper or board with a rectangle cut out of the center), select a detail (people, animals, or a landscape element) that seems especially peaceful. Tape the viewfinder to the printout so that it frames the detail. Taking inspiration from the detail, paint an image in the chosen palette.

This object is included in Pennsylvania Art: From Colony to Nation, a set of teaching posters and resource book produced by the Division of Education and generously supported by the Sherman Fairchild Foundation, Inc.