



The Banjo Lesson
By Henry Ossawa Tanner
1893
Oil on Canvas

Henry Ossawa Tanner



- ▶ Born 1859 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- ▶ Oldest of nine children
- ▶ Father was a minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church
- ▶ Mother was a former enslaved person who escaped on the Underground Railroad
- ▶ Educated at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia
- ▶ Professor at Clark College (Now Clark Atlanta University)

Tanner in France



- ▶ 1891 Tanner moved to France to further his art
- ▶ Found Paris to be less restrictive for people of color
- ▶ 1899 married white American singer, Jessie Olssen
- ▶ 1903 birth of their only child, Jesse
- ▶ Died in Paris on May 25th, 1937

Famous Works

- ▶ “The Banjo Lesson”
- ▶ “The Thankful Poor”
- ▶ “Nicodemus Visiting Jesus”
- ▶ “Sand Dunes at Sunset, Atlantic City”
 - ▶ First painting by an African American artist to enter the permanent collection of the White House
- ▶ <https://www.wikiart.org/en/henry-ossawa-tanner>