



Nuenen

5 December 1883 – 24 November 1885

In December of 1883, Vincent left Drenthe to live with his parents in Nuenen. This was a bold move, since he had not been home for two years due to a dispute about religion. His welcome was not warm but he soon became attached to the people and the surroundings of Nuenen. In weaving mills, on the land, and in his studio, he diligently worked producing studies of typical 'Brabanders' (people of the

Brabant province). He also ventured out into the countryside to paint landscapes to explore the effects of colour. Newly confident thanks to his many figure studies, Vincent executed the large figure painting *The Potato Eaters*. Because he remained unable to sell his work, the artist depended on his brother. Theo, who worked as an art dealer in Paris, sent him a monthly sum of francs in exchange for a

number of new pieces. The brothers agreed that all of Vincent's paintings would henceforth belong to Theo. On 24 November 1885, eight months after his father died from a heart attack, Vincent left for Antwerp, where he hoped to sell his work and continue his artistic studies.



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Nuenen Church
Papenvoort 2



The Parsonage
Berg 26



Margot ('Nune Ville')
Berg 24



The Old Church Tower of Nuenen
Tomakker (corner of the Smits van Oyenlaan
and the Laan van Nuenhem)

Nuenen Cemetery
Tomakker (corner of the Smits van Oyenlaan
and the Laan van Nuenhem)



De Groot – Van Rooij Family (*The Potato Eaters*)
Gerwenseweg 4
*Please note that this location is at considerable
distance from the others.*



Nuenen Church

Address Papenvoort 2

Vincent's father had been minister of the Reformed Church in Nuenen since August 1882, a congregation that numbered around one hundred members at the time. Vincent probably attended few, if any, services at the church – he had turned his back on the Christian faith several years before and the relationship with his father was strained. After his mother broke her femur in February of 1884, Vincent painted a view of the church especially for her.



The Parsonage

Address Berg 26

Vincent lived with his parents in the rectory of Nuenen's Dutch Reformed Church, where his father was minister. Vincent painted a view of the house and produced several views of the parsonage's garden. His parents had allowed him to set up a studio in the mangle room behind the house. After a year, he found a larger studio, which he rented from the Catholic sexton Johannes Schafrat. Vincent's father died from a heart attack on 26 March, 1885. Shortly afterwards he moved into the studio, because of too many tensions at home.



Margot ('Nune Ville')

Address Berg 24

Margot Begemann was Vincent's neighbour in Nuenen. She was twelve years his senior. When Vincent's mother was bedridden with a broken femur in July 1884, Margot took over Mrs. Van Gogh's sewing lessons. During this time, Vincent and Margot fell in love. He even proposed to marry. Margot suffered severely from anxiety and mood swings. During a walk in September 1884, Vincent discovered that she had attempted suicide by drinking poison. Vincent reacted aptly and forced her to vomit. Margot went to Utrecht for treatment and did not return to Nuenen until March 1885. They would never wed.



The Old Church Tower of Nuenen

Address Tomakker (corner Smits van Oyenlaan and Laan van Nuenhem)

One of Vincent's favourite spots in Nuenen was the old church tower just outside the village. He painted and sketched the fifteenth-century tower dozens of times. The tower was visible from the parsonage's backyard and can thus be seen in a few views painted from the garden. However, Vincent did not always depict the tower in its correct geographical position. The old church tower was demolished in 1885. The cemetery near the tower has remained in use.



Nuenen Cemetery

Address Tomakker (corner of the Smits van Oyenlaan and the Laan van Nuenhem)

On Monday 30 March, 1885, Vincent's father was buried at the cemetery next to Nuenen's old church tower. He had suddenly died from a heart attack three days earlier. Vincent enjoyed sketching and painting views of this cemetery. A number of studies were unsuccessful but he was very pleased with the painting *Old Church Tower of Nuenen*. In June of 1885, he sent this piece to his brother Theo, who was living in Paris and brought Vincent's work to the attention of art specialists there.

The De Groot - Van Rooij Family

Address Gerwenseweg 4

Vincent made his first painted sketch of *The Potato Eaters* inside the De Groot family's hut. The original dwelling no longer exists, however. Vincent often worked for the family and passed their hut after working outdoors one day: "The family had just gathered right under a lamp and began eating. Vincent spontaneously grabbed canvas, brush and palette and started to paint the group..." [source: De Brouwer, 1984] *The Potato Eaters* was the first canvas that Vincent considered a true painting, as opposed to the many painted studies that he produced.

Would you like to complete the Van Gogh Route?

Visit one of the watermills that Vincent painted: the Collse Watermill, the Opwetten Watermill or the Genneper Watermill. Please see www.vangoghroute.nl for more information.

You can also walk or cycle along the illuminated cycle route between Nuenen and Eindhoven, created by artist Daan Roosegaarde. For more information, see the relevant link on www.vangoghroute.nl/nederland/nuenen.