

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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WASHINGTON, D. C.

SUNDAY, APRIL 18, 1943

The Thomas Jefferson Bicentennial Exhibition, commemorating the two-hundredth anniversary of his birth, will be open to the public at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C., from April 13, through May 15, 1943.

Displayed here are numerous portraits of Thomas Jefferson, as he appeared to his contemporaries during his long and varied career. The Exhibition begins with an early likeness, painted by Mather Brown in London in 1786, for John Adams, (lent by Mr. Charles Francis Adams); passes to a brilliant portrait by Rembrandt Peale, (lent by Lieutenant Lawrence Coolidge), which shows Jefferson at the height of his power about 1805; proceeds to Thomas Sully's preliminary sketch done in 1821, (lent by Mr. John Hill Morgan), for the well-known, full-length portrait executed for the United States Military Academy at West Point; and ends with the bronze cast of Browere's startlingly realistic life mask of the aged statesman and sage of Monticello as he appeared less than a year before his death, in 1826.

Of particular interest is the superb portrait by Gilbert Stuart, once owned by Jefferson, and known as the "Edgehill Portrait" (lent by Mr. and Mrs. Percy S. Straus), painted in 1805. This portrait was retained by the artist until 1821, and is believed to be the original from which his subsequent replicas were made.

There are two miniatures by John Trumbull, which differ slightly from the final portrait of Jefferson used in the familiar

"Declaration of Independence", and a large, full-length portrait by Caleb Boyle, (lent anonymously), painted in 1801. In the background of this picture can be seen the Natural Bridge of Virginia, which was owned by Jefferson.

It is interesting to compare these various portraits with the crayon drawing by the French draftsman, C. B. P. de Saint-Mémin, (lent by the Estate of John Chandler Bancroft), which shows Jefferson in profile as he appeared in 1804. It was Saint-Mémin's custom to make a drawing such as this for his small engravings.

A unique set of portraits of the first five Presidents, painted by Gilbert Stuart, (lent by Mr. T. Jefferson Coolidge), forms an important group. These five canvases show Jefferson surrounded by his peers from Washington to Monroe, who was the last of the so-called Virginia Dynasty.

There are also other portraits of Jefferson's friends and contemporaries, including Houdon, the celebrated French sculptor, and Gilbert Stuart.

The author of the Declaration of Independence was also a designer of buildings, both public and private, for the nation he helped to found. The evolution of his own beloved Monticello may be studied in the Exhibition, as well as the dignified mansions planned by him for his friends; the Virginia Capitol at Richmond, and that last great undertaking, the University of Virginia. The enlarged photographs are from negatives lent by Mr. I. T. Frary, which are supplemented by many original drawings by Jefferson

himself, from the collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

This notable Exhibition thus permits us to see Jefferson as he appeared to his contemporaries. It shows us also the men with whom he labored for the betterment of his country, and the designs which he made for the improvement of American architecture.