



The Development of an American Culture

1800-1848



Art, Literature, and Music

- The period from 1800-1848, saw the development of a unique American culture. In America, art, literature, and even music flourished. It was an age of Romanticism. Romanticism featured inspiration, and it emphasized the individual, the subjective, the irrational, the imaginative, the personal, the spontaneous, the emotional, the visionary, and the transcendental.
- Such authors as Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper, Edgar Allan Poe, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Herman Melville, and Nathaniel Hawthorne would make their appearance during this period.
- Artists such as Thomas Cole of the Hudson River School, launched larger than life paintings of an American landscape which was just beginning to be transformed by the movement of Americans into the West.



The County Election, by George Caleb Bingham, 1852



The Pic-Nic, by Thomas Cole, 1845

Thought Question

- a. How do the two paintings showcase the development of a unique American culture during the period from 1800-1848?
- b. What do the two paintings tell us about this new American culture that is developing during this period from 1800-1848?