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Homenetmen Glendale Ararat Chapter  
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*Get to Know...*

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## HOVHANNES AIVAZOVSKY

July 29, 1827 – May 5, 1900

Aivazovsky an Armenian painter most famous for his seascapes, which constitute more than half of his paintings. was born in the city of Theodosia in the Crimea. The Artist's ancestors were called Aivazian. His father called himself Haivazosky. The Artist and his brother decided to call themselves Aivazian or Aivazovsky. Some of the Artist's work bears the signature Hovhannes Aivazian, in Armenian. He spent his childhood in poverty. His talent as an artist earned him sponsorship and entry to the Simpheropol gymnasium and later the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts, where he graduated with the gold medal.

In 1838 he was sent to the Crimea for two years for independent study where he painted the beautiful works *Seashore and Moon over Gurzuf*. In 1840 he went abroad, returning only in 1844. He was accorded the title of academician and tasked with painting all the major Russian military ports on the Baltic Sea. In the 1840s, during his stay in Italy, Aivazovsky's painting gained its own individual style, and by 1850 his art was fully mature. In later life, his paintings of naval scenes earned him a longstanding commission from the Russian Navy. He was also commissioned by the Ottoman Sultan to paint various artworks which are still hang in Turkish museums. His work also hangs in the most renowned museums throughout the world, including New York's Metropolitan Museum and the Hermitage in St. Petersburg. With funds earned during his successful career as an artist he opened an art school and gallery in his home town of Feodosiya. Aivazovsky himself was accomplished in many areas, played the violin, was an architect, and dabbled in archeology.

Aivazovsky also spent some time working in the Caucasus, sailing to the shores of Asia, visiting Egypt during the opening of the Suez canal. Near the end of his life, in 1892, Aivazovsky even traveled to America, where he visited Washington, DC, and Niagara Falls. He produced paintings as a result of all his travels, including a famous painting of Niagara Falls that hangs in his Teodosia galley. Due to his long life in art, Aivazovsky became the most prolific Russian painter of his day and he left over 6000 works at his death in 1900. He is reputed to be a favorite among forgers. Recently, Russians and Armenians have begun to buy back many Russian paintings that ended up in the west after the 1917 Communist revolution, including works by Aivazovsky.

