

painting on previous spread

PLATE 21

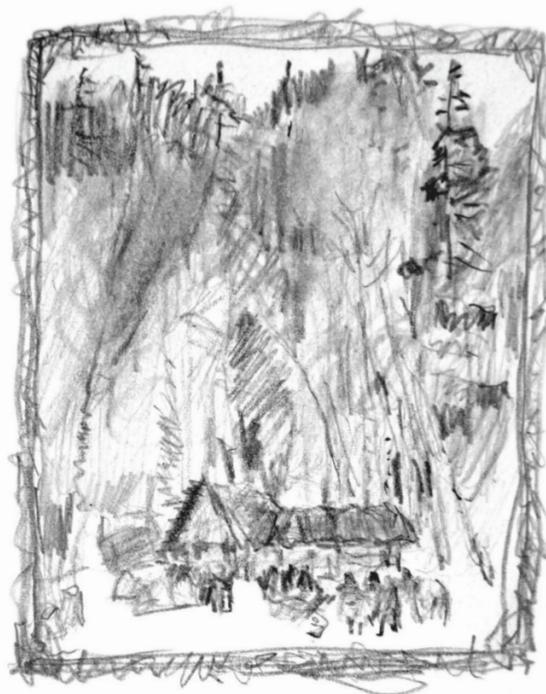
EARLY RUSSIAN SKETCH, WOODEN HOUSEOil
7 x 13

FIGURE 2

Gaspard felt the need to get away from the regimented life and tedium of the classroom and the city. At seventeen he struck out alone for Siberia on a summer painting trip. He was sturdy, bright, and confident—and, because he had already traveled extensively with his father, he had no fear of distant places. Leon paid a man twenty-five kopeks (about twelve cents) to allow him to ride in a horse-drawn wagon along with the man's wife and daughter, as well as another couple. His painting materials were packed in among their supplies of axle grease, bolts of cloth, and food.

We don't know how long they journeyed, but Gaspard was eventually dropped off deep in Siberia at the Kosovichi Inn and Trading Post. The inn was crowded with people and a few goats. There was a cacophony of noise and activity, and the air was filled with smoke from Majorca (a cheap, strong tobacco the men smoked) and the earthy scent of animals. Gaspard described the proprietor's wife as being "fat, strong, smart and handsome." She charged Leon ten rubles (five dollars) a month for three meals a day, a glass of milk, and a small room with a cot and bearskin blanket. **KAMINSKY**

The inn backed up to a dense spruce and birch forest, and every day Leon sketched in the boundless outdoors. He drew the peasants, who were dressed in colorful embroidered shirts and shawls, as well as teams of horses hitched to loaded wagons. The young artist was drawn to ordinary folks living a provincial life.

Earl Stendahl, of the Stendahl Art Galleries in Los Angeles, said of Gaspard's later career, "Some of his most intriguing paintings are scenes of resting ports or shelters for travelers nestling under the protection of the great virgin forest. The variation of vivid colors of the peasant

PLATE 22
TRADING POST, RUSSIA

1915
Oil
36 x 32

