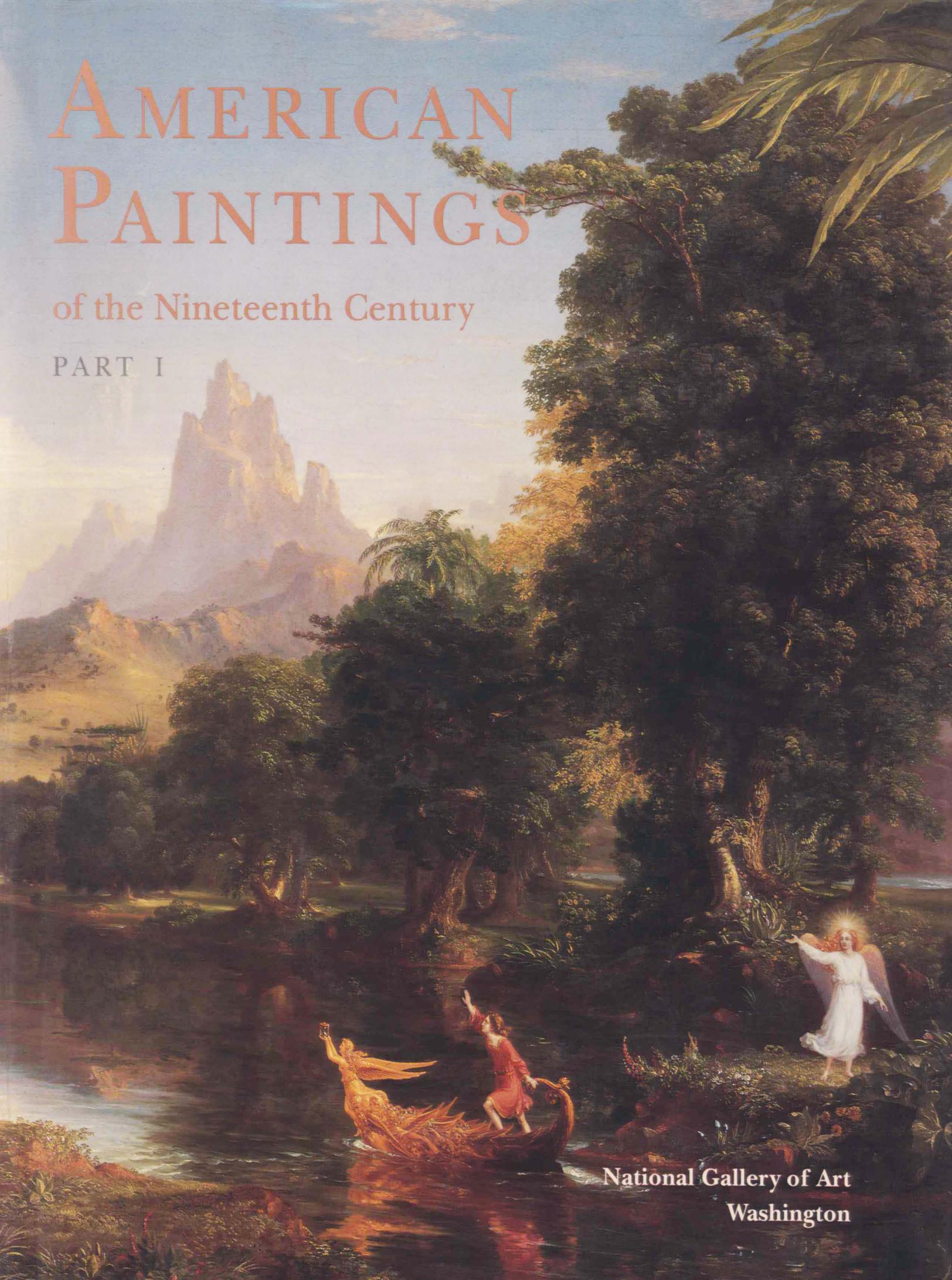


# AMERICAN PAINTINGS

of the Nineteenth Century

PART I



National Gallery of Art  
Washington

THE COLLECTIONS OF THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART  
SYSTEMATIC CATALOGUE

The systematic catalogue will include approximately thirty volumes on the paintings, sculpture, and decorative arts in the collection of the National Gallery of Art. Published to date are:

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American Paintings  
of the Nineteenth Century

PART I



Franklin Kelly

*with*

Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr.

Deborah Chotner

John Davis

# AMERICAN PAINTINGS

of the Nineteenth Century

PART I

THE COLLECTIONS OF THE  
NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART  
SYSTEMATIC CATALOGUE

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## FOREWORD

American paintings represent the single largest holding of any national school in our collection. The culmination of years of research, this volume includes some of our best-known and greatest treasures from the nineteenth century. These range from familiar national images such as Winslow Homer's joyous *Breezing Up (A Fair Wind)*, to Thomas Cole's celebrated *Voyage of Life*, to Thomas Eakins' psychologically probing portrait *Baby at Play*, to William Harnett's famous (even infamous) *The Old Violin*. Together, these paintings attest to the extraordinary achievements of the American school during one of its most vital periods.

The research presented in this volume not only tells us a great deal about the individual works, but also, because of the particular nature of the Gallery's holdings, provides admirable documentation of certain key movements and figures. Nineteenth-century landscape painters, for example, are especially well represented, allowing the interested reader to trace the foundations of the Hudson River School in the pioneering work of Thomas Cole, and then through its great flowering in the works of such artists as Asher B. Durand, John F. Kensett, Jasper F. Cropsey, Frederic Edwin Church, and Albert Bierstadt. Individual artists who are present in great strength include those two incomparable giants of American painting, Homer and Eakins, represented by seven and ten paintings respectively.

The National Gallery has been fortunate over the years to have had many dedicated staff members with particular interest in and enthusiasm for American art, who have studied and continued to build its great collection. In particular, we owe special gratitude to the late William P. Campbell, who played a key role in creating the nineteenth-century paintings collection through judicious purchases, and to his successor as curator of American art, John Wilmerding. Their fine work has been continued by Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr., head of the department of American and British paintings, and his colleague Franklin Kelly, the coordinating author of this volume, as well as Deborah Chotner, Nancy Anderson, and John Davis. The meticulously researched and richly informative text published here is a testament to their industry and dedication and, most especially, to their expertise.

From the inception of our project to catalogue the collections of the National Gallery of Art in their entirety, The Henry Luce Foundation has supported our efforts to research and publish the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American paintings. For the Foundation's continued forbearance during the many years of work on the American volumes, and for its generous support and outstanding dedication to American art scholarship, we are most grateful.

Earl A. Powell III  
*Director*



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In preparing this catalogue the authors have been assisted, both directly and indirectly, by many individuals who have kindly shared expertise and information. Work on this volume began in earnest more than a decade ago, but long before then numerous colleagues had been regularly contributing important information and materials to the Gallery's files. For practical reasons, we here give specific acknowledgment only to those who contributed directly to the realization of our project.

Starting closest to home, we received generous assistance from many colleagues at the National Gallery of Art. Former curator of American art John Wilmerding and former assistant curator Linda Ayres played important roles in the early stages of the project. Edgar Peters Bowron read the completed manuscript and offered numerous comments. Former staff assistants Maria Mallus, Rosemary O'Reilly, Suzanna Atkins, and Jennifer Friel, and current staff assistant Stephenie Schwartz, handled endless tasks involving correspondence, the gathering of photographs and other materials, and the preparation of accurate and complete manuscript drafts. Over the years many interns, predoctoral fellows in the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, and volunteers have helped with research, fact-checking, and other tasks. In particular, we thank Martha Bari, Jack Becker, Cristina Bishop, Patricia Burda, John Chewing, Linda Docherty, Joan Feldman, Michael Godfrey, Jennifer Harper, Andrea Henderson, Laurette McCarthy, Maureen McKenna, Bridget Manoogian, Jodi Mansbach, Michelle Miller, Debora Rindge, and Michael Shapiro. Merl M. Moore, Jr., graciously provided information from his unrivaled collection of photocopies from nineteenth-century newspapers and journals.

We worked closely with our colleagues in the painting conservation department, who prepared detailed examination reports on all of the paintings published here and also answered countless questions about techniques, materials, and condition. We are especially grateful to Elizabeth Walmsley for her scrupulous work on the technical notes, and to Carol Christensen, Tammy

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The hard work of publishing this catalogue was the responsibility of the Gallery's editors office, under the leadership of Frances P. Smyth. Mary Yakush and Katherine Whann, especially, deserve our great thanks for their conscientious supervision and guidance. We are also grateful to Suzannah Fabing and Barclay Gessner for assistance during the early stages of our work. In the photographic laboratory, Bob Grove and Richard Carafelli were responsible for photographing most of the paintings reproduced here. Catherine Hutchins handled the daunting task of editing the final manuscript, Klaus Gemming was responsible for uniting all the materials in a coherent and elegant design, and Chris Vogel expertly supervised the production.

We received essential assistance from many institutions and individuals outside the National Gallery. Among those that were indispensable to our research were the Library of Congress, the National Museum of American Art/National Portrait Gallery Library, the Archives of American Art, the Bicentennial Inventory of American Paintings, and the New York Public Library. Other museums, libraries, historical societies, and organizations that provided assistance are listed in the footnotes for the appropriate entries, as are the names of individuals who helped with particular

questions and problems. In addition to those listed in the footnotes, we would like to thank the following: Kevin Avery, Susielies M. Blakelock, Timothy A. Burgard, Sharon Burlee, Sarah Burns, Kathleen Burnside, James W. Cheevers, Tracie Felker, Suzanne L. Flynt, Abigail Gerdts, William H. Gerdts and the William H. Gerdts Library and Archive, Kathleen Guilday, Eleanor Jones, Nicholas Kilmer, Susan Larkin, Jeffrey Goodhue Legler, Leah Lipton, Kenneth Maddox, Ellen Miles, Kate Nearpass Ogden, Gwendolyn Owens, Ellwood C. Parry III, Anne W. Schmoll,

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To all those, both named and unnamed, who have assisted us over the years in ways both large and small, we offer our profound thanks.

Franklin Kelly

## INTRODUCTION AND NOTES TO THE READER

This is the first of two volumes in which the nineteenth-century American paintings are catalogued. It does not, however, include naive paintings from the Garbisch collection, already published in this series, or works by either George Catlin or Mary Cassatt. The Gallery's more than three hundred and fifty works by Catlin will form a separate volume, which is currently in preparation. The important group of paintings by Cassatt, including the well-known *Boating Party*, will be published in the forthcoming systematic catalogue of nineteenth-century French paintings, to which they are most properly related. Several works actually executed in the twentieth century, such as those by Childe Hassam, have been assigned to this volume either because their creators executed most of their work before 1900 or worked in a style (or styles) most commonly identified with the nineteenth century.

That the nineteenth-century American paintings in the National Gallery warrant a two-volume publication is evidence not so much of their numbers (almost two hundred and fifty at present), but rather of the presence of many works that deserve extended discussion because of their exceptional artistic and historic importance. Virtually every major figure of the period is included, and certain key artists such as Thomas Cole, Thomas Eakins, Winslow Homer, John Singer Sargent, and James McNeill Whistler are represented by several examples. The collection is strongest in landscapes, figure paintings, and portraits. It lacks, unfortunately, significant numbers of still-life and genre paintings, relying instead on a few, but generally first-rate, examples to represent those important aspects of nineteenth-century American painting.

The various gifts made to the Gallery by Andrew W. Mellon and his foundation include John Quidor's important *Return of Rip Van Winkle*, Albert Pinkham Ryder's *Siegfried and the Rhine Maidens*, and numerous nineteenth-century American portraits of interest, such as Frank Duveneck's fine *William Gedney Bunce*. Andrew W. Mellon's most significant influence on the American holdings, however, is in the area of eighteenth-cen-

tury painting, published in 1995 in this series. Other important gifts to the nineteenth-century holdings include Chester Dale's donation in 1943 of William Merritt Chase's *A Friendly Call*; the gift of James McNeill Whistler's masterpiece *The White Girl* from Harris Whittemore, also in 1943; Mrs. Huttleston Rogers' purchase for the Gallery of George Inness' *The Lackawanna Valley* in 1945; Thomas Eakins' *The Biglin Brothers Racing* from Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney in 1953; and Mrs. Cooper R. Drewry's 1959 gift of Jacob Eichholtz's *The Ragan Sisters*. Paul Mellon's donation in the 1960s of the cartoons by George Catlin is easily the largest gift to the nineteenth-century collection, but other important works such as John Singer Sargent's *Mrs. Adrian Iselin*, given by Ernest Iselin in 1964, and Edmund Tarbell's *Mother and Mary*, given by the Belcher Collection in 1967, were also added at that time.

Many important nineteenth-century American paintings have come into the collection as gifts over the past twenty-five years. Especially notable are the fine paintings by John Kensett, Asher B. Durand, Francis Edmonds, and John Casilear that came as a bequest from Frederick Sturges, Jr., having been purchased directly from the artists by Sturges' forebears in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1982 two superb nineteenth-century works, Eakins' *Baby at Play* and Whistler's *Wapping on Thames*, came to the Gallery as part of the John Hay Whitney Collection. Paul Mellon's donations to the Gallery continued to enrich it in countless areas, not the least being American painting. In 1985 he presented Homer's hauntingly beautiful *Autumn* and two oil sketches by Eakins; more recently he has given the Gallery Fitz Hugh Lane's *Becalmed off Halfway Rock* and yet another important Homer oil, *The Dinner Horn (Blowing the Horn at Seaside)*, as well as our first examples by the still-life painter Joseph Decker and the landscape and genre painter George Henry Durrie.

Purchases of American nineteenth-century paintings (often with funds specifically donated) have played an especially important role in shaping the character of the Gallery's collection. Such acquisitions began early with Winslow Homer's

*Breezing Up (A Fair Wind)*, purchased in 1943 with funds provided by the W. L. and May T. Mellon Foundation, and continued with the same artist's *Right and Left*, acquired in 1951 through the Avalon Foundation.<sup>1</sup> Under the guidance of William P. Campbell, the Gallery's assistant chief curator from 1951 until his untimely death in 1976, the collection grew significantly, most especially in the area of landscapes. Among the paintings Campbell acquired were several of very high standing, including Jasper Cropsey's *Autumn—On the Hudson River*, Frederic Church's *Morning in the Tropics*, and Thomas Cole's *A View of the Mountain Pass Called the Notch of the White Mountains (Crawford Notch)*. Campbell also spearheaded the 1971 acquisition of the second version of Thomas Cole's famous four-part cycle, *The Voyage of Life*, which had been rediscovered just a few years earlier. John Wilmerding, who became curator of American art in 1977, acquired another long-lost masterpiece, Cropsey's *Spirit of War*, the following year. Wilmerding also purchased Fitz Hugh Lane's important *Lumber Schooners at Evening on Penobscot Bay* in 1980 and Martin Johnson Heade's *Cattleya Orchid and Three Brazilian Hummingbirds* in 1982.

Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr., succeeded John Wilmerding as head of the department of American paintings in 1983 and, together with other members of the department and the Gallery's staff, has helped bring a number of important pictures into the collection. In 1985 Rembrandt Peale's charming portrait of his brother, *Rubens Peale with a Geranium*, was the first acquisition of the Patrons' Permanent Fund. As had happened in the past, the Gallery was able to position itself on several occasions to acquire newly discovered works, including William Stanley Haseltine's *Natural Arch at Capri*, purchased in 1989 with funds provided by Guest Services, Inc.; Albert Bierstadt's seminal masterpiece, *Lake Lucerne*, acquired in 1990 with funds donated by Mr. and Mrs. Richard Mellon Scaife; and Thomas Cole's elegiac *Italian Coast Scene with Ruined Tower*, a purchase made possible in 1993 by the Circle of the National Gallery of Art. Without question, the key purchase of recent years is one of the outright masterpieces of American nineteenth-century painting, William Michael Harnett's *The Old Violin*, which was acquired with funds from Mr. and Mrs. Richard Mellon Scaife in Honor of Paul Mellon.

Like the National Gallery's American painting collection generally, the nineteenth-century holdings, although still young in comparison to those of other major institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art or the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, provide a rich representation of the achievements of the era. Even though the entries in this volume are primarily addressed to scholarly audiences that desire complete documentation regarding subject, provenance, technique, condition, place in the artist's oeuvre, and other matters, they may collectively provide a broader perspective on American nineteenth-century culture. Following an introductory biography for each painter and a brief bibliography, each entry begins with the title of the work, its medium, dimensions, and the location of signatures or inscriptions. Original titles have been used whenever possible, except in the case of Homer's *Breezing Up (A Fair Wind)*, which is simply too well-known by its familiar title to do anything other than give its original name in parentheses. The following conventions are used in dating the paintings:

1850	Executed in 1850
c. 1850	Executed in about 1850
1850–1855	Begun in 1850, finished in 1855
1850/1855	Executed sometime between 1850 and 1855
c. 1850/1855	Executed sometime around the period 1850–1855

Dimensions are given in centimeters, with height preceding width (dimensions in inches follow, in parentheses).

Each painting published here was examined by a paintings conservator and the findings were discussed with the authors. The conservators' examination reports are summarized in the technical notes, which were written by the authors and reviewed by Elizabeth Walmsley, conservator for the systematic catalogue.

For each examination the painting was unframed. The front, back, and sides were examined in visible light; the paintings were examined with a stereomicroscope and under ultraviolet light. Most paintings were x-rayed with a unit containing a Eureka Emerald 125 MT tube, a Continental 0–110 kV control panel, and a Duocon M collimator. Kodak X-OMAT film was used. The

results are presented here when they pertain to the interpretation of the work. Most paintings were also examined with infrared reflectography to reveal underdrawing and compositional changes. Prior to November 1992, a vidicon camera was used for the examination; more recently, a camera with a platinum silicide detector was used. The vidicon camera system consists of a Hamamatsu C/1000-03 camera fitted with either an N2606-10 or N214 lead sulphide tube, a Nikon 55mm macro lens with a Kodak Wratten 87A filter, a C/1000-03 camera controller and a Tektronics 634 monitor. The newer camera system is a Kodak 310-21 thermal imager configured to 1.5–2.0 microns and fitted with a Nikon 55mm macro lens. The video signal was collected with a Perceptics Pixelbuffer board and Signal Analytics IP Lab Spectrum software on an Apple Macintosh computer. Again, only findings essential to the interpretation of the work are discussed here. The infrared reflectogram of Homer's *Breezing Up (A Fair Wind)* is a composite of frame-averaged sub-images assembled with Adobe Photoshop.

Most paintings published here exhibit a similar construction. Nearly all were executed on medium-weight fabrics with a plain weave. Twelve paintings were executed on twill fabrics, and two paintings were executed on wooden panels that were textured to resemble twill fabrics. The fabric supports are described with the conventional terms of canvas and are assumed to be linen, although the fibers were not analyzed. Eleven paintings are on single-member wooden panels. The thickness of the panels is given, as is the type of wood, which was determined through analysis carried out by Michael Palmer of the scientific research department. Three paintings are on paper supports mounted onto fabric and secured to stretchers. The fabric, wooden, and paper supports were primed with a single, smooth ground layer. While the ground layer is typically white in color, variations occur, ranging from light brown (seven paintings), yellow (one), dark reddish brown (four), pink (two), to gray (one). Three paintings have double grounds (two have a gray over a white layer and one has a gray over a pink layer). Two paintings lack an overall ground layer. In twenty-two paintings, the ground has been toned with an imprimatura, either transparent or opaque, applied overall or beneath selected com-

positional elements. Fifteen paintings have a reddish brown imprimatura over a white ground, and nine paintings have imprimaturas of other colors, including white. The availability of commercially-prepared artist materials is reflected in the eighteen supports distinguished with a colormen's stencil or label. The paint layer is assumed to be in an oil medium, although medium analysis was not carried out. While variations in technique and paint application are described in the technical notes, generally the paint was applied in thin washes and glazes in the dark backgrounds and shadows, and as a thicker, more pastelike paint in the flesh tones.

The condition of the paintings varies. Records of conservation treatment are frequently available in the conservation files. The technical records cite all treatments since acquisition; prior to acquisition, conservation records are incomplete. With the exception of twenty-two unlined paintings, the paintings on fabric have been lined, generally with a secondary fabric. This process often involved removal of original stretchers and tacking margins, however twenty-seven paintings retain original keyable wooden stretchers and nineteen retain original tacking margins. Cusping of threads along the cut edges of the fabric supports is taken as an indication that only the tacking margins were removed and the image has not been reduced. At times the files record that the painting was "re-lined" rather than lined. The technical notes in this volume repeat the phrases as found in the records, without determining whether this means a first or a later lining, since this phrase may be merely a casual use of the term, without intending to indicate that an earlier lining was removed during the treatment. These conservation treatments also included removal of discolored varnish layers and old inpainting. Damage to the support, such as tears, holes, and patches, may be assumed to have been repaired and inpainted. A record of later overpaint and inpainting was made during the technical examination and these records are in the Gallery's conservation files. Surface coatings are estimated. None is original. Seven paintings are unvarnished, as intended by the artist.

The section on Provenance gives the name of each known owner, with the use of a semi-colon between names indicating a direct transfer. The use of a period after a name indicates a break in

the chain of ownership, with the whereabouts of the object unknown until its next documented owner. Dealers' names are provided in parentheses. Exhibition histories are as complete as available information has made possible. The reference section concentrates on important and useful sources, and repeats the listing of exhibition catalogues if they are considered essential scholarly sources on the particular artist.

The catalogue essays address a variety of issues raised by considerations of the subject of the painting, its date, and the artist's style and technique. As is inevitable in books with more than one author, variations in methodology and emphasis abound, but the aim is always to provide as full and complete a discussion as is possible. Although factual information necessarily dominates the essays, interpretations of meaning, whether to the artist personally or more broadly in the context of the social, political, and artistic culture of the time, have been ventured when reasonable and appropriate. Thus, even though the authors have in every instance endeavored to make the catalogue entries fulfill their primary roles as reference

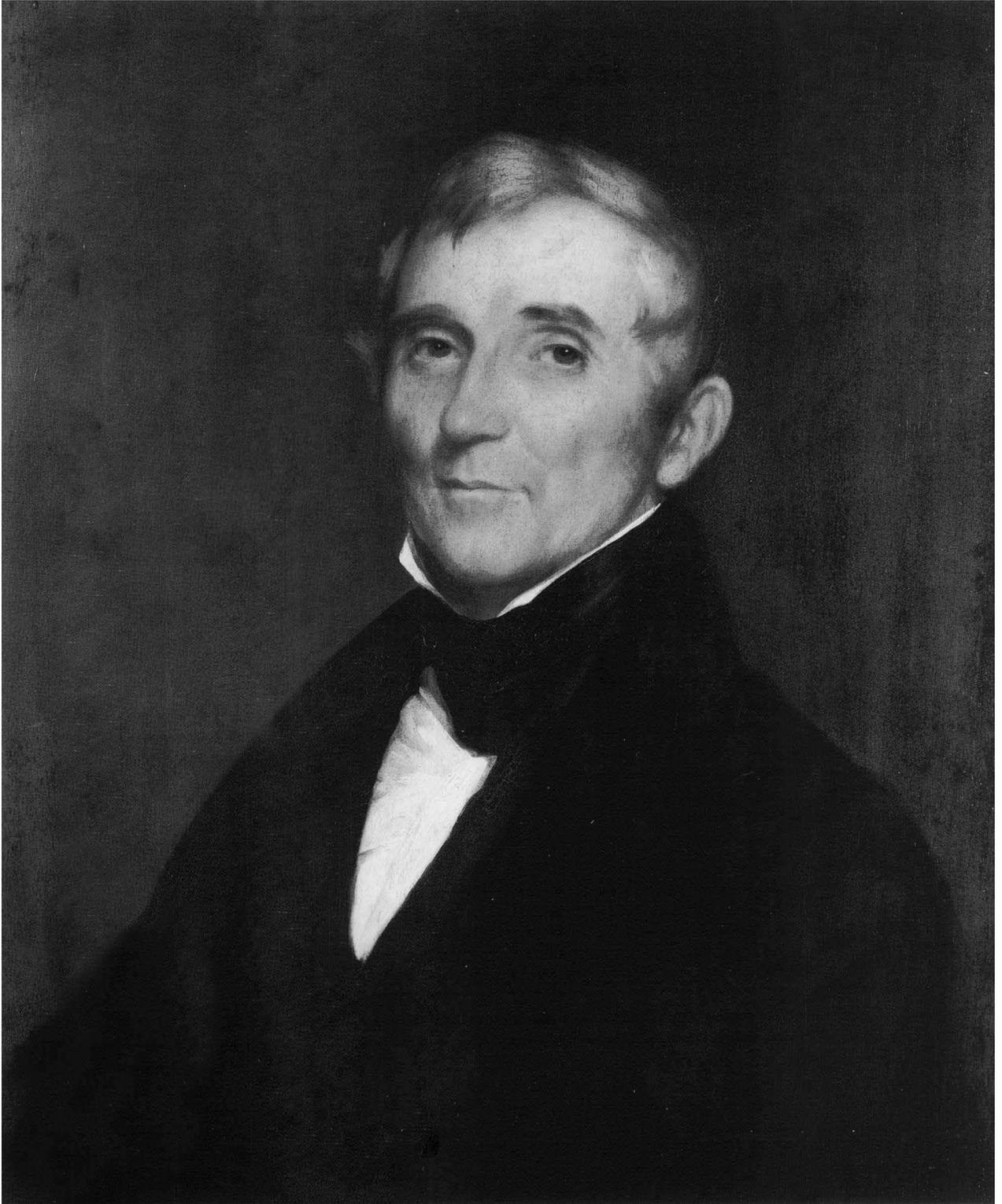
material, they also hope that the essays may serve to alert interested readers to some of the myriad ways that American nineteenth-century paintings can be used to help shed light on a dynamic and richly textured period in our national history.

The four principal authors who contributed to this volume are: Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr. (NC); Deborah Chotner (DC); John Davis (JD); and myself (FK). Deborah Rindge wrote on Eichholtz's profile portraits, and Nancy Anderson contributed the entry on Bierstadt's *Lake Lucerne*.

Franklin Kelly

1. The Avalon Foundation was established by Ailsa Mellon Bruce and existed until 1969, when it merged with the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. In 1947 the Avalon Foundation created a purchase fund for the National Gallery known as the Avalon Fund and designated for the purchase of contemporary art. It was later broadened, with the consent of the Avalon Foundation trustees, to include American art of all periods. Until 1978, purchases made from the Avalon Fund were given the credit line "Gift of the Avalon Foundation"; since 1978 purchases have been credited to the "Avalon Fund."

# CATALOGUE



Francis Alexander, *Aaron Baldwin*, 1945.II.1

# Francis Alexander

1800 – 1880

THE SON OF A FARMER of moderate means, Francis Alexander was born in Killingly, Connecticut, on 3 February 1800. During the winters when he was eighteen and nineteen, he earned a small sum teaching in the local school, and when he was twenty he used it to seek art instruction in New York City. He studied for several weeks with Alexander Robertson (1772–1841) but was forced to return home for lack of funds. After executing a number of commissions locally, he made a second visit to New York, at which time he copied paintings by John Trumbull (1756–1843) and became familiar with Gilbert Stuart's range and application of color. Alexander painted many portraits on his return to Connecticut, two of which were sent to Providence and led to an introduction to Mrs. James B. Mason, his future friend and patron.

Alexander lived in Providence in 1823–1824 and apparently had settled in Boston by 1825. There he sought the advice of Gilbert Stuart (1755–1828), who offered him encouragement. Alexander was also associated with the Pendleton lithographic firm, where he made "some of the earliest portraits in stone."<sup>1</sup> Between 1825 and 1831 his portraits commanded increasingly higher prices. By the time he left Boston for a European tour in 1830–1831, he had already painted the likenesses of such famous individuals as Noah Webster and President Andrew Jackson.

Most of Alexander's time abroad was spent in Italy and included several months in Rome, during which time he lived with Thomas Cole. In Florence Alexander met Lucia Swett, whom he married in 1836.

Upon his return to Boston in 1833, Alexander exhibited thirty-nine of his works at the Harding Gallery and was for a time quite successful. He was made an honorary member of the National Academy of Design in 1840 and two years later painted a portrait of Charles Dickens during the author's American tour. In the late 1840s and 1850s his commissions began to decline. Perhaps because of this, for health reasons, or to enhance the musical education of his daughter Francesca, Alexander and his family moved to Europe in 1853.<sup>2</sup> Except for a brief visit to America in 1868–

1869, they spent the rest of their lives in Italy, where Alexander abandoned portraiture and became a collector of early Italian paintings. He died in Florence on 27 March 1880.

DC

## Notes

1. Peters 1931, 74. Alexander is one of four artists mentioned as "engaged in doing something in lithography to exhibit to the public" in "Lithography," *The Boston Monthly Magazine* 1, December 1825, 384.

2. Francesca Alexander (1837–1917) later became an artist/illustrator and a friend of John Ruskin, who admired her sensitive, detailed drawings.

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Dunlap 1834: 2:426–433.

Peters 1931: 74.

Pierce 1953: 29–46.

Pierce 1965: 35–44.

1945.11.1 (833)

## Aaron Baldwin

c. 1835

Oil on wood panel, 64.5 × 54.2 (25<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 21<sup>5</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)

Gift of Constance Cushing Bessey

**Technical Notes:** The support is a vertically grained white poplar panel, 1.2 cm thick. It was prepared by drawing a sharp, comblike tool diagonally across the board, creating crosshatched lines. The painting has not been cradled. There is no evidence of a ground layer. The paint was generally applied wet-over-dry. Traction crackle in the head and in the waistcoat suggests artist's alterations, and x-radiography shows that the area of the shirt and stock was initially broader and the head was blocked in with off-white paint. A small gouge on the surface of the panel, to the left of the sitter's head, existed before the painting was completed. The varnish is very dull with scattered saturated, discolored patches.

**Provenance:** By inheritance 1862 to the sitter's daughter, Elizabeth Adelaide Baldwin Cushing [Mrs. Thomas Cushing, 1811–1879], Boston; her husband, Thomas Cushing [1814–1895], Boston; their son, Herbert Baldwin Cushing [1843–1922], Boston; his daughter, Constance Cushing Bessey, Minot, Massachusetts.

AARON BALDWIN was born on 18 January 1783 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, one of four children of

Sibbyl Knapp and Enoch Baldwin. After working for a time in the accounting house of his grandfather Josiah Knapp, Baldwin became a successful shipping merchant trading with China and the West Indies. He also served as president of Boylston Insurance Company and Washington Bank, both in Boston, but retired from business pursuits after 1851. He died on 24 February 1862 at his home on Essex Street, leaving a wife and three children.<sup>1</sup>

Baldwin's portrait is a characteristic example of Alexander's competent yet undistinguished work, painted with the soft, undefined brushwork typical of his style. The painting's date is based upon the apparent age of the sitter.

DC

#### Notes

1. Letter dated 19 March 1948 from Richard W. Cushing (in NGA curatorial files) provides biographical information.

1947.17.18 (926)

### *Sarah Blake Sturgis*

1835

Oil on canvas, 61.3 × 46.0 (24 1/8 × 18 1/8)  
Andrew W. Mellon Collection

#### Inscriptions

On reverse: Fr. Alexander Pinxet 1835

**Technical Notes:** The painting is unlined but has a new stretcher, slightly larger than the original. The primary support is a plain-weave, medium-weight fabric. Over a thin, off-white ground layer, the paint was thinly applied with fluid brushstrokes. There are a few areas of impasto in the highlights and the veil. X-radiography suggests that an oval format may have originally been intended. Without further analysis it cannot be determined whether the change to a rectangular format was made by the artist or at a later date. The background shows small, darkened areas of inpainting as well as one large inpainted area at the right ear. The varnish is discolored.

**Provenance:** Samuel Parkman Sturgis [1803–1877], brother of the sitter, Canton, China; his brother, James Sturgis [1822–1888], Boston; his son, Charles Wilkins Sturgis [1849–1913], Boston. (Rose M. de Forest [Mrs. Augustus F. de Forest], New York); purchased 10 October 1921 by Thomas B. Clarke [1848–1931], New York; his estate; sold as part of the Clarke collection 29 January 1936, through (M. Knoedler & Co., New York), to The A.W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

**Exhibited:** *Exhibition of Paintings by Early American Portrait Painters*, Union League Club, New York, November 1921, no. 13. *A Loan Exhibition of Paintings by Early American Portrait Painters*, Century Association, New York, 1926, no. 7. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered.

SARAH BLAKE Sturgis was born in 1815, the daughter of Susan Parkman and Nathaniel Russell Sturgis of Boston.<sup>1</sup> Her portrait, which according to dealer records was owned by her brother Samuel, was probably painted sometime before June 1835, when she married Francis George Shaw, a well-to-do and Harvard-educated man.<sup>2</sup> After working briefly in his father's counting-room, he left business in 1841 for intellectual and philanthropic pursuits.<sup>3</sup> The couple lived in West Roxbury, Massachusetts, near the Transcendentalist community of Brook Farm, until 1847, when they traveled to Europe and subsequently returned to settle on Staten Island. Their son Robert Gould Shaw (b. 1837) became renowned as the colonel of the 54th Massachusetts, the first regiment of African American troops mustered into service during the Civil War. He died during the assault on Fort Wagner, South Carolina, on 18 July 1865.<sup>4</sup> Sarah Sturgis Shaw died in New York in 1902.<sup>5</sup>

Sarah Sturgis' portrait is executed in the fluid manner that is typical of Francis Alexander. The method of using loose strokes painted thinly is also evident in works such as Alexander's portrait of Sally Arnold Green (c. 1830).<sup>6</sup> Although more idealized than *Sarah Blake Sturgis*, it shares, in addition to similar handling, an attention to the curls and wisps of an elaborate coiffure and an emphasis on the sitter's elongated neck, full lips, and chin. The two works are the same size, *Mrs. Green* having the oval format that *Sarah Blake Sturgis* probably once had as well.

DC

#### Notes

1. Nathaniel Russell Sturgis may have been the subject of a portrait by Alexander listed as "N.R. Sturgis, Esq." in the 1827 exhibition at the Boston Athenaeum (see Perkins and Gavin 1980, 9).

2. The identification of the sitter as Sarah Blake Sturgis is made in Thomas Clarke's records, and old labels on the painting's stretcher and frame give that name for the sitter. It has been suggested that the subject might instead have been either of Sarah Sturgis' sisters, but no clear evidence supports this suggestion. Photographs of Sarah Sturgis (in NGA curatorial files), taken several years after she married Shaw, show a woman whose features, though aged, could certainly be those in the Na-



Francis Alexander, *Sarah Blake Sturgis*, 1947.17.18

tional Gallery portrait. The dark, luxurious hair, full jaw, and strong nose seem to confirm her as the sitter.

3. Francis Shaw's father, Robert Gould Shaw (1776–1853), and mother also appear to have been the subjects of portraits by Alexander; see Pierce 1953, 45.

4. On the Shaw family, see *Appleton's* 1888, 5:486.

5. Sturgis 1943.

6. Inventory of American Painting, no. A4.12, listed as with Victor Spark.

#### References

1914 Sturgis.

1953 Pierce: 44.

## Ezra Ames

1768 – 1836

ALTHOUGH he was born in Framingham, Massachusetts, and grew up in present-day Wayland, Massachusetts, Ezra Ames ultimately became closely associated with the city of Albany, New York, where he dominated portrait painting during the early decades of the nineteenth century. Ames began his career in his home state; by 1790 he was living in Worcester, evidently accepting nearly any job that came his way. Besides the occasional miniature portrait, his commissions included the painting, lettering, or gilding of carriages, fire buckets, clock faces, fences, mirror frames, drums, sun blinds, ear trumpets, and various articles of furniture. Little of this early work has been identified, however.

By 1793 Ames had left Worcester for Albany, where he joined family members who had moved west several years earlier. There he took on the same variety of odd painting jobs and sold artists' materials on the side. With little artistic competition in the growing town (which became the state capital in 1796), Ames gradually eliminated some of this craftwork as portrait commissions became more numerous. He also profited from producing a steady flow of Masonic regalia and medals. An active Freemason, Ames later served as the highly visible Grand High Priest of the Grand Chapter of New York State Masons.

Ames was not a consistent stylist as a painter, but his work benefited most from the example of Gilbert Stuart (1755–1828), whose portraits he occasionally copied and acquired. Several compositions, such as his early group portrait *The Fondsey Family* (1803, Albany Institute of History & Art), stand out in his career as ambitious showpieces, but undoubtedly his greatest bid for national

recognition was his portrait (no longer extant) of vice-president and former New York state governor George Clinton. Shortly after Clinton's death in 1812, Ames sent the portrait to Philadelphia for the second exhibition of the Society of Artists of the United States, where it surprised critics and received unusual acclaim. It was honored by becoming the first work ever purchased by the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Ames subsequently painted other versions of Clinton's portrait, notably the full-length likeness (1813) in the New York State capital building. He is also known to have executed a few landscape paintings at this time.

For the most part, though, the artist's activities were restricted to painting portraits of sitters in the upper Hudson River Valley, particularly members of the state legislature and the still-powerful descendants of the original Dutch patroons. While he made occasional trips to New York City and was elected an honorary member of the American Academy of the Fine Arts in 1825, his financial base remained in Albany. Ames took an active role in local affairs there, serving as the chairman of the fine arts committee of the Society for the Promotion of Useful Arts when it was established in 1815, and as director and finally president of the Mechanics and Farmers' Bank of Albany. At his death, he left a considerable estate worth \$66,000, including more than fifty of his own works, which were auctioned by his family in 1842.

JD

#### Bibliography

Wheeler 1947: 6–8.

Bolton and Cortelyou 1955.

*Faces of the City* 1986.

1947.17.20 (928)

*Maria Gansevoort Melvill*  
(*Mrs. Allan Melvill*)

c. 1815

Oil on wood panel, 76.2 × 59.7 (30 × 23 1/2)  
Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The panel, 0.9–1.1 cm thick and most likely of poplar, has a vertical grain and was tangential-cut. The reverse of the panel is stained with dark red paint. The off-white ground was scored to resemble a fine twill fabric, with subsequent paint applied in multiple layers, both wet-over-dry and wet-into-wet. Paint application is thin, with the exception of the raised areas of jewelry and lace. The varnish has yellowed considerably.

**Provenance:** The sitter [1791–1872]; by descent to her granddaughter, Charlotte Elizabeth Hoadley [1858–1946], Chicago.<sup>1</sup> (C.W. Lyon, New York); sold 26 January 1917 to Thomas B. Clarke [1848–1931], New York;<sup>2</sup> (sale, American Art Association, New York, 7 January 1919, no. 24); E. T. Heckscher.<sup>3</sup> Again Thomas B. Clarke by December 1921;<sup>4</sup> his estate; sold as part of the Clarke collection 29 January 1936, through (M. Knoedler & Co., New York), to The A.W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

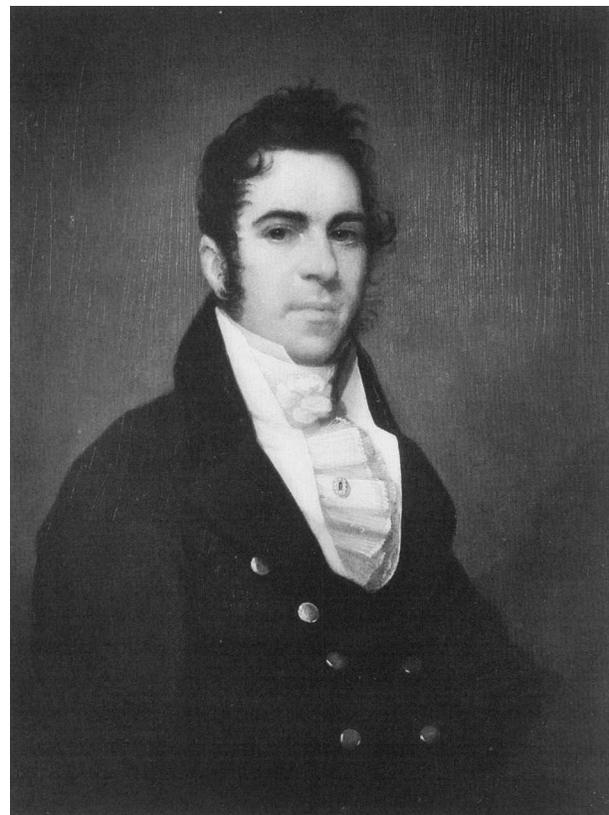
**Exhibited:** *Exhibition of Paintings by Early American Portrait Painters*, Union League Club, New York, December 1921, no. 12. *A Loan Exhibition of Paintings by Early American Portrait Painters*, Century Association, New York, 1928, no. 16. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered. Berkshire Athenaeum Public Library, Pittsfield, Massachusetts, on long-term loan, 1971–1983.

MOST OFTEN remembered as the mother of author Herman Melville, Maria Gansevoort Melvill (1791–1872) was known in her own day largely through family connections of a different sort: She was the only daughter of the wealthy Peter Gansevoort, scion of a powerful Albany family that could trace its Dutch ancestry in New York State back to the seventeenth century. Raised in privileged surroundings, she married Allan Melvill, an importer of French dry goods, on 4 October 1814.<sup>5</sup> After living in Albany for several years with the bride's widowed mother, the couple moved to New York City, where they expected to find a larger market for fancy goods among the urban upper classes. Following several business failures, however, Allan and Maria Melvill were forced to move back to Albany in 1830. Two years later, he died suddenly, leaving his widow with eight children, aged two to sixteen, and a heavy debt of \$26,000.

Unaccustomed to privation, Maria Melvill found the subsequent years exceedingly difficult, managing only with the help of her brother. She spent the rest of her life residing with various members of her large family.

Ezra Ames' portrait depicts Maria Melvill during a happier period in her early twenties. Her gold wedding band indicates a date for this portrait after her marriage in 1814, and her coiffure and high-waisted Empire dress are consistent with styles in the 1810s, when she continued to reside in Albany and could easily have sat to Ames, who lived nearby.<sup>6</sup> Melvill's formal evening wear is complemented by such prominent accessories as a "Medici" lace collar and a seed pearl brooch and earring set. In addition, a crescent-shaped hair ornament is fashionably attached to a wide black bandeau. Known as a "Diana" headdress, after the moon attribute of the mythical goddess, it had become fashionable among English women during the first decade of the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> The artist accentuated her conspicuous personal display by building

Fig. 1. Ezra Ames, *Allan Melvill*, oil on canvas, San Marino, Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery





Ezra Ames, *Maria Gansevoort Melville (Mrs. Allan Melville)*, 1947.17.20

up the tiny pearls with individual mounds of impasto, each topped by a white highlight.

Melvill's portrait was likely executed by Ames as a pendant to that of her husband (fig. 1).<sup>8</sup> The National Gallery's painting exhibits many of Ames' stylistic characteristics, including two highlights near the inner, upper edges of the pupils of the eyes, casually brushed red drapery that frames the head from the corner above, a handkerchief clutched in one hand, and a slightly awkward passage in the bust area. The pose, however, is unusually animated for the artist, with both of the sitter's hands visible, one thoughtfully—or perhaps self-consciously—raised to the side of her face. That Ames should have lavished such extra attention on the portrait is not surprising, given the aspirations of the young sitter and the local prominence of her family.

JD

## Notes

1. At the sitter's death in 1872, the portrait presumably passed to her daughter, Katherine G. Hoadley [d. 1905], Boston (possibly through Hoadley's sister, Frances Priscilla Melville [d. 1885], who had lived with her mother and continued to occupy the family home in Gansevoort, New York, until her own death). (Herman Melville, in a letter of 1875 to his cousin Catherine Gansevoort Lansing, refers to "mother's portrait" hanging in the family home at Gansevoort [Paltsits 1977, 33]). At the time of Katherine Hoadley's death, Charlotte Hoadley was her oldest surviving child and only surviving daughter. According to a codicil to Katherine's will, dated 23 April 1894 (no. 129493, Suffolk County Probate Court, Massachusetts), Charlotte Hoadley inherited "all my furniture, pictures, books, plate, crockery, linen and similar articles." See also the undated, handwritten label (in NGA curatorial files) that attributes the portrait to

Gilbert Stuart and calls it the "Property of Charlotte Hoadley." The Stuart attribution has never been accepted.

2. The name of the dealer and the date of the purchase by Clarke are recorded in an annotated copy of *Clarke* 1928 in the NGA library.

3. Heckscher's name is recorded in an annotated copy of the 1919 sale catalogue in FARL.

4. Union League Club, exhibition catalogue, December 1921, *Exhibition of Paintings by Early American Portrait Painters*.

5. The family added the "e" to their surname after Allan Melvill's death. The most complete account of Maria Melvill's early life is found in Kenney 1969. Most scholars of Herman Melville's writings see an unflattering portrait of his mother in the character of Mary Glendinning in his novel *Pierre; or, The Ambiguities* (1852).

6. It has been alternatively proposed that the portrait dates from 1823, when Ames is known to have made a trip to New York City, then the residence of the Melvill family (letter from Henry A. Murray, 23 July 1971, in NGA curatorial files).

7. See "Fashions for Ladies" and "Ninth Letter From A Young Lady in the Gay World, to Her Sister in the Country," *Repository of Arts, Literature, Commerce, Manufactures, Fashions, and Politics* (London) 3, March 1810, 185, 187. Until recently Melvill's crescent hair ornament was preserved in the Berkshire Athenaeum Public Library. Its present whereabouts are unknown.

8. The pair of paintings was separated in the sale of 1919. A second portrait (on canvas) of Maria Melvill by Ames, who was a favorite artist of the Gansevoort family, is in the Berkshire Athenaeum Public Library. A daguerreotype of the NGA portrait is in the Gansevoort-Lansing Collection, NYPL. It is reproduced in Weaver 1921, opp. p. 64.

## References

- 1928 Cary, Elisabeth L. "Americans of the Past." *New York Times* (25 May).  
1955 Bolton and Cortelyou: 255, no. 211.  
1972 Gilman: 10–11.

## Joseph Alexander Ames

1816 – 1872

JOSEPH AMES, a self-taught portrait painter, was born into a prominent family in Roxbury, New Hampshire. Achieving moderate success in his home region, he relocated in 1841 to Boston, which remained his primary residence for more than twenty-five years. There Ames was influenced by Washington Allston (1779–1843), and like a number of young artists, he attempted to emulate All-

ston's "old master" technique of successive glazes and rich, "Titianesque" color. His opportunity to see the Italian masters' work firsthand came in 1848, when Ames traveled to Italy on a commission from officials of the American Roman Catholic church to execute a full-length portrait of Pius IX. This large painting (8 by 12 feet, location unknown) was exhibited in Boston the same year

and at the National Academy of Design in 1850. It served as Ames' introduction to New York City, and it received a great deal of attention from the press.

Although Ames never seems to have lacked for business (Tuckerman estimated his production at seventy-five portraits a year), his later reputation in Boston did not live up to early promise. During the 1850s, he sought additional markets in Baltimore and Washington and during the summers he traveled to Newport, Rhode Island, in search of commissions. He remained active in the art community of Boston, exhibiting regularly at the Boston Athenaeum and participating in the formation and governance of the Boston Artists' Association, the Boston Art Club, and the Allston Club. In addition to portraits, he occasionally showed landscapes and genre paintings. Above all, Ames became known for his many likenesses of Daniel Webster, of which he painted at least nine. His *Last Days of Webster* (c. 1856, Bostonian Society), a deathbed scene with more than twenty

figures, was—like his portrait of Pius IX—engraved and widely distributed.

Ames rented a studio in New York in the early 1860s. By 1869 he had left Boston permanently to begin a new phase of his career in Manhattan, where he was received by critics as a follower of William Morris Hunt. The National Academy immediately elected him an associate member, and, in 1870, a full academician. His New York residence was nevertheless short-lived, for three years after his arrival, he died of “brain fever,” leaving behind his wife, sculptor Sarah Fisher Clappitt, and several children (one of whom, Josephine Ames, eventually became a painter).

JD

#### Bibliography

Tuckerman, *Book*, 1867: 459–460.

William Howe Downes. “Boston Painters and Paintings. II. Allston and His Contemporaries.” *Atlantic Monthly* 62 (August 1888): 258–266.

Spassky 1985: 51–52.

## Attributed to Joseph Alexander Ames

1947.17.21 (929)

*George Southward* (?)

c. 1841

Oil on wood panel, 76.2 × 61.7 (30 × 24<sup>5/16</sup>)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

#### Inscriptions

On reverse: George Southward / Artist. pupil of Josep [sic] Ames / Joseph Ames. Pinxt

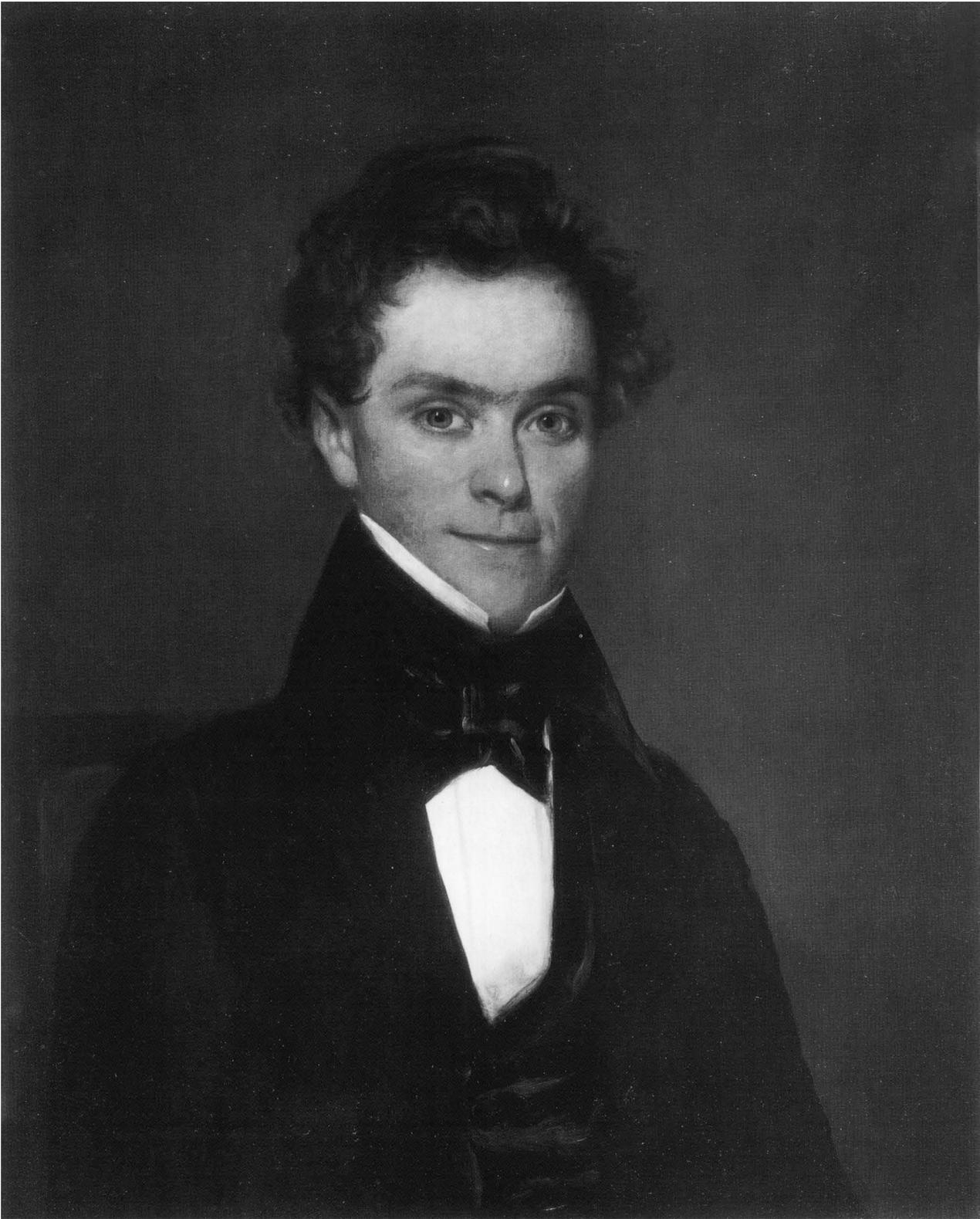
**Technical Notes:** The painting is on a wooden panel, 1.3 cm thick, most likely yellow poplar, which has been visibly scored with diagonal lines to simulate the texture of twill fabric. The reverse of the panel has a grayish green coating and a sketch of a head. A white ground of medium thickness was applied, with an additional reddish brown toning layer under the head, collar, and background. Paint layers are creamy and smooth and have been applied with a wet-into-wet technique. The surface has been abraded through the face and hair and along the edges; inpainting is evident in these areas. The upper left part of the background has been glazed during

a past restoration. A slightly discolored varnish covers the surface.

**Provenance:** (Ehrich Galleries, New York), by 1918.<sup>1</sup> (sale, Stan V. Henkels, Philadelphia, 5 February 1920, no. 32); Thomas B. Clarke [1848–1931], New York;<sup>2</sup> his estate; sold as part of the Clarke collection 29 January 1936, through (M. Knoedler & Co., New York), to The A.W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

**Exhibited:** *One Hundred Early American Paintings*, Ehrich Galleries, New York, 1918, p. 15. *Exhibition of Paintings by Early American Portrait Painters*, Union League Club, New York, December 1921, no. 15. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered.

ALL BUT FORGOTTEN today, George Southward (1803–1876) was a little-known artist even to his contemporaries. He spent most of his life in Salem, Massachusetts, the city of his birth and death. There he led a quiet existence as a teacher, copyist,



Attributed to Joseph Alexander Ames, *George Southward (?)*, 1947.17.21

and painter of portraits, miniatures, landscapes, still lifes, and genre scenes.

Descending from a long line of sailors and ship captains (his father was lost at sea when George was eleven), Southward manifested an early interest in art but was discouraged from pursuing a career as a painter. Instead, he entered the boot and shoe trade, eventually becoming a partner in the Salem firm of Kimball & Southward. Increasingly disenchanted with his profession, Southward took up painting on the side and exhibited his first finished picture, *The Tight Shoe* (location unknown), around 1838. At some point over the next few years, he moved to Boston, where he studied with Joseph Ames and possibly with Thomas Sully, who was then visiting the city.<sup>3</sup> In late 1847 Southward accompanied Ames to Italy where both men executed life portraits of Pius IX in Rome. Southward, however, seldom exhibited his work publicly, and his likeness of the pope, which remained in his studio, did not achieve the renown of Ames' version. The final decades of Southward's life were spent in Salem, where, according to his obituary, "he lived, single and alone, outside of the world's bustle and gaze."<sup>4</sup>

From the time that this portrait entered the National Gallery's collection, experts have offered conflicting opinions as to its authorship and subject. While Alan Burroughs accepted it as "one of Ames' best portraits," William Sawitzky, Harry Bland, and William Davidson rejected the picture, citing doubts surrounding the ages of the painter and sitter. In 1952 Rutledge and Lane concluded that the picture was "not authentic as to either subject or artist." They questioned the authenticity of the inscription on the reverse of the panel, which appeared to them "floated on," and noted that the painting lacked a nineteenth-century provenance and was unlike any other known works by Ames. Finally, William P. Campbell returned the debate to the original attribution by registering his belief that the portrait could indeed depict a man as old as thirty-eight (Southward's age in 1841).<sup>5</sup>

The available evidence is problematic enough to cast a measure of doubt on the identification of both artist and sitter, yet it does not suggest an acceptable alternative to the traditional attribution of the portrait. Ames did not move to Boston until 1841, which establishes that year as the earliest reasonable date for the beginning of the two artists' friendship, and thus, for the execution of the painting. Southward would have been thirty-eight then, an

age some see as too old for this sitter, and Ames would have been twenty-five. (The sitter's dress and hair are consistent with styles current in the late 1830s and early 1840s.) Few portraits by Ames, however, can be firmly dated this early, and none closely resembles the National Gallery's painting. In comparison to Ames' known work, this likeness lacks his customary vigor of characterization. Tactile values are largely missing, brushwork is squarish and amorphous, and the construction of the body and clothing has little authority. Such elements of stiffness and flatness, however, could easily be ascribed to the inexperience of a hitherto provincial artist.

The remaining evidence is no less equivocal. The panel support, for example, is all but unknown in Ames' oeuvre, and the inscription does not match his handwriting or signature. Still, a physical description of Southward given in 1847 at the time of his application for a passport does generally match the likeness, although not closely (there are no other known depictions of Southward).<sup>6</sup> Adding to the confusion are references to another Massachusetts miniature painter with a similar name, Nathan Southworth (1806–1858), who also had several identical biographical ties to Ames. Like Southward, he worked in Boston in the early 1840s, and he also traveled to Italy as a companion of Ames in 1847.<sup>7</sup>

JD

#### Notes

1. The introduction to the Ehrich Galleries exhibition catalogue relates that the works shown "have at various times" been in the possession of the gallery.

2. The name of the auction house and the date of the purchase are recorded in *Clarke* 1928 in the NGA library. An annotated copy of the 1920 sale catalogue, FARL, indicates that "Harris"—probably Charles X. Harris, a painter and associate of Clarke—acted as the purchasing agent.

3. Bolton 1921, 145, mentions that Southward "at one time . . . was a pupil of Thomas Sully." Apparently, the artist did not immediately give up the shoe trade, for Salem directories list him as a dealer in 1842 and 1846.

4. "George Southward, Artist," *Boston Daily Globe*, 21 February 1876. This is the most important biographical source on Southward. See also William Leavitt, "Notice of the Southward Family in Salem," *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 14, January 1877, 77–80.

5. All opinions recorded in NGA curatorial files.

6. Southward is described in the application as having a "high forehead," "grey eyes," a "grecian nose," a "large mouth," a "round chin," "brown hair," a "light complexion," and an "oval face" (Register of Passport Applications, microfilm M1371, fr. 185, National

Archives, Washington). The eye and hair colors match the NGA portrait.

7. Southworth and Ames applied for the passports on the same day in October 1847, a month after Southward. Southworth's physical description also matches the NGA portrait: "low forehead," "grey eyes," "aquiline nose," "large mouth," "long chin," "black hair," "dark

complexion," and "thin face" (Register of Passport Applications, microfilm M1371, fr. 185, National Archives, Washington).

#### References

- 1921 Bolton: 145.  
1952 Rutledge and Lane: 113.

## John James Audubon

1785 – 1851

BORN ON 26 April 1785 in Les Cayes, Santo Domingo (now Haiti), John James Audubon was the illegitimate son of French sea captain Jean Audubon and a servant, Jeanne Rabine. In 1789, a few years after the death of his mother, he was taken to France and raised by his father and stepmother. During a happy childhood at Coueron, near Nantes, he studied geography, fencing, and mathematics, but he was most enthusiastic about exploring the out-of-doors and collecting and drawing birds' nests, eggs, and other natural curiosities.<sup>1</sup>

In 1803 he was sent to America to operate Mill Grove, a farm near Philadelphia that his father had purchased in 1789. Through mismanagement and neglect Audubon lost the farm, thus beginning a long series of early commercial failures for the young man, who preferred to devote his time to shooting and sketching specimens. At Mill Grove, Audubon met Lucy Bakewell, whom he married in 1808. They moved to Louisville and then to Henderson, Kentucky, and in later years to New Orleans. Because he was often absent on collecting excursions, his wife worked as a governess and schoolteacher to support the family. In 1819 Audubon was briefly jailed for debt. About this time he began to earn a living making likenesses in chalk, which he continued to do until 1826. He also worked as a taxidermist in Cincinnati in 1820.

Although he had met Alexander Wilson (1766–1813) in 1810 and had seen Wilson's great work *American Ornithology*, it was not until ten years later that Audubon arrived at the idea of publishing his own illustrations of birds and began collecting and drawing specifically toward that end. With his

assistant Joseph Mason, a young artist specializing in plants and insects, he journeyed from Cincinnati to New Orleans and Natchez. In 1822 Audubon took lessons in oil painting from an itinerant artist named John Stein (or Steen). This is his only recorded training in this medium. He had been working primarily in pastels, but about this time he began increasingly to use watercolors. Audubon visited Philadelphia in 1824 and arranged to show his work at the Academy of Natural Sciences. He won no sponsorship in that city, however, because of his rough manner and the threat his project posed to the work of the favored Alexander Wilson.

In 1826 Audubon turned to England to gain support for his venture. He found a warm and encouraging reception in Liverpool, where he showed his drawings and paintings at the Royal Institution. Gradually he gathered a group of subscribers and engaged the accomplished London engraving firm of Robert Havell and Son, thus enabling him to begin his project of creating large (double elephant folio, approximately 39½ by 26 inches) illustrations of American birds. Audubon traveled back and forth between the United States and England over the next several years to secure specimens and financing for his production. He was assisted by his sons John Woodhouse Audubon, who accompanied him on collecting trips, and Victor Gifford Audubon (1809–1860), who supervised the printing and marketing of the plates in London.

*The Birds of America* was issued in eighty-seven parts of five plates each and, when completed in June 1838, contained 435 hand-colored engrav-

ings of 1,065 birds of 489 species. Accustomed to seeing specimens shown in a straightforward manner against a blank background, some naturalists objected to Audubon's use of dramatic poses and settings. Indeed, Audubon was sometimes guilty of endowing the creatures he depicted with almost human attitudes. Yet his attempt to position them as he thought they moved in the wild, using wire armatures to support the freshly killed subjects, was truly revolutionary. Today *The Birds of America* engravings and the brilliant watercolors upon which they were based are admired not only for their ornithological exactness but also for their vitality and keen sense of design.

Even while Audubon was producing his visual record of American birds, he was documenting their characteristics and his own experiences in the wilderness in his *Ornithological Biography*, published in five volumes between 1831 and 1839. By this time he had become a celebrated figure in the United States who was interviewed by the press, gave public lectures, and mingled with important people such as President Andrew Jackson. He was encouraged to undertake two new publications. The first was a version of *The Birds of America* comprising lithographic illustrations (rather than engravings) of reduced size, which were printed from 1839 to 1843. The second was *The Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America* (printed from 1845 to 1848), two volumes of hand-colored lithographs based on watercolors by John James Audubon and his son John Woodhouse Audubon, accompanied by text written by their friend, the Reverend John Bachman, an amateur naturalist. Both of these efforts were very successful and allowed the artist to retire in comfort.

Audubon's last nine years were spent at Minnie's Land, thirty-five acres of property that he purchased on what is now upper Manhattan, facing the Hudson River. He died there on 27 January 1851.

DC

#### Notes

1. Although Audubon claimed to have studied with the French neoclassical painter Jacques-Louis David, no documentation supports this.

#### Bibliography

Audubon 1869.  
Audubon 1897.

Herrick 1917.  
Chancellor 1978.  
Reynolds 1982.  
Ford 1988.  
Blaugrund and Stebbins 1993.  
Streshinsky 1993.

1951.9.3 (1070)

### *Farmyard Fowls*

c. 1827

Oil on canvas, 71.5 × 104.0 (28 1/8 × 40 15/16)  
Gift of E. J. L. Hallstrom

#### Inscriptions

At lower right: Audubon [first five letters added during 1951 treatment]

**Technical Notes:** The support is a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric that was lined, possibly during the 1951 treatment. Tack holes are visible on the right, left, and bottom edges. Over a thin, white ground layer, the paint was rapidly applied in several, often thick layers. Details in the chickens were applied in broad brushstrokes with some fairly high impasto to represent the feathers and highlights in the heads and feet. The layering appears to be wet-into-wet as well as wet-over-dry, and glazes were used in the areas of thicker feathers. The painting is in poor condition, probably resulting from environmental conditions and from an unsound technique. X-radiography reveals large areas of loss, particularly at the bottom edge, top center, and right, and in the tail feathers of the chicken on the left. The entire right side suffers from numerous small losses. The dark background appears to have been entirely repainted. The varnish has become severely discolored.

**Provenance:** The artist, until 1851; his son, John Woodhouse Audubon [1812–1862], Salem, New York; probably his wife, Caroline Hall Audubon, Salem, New York, 1862–1899; probably their son, William Bakewell Audubon, Australia, until 1932; his daughter and son, Eleanor Caroline Audubon and Leonard Benjamin Audubon, Sydney, Australia; sold 1950 to E. J. L. Hallstrom, Sydney, Australia.

**Exhibited:** John James Audubon exhibition, Kennedy Galleries, New York, 1954, no cat.

AT SEVERAL POINTS in his memoirs John James Audubon laments the limitation of his ability to paint in oil. Although he felt his oil paintings lacked the assurance and precision of his watercolors, he nevertheless painted close to one hundred of them.<sup>1</sup> He seems to have worked quickly, often producing these works to earn money to support the printing



John James Audubon, *Farmyard Fowls*, 1951.9.3

of *The Birds of America*. One possible example of this cursory style is *Farmyard Fowls*. A label on the reverse of the canvas, signed by Audubon's granddaughter Maria Rebecca Audubon, purports to explain the circumstances surrounding the creation of the painting: "These chickens were painted by J.J. Audubon in one morning before a one o'clock lunch, as some-one visiting the house at Minnie-land N.Y. in May 1841 told him he did not believe such rapid work could be done. Audubon picked up a canvas the guest sent with him, the subject chosen and the painting left as it is now after four hours work. It is one of the few paintings to which Audubon signed his name."

Although Maria Audubon indicates the work was painted in 1841, she is probably mistaken, since Minnie's Land (Audubon's last home) was not occupied until 1842. In addition, Audubon does not seem to have been painting in oil as late as 1841. The work most resembles other oil paintings made in the late 1820s. While abroad in 1827, Audubon wrote in his journal, "I do anything for money now a days," and went on to list the subjects he had submitted to the exhibition of the Liverpool Royal Institution in hope of sales. Among these was one called *Cocks and Hens* or *Common Fowls*, quite likely similar to *Farmyard Fowls* and approximately the same size (28 by 42 inches). When Audubon discovered a subject that was popular, he might produce several versions of it. For example, he sold seven oil copies of his watercolor *Otter Caught in a Trap*, a painting that was also included in the 1827 Liverpool exhibition.<sup>2</sup>

Today the quality of *Farmyard Fowls* is difficult to judge because the painting has experienced serious deterioration. Even in 1895 a visitor to the home of

John Woodhouse Audubon noted that the painting was "cracked like old china." Yet he went on to comment on the "rather spirited attitude" of the birds and described them further as "a common cock" and two hens "apparently of the Polish breed, or perhaps Houdans."<sup>3</sup> The way the fowls are painted emphasizes their prancing or combative attitudes. In his choice of subject Audubon may have been influenced by the lavish paintings of Melchior de Hondcoeter (1638–1695), a widely imitated Dutch artist who, in his artwork, endowed ducks, geese, and other fowl with lively and varied temperaments. Interestingly, while Audubon greatly admired Hondcoeter's technique, he found his characterizations lacking. Upon seeing one of Hondcoeter's paintings, Audubon wrote: "To me the picture was destitute of *life*; the animals seemed to me to be drawn from poorly stuffed specimens, but the coloring, finish, the manner, the effect, was most beautiful, and but for the lack of Nature in the animals was a picture which commanded admiration and attention. Would that I could paint like Hondcoeter [*sic*]!"<sup>4</sup>

DC

#### Notes

1. This figure is courtesy of Mary Tyler Winters, an Audubon descendant who has made an exhaustive study of the oil paintings executed by Audubon and his sons; discussion with author, October 1991.

2. Audubon 1869, 153.

3. Shufeldt 1910, 4.

4. Audubon 1897, 1:204. Audubon made the visit on 11 January 1827.

#### References

1910 Shufeldt: 4–5.

## Studio of John James Audubon

1951.9.4 (1072)

### *Long-Tailed Weasel*

c. 1845

Oil on canvas, 51.2 × 61.5 (20<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 24<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)

Gift of E. J. L. Hallstrom

#### Inscriptions

On reverse at top: White Weasel Stoat by J.J. Audubon

On reverse at bottom: W.B. Audubon

**Technical Notes:** The painting has been lined and windows have been cut into the lining fabric to reveal inscriptions in ink on the reverse. No cusping is visible along the cut fabric edges. A warm, off-white ground layer of moderate thickness was applied over the plain-weave fabric support. Where original paint is visible, it was applied in short refined brushstrokes, with fine applications of thin paint used to indicate the texture of the animals' fur. However, a great deal of the surface is covered with overpaint. Many of the grass stalks are inventions of a restorer, and the sky and back of the weasel on the left are almost completely overpainted. Beneath the



Studio of John James Audubon, *Long-Tailed Weasel*, 1951.9.4

overpaint are numerous unfilled losses in the original paint. A large vertical tear, one-third of the way in from the left edge, runs almost from top to bottom. The painting's condition is extremely poor. The thick varnish has become somewhat discolored.

**Provenance:** Probably the artist until 1851; probably his son, John Woodhouse Audubon [1812–1862], Salem, New York; probably his wife, Caroline Hall Audubon, Salem, New York, 1862–1899; probably their son, William Bakewell Audubon, Australia, until 1932; his daughter and son, Eleanor Caroline Audubon and Leonard Benjamin Audubon, Sydney, Australia; sold 1950 to E. J. L. Hallstrom, Sydney, Australia.

THIS PAINTING was handed down in the Audubon family, which lends credence to the belief that it has some connection with John James Audubon, whose name was inscribed on the reverse of the canvas by his grandson William Bakewell Audubon. So little of the original painting is visible, however, that it is difficult to determine its authorship. The thin, sketchy quality of the painting may indicate that it was undertaken to provide cursory directions to the printer of *The Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America* (1845–1848). Mary Winters suggests that the raw appearance of the work might also reflect John James Audubon's failing abilities during this period, since he began to experience trouble with his eyesight around 1845.<sup>1</sup> Some aspects of the painting are reminiscent of the artist's earlier work. Winters cites, in particular, the curve of the weasels' tails and their twisting poses, which are typical of Audubon and his special affection for smaller animals. The curved oak leaf, one of the better-preserved elements of the painting, is also a characteristic John James Audubon device.<sup>2</sup> Although John Woodhouse Audubon, who painted half of the sub-

jects in *Quadrupeds*, worked in oils, there is no good reason to suspect that this painting is by his hand. His identified works generally show a high level of technical accomplishment and a firmer application of paint.

The painting differs slightly in background from the illustration in *Quadrupeds* (pl. 59). In the illustration the weasels are located solidly on land, rather than beside water, and no clump of leaves appears, as it does above the grass at the painting's upper left.

Called "White Weasel. Stoat" in *Quadrupeds* and later identified as a "New York weasel," the animal depicted in the National Gallery painting is now recognized as *Mustela frenata noveboracensis*, a subspecies of long-tailed weasel.<sup>3</sup> According to the Reverend John Bachman's text in *Quadrupeds*, this small carnivore is "graceful, rapid, of untiring industry, brave and fearless" as well as "fierce and blood thirsty. A mission appears to have been assigned it by Providence to lessen the rapidly multiplying number of mice and small rodentia."<sup>4</sup>

DC

#### Notes

1. Information derived from Mary Tyler Winters' unpublished manuscript concerning Audubon oils and from discussion between Winters and the author on 26 September 1991 (notes in NGA curatorial files).

2. Information from notes of visit with Winters on 26 September 1991 (in NGA curatorial files).

3. This classification is provided in a letter of 12 April 1983 (in NGA curatorial files) from John Miles, Jr., the National Museum of Natural History, citing sources such as Raymond Hall's *Mammals of North America*.

4. Audubon and Bachman 1846, 2:57–59.

#### References

1951 Ford: 216.

## John Woodhouse Audubon

1812 – 1862

JOHN WOODHOUSE AUDUBON, second son of the great artist/naturalist John James Audubon, was born on 30 November 1812 in Henderson, Kentucky. At an early age he showed artistic promise and was encouraged to join his father in his scientific interests. While his brother Victor Gifford Audubon (1809–1860) assisted with the

business and record-keeping functions related to the various Audubon publications, John Woodhouse was an active traveler and collector of specimens, as well as a draftsman. In 1833 he accompanied his father on an expedition to Labrador. Later that year John James was able to write, "John has drawn a few Birds, as good as any I ever

made, and in a few months I hope to give this department of my duty up to him altogether."<sup>1</sup>

While the Audubon family was in London in 1834, both sons studied painting, John apparently making portraits and copies of works by Henry Raeburn (1756–1823) and Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617–1682).<sup>2</sup> By this time the senior Audubon's projects had become family enterprises. John Woodhouse traveled to Florida and Texas in 1837 on collecting missions. He would journey to the Southwest nine years later to gather specimens of mammals in addition to birds. From 1839 to 1843 John Woodhouse was chiefly responsible for the production of the second version of *The Birds of America*, overseeing the reduction of 500 plates, and working with the lithographer. Within a few years he also painted, in oil, half the subjects used as illustrations in *The Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America* (1845–1848) and supervised the printing of all of the plates. In 1856 he published a second reduced-size version of *The Birds of America* and in 1860 began to produce a second, folio-size edition of it, this time by lithography rather than engraving. Because many of the subscribers to the second edition of *Birds of America* were Southern, the venture was ruined by the outbreak of the Civil War.

Both John and Victor Audubon built homes on the land surrounding their parents' house in New York. John had nine children, two by his first wife, Maria Rebecca Bachman, daughter of the Reverend John Bachman (collaborator on *Quadrupeds*), and seven by his second wife, Caroline Hall. He exhibited portraits as well as animal paintings in New York throughout the 1840s and 1850s, at the Apollo Association, American Art-Union, and National Academy of Design.

John Woodhouse Audubon is chiefly remembered as an assistant to the monumental projects of his dynamic father; consequently his own substantial skills are often overlooked. He was, in fact, a talented wildlife artist, and his illustrations for the *Quadrupeds* seem quite equal to those of his father.

DC

#### Notes

1. Herrick 1917, 2:56.

2. Victor Gifford Audubon appears to have concentrated on landscape painting. He exhibited a number of these subjects at the National Academy of Design during the 1840s. On several occasions the brothers collaborat-

ed on paintings and may have worked together on the circa 1841 portrait of John James Audubon, posed with shotgun, dog, and horse in a landscape, that is now in the American Museum of Natural History, New York.

#### Bibliography

Herrick 1917.

Reynolds 1982.

1951.9.1 (1068)

### *Black-Footed Ferret*

1840/1846

Oil on canvas, 55.5 × 68.5 (21<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 26<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)

Gift of E. J. L. Hallstrom

#### Inscriptions

On reverse, written twice at right angles, now obscured by lining fabric: W.B. Audubon<sup>1</sup>

**Technical Notes:** The original support is a plain-weave fabric. The painting has been lined. The paint was generally applied thinly and transparently. In the foreground the warm, off-white ground layer shows through the brushstrokes, creating a luminosity in some of the browns. The ferret was accomplished with fine brushstrokes of thinly applied paint to suggest the texture of fur. The painting is in a very poor condition, with numerous small losses of paint and ground. The largest loss, the size of a quarter, is in the center of the sky above the ferret's back. In 1989, the painting was relined and a new varnish coating was applied over remnants of an old, discolored varnish layer. Inpainting in the sky has whitened.

**Provenance:** The artist; probably his wife, Caroline Hall Audubon, Salem, New York, 1862–1899; probably their son, William Bakewell Audubon, Australia, until 1932; his daughter and son, Eleanor Caroline Audubon and Leonard Benjamin Audubon, Sydney, Australia; sold 1950 to E. J. L. Hallstrom, Sydney, Australia.

JOHN WOODHOUSE AUDUBON'S *Black-Footed Ferret* is the study upon which plate ninety-two of *The Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America* is based. The illustration, which was printed by the lithographer J.T. Bowen of Philadelphia in 1846, follows the painting with no apparent variation. Beneath it appears the legend "Drawn from Nature by JWA." Without their inscriptions the *Quadrupeds* illustrations of John James and John Woodhouse Audubon are difficult to differentiate on the basis of style. One varying aspect does seem discernible. While each artist depicted animals engaged in typical activities, the elder Audubon tended toward a more dramatic



John Woodhouse Audubon, *Black-Footed Ferret*, 1951.9.1

presentation, often contorting bodies or showing teeth bared. The stable placement of the ferret in this painting, inquisitively turning to the bird's nest, his tail gently curving behind him, follows the characterization that was more typical of the younger Audubon.<sup>2</sup>

When John James Audubon and his coauthor, the Reverend John Bachman, introduced this species (based on a single skin that was sent to them from the West), some readers doubted its existence. An appeal to sportsmen in the Great Plains area brought forth the skins of several more of these animals, thus vindicating Audubon and Bachman. The black-footed ferret, which was uncommon even in Audubon's day, has more recently been called "North America's rarest mammal."<sup>3</sup> Because it occupies prairie dog burrows and depends on that animal for both its food and shelter, this ferret has been adversely affected through the years by programs to eradicate prairie dogs; however, this elusive creature has been sighted recently in Wyoming and South Dakota.

DC

#### Notes

1. A photograph of the inscription is in the NGA curatorial files.

2. Mary Winters feels that the *Black-Footed Ferret* is "totally John Woodhouse" but following the model of John James Audubon. She adds that the ferret's forelegs, particularly the awkwardly placed left one, may have been added slightly later than the rest of the creature. It would have been like John James to insist that the animal's paws be made clearly visible and it would have been like John Woodhouse, in this period, to accede to his father's wishes. (Information based on a discussion with Winters, 26 September 1991; notes in NGA curatorial files.)

3. "Ferret" 1983 (reference is courtesy of Judith Block, National Zoological Park; notes in NGA curatorial files).

#### References

1951 Ford: 216.

1951.9.9 (1077)

### *Long-Tailed Red Fox*

1848/1854

Oil on canvas, 56.2 × 69.3 (22 1/8 × 27 5/16)

Gift of E. J. L. Hallstrom

#### Inscriptions

At lower right: JW AUDUBON

On reverse of lining [fabric], in another hand: B.P. Audubon

**Technical Notes:** The support is a plain-weave fabric that has been lined. On the reverse of the lining canvas, a colormen's stencil reads: "PREPARED/BY/ED<sup>WD</sup> DECHAUX/NEW YORK" and "22 × 27." There is a warm, off-white ground layer of moderate thickness under the thinly and transparently applied paint. The ground layer shows through the foreground, creating a luminosity in some of the browns. Fine brushstrokes of thinly applied paint are used to suggest the texture of the fox's fur. The sky is more thickly painted, wet-into-wet. White highlights in impasted paint outline most of the design areas. The condition of the painting is reasonably good, with the exception of the edges. There is a tear in the back of the fox and a dime-size loss in the center of the sky. Blistering and crizzled paint and long, irregular losses along the bottom edge are the result of water damage. The varnish is unevenly glossy and has become highly discolored.

**Provenance:** The artist; probably his wife, Caroline Hall Audubon, Salem, New York, 1862–1899; probably their son, Benjamin Phillips Audubon [d. 1886]; his nephew, Leonard Benjamin Audubon, Sydney, Australia; sold 1950 to E. J. L. Hallstrom, Sydney, Australia.

THE SENSITIVITY with which the subject is rendered demonstrates John Woodhouse Audubon's substantial skills. He creates a believably stealthy pose for the fox, with its head low to the ground and its eyes and ears alert. The subtle gradations of gray, red-brown, and white in the animal's coat and the softness of its fur are expertly captured with fine, individual strokes.

This painting would seem to be the model upon which plate 151, *Jackall Fox* (*Vulpes macroura*), of *The Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America* was based.<sup>1</sup> It appeared as an addition to the octavo edition of *Quadrupeds*, volume three, published in 1854, but was not included in the earlier, larger "imperial edition," which was completed in 1848. Below the illustration is printed, "Drawn from Nature by J.W. Audubon."<sup>2</sup> Unlike his father, John Woodhouse felt quite comfortable working in oil, and all of the studies that he contributed to *Quadrupeds* were painted in this medium.

DC

#### Notes

1. The title *Long-tailed Red Fox* is based upon modern terminology. This animal ranges through Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming.

2. In the *Quadrupeds* illustration, the tall grasses at the right in the painting are deleted.

#### References

1951 Ford: 214.



John Woodhouse Audubon, *Long-Tailed Red Fox*, 1951.9.9

# Attributed to John Woodhouse Audubon

1951.9.2 (1069)

## *A Young Bull*

c. 1849

Oil on canvas, 35.3 × 50.5 (13<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 19<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>)

Gift of E. J. L. Hallstrom

**Technical Notes:** The support is a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric. The ground is a warm, off-white layer of moderate thickness which has a pebbly texture in the sky. In the foreground, paint was applied thinly in a series of transparent glazes, one over the other. Trees and bushes are painted on top of this more thinly painted passage. The sky was painted more thickly, with low impasto blended wet-into-wet. The bull was added last in heavier, wet-into-wet paint. Pentimenti are evident in the tree on the left side and in the change of the position of the foreground path. Inpainting covers a number of relatively large losses, the biggest of which is found in the sky to the right of the trees. There is a tear inside the left stretcher bar. In 1989 the painting was relined and a new varnish coating was applied over remnants of an old, discolored varnish layer.

**Provenance:** Probably the artist; probably his wife, Caroline Hall Audubon, Salem, New York, 1862–1899; their daughters, Maria Rebecca Audubon and Florence Audubon; their nephew, Leonard Benjamin Audubon, Sydney, Australia; sold 1950 to E. J. L. Hallstrom, Sydney, Australia.

**Exhibited:** *Audubon as an Animal Painter*, National Audubon Society, New York, 1951, no. 19, as *Bull*, attributed to John James Audubon.

THIS STOLID white-and-brown animal was probably painted by John Woodhouse Audubon, who ex-

hibited a work titled *A Young Bull* at the National Academy of Design in 1849. The National Gallery painting, although not necessarily the same work, may well be related to it.<sup>1</sup>

Livestock painting, a strong tradition in Britain, was carried over to a lesser extent in America.<sup>2</sup> The background in *A Young Bull*, with its low hills and distant church spire, suggests a British landscape, but it may instead reflect the peaceful, rural existence of Minnie's Land, the property on which the Audubons—father, sons, and their families—settled, in 1842.

DC

### Notes

1. Mary Winters suggests the possibility that the landscape background was painted by Victor Gifford Audubon. (Information based on Winters' unpublished manuscript concerning Audubon oils, and a discussion with the author, 26 September 1991; notes in NGA curatorial files.)

2. The NGA collection includes a painting called *Prize Bull*, dated 1876 (1980.62.3), by a naive American artist named H. Call. Edward Hicks (1780–1849), well known for his scenes of the Peaceable Kingdom and other Quaker themes, also painted livestock on occasion (for example, *James Cornell's Prize Bull*, 1846, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Center). Pennsylvania artist John Archibald Woodside, Sr. (1781–1852), also created livestock portraits.

### References

1951 Ford: 38, repro.



Attributed to John Woodhouse Audubon, *A Young Bull*, 1951.9.2

# Frank Weston Benson

1862 – 1951

FRANK WESTON BENSON was a well-known and financially successful painter, printmaker, and teacher. A founding member of The Ten, Benson was associated with that group of painters who withdrew from the Society of American Artists in 1897 in order to promote their own work through smaller, more personal exhibitions, the first of which took place in 1898. Though quite diverse in their approaches, much of their work was characterized by visible brushwork, a lightened palette, and a concern with the natural and evocative qualities of light.

Among these painters was Edmund C. Tarbell (1862–1938), Benson's lifelong friend and a colleague for nearly three decades.<sup>1</sup> The two young men studied together under Otto Grundmann (1844–1890) at the Boston Museum School beginning in 1880 and later at the Académie Julian in Paris, under Gustave Boulanger (1824–1890) and Jules-Joseph Lefebvre (1836–1911). While in Europe, Benson spent the summer at the artists' colony of Concarneau in Brittany and traveled with Tarbell through Germany, Italy, and England.

Upon returning to the United States in 1886, Benson worked briefly in Salem, Massachusetts, where he would settle eventually. During 1886 and 1887 he taught drawing and painting at the Portland (Maine) Society of Art, and in 1889 he began to teach at the Boston Museum School, where he remained until 1912. While teaching, Benson also received wide recognition for his own work. He won numerous awards, including the Hallgarten Prize at the National Academy of Design in 1889 and a World's Columbian Exposition Medal in Chicago in 1893. Three years later he provided decorations for seven ceiling and wall panels in the Library of Congress. Benson became an associate of the National Academy of Design in 1897 and an academician in 1905. He was a founding member of the Guild of Boston Artists in 1914.

The first exhibition of Frank Benson's etchings and drypoints was held the following year, in 1915. The prints, which primarily depicted waterfowl and other sporting subjects, combined Benson's great love of the outdoors with his free and open

draftsmanship. So many variations of these subjects were created over the next decade that some accused the artist of being commercially repetitive. Nonetheless, the turn to sporting subjects in prints, watercolors, and paintings changed the direction of his work, and Benson created fewer of the serene paintings of women and children for which he had become so well known. In the last years of his career his watercolor landscapes met with high demand.

Benson maintained his connection with the Boston Museum School as a member of the Advisory Council until his resignation in 1930. Retrospective exhibitions of his work were held at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, in 1921 and jointly with Tarbell at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in 1938.

Benson, who had a studio in Boston and, at various times, summer houses in Maine and Cape Cod, eventually retired to his home in Salem (the city in which he was born), where he died on 14 November 1951.

DC

## Notes

1. Although almost always linked to Tarbell by contemporary writers, particularly in the early years when their choice of subject and style was most similar, Benson's work differed in many respects from that of his friend. While Tarbell most often depicted women coolly and carefully arranged in softly lit interiors, Benson's best-remembered works contain figures relaxing in warm, full sunlight, often with breezes playing upon their hair and clothing. In addition, the distinctive, loose brushwork of Benson's mature period was generally more lively than that of Tarbell.

## Bibliography

Salaman 1925.  
*Benson* 1938.  
Pierce 1976.  
Wilmerding, Dugan, and Gerdts 1988.  
Bedford 1989.  
Bedford 1994.

1977.4.1 (2734)

## *Portrait in White*

1889

Oil on canvas, 122.6 × 97.2 (48 1/4 × 38 1/4)

Gift of Sylvia Benson Lawson

### Inscriptions

At upper left: Frank W. Benson / '89

**Technical Notes:** The support is a very fine twill fabric that has been lined, but the original tacking margins are present. A white ground was unevenly applied over the finely woven support. After the figure was sketched in, the background was covered with dark green paint of a pastelike consistency. The sitter's body and dress were blocked in with white, and the flesh areas with a yellow-tan. Following this, the flesh areas were painted over with smooth applications of cool pink, leaving the darker tan underlayer exposed to model the forms. The details of the dress were built up thickly with ridges of impasto defining the stripes along the sleeves. Overall, the painting was executed decisively, with bold brushwork and very few changes in the composition. Examination by x-radiography reveals that the only compositional change made to the work involved the figure's right eye. The paint and ground layers are secure, although areas of craquelure are found throughout the thickly painted face, hands, and dress. One large hole, located in the middle of the woman's left side, and several old losses are also present. The varnish has grayed slightly.

**Provenance:** The artist and his wife, Ellen Perry Peirson Benson, to 1951; Ellen Perry Peirson Benson [1860–1954], Salem, Massachusetts; her estate, 1954–1956; her daughter, Elisabeth Benson Rogers [Mrs. C. M. A. Rogers], Alabama, by 1956 or before; her sister, Sylvia Benson Lawson [Mrs. Ralph Lawson], Salem, Massachusetts, by 1976.

**Exhibited:** *Exhibition of Pictures by Frank W. Benson and Edmund C. Tarbell*, Chase's Gallery, Boston, 1891, no. 7. *World's Columbian Exposition*, Chicago, 1893, no. 561. *Exhibition of Paintings by Frank W. Benson*, St. Botolph Club, Boston, 1900, no. 20. *An Exhibition of Portraits*, Union League Club, New York, 1904, no. 4. *Paintings, Prints, and Drawings by Frank W. Benson*, CGA, 1921, no. 38, as *Portrait of My Wife*. *Frank W. Benson*, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, 1924, no. 26, as *Portrait of My Wife*. *Paintings, Watercolors and Etchings by Frank W. Benson*, Akron Art Institute, Ohio, 1924, no. 18. *Frank W. Benson & Edmund C. Tarbell: Exhibition of Paintings, Drawings, and Prints*, MFA, 1938, no. 45. NAD Annual 1952, no. 3. *Frank W. Benson Retrospective Exhibition*, Essex Institute, Salem, Massachusetts, 1956, no. 5. *Frank W. Benson 1862–1951: Exhibition of Paintings, Drawings, and Prints*, Farnsworth Library and Art Museum, Rockland, Maine, 1973, no cat.

THE SUBJECT of this sensitive portrait is Ellen Perry Peirson (1860–1954) to whom Benson was mar-

ried on 17 October 1888.<sup>1</sup> The Peirsons and Bensons were well acquainted; Ellen was the best friend of Frank Benson's sister Georgie. When the Peirson family journeyed to France in the summer of 1884, visiting the village of Concarneau and spending the following fall and winter in Paris, the young artist and Ellen were often in each other's company. That year Benson painted a half-length portrait of her as a present for her mother.<sup>2</sup> In it, the sitter is shown in profile against a plain background. While her attractive features are adequately described, the somewhat stiff student work does not approach the level of skill and self-confidence demonstrated in this portrait of 1889.

The couple became engaged in the fall of 1885 but waited to be married until Benson was professionally established. In 1887 the artist included his fiancée in a work titled *In Summer*, which he exhibited at the Boston Art Club, the Society of American Artists, and later at the Paris international exposition of 1889.<sup>3</sup> Softer in focus and lighter in palette than the 1884 portrait, it was described by a critic as "clean and fresh in color."<sup>4</sup> A somewhat experimental work, based on observation of outdoor light and less dependent on academic models, the painting received a great deal of positive notice when it was first shown.

Two years later Benson depicted Ellen in *Portrait in White*, in which he used a more elegant and restrained manner that was calculated to show his skills as a portraitist. *Portrait in White* demonstrates Benson's command of draftsmanship and figure painting, as well as his exposure to the traditions of European portraiture. The artist employs the popular nineteenth-century convention of illuminating the sitter with controlled light against a dark background. In its simplicity and reserve it is typical of Benson's portrait style prior to around 1898. The subject's face, with its soft features and doe eyes, is, paradoxically, constructed of well-worked, heavily textured paint layers. The broad, energetic brushwork found in Benson's later, impressionistic paintings is not yet visible here. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the portrait's execution is the sensual treatment of the sitter's shimmering white gown, which calls to mind the work of Benson's friend, American expatriate John Singer Sargent.

The white dress would become emblematic of Benson's work. Although he painted numerous landscapes and still lifes, his name most often conjures up images of young women, their white garments suffused with bright sunlight and ruffled by



Frank Weston Benson, *Portrait in White*, 1977.4.1

breezes. Benson seems to have been particularly taken with the aesthetic properties of the color as, indeed, were many artists at the turn of the century. His daughter Eleanor recalled, "When we were in North Haven, Papa would often have us put on our best white dresses and then ask us to sit in the grass or play in the woods. We thought it was so silly and the maids made such a fuss when they saw the clothes afterwards."<sup>5</sup>

Equally important to the pleasingly subtle textures and tones of *Portrait in White* is the artist's special affection for the sitter, so sensitively communicated in this warm, poetic image. Three decades after the painting was finished, one reviewer wrote at length about its emotional content, commenting that in it Benson showed "the old world spirit of introspection, the desire to translate psychic emotion. Perhaps, too, he was under that still older and more poignant spell—love. Be that as it may, he has given us a spiritual interpretation of character in this portrait of his wife, so simply painted, yet with such rare and loving insight. . . . One almost regrets that so few of his pictures share the very unusual psychic qualities which Benson here expresses."<sup>6</sup>

DC

#### Notes

1. Ellen and Frank Benson had four children: Eleanor, George, Elisabeth, and Sylvia. Mrs. Benson died 3 October 1954.
2. Private collection; reproduced in Bedford 1994, pl. 11.
3. Private collection; reproduced in Bedford 1994, pl. 17.
4. "Society of American Artists," *New York Evening Post*, 28 April 1888, 5, as quoted in Gerdts, "Benson," 1988, 34.
5. Bedford 1989, 60.
6. Seaton-Schmidt 1921, 366.

#### References

- 1900 Downes: 153, repro. 149.  
 1908 Smith: 100.  
 1921 Seaton-Schmidt: 366–368, repro. 367.  
 1979 Southgate: 25, color repro. cover.  
 1981 Williams: 190, repro. 191.  
 1989 Bedford: 31, repro. 40.  
 1994 Bedford: 42–43, repro. 36.

1992.66.1

### *Margaret ("Gretchen") Strong*

c. 1909

Oil on canvas, 76.8 × 64.2 (30 1/4 × 25 1/4)

Gift of Elizabeth Clarke Hayes

#### Inscriptions

At lower left: F.W. Benson / [four blurred digits, possibly 1910]

**Technical Notes:** A thin, grayish ground is applied over the medium-weight, plain-weave fabric support. The painting remains unlined and is attached to the original four-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher. The fabric was primed before stretching. Paint was applied fluidly and in a relatively thick manner in a series of impasted brushstrokes. A small repaired hole is found in the area of the sitter's hair. There appears to be writing in addition to the signature and date. Efforts to decipher this with infrared reflectography and ultraviolet examination have been unsuccessful. The painting underwent varnish removal in 1993 and is currently displayed unvarnished.

**Provenance:** The Reverend and Mrs. George Alexander Strong, Boston; their daughter, the sitter, Margaret Strong Withers [1892–1973] and her husband, Captain Clarke Withers [d. 1983], Massachusetts and St. Michael's, Maryland; by bequest to Captain Withers' first cousin once removed, Elizabeth Clarke Hayes [Mrs. Frank W. Hayes], St. Michael's, Maryland.

**Exhibited:** *Frank W. Benson: A Retrospective*, Berry-Hill Galleries, New York, 1989, no. 28.

BY THE TIME Benson created this portrait, his fruitful preoccupation "with the beauty of sunlight in its relation to landscape and to figures disposed in the freedom of the open-air environment" was already widely known and commented upon.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the previous decade he had produced bright, evocative images of each summer's idylls. These won him numerous accolades as they were exhibited every subsequent winter and spring.

Benson found inspiration for these works in the pristine environment of Maine's North Haven Island, which he first visited in 1900. The next year the family rented an old house and property near the ocean there. Wooster Farm, named after the original owner, remained the artist's summer retreat until his death. Benson's usual subjects from these times were his children and close friends engaged in simple outdoor activities. Although always carefully posed (Benson advised his daughter extensively on the importance of composition and design), these sitters give the appearance of having



Frank Weston Benson, *Margaret ("Gretchen") Strong*, 1992.66.1



Fig. 1. Frank Weston Benson, *Summer*, oil on canvas, 1909, Providence, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Bequest of Isaac C. Bates

been candidly observed in the midst of their sewing, reading, quiet conversation, or reverie.<sup>2</sup>

The portrait of Margaret Strong is derived from one of the loveliest of these images. Dated 1909, *Summer* (fig. 1) comprises four figures: the artist's daughter, Elisabeth, and her friend Anna Hathaway, who are seated on the golden hillside at left; his other daughter, Eleanor, shown standing against the sky and raising one hand to shade her eyes; and Margaret Strong, who is perched slightly downhill and gazes up at her friends. The device of the figure silhouetted against the blue sea or sky, as are Eleanor and Margaret in this work, recurs frequently in Benson's North Haven paintings.

Margaret Strong's portrait is one of three smaller works that were based on *Summer*. Neither it nor *Elisabeth and Anna* (private collection), nor *Sunlight* (Indianapolis Museum of Art), which shows the single figure of Eleanor, can be called studies for the larger work.<sup>3</sup> However, photographs of the young women may have been used by Benson to aid his memory when his subjects grew tired of posing.<sup>4</sup> *Summer* was one of several compositions that inspired closely related images. Faith Andrews Bedford describes the artist's working method:

Benson's strong emphasis on composition and design usually led him to arrange his finished picture first. Indeed for some of his larger works which were later divided, there exist smaller studies of the final arrangement of figures in oil on canvas and oil on paper. . . .

Once Benson had arranged his large group picture, he would try other compositions as variations on the theme. He used photographs as an aid to the completion of these secondary works . . . his children recalled his skill with a camera, remembering how he could frame with his lens the exact scene he was painting with his brush. . . . Once he had arranged the large group and captured the light and feeling he wanted, Benson would apparently put the larger canvas on one easel in his barn studio and copy parts onto other canvases.<sup>5</sup>

In the case of the portrait *Margaret ("Gretchen") Strong*, family history confirms that it was made after *Summer*: "When Margaret's parents saw the picture, they were so delighted with Benson's portrayal of their daughter that they asked their friend, Frank Benson, if he would paint a single figure portrait of Margaret as she was posed in *Summer*."<sup>6</sup> Another version of the subject was once owned by Benson's friend, the sculptor Bela Pratt, who described it in a letter: "I wish you could see the picture Frank Benson painted and gave to me this summer. It is a red-headed girl against a background of blue water. It is the best thing Frank ever painted and hangs here over the table in the office."<sup>7</sup>

Pratt's enthusiastic account might apply to the National Gallery's portrait as well. In it Margaret Strong's red hair glistens with gold and rose highlights against an intensely blue sea. Her face is less shadowed than in *Summer*, perhaps to clarify her features and warm complexion in a way calculated to please her family for whom the painting was

made. Benson also adjusted the compositional elements slightly so that the coastline seen in the distance is no longer level with the subject's nose, but instead appears above her brow and shows to best effect the contour of her pretty features. At this stage in his career, Benson was at the height of his impressionist style, and his ease and self-assurance are apparent. While he retained the three-dimensional solidity of the figures, his brushwork is energetic, open, and light. *Margaret Strong* is particularly enlivened by the white flecks of wild flowers that dot the hillside and the varied strokes of blue and green that comprise the ocean. In the image as a whole, the artist recreates the quality of glorious, full sunlight, an ability for which he was renowned.

Margaret Wendell Strong, the only daughter of the Reverend and Mrs. George Alexander Strong, was born in Boston in 1892 and spent her early years there. The Benson and Strong families summered in North Haven, and the daughters were good friends and sailing companions. Margaret's portrait was probably painted shortly before her marriage, at the age of eighteen, to Clarke Withers (later Captain U.S.N.) of Port Hope, Ontario. The couple

lived first in Massachusetts and later in St. Michael's, Maryland, and Beaufort, South Carolina. Mrs. Withers died in 1973.<sup>8</sup>

DC

#### Notes

1. Caffin 1909, 109.
2. Benson observed to his daughter Eleanor: "Design makes the picture. . . . A picture is good or bad only as its composition is good or bad" (entry of 11 February 1946, "Advice to an Artist," notes taken by Eleanor Benson Lawson [typescript, Benson Papers, Essex Institute, Salem]), as quoted in Bedford 1989, 67.
3. See Dugan 1988, figs. 6, 7.
4. See Dugan 1988, figs. 4, 5 and n. 19. See also Bedford 1994, pl. 64, which is a photograph of the three seated figures in *Summer*.
5. Bedford 1989, 66–67.
6. Letter of 23 June 1992 from Elizabeth Clarke Hayes (in NGA curatorial files).
7. Letter of 1909 from Bela Pratt (Charlotte West Barton Papers, AAA), as quoted in Bedford 1989, 67.
8. Letter of 23 June 1992, from Elizabeth Clarke Hayes (in NGA curatorial files).

#### References

- 1989 Bedford: 66.  
1994 Bedford: 106, repro. 107.

## Albert Bierstadt

1830 – 1902

ALBERT BIERSTADT was born in Solingen, Prussia, on 7 January 1830, but he spent his early years in New Bedford, Massachusetts, where his parents settled two years after his birth. In the city that had become the capital of America's whaling industry Henry Bierstadt, the artist's father, found work as a cooper.

Primarily self-taught, Albert Bierstadt began his professional career in 1850 when he advertised his services as a drawing instructor. Three years later he departed for Europe, hoping Johann Peter Hasenclever (1810–1853), a distant relative and a prominent member of the Düsseldorf school of artists, would help him obtain formal instruction. Unfortunately, Hasenclever died suddenly shortly before Bierstadt's arrival. When Emanuel Leutze (1816–1868) and Worthington Whittredge

(1820–1910) came to his aid Bierstadt found, unexpectedly, American rather than German mentors.

After nearly three years in Düsseldorf, Bierstadt joined Whittredge on an extended sketching tour through Germany, Switzerland, and Italy. Following a winter in Rome and a sketching tour to Naples and Capri, Bierstadt returned to New Bedford in the autumn of 1857. The "timid, awkward, unpolished specimen of a Yankee" who had arrived in Düsseldorf in 1853, returned to New Bedford a socially poised and technically mature painter.<sup>1</sup>

In the spring of 1858 Bierstadt made his New York debut when he contributed a large painting of Lake Lucerne and the Swiss Alps [1990.50.1] to the annual exhibition at the National Academy

of Design. Critics were dazzled by his technical expertise; within weeks he was elected an honorary member of the Academy.

Bierstadt's European apprenticeship served him well the following spring when he journeyed west for the first time, joining Frederick W. Lander's survey party bound for the Rocky Mountains. Although not the first artist to see or even paint the Rockies, Bierstadt was the first who brought with him superior technical skills and considerable experience painting European alpine peaks. For Americans eager to finally see the mountains a generation of travelers had described as "America's Alps," Bierstadt's credentials were near perfect.

By late September 1858 Bierstadt had returned to New Bedford laden with field sketches, stereo photographs, and Indian artifacts. Within three months he moved to New York, established himself in the Tenth Street Studio Building, and began to exhibit the western paintings that would soon make his reputation. He completed the most important of these, *The Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak* (MMA), in the spring of 1863, just weeks before he set off on his second journey west.

Accompanied by Fitz Hugh Ludlow, a celebrated writer who later published a book about their overland adventure, Bierstadt traveled to the Pacific Coast. He spent several weeks in Yosemite Valley completing the plein-air studies he would later use to compose several of his most important paintings. Following a trip north through Oregon to the Columbia River, Bierstadt and Ludlow returned east. Using studies gathered during all stages of his journey, Bierstadt completed, by the end of the decade, a remarkable series of large scale paintings, including *Looking Down Yosemite Valley, California* (1865, Birmingham Museum of Art, Alabama), *Storm in the Rocky Mountains, Mt. Rosalie* (1866, The Brooklyn Museum), *The Domes of the Yosemite* (1867, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum, Vermont), and *Among the Sierra Nevada Mountains, California* (1868, NMAA), that not only secured his position as the premier painter of the western American landscape but also offered a war-torn nation a golden image of their own Promised Land.

In 1867 Bierstadt and his bride, Rosalie Osborne (1841–1893), set sail for London. It was a triumphant return for the emigrant's son who had

arrived in Europe fourteen years earlier an eager but impoverished student. Six months later he was invited to exhibit two of his most important paintings, *The Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak* and *Storm in the Rocky Mountains, Mt. Rosalie* (both had been purchased by English railroad entrepreneurs), privately before Queen Victoria. During the more than two years he remained abroad, Bierstadt traveled, sketched, and cultivated the friendships that would sustain a European market for his work for many years.

In July 1871 Bierstadt and his wife journeyed to San Francisco aboard the recently completed transcontinental railroad. Apart from the artist's brief return to New York that autumn, they remained in California until October 1873. As he had since his days in Düsseldorf, Bierstadt spent much of his time traveling in remote regions making field studies he would later use to compose studio paintings.

In the autumn of 1876 Rosalie, who had been diagnosed as consumptive and advised to spend the winter months in a warm climate, made the first of several increasingly lengthy trips to Nassau. Although Bierstadt continued to maintain his New York studio and travel widely in the West and Canada, he found new subject matter in the tropics during visits with his wife. In 1880 he exhibited one of the most successful of these pictures, *The Shore of the Turquoise Sea* (1878, private collection), at the National Academy of Design. Though praised by some, the painting drew fire from critics who had found fault with Bierstadt's "theatrics" as early as the 1860s.

Critical disfavor and a falling market plagued Bierstadt during his later years. The most telling blow came in 1889 when the American committee charged with selecting works for the Exposition Universelle in Paris rejected Bierstadt's entry, *The Last of the Buffalo* (1888, CGA). Described as too large but more likely judged old-fashioned, the painting marked the end of Bierstadt's remarkable series of monumental western landscapes. On canvases that matched in scale the landscapes they depicted, Bierstadt's Rocky Mountain and Sierra views mirrored the ambitions of a nation that celebrated with equal fervor the beauty of the land and the commercial potential of its resources.

Bierstadt died suddenly in New York on 18 Feb-

ruary 1902, largely forgotten. Ironically, renewed interest in his work was sparked by a series of exhibitions in the 1960s highlighting not the great western paintings but rather the small oil sketches he had used as color notes for the panoramic landscapes that had brought him such success in the 1860s.

NANCY ANDERSON

#### Notes

1. Letter of 1 November 1858 from Henry Lewis to his brother, George Lewis. Henry Lewis Papers, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

#### Bibliography

Hendricks, 1973.  
Baigell, *Bierstadt*, 1981.  
Anderson and Ferber, 1990.

1990.50.1

### *Lake Lucerne*

1858

Oil on canvas, 182.9 × 304.8 (72 × 120)  
Gift of Richard M. Scaife and Margaret R. Battle, in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art

#### Inscriptions

At lower right: ABierstadt. / 1858.

**Technical Notes:** The support is a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric coated with a white ground of moderate thickness. Infrared reflectography and x-radiography reveal traces of underdrawing, probably in pencil, as well as significant compositional changes in the paint layer. Of particular note are passages at the far left, where a rocky cliff was transformed into a grove of trees, and at the far right, where the church atop the promontory was repositioned at least twice. Pentimenti in the sky indicate that the profiles of several mountain peaks were also altered. Except in dark areas where the paint is thin and transparent, the surface is opaque. Numerous brushstrokes are visible in the paint, which was applied as a relatively fluid paste. Impasto highlights are common in the foreground. A strong tented craquelure, perhaps signifying the use of driers, is visible in the sky. In 1990–1991 the picture was relined, discolored varnish was removed, and the painting was restored. The painting is in excellent condition.

**Provenance:** Purchased from the artist by Alvin Adams [1804–1877], Watertown, Massachusetts, by 14 December 1858;<sup>1</sup> his estate; (his estate sale, Leonard & Co., Boston, 17 March 1882, no. 109); Hezekiah Conant [1827–1902], Pawtucket, Rhode Island;<sup>2</sup> William Leroy

Sunderland [d. 1938], Exeter, Rhode Island, circa 1890;<sup>3</sup> his wife, Pearl Joslin Tarbox Sunderland Rose [d. 1989], Exeter, Rhode Island; (her estate auction, Northern Appraisers, Warwick, Rhode Island, 13 October 1990, no. 43).<sup>4</sup>

**Exhibited:** NAD Annual, 13 April–30 June 1858, no. 6. *New-Bedford Art Exhibition*, Massachusetts, 20 July–7 August 1858, no. 136.<sup>5</sup> Boston Athenaeum, c. September–December 1858, no. 327. Boston Athenaeum, 1860, no. 207. Boston Athenaeum, 1860, no. 239. Boston Athenaeum, 1861, no. 246. Boston Athenaeum, 1862, no. 260.<sup>6</sup> *NGA* 1991, 148–149. *Albert Bierstadt: Art & Enterprise*, NGA, 1991–1992, 130–131, no. 6.

*Lake Lucerne* was the pivotal painting of Albert Bierstadt's early career. On a canvas larger than any he had attempted before (six by ten feet), the twenty-eight-year-old artist created an image of Swiss alpine grandeur that simultaneously marked the end of his European apprenticeship and foretold the great western landscapes of the following decade. Begun in the autumn of 1857 and completed the following spring, the picture was exhibited for the first time in April 1858 at the annual exhibition of the National Academy of Design in New York. The largest painting in the exhibition and the first by Bierstadt to be shown in America's art capital, *Lake Lucerne* served as a stunning announcement that a major new talent had appeared on the American art stage.<sup>7</sup>

The first of Bierstadt's panoramic landscapes, *Lake Lucerne* was composed from sketches completed during the summer and early autumn of 1856, when the young artist joined Worthington Whittredge (1820–1910) and several other aspiring painters on a sketching tour that began as a journey up the Rhine and continued as an overland expedition to Switzerland.<sup>8</sup> By late July 1856, as Sanford Robinson Gifford (1823–1880), another young artist traveling abroad, recorded, Bierstadt and his companions were near Lake Lucerne and intended "to spend several weeks on the lake."<sup>9</sup> William Stanley Haseltine, a member of the party, reported that he and his companions had sketched for a time in the vicinity of Brunnen on the eastern shore of Lake Lucerne before continuing on, early in September, to Meiringen near Reichenbach Falls.<sup>10</sup>

In late September or early October, Whittredge, Bierstadt, Haseltine, and perhaps other members of the group departed for Italy.<sup>11</sup> Following a winter in Rome, and a summer sketching tour along the coast of Italy, Bierstadt returned to New Bedford in late August or early September of 1857. Almost im-

mediately he began exhibiting paintings with subjects drawn from his European travels.<sup>12</sup> A view of the Wetterhorn, for example, was reported to have “made some sensation among picture-lovers” when exhibited in Boston.<sup>13</sup> The picture to which he devoted his greatest attention, however, was *Lake Lucerne*, the painting with which he would make his New York debut the following spring.

While a student in Düsseldorf, Bierstadt had undertaken several extended sketching tours in the German countryside, returning—according to Whittredge, whose studio he shared—“loaded down with innumerable studies of all sorts.”<sup>14</sup> He then used the plein-air sketches as the raw material from which to compose studio paintings. It was a working method he would employ with great success throughout his career.

*Lake Lucerne* was the first of Bierstadt’s large-scale landscapes composed in this manner. Shortly before the painting went on view in New York it was reported that “fifty studies in the open air” were made for the picture.<sup>15</sup> Numerous pentimenti and other compositional changes (visible through infrared reflectography and x-radiography) suggest that even when painting on a very large scale Bierstadt did not work from a detailed preliminary drawing. Instead, he used his field sketches as memory aids and composed the picture directly on the canvas. Following a pattern that would be re-

peated numerous times during the coming decade, Bierstadt retained the distinctive topographic features of the alpine scene but allowed himself considerable license (particularly in the foreground) to manipulate compositional elements for aesthetic purposes.

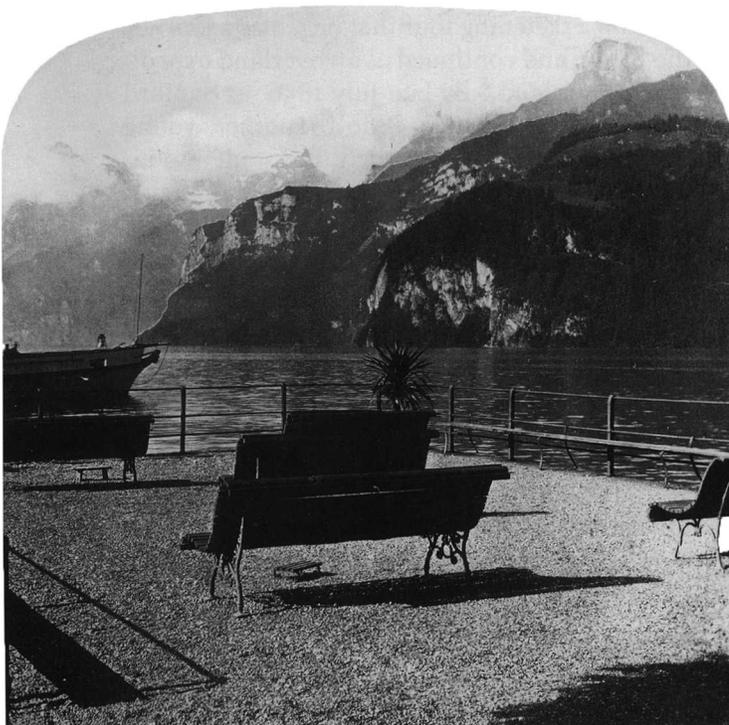
On 3 April 1858, ten days before *Lake Lucerne* went on view at the National Academy, *The Home Journal* published a lengthy description of the painting, which began by introducing its young artist as a “gentleman of indubitable genius . . . about to present his claims to the attention of the New-York public.”<sup>16</sup> Noting that alpine scenery had become a subject of special interest to Bierstadt during his European sojourn, the reviewer went on to describe *Lake Lucerne* in some detail. The geographic information undoubtedly came from Bierstadt himself:

The spectator stands on a winding road, skirted with rocks, flowers, oaks, and a nooning party of gipsies [*sic*]; to the right is a hamlet, and beneath it flows the river Muotta through a broad and sunny valley, bounded by the village of Brunnen and the turquoise waters of Lake Lucerne; and, beyond the lake, rise the mountains in all their vastness and variety of forest, pasture, precipice, glacier, and peak—heavy-headed Ematten near at hand, then Oberbauen and snowy Uri Rothstok [*sic*], and finally St. Gotthard, thirty miles off—the fleecy clouds stooping and lifting, trailing and breaking themselves over among the summits.<sup>17</sup>

Brunnen, a village situated at a particularly scenic spot on Lake Lucerne, was a destination much favored by artists during the nineteenth century. It is not surprising, therefore, that Bierstadt and his companions spent considerable time sketching near the village. A stereoscopic photograph labeled “Lake Lucerne from Brunnen, Switzerland” (fig. 1) confirms the geographic identification reported by *The Home Journal*. Across the lake, at the far right of both the photograph and the painting, is Ematten with its distinctive “heavy head.” Moving from right to left the alpine peaks are indeed Oberbauen, Uri-Rotstock, and in the far distance St. Gotthard.

*Lake Lucerne* was seen by the public for the first time on 13 April 1858, when the annual exhibition opened at the National Academy of Design. One reviewer described the painting as “exceedingly rich in the quality of light, and very inspiring in its effect.”<sup>18</sup> Another commentator advised viewers to “step as far back as the breadth of the room permits” in order to “compass [the painting’s] exceeding merit.”<sup>19</sup> *The Crayon* praised Bierstadt for his “great command of landscape elements” but went

Fig. 1. Lake Lucerne taken from Brunnen, Switzerland, Washington, Library of Congress





Albert Bierstadt, *Lake Lucerne*, 1890.50.1

on to suggest that “the same ability on a smaller scale, would be more readily appreciated.”<sup>20</sup>

The size of Bierstadt’s canvas was indeed extraordinary and represented a bold and confident bid by the young artist from New Bedford to join the ranks of America’s professional artists. Less than one month after *Lake Lucerne* was placed on view, Bierstadt was elected an honorary member of the Academy.<sup>21</sup> With surprising speed, the academic art community had welcomed him among their number.

Following the close of the exhibition at the Academy Bierstadt placed *Lake Lucerne* on view in New Bedford. On 20 July a local newspaper reported that the large Swiss landscape had been added to the group of works already on view at John Hopkins’ music store.<sup>22</sup> New Bedford’s first art exhibition (organized by Bierstadt) had opened with much fanfare on 1 July. Local response, however, had been disappointing. Unfortunately, even the addition of *Lake Lucerne*, the picture that had caused such a stir in New York, could not turn the tide, for when the exhibition closed on 7 August it was reported that “the balance of profit and loss” was “inconveniently upon the wrong side of the ledger.”<sup>23</sup>

Early in September Bierstadt placed several paintings, including *Lake Lucerne*, on exhibition at the Athenaeum in Boston. One Boston critic de-

scribed Bierstadt’s Swiss landscape as “magnificent,” noting it was by a young artist “who has risen up amongst us,—astonishing even our foremost artists with his bold strides.”<sup>24</sup> By mid-December *Lake Lucerne*, which had been listed as for sale since it went on display at the Academy in April, had attracted a buyer—Alvin Adams, a businessman from Watertown, Massachusetts—who, it was reported, paid \$925 for the painting.<sup>25</sup>

Although Adams allowed the picture to be shown at the Athenaeum on several occasions and later opened the art gallery in his home to visitors one day a week, *Lake Lucerne* remained somewhat inaccessible. No engraving or chromolithograph was ever produced after the painting. Thus the most important picture from Bierstadt’s early career was, as Henry Tuckerman noted in 1867, “lost to public view” in a private collection.<sup>26</sup>

In 1869, a decade after he had acquired *Lake Lucerne*, Adams purchased a second painting of equal size by Bierstadt; however, the artist’s reputation had grown so significantly during the interim, that Adams reportedly paid \$15,000 for the large western landscape *Among the Sierra Nevada Mountains, California* (1868, NMAA).<sup>27</sup> Until his death in 1877 the two paintings hung in the same gallery in Adams’ home (fig. 2).<sup>28</sup> It was a telling juxtaposition.

Although completed early in Bierstadt’s career, *Lake Lucerne* was, in several important ways, a summary painting. Begun immediately following four years of study abroad, the painting clearly demonstrated Bierstadt’s mastery of the craft of painting. In a surprisingly short period of time, and despite a reported lack of natural gifts, Bierstadt had acquired astonishing technical skills—from the precisely rendered foliage and lichen-covered rocks of the foreground, to the deft use of light and shade as a recession device, Bierstadt had learned how to construct a picture. In *Lake Lucerne* he applied his newly won technical expertise to a traditional subject that had long been popular with both American and European audiences.

The alpine view, in both its wild and pastoral states, had become a staple of landscape painting long before Bierstadt visited the Alps for the first time in 1856. The paintings of J. M. W. Turner (1775–1851) were well known as were the works of Alexandre Calame (1810–1864), the Swiss master whom Bierstadt and his companions had observed sketching near Brunnen.<sup>29</sup> Landscape views with European towns and villages (whether English,

Fig. 2. Alvin Adams picture gallery, c. 1870–1877, private collection





Fig. 3. Albert Bierstadt, *Looking Down Yosemite Valley, California*, oil on canvas, 1865, Collection of the Birmingham Museum of Art, Gift of the Birmingham Public Library, Alabama, 1991.879

French, Swiss, German, or Italian) had also served as stock-in-trade for young American artists who had completed study tours abroad. Clearly aware of both European and American precedents, Bierstadt chose, for the most ambitious painting of his early career, a subject widely explored by others. He produced a picture that demonstrated both his technical maturity and the extent to which he had assimilated European models. He also produced a picture that was, in some ways, without precedent—one that in scale and structure forecast the great western landscapes of the 1860s.

The skill with which Bierstadt recast what he had learned abroad when confronted with a new landscape became apparent in 1863 when he placed *The Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak* (1863, MMA) the most important picture to result from his first trip west, on view at the Tenth Street Studio Building.

The first of his panoramic western landscapes, *The Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak* equaled in scale and echoed in composition the earlier *Lake Lucerne*.

As he had done in his Swiss landscape, Bierstadt filled the foreground with domestic activity (Indians replaced gypsies), included a body of water in the middle distance (purportedly the Colorado River), and crowned the composition with a range of snowcapped peaks. The transformation was so complete that a critic writing for *Harper's Weekly* described the picture as “purely an American scene.”<sup>30</sup>

Perhaps the most successful recasting of *Lake Lucerne* came two years later, following Bierstadt's second trip west. In 1863, after a rigorous overland journey to the Pacific coast, the artist spent several weeks sketching in Yosemite Valley. Once back in his New York studio he began to compose (again from field sketches) *Looking Down Yosemite Valley, California* (fig. 3). The painting would later occupy “the place of honor” in the inaugural exhibition celebrating the opening of the new National Academy of Design building in April 1865.<sup>31</sup>

Structurally *Lake Lucerne* and *Looking Down*

*Yosemite Valley, California* are closely related. In place of Ematten, Oberbauen, and Uri-Rotstock are the distinctive granite cliffs of Yosemite: Cathedral Rocks on the left and El Capitan on the right. In the middle distance the Merced River has replaced Lake Lucerne. In both pictures the foreground is similarly elevated at the left and cast in deep shadow at the right. In each painting Bierstadt manipulated light and shade charting the viewer's path from foreground to distant mountain peaks. The Yosemite painting, however, contains no reference to human activity. No road offers access to the scene, no Indians camp in place of gypsies, and no farmers cultivate the land. Instead, a shimmering golden light serves as the natural protagonist. In a remarkable display of creative adaptability, Bierstadt drew upon his European training and experience and transformed the grand but pastoral landscape of *Lake Lucerne* into the wilderness sanctuary of *Looking Down Yosemite Valley, California*.

Testimony to the success of the transformation came when a reviewer for *The Golden Era* wrote: "Why should our artists make their pilgrimages to the Alps for mountains, to Italy for skies, or to Chamouni Valley, when we have the mountains and skies of California, and the Valley of the Yosemite."<sup>32</sup>

During a career that continued into the next century, Bierstadt produced a series of landscapes, repeatedly described as distinctly American, whose roots were unquestionably European and whose compositions often echoed the first of his heroic landscapes, *Lake Lucerne*.

NANCY ANDERSON

## Notes

1. On 14 December 1858 the *New Bedford Daily Mercury* reported "Mr. Bierstadt has disposed of his oil painting of 'Lake Lucerne' to a gentleman in Boston [Alvin Adams], for the sum of \$925." Orphaned as a young boy, Adams later rose to prominence and acquired a substantial fortune as founder and president of the Adams Express Company. In 1860 he built Fairhaven, a lavish home in Watertown, Massachusetts, where he displayed his art collection in a gallery open to the public one day a week.

2. Alvin Adams died in 1877, but his art collection was not sold until 1882. On 18 March 1882 *The Boston Globe* reported that *Lake Lucerne* had been purchased at the Adams sale by Mr. H[ezeekiah] Conant of Pawtucket, Rhode Island, for \$3375. Conant, an inventor and manufacturer, had established the Conant Thread Company in Pawtucket in 1868. For many years the largest employer in the state, he succeeded in forging profitable alliances with European thread manufacturers including J. & P. Coats Company, Ltd., of Paisley, Scot-

land, which began operating the Conant Thread Company as one of its branches in 1893.

3. On 11 June 1990 *The New York Times* reported that John D. Lynch, executor of the Rose estate, said he was told by Mrs. Rose that William L. Sunderland, her first husband, had acquired the painting in the 1890s.

4. *Lake Lucerne* was purchased at auction by Richard York of Richard York Gallery, New York, acting on behalf of the National Gallery of Art with funds provided by Richard M. Scaife and Margaret R. Battle.

5. The catalogue for Bierstadt's New Bedford art exhibition is reproduced in Anderson and Ferber 1990, appendix A, 304-305.

6. Perkins and Gavin 1980, 20.

7. *Lake Lucerne* was described as the largest painting in the National Academy exhibition by the *New York Evening Post*, 1 May 1858.

8. Bierstadt's journey through Switzerland is summarized in Anderson and Ferber 1990, 119-120.

9. Sanford Robinson Gifford Letters, vol. 2, 10 August 1856, AAA.

10. See Plowden 1947, 46-49.

11. See Anderson and Ferber 1990, 120-122.

12. On 7 October 1857 the *New Bedford Daily Mercury* reported that four paintings by Bierstadt were on view at John Hopkins' music store: "... a morning in Switzerland ... a scene on the Roman campagna ... the 'Upper Glazier of Rosenloni [sic], on the Wetterhorm [sic]' ... 'Spearing Fish by torchlight, Lake Lucerne.'"

13. "A Grand Picture," *Home Journal*, 3 April 1858, 7.

14. Whittredge 1942, 27.

15. "A Grand Picture," *Home Journal*, 3 April 1858, 7. Although Bierstadt was reported to have completed many preliminary sketches for *Lake Lucerne*, few have come to light. A small (6 x 8 inch) oil on board study signed "A.B." and inscribed "Urirothstock" (one of the alpine peaks identified by *The Home Journal* as present Bierstadt's painting) was with William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport, in 1993.

16. "A Grand Picture," *Home Journal*, 3 April 1858, 7.

17. "A Grand Picture," *Home Journal*, 3 April 1858, 7.

18. *Boston Evening Transcript*, 13 April 1858.

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20. "Sketchings," *The Crayon* 5, May 1858, 147.

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26. Tuckerman, *Book*, 1867, 388.

27. *Boston Morning Journal*, 18 March 1882.

28. In the photograph of the art gallery at Fairhaven, Bierstadt's California landscape hangs on the end wall; *Lake Lucerne* is partially visible on the wall at the right.

29. Calame was, in fact, the European artist with whom Bierstadt was most often compared. Théophile Gautier may have been the best known European critic to make the comparison: "This picture [*Storm in the Rocky Mountains, Mt. Rosalie*], which initiates us into a new nature, besides the merit of representing scenery whose character is unknown to us, possesses that of being paint-

ed with great skill, and in a manner which recalls the handling of Calame. . . . Bierstadt may be proud of the resemblance." Gautier as quoted in Anderson and Ferber 1990, 205.

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# Ralph Albert Blakelock

1847–1919

RALPH BLAKELOCK'S difficult life began in New York City, where his father was a homeopathic physician. His parents wished him to follow a career in medicine, but after three semesters at the Free Academy of the City of New York (later the City College of New York), Blakelock ended his formal education in 1866 and began to study art, particularly landscape painting. During the late 1860s he made several sketching trips in upstate New York and New Hampshire. His debut at the National Academy of Design occurred in 1868, when he exhibited a view of the White Mountains.

The following year he began the first of two extended visits (financed by his father) to the western territories of the United States. He crossed areas of Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, and Nevada, spent time in California, and ventured south into Mexico, probably returning by ship in 1871 via the Isthmus of Panama. A second western trip took place in 1872. Blakelock drew constantly during his time in the West, and it was there that he became interested in one of his most enduring subjects, Native Americans.

Back in New York, Blakelock continued to exhibit sporadically at the National Academy as well as at the Society of American Artists and the Brooklyn Art Association. His work, however, found little critical favor, and after his marriage to Cora R. Bailey in 1877, he began to experience difficulty providing for his growing family, which eventually included nine children. Blakelock's initial landscapes had been careful, unassuming views that owed a great deal to the previous generation of Hudson River School painters. Around 1880, however, his style evolved along more personal lines, with his paintings becoming more intimate, less naturalistic, and darker in tonality. Gradually he developed an idiosyncratic manner characterized by thick, uneven brushwork, attention to surface pattern, and a somber, melancholic mood. A frequent motif was the lacy silhouette of dark tree branches against a moonlit sky.

Such works, when they sold at all, did not bring much money. Unable to pay rent regularly, Blakelock was repeatedly forced to move his large fam-

ily from home to home in northern New Jersey, Brooklyn, and Harlem. Although friends tried to help by buying and selling his works, the artist, who was known for his impractical nature, had trouble managing his finances. A disappointing encounter with a patron led to a mental breakdown in 1891 and a short hospitalization. Over the next few years, Blakelock's behavior became increasingly eccentric, and after another difficult interaction with a collector in 1899, he again broke down. Diagnosed with "dementia praecox," or paranoid schizophrenia, he spent much of his remaining life in the Middletown State Hospital for the Insane in New York State.

Although Blakelock lived another two decades, the course of his growing reputation was beyond his control, as were the profits realized from the booming market for his work. Almost as soon as he was institutionalized, his paintings began to mount in value. Speculators quickly bought up the available stock, and the first group of what was to be an unusually large number of Blakelock forgeries appeared. Twice, in 1913 and 1916, his pictures sold for record American prices. News of these sales prompted a great deal of popular interest and belated professional recognition. His election as an associate, and then full member of the National Academy, for example, closely followed these two record-breaking sales. While his family languished in poverty, Blakelock became perhaps the best-known artist in the United States and the subject of several important one-man exhibitions.

In 1916 a woman who went by the alias of Mrs. Van Rensselaer Adams and who is now known to have been acting in her own financial interests, established a benevolent fund for the artist and obtained legal guardianship of him. Denying him access to his family, she temporarily removed him from the mental institution on several occasions, apparently hoping he would produce valuable paintings. Aged and infirm, Blakelock died in her custody near Elizabethtown, New York.

J.D.

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1954.4.2 (1341)

### *The Artist's Garden*

c. 1879/1889  
Oil on canvas, 40.6 × 61 (16 × 24)  
Chester Dale Collection

#### Inscriptions

At lower right: R.A. Blakelock [incomplete, within broken arrowhead shape]

**Technical Notes:** The original medium-weight, plain-weave fabric support has been lined. The application of paint is varied and complex. A thin, light ground was applied overall, with a dark green wash laid over the ground in the lower half of the composition. Areas of impasto, usually corresponding to tufts of foliage, were built up into considerable relief. A resinlike layer blankets this lower half—thinner and translucent over the areas of green wash and thicker in the troughs between impasto. The islands of impasto rise up through this layer, often to the surface. Wrinkling and traction crackle are visible in the brown paint below the resinous layer. The sky is composed of variegated layers of pale and deeper blue paint, with additional resinlike coats and a blue glaze. Crackle has also developed throughout the thickly painted sky, which has been painted over the darker foreground area. Considerable and discolored overpainting and inpainting is apparent: throughout the sky; at the tree line; and along the bottom and lateral edges. Damage in the center of the sky was repaired prior to acquisition, resulting in a dull clouding of darker paint. The varnish is moderately discolored.

**Provenance:** Lewis Bloomington Slocum [a.k.a. Lew Bloom]; his niece, The Oranges, New Jersey.<sup>1</sup> (sale, American Art Association–Anderson Galleries, New York, 29 October 1931, no. 62, as *The Artist's Garden: East Orange, N.J.*); Abner S. Werblin, Larchmont, New York;<sup>2</sup> (sale, American Art Association–Anderson Galleries, New York, 6 May 1937, no. 31, as *The Artist's Garden: East Orange, N.J.*); Chester Dale [1883–1962], New York.

**Exhibited:** *Paintings from the Chester Dale Collection*, PMA, 1943–1951.

*The Artist's Garden* is a singular, unusual work within Blakelock's sometimes unvarying and often confusing oeuvre. Stylistically and thematically outside the mainstream of his landscape production, it can

nevertheless be considered biographically “closer” to the artist than the majority of his early mature works. Transitional in technique, it also refers to a certain shift in the lives of Blakelock and his family and, simultaneously, documents a defining moment in the social history of their surrounding community, East Orange, New Jersey.

Blakelock was apparently introduced to the town of East Orange through his aunt Emily Johnson, whose husband is thought to have been her nephew's early teacher.<sup>3</sup> The Johnson home was toward the south end of the small town, on a road then named Pulaski Street. Blakelock is known to have begun paying summer visits to his aunt and uncle by the late 1870s. In 1942 a former neighbor on Pulaski Street remembered that the young artist was given a studio in the backyard of the Johnson property, although “he rarely painted there.”<sup>4</sup> This information would seem to suggest an identification of the National Gallery's painting with the Johnson yard, however it is more likely that the scene depicts another neighborhood in the town.

According to the East Orange directory, by 1879 Blakelock had moved with his wife Cora to a rented house further to the north, on Evergreen Place. Their first child was born in 1880, and for most of the next eight or nine years, they remained on Evergreen Place, moving away briefly in the mid-1880s and returning at an unknown date to a second rented home next door to the first. Some idea of Blakelock's life on Evergreen Place can be pieced together from family correspondence and interviews with former neighbors.

It appears that from the beginning of his life in New Jersey, the artist struggled with the difficult task of supporting his wife and numerous offspring. The family of Albert Schoch, a friend who lived across the street, was frequently called upon to provide the Blakelock children with food and milk. The younger Blakelocks were described by Schoch's daughter Marion as “dirty” and “ragged.” They suffered from what the Schochs perceived as an overly lax household management.<sup>5</sup> Blakelock's wife remembered: “Three times we were dispossessed [*sic*] because we were unable to pay our rent and often we [did not know] where our next meal was coming from.” Of this period, his eldest daughter later wrote, “We were always moving about (never bettering ourselves), always going down, always having to contrive to get along with a little less each time, and my father living on hope that was always being deferred.”<sup>6</sup> In fact, after the

relatively lengthy calm of Evergreen Place, the Blakelock family lived at no fewer than three different addresses in East and West Orange during the period of 1889 to 1891.<sup>7</sup>

It seems fairly certain that the National Gallery's painting depicts a scene on Evergreen Place, the site of Blakelock's most protracted residence in New Jersey. Less secure is its identification as a view of his own garden, as the title implies. When shown a photograph of the painting in 1947, Marion Schoch recognized it as her next-door neighbor's yard, *not* the artist's. Blakelock, who always lived across the street, had no garden, she said. This information was corroborated by Ruth Blakelock Austin, one of the artist's daughters, who remembered no family garden and "couldn't imagine" that her distracted father would keep one.<sup>8</sup> Another sister, Mary Blakelock Vedder, spoke in contrast of a thriving vegetable garden which was tended by the Blakelock daughters.<sup>9</sup>

Whatever the truth as to Blakelock's own garden, he chose as his subject a carefully tended suburban plot, fenced and squared off, with nearby houses and outbuildings visible through the engulfing foliage. Depictions of this type of "middle" landscape—neither urban nor fully rural, subdivided to gratify feelings of privacy and ownership, yet spatially contiguous and communal—are rare in American painting. Blakelock's view of backyards, rooftops, and humble vegetables is a far cry from the sublime mountain peaks of the Hudson River School or even the bucolic, "settled" landscapes of George Inness, his neighbor in Montclair, New Jersey. In its concern with the quotidian specifics of his immediate surroundings, it occupies an unusual, but not solitary, place within Blakelock's oeuvre.

While addressing the subject of her husband's mental instability, Cora Blakelock offered one explanation for this focus on the East Orange topography:

While living in Orange he conceived the idea that some one was trying to arrest him; he was afraid to venture out of the house but thought it his duty to provide for his family and would go away and return in the most roundabout ways so as to elude those who he thought were trying to catch him. He constantly imagined some one was trying to separate him from us and one time on returning home after dark and finding no light in the window, did not even try to enter the house because he thought some one had taken us all away.<sup>10</sup>

Her account leaves the impression of a man prone to wandering the alleys and side streets of his neigh-

borhood at all hours, when he might easily happen upon such nondescript scenes as the deserted vista depicted here.

Blakelock, in fact, witnessed a great transition in the city of East Orange during the decade he resided on Evergreen Place. The year 1880 began a period of intense real estate development, particularly in the neighborhood surrounding the artist's rented home. In the years prior to his move to East Orange, a 100-acre farm had been subdivided into small streets and individual building lots. One of these new lanes was Evergreen Place, and when Blakelock and his wife arrived around 1879, their house and that of the Schochs were the only two structures on the street.<sup>11</sup> The following year, Matthias Halstead, the original landowner, constructed a train depot at the end of Evergreen Place that provided a direct commuter link to New York City via the Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western Railroad. This would have been the means by which Blakelock made his frequent trips to Manhattan.

The commuter train sparked a campaign of development that transformed East Orange and other outlying towns from isolated summer communities to thriving, year-round "borderland" suburbs.<sup>12</sup> As middle-income families were priced out of older urban areas throughout the eastern seaboard, speculators began selling them new homes built on narrow, rectilinear lots, cut from a grid imposed on the formerly rural landscape. Promotional materials stressed "open-air" living and a healthful, wholesome environment for children. Commuting husbands and village-bound wives discovered new connections to their agrarian roots by caring for yards and tending kitchen gardens. Proprietary feelings were reinforced by the construction of boundary fences and hedges.

Ralph Blakelock, known for his vague, dreamy, woodland compositions that are usually untraceable to particular sites, would seem a strange choice to document this shift in American living patterns. Yet a concern with marginal "in-between" landscapes is not unprecedented in his oeuvre. More than a decade earlier, he had executed his so-called shanty series, which took as its subject the jerry-built cottages of the then-undeveloped areas of upper Manhattan.<sup>13</sup> In fact, Norman Geske has observed that throughout his career, Blakelock evinced an interest in the placement of small domestic structures within wooded landscapes, "always with a specific interest in the interrelation of



Ralph Albert Blakelock, *The Artist's Garden*, 1954.4.2

roofs and walls, chimneys, openings and fences.”<sup>14</sup>

Despite such similarities of subject, *The Artist's Garden* exhibits a more restricted palette, an increased reliance on thick glazes, and a pronounced concern with shape and pattern, characteristics identified by Warren Adelson as constituting a “transitional phase” in the artist’s style.<sup>15</sup> In contrast to the earlier images, Blakelock also elected not to include any visible human figures in this clearly inhabited landscape, leaving an eerie impression of charged emptiness and sudden abandonment. The scene thus becomes less immediate than the shanty works, with a greater psychological distance between the viewer and the partially obscured elements of the houses beyond. Nevertheless, the plunging perspective remains disconcertingly precipitous, thanks to the outwardly radiating garden rows and the sense of motion imparted by the wave in the fence at left.

This bottom third of the canvas, which, as is typical of Blakelock’s works, has darkened over time, seems to resist penetration of light and vision. Forms are not easily made out, and light is absorbed by the resinous layers without ever appearing to reach deep into the paint. Although almost universally brown and silvery in tone, the tufts of foliage, like tiny blanketed knobs, push outward in a convex bulging from the surface, leaving a curious sense of lush, ongoing growth. Possibly the most striking element of the painting in its present state is the contradiction between this darkly shrouded, twilight scene below and the blazing daylight of the sky above.<sup>16</sup> It is a strangely surrealistic effect that injects a hint of modern disjunction and anxiety entirely in keeping with Blakelock’s exploration of the nascent compartmentalization of the American suburban landscape.

JD

#### Notes

1. Letters from Susielies M. Blakelock, 15 September and 6 December 1991 (in NGA curatorial files), provide this provenance information. Lew Bloom (Lewis Bloomington Slocum), a popular vaudeville actor, has long been identified as one of several friends who bought paintings from the artist in times of particular financial need. Blakelock reputedly provided Bloom with occasional piano accompaniment for his act. (Goodrich 1947, 26, was the first to note Bloom’s relationship with Blakelock.) Lewis Bloomington Slocum was identified in 1931 as the first known owner of the National Gallery’s painting in the American Art Association–Anderson auction catalogue. Susielies Blakelock, the wife of the artist’s grandson, cites extensive interviews with the artist’s children as the source for the information that the

two names actually refer to the same owner. She also provides the undocumented information that the painting was executed around 1882, that Bloom/Slocum purchased it for \$100 in 1887 or 1888, and that his niece (who used the name Slocum) inherited several of her uncle’s paintings by Blakelock and later kept in touch with the artist’s family. Early twentieth-century newspaper clippings that relate to Bloom (Billy Rose Theatre Collection, New York Public Library) make no mention, however, of a Slocum alias and refer to several of the actor’s family members as having the surname Bloom.

2. Mary Vandergrift, Parke-Bernet Galleries, in a letter of 14 November 1964 (in NGA curatorial files), indicates that the consignor of the painting was Albert Goldberg, New York. It is unclear whether he was the owner or an agent for the owner.

3. Gerds 1964, 123–124, identifies landscape painter James Johnson as Blakelock’s possible teacher.

4. Letter from H.C. Greening to E.A. Jewell, 13 January 1942, copy in Lloyd Goodrich Blakelock files, WMAA Papers (AAA microfilm, N630).

5. Marion Schoch, 11 April 1947, interviewed by Lloyd Goodrich and paraphrased in note form, Lloyd Goodrich Blakelock files, WMAA Papers (AAA microfilm N630). Albert Schoch’s friendship with the artist is mentioned in Goodrich 1947, 20, and *Blakelock* 1973, 1, which includes a list of Blakelock works originally acquired by Schoch from the artist.

6. Letters from Cora Blakelock and Marian Blakelock, 10 January 1906 and 29 February 1908, Vose Galleries Archives, Boston.

7. By this time, the artist’s father and brother had also moved to East Orange, but there is no evidence that he sought refuge for his large family in their homes.

8. Marion Schoch, 11 April 1947, and Ruth Blakelock Austin, 22 January 1947, interviewed by Lloyd Goodrich and paraphrased in note form, Lloyd Goodrich Blakelock files, WMAA Papers (AAA microfilm N632 and N630).

9. Letter from Susielies M. Blakelock, 15 September 1991 (in NGA curatorial files).

10. Letter from Cora Blakelock, 10 January 1906, Vose Galleries Archives, Boston.

11. Marion Schoch, 11 April 1947, interviewed by Lloyd Goodrich and paraphrased in note form, Lloyd Goodrich Blakelock files, WMAA Papers (AAA microfilm, AAA N630). Two smaller, vertical landscapes, both entitled *Street in East Orange, N. J.* (one formerly belonging to Albert Schoch), show scenes that are more “natural” and less settled than *The Artist's Garden* (see *Blakelock* 1973, figs. 7 and 8). An account of the changes occurring in East Orange at this time is given in Pierson 1922, vol. 2.

12. This phenomenon receives extensive treatment, with particular reference to East Orange, in Stilgoe 1988.

13. See, for example, his *Shanties in Harlem* (private collection) and *Fifth Avenue at 89th St.* (Museum of the City of New York), both illustrated in Geske 1975, 65, 66.

14. Geske 1975, 10.

15. Warren Adelson, “A Chronology of His Works,” in *Blakelock* 1973, 10.

16. Williams 1981, 183, refers to the painting’s “impossible light effects.” This extreme contrast is likely a re-

sult of age and conservation treatment, rather than a part of the artist's original conception. NGA conservation records indicate that during treatment in 1964, discolored varnish was removed from the sky, but not from the foreground, thus increasing the contrast in values between top and bottom. (See Jane E. Tillinghast's excellent technical examination summary, dated 17 October 1990, in NGA curatorial files.) An old photograph of *The Artist's Garden*, FARL, confirms that much detail and depth in the foreground have been lost over the years.

## Emil Carlsen

1853 – 1932

EMIL CARLSEN, who was born in Copenhagen on 19 October 1853, studied architecture at the Danish Royal Academy during the late 1860s.<sup>1</sup> He immigrated to America in 1872, settled in Chicago, and found employment as an assistant to a local architect. For a time he also worked for a fellow Dane, painter Lauritis Bernhard Holst (1848–1934). When Holst went back to Denmark in 1874, he turned his studio over to Carlsen, who by then had decided to become a full-time painter. Upon the recommendation of Chicago sculptor Leonard Wells Volk (1828–1895), Carlsen was appointed the first instructor at the newly formed school of the Art Institute.

In 1875 Carlsen returned briefly to Denmark and then traveled to Paris, where he stayed for six months. While there, he carefully studied the works of the eighteenth-century painter Jean-Baptiste Siméon Chardin (1699–1779). Upon his return to the United States, the artist set up his own studio in New York, but he had to supplement his meager income from painting by working as an engraver and designer. In 1879 financial difficulties forced him to auction off thirty of his works, but the proceeds did not even cover the sale's expenses.

In the early 1880s Carlsen began to develop a reputation as a still-life painter. Commissioned by a dealer to paint saleable flower pieces, he returned to Paris in 1884, where for two years he painted numerous brightly colored pictures. Eventually he grew tired of this repetitious work and broke his contract with the dealer. Carlsen went back to

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- 1965 Dale: 37, repro.
- 1975 Walker: 559, no. 849, color repro.
- 1980 Wilmerding: 102, no. 32, color repro. 103.
- 1981 Williams: 183, repro. 184.
- 1988 Wilmerding: 116, no. 35, color repro. 117.

New York and opened a studio on West 57th Street, where he worked until 1887. A two-year tenure as director of the San Francisco Art Association's school ended with his resignation in 1889, but he remained in San Francisco for two more years.

Carlsen again settled in New York City in 1891 and began teaching at the National Academy of Design, where he would continue as an instructor until 1918. He was married in 1896 and numbered among his New York friends William Merritt Chase, J. Alden Weir (1852–1919), and Childe Hassam. During the first three decades of the twentieth century his works were included in numerous exhibitions and he was awarded many prizes. In 1911 he began an association with New York dealer William Macbeth, and his work was the focus of one-man exhibitions at Macbeth's gallery in 1912, 1919, 1921 and 1923. Carlsen died in New York on 2 January 1932.

FK

## Notes

1. One source (*Weilsbachs* 1947, 1:188) states that Carlsen was born in 1848 and studied at the academy between 1866 and 1869, but this does not agree with all other sources, which give his birth date as 1853 and the dates of study as 1868–1872.

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1963.10.93 (1757)

## *Still Life with Fish*

1882

Oil on canvas, 75.2 × 101 (29<sup>5/8</sup> × 39<sup>3/4</sup>)  
Chester Dale Collection

### Inscriptions

At lower left: Emil. Carlsen. 1882–

**Technical Notes:** The support is a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric. The painting has been lined and the original tacking margins removed, but cusping exists only along the top edge. Paint was applied in many layers over a moderately thick white ground. The paints range from opaque to translucent and were applied in varying thicknesses, giving the surface a rich texture with areas of considerable impasto. Brushstrokes are evident in many passages and certain relatively broad and flat areas of paint (especially in the large fish) indicate the use of a palette knife. X-radiography reveals two compositional changes: a third fish was once present in the lower right corner and an additional oyster was at the upper left. The painting is generally in very good condition, with only minor losses. In 1954 the painting was relined, discolored varnish was removed, and the painting was restored. The varnish has become slightly hazy.

**Provenance:** Purchased circa 1895 from the artist by Charles A. Walker [d. 1920], Boston; his son, M. Leon Walker, Lexington, Massachusetts, from 1920;<sup>1</sup> (sale, Parke-Bernet Galleries, New York, 24 May 1940, no. 120); Chester Dale [1883–1962], New York.<sup>2</sup>

**Exhibited:** *Second Exhibition of Contemporary American Oil Painting*, CGA, 1908–1909, no. 109, as *Still Life and Symphony of Copper and Brass. Seventy-Ninth Exhibition*, Boston Art Club, 1909, no. 42, as *Still Life and Symphony in Copper and Brass. Paintings from the Chester Dale Collection*, PMA, 1943–1944 (shown only one year).

ALTHOUGH Emil Carlsen painted numerous landscape and marine paintings, his specialty was still life, particularly flower pictures, dead game pieces, and kitchen scenes.<sup>3</sup> *Still Life with Fish*, painted in 1882 just as the artist began to develop a reputation as a still-life painter, is an early and robust example of a kitchen scene. Carlsen believed that through the study of such inanimate objects, the painter could master all the technical difficulties of painting and also find subjects for meaningful art. As he observed, “After all, a two penny bunch of violets in an earthen jug may make a great work of art, if seen through a temperament.”<sup>4</sup> To his contemporaries, it was Carlsen’s ability to see beyond mere surface reality that elevated him to a master. As one ex-

plained: “Objects have a more mystical meaning to Carlsen; they delight his outward eye as they do any painter, but Carlsen has an inward eye, a faculty for discerning all that anyone ever saw, but more—a rhythm and music and poetry, a serenity and sublimity which makes his still-life groupings classic.”<sup>5</sup>

Carlsen’s early still lifes, distinguished by their vigorous brushwork, might seem to suggest the influence of his famous contemporary, William Merritt Chase, who painted numerous similar works of fish and kitchen objects. Chase’s fish pictures date from late in his career, however, and Carlsen was, in fact, more attracted to the French still-life tradition established by the eighteenth-century master Jean-Baptiste Siméon Chardin.<sup>6</sup> Carlsen studied the French artist’s work thoroughly during his visits to Paris and once wrote, “Chardin tells the whole story.”<sup>7</sup> A general revival of interest in Chardin occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century and was manifested first in France, particularly in the works of François Bonvin (1817–1887), Philippe Rousseau (1816–1887), Antoine Vollon (1833–1900), and Théodule Ribot (1823–1891).<sup>8</sup> By the late 1870s the Chardin revival had gained momentum in America and its influence can be seen not only in Carlsen’s work but also in that of his contemporaries John F. Peto (1854–1907) and Henry Golden Dearth (1864–1918).<sup>9</sup> In *Still Life with Fish* Carlsen’s debt to the French artist is evident in the general subject, which recalls so many of Chardin’s paintings of kitchen objects and food, the carefully balanced arrangement of forms, the vague space, and the subtle modulations of tone. The thick impasto and monochromatic range of colors are closer, however, to the style of Vollon, whose works Carlsen almost certainly saw in France.<sup>10</sup>

In 1908 this painting was exhibited in Washington with the title *Still Life and Symphony of Copper and Brass*.<sup>11</sup> If this title reflects the intentions of Carlsen himself, it would suggest that he, like other artists of his era, such as James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903) and Thomas W. Dewing, was interested in evoking parallels between painting and music. Furthermore, the division implied by the title—into “still life” on the one hand (the dead fish) and “symphony” on the other (the brass and copper pots with their flickering, lively highlights)—could serve to underscore the traditional *memento mori* theme inherent in still life by emphasizing the transience of life in comparison to the more enduring qualities of inanimate objects. If Carlsen did indeed



Emil Carlsen, *Still Life with Fish*, 1963.10.93

find a “more mystical meaning” in the objects he depicted, such a reading would be quite plausible.

FK

### Notes

1. Letter of 6 June 1940 from Leon Walker to Mary Bullard, Chester Dale’s secretary (in NGA curatorial files), states that the picture was purchased by his father around 1895 and that he received it following his father’s death in 1920.

2. Letter of 28 May 1940 from Mary Bullard to Leon Walker (in NGA curatorial files).

3. Gerdtz, *Humble Truth*, 1981, 229, suggests this way of subdividing the oeuvre, but he notes that it may be an oversimplification because Carlsen’s art has received relatively little scholarly attention.

4. Carlsen 1908, 6–8, as quoted in Gerdtz, *Humble Truth*, 1981, 31.

5. Bye 1921, 213, 215. Bye considered Carlsen “unquestionably the most accomplished master of still-life painting in America today,” and dedicated his book to the artist. His evaluation of Carlsen’s art not only reflects his own beliefs about the possibilities for still life to convey profound meaning, but also suggests that he was at-

tempting to link the artist with the imaginative tradition of late nineteenth-century American painting.

6. As Gerdtz (*Humble Truth*, 1981, 213) has noted, these are generally from the 1890s and the early years of the twentieth century.

7. Letter of 3 July 1930 from Carlsen to Helen Keep, reprinted in *Carlsen* 1975, 30. Carlsen was referring specifically to Chardin’s masterful handling of white in his paintings.

8. See McCoubrey 1965, 39–53, and Weisberg 1979, 34–47.

9. Wilmerding 1983, 82–86. For Gerdtz (*Humble Truth*, 1981, 230) Carlsen’s kitchen still lifes represent, “the greatest testament of the Chardin revival in America.”

10. For a discussion of Chardin’s kitchen still lifes and a selection of representative examples, see Rosenberg 1979, 157–186. On Vollon, see Weisberg 1979, 58, no. 28 (*Still Life with Fish*), and Weisberg 1978, 222–229.

11. The painting was shown in Boston the following year with the same general title, but “in” rather than “of” was used.

### References

1965 Dale: repro. 38.

1983 Wilmerding: 80, repro. 79.

## Francis Bicknell Carpenter

1830 – 1900

BORN ON 6 August 1830 in Homer, New York, Francis Bicknell Carpenter received his first training as an artist in 1844, when he studied with Sanford Thayer of Syracuse. In 1851 he moved to New York City, where he was given his first important commission—a full-length portrait of banker David Leavitt. Shortly thereafter Carpenter traveled to Washington, D.C., to paint a portrait of President Millard Fillmore, which marked the beginning of great success for the artist in that city. He completed a portrait of President Franklin Pierce shortly after his 1853 inauguration and later produced portraits of several senators.

Carpenter’s most famous effort, *The First Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation*, 1864, was exhibited in several American cities before being hung, in 1878, in the wing of the Capitol occupied by the House of Representatives.<sup>1</sup> Carpenter had created this large historical piece in the White House, under the watchful eye of President Abraham Lincoln, and in 1866 published his reminis-

cences in a book entitled *Six Months in the White House*. The account of life with the president was sufficiently popular to be reprinted sixteen times in seventeen years. The artist also painted several other images of Lincoln (some posthumous) alone and with his family and colleagues during the 1860s.<sup>2</sup>

Elected an associate member of the National Academy of Design in 1853, Carpenter continued to exhibit there until 1896. A reviewer of the Academy’s exhibition in 1856 astutely summarized the appeal of Carpenter’s style to mid-nineteenth-century sensibilities: “The painter of these pictures is, perhaps, the most variously self-adaptable, the most symmetrically constituted, safe, and sure of any of our portrait painters. With neither the exceeding prominence of one or two merits, nor of one or two defects, which mark all our masters, he is proportionate and satisfying. If he can be characterized by anything, it is the most unexampled number of his variations of color and

style to suit the complexion and character of his sitters."<sup>3</sup>

DC

#### Notes

1. The painting now hangs in the west stairwell of the Senate wing.

2. For a detailed account of these paintings, see Holzer, Boritt, and Neely 1984.

3. *Home Journal* (n.d.), as cited in "Frank Bicknell Carpenter: Phrenological Character and Biography," *American Phrenological Journal* 28, September 1858, 1-4.

#### Bibliography

"Frank Bicknell Carpenter: Phrenological Character and Biography." *American Phrenological Journal* 28 (September 1858): 1-4.

*DAB* 3:510.

"Carpenter" 1949: 5, 7.

Holzer, Boritt, and Neely 1984: 66-89.

1961.10.1 (1652)

### *Lucy Tappan Bowen* (Mrs. Henry C. Bowen)

1859

Oil on canvas, 142.7 × 111.4 (56<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 43<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>)

Gift of Lady Vereker

#### Inscriptions

At center left: F.B. Carpenter/1859

**Technical Notes:** The support consists of a fine, tightly woven twill fabric that has been lined. The four-member oval stretcher with four vertical mortise-and-tenon joins appears to be original. There is a white ground of medium thickness. Paint was applied in a straightforward manner; highlights were done with impasto and slight glazing used for shadows. Brushwork is visible in the modeling of some of the draperies, but other areas, such as the sitter's bare shoulders and the bodice of her dress, were painted in an extremely thin manner. Although no major losses are present, damage to the paint layer has occurred along much of the edge and under the rabbet, and excessive wear is apparent in the area of the sitter's upper torso. The varnish has discolored considerably, and there are extensive residues of heavily discolored varnish.

**Provenance:** The sitter's husband, Henry C. Bowen [1813-1896], New York, and Woodstock, Connecticut; his son, Clarence Winthrop Bowen [1852-1935], New York, and Woodstock, Connecticut; his daughter, Roxana Wentworth Bowen, Lady Gordon Vereker [1895-1968], Valbonne, France.

**Exhibited:** NAD Annual, 1860, no. 197, as *A Lady*. Brooklyn Art Association Annual, March 1862, no. 113, as *Portrait*.

ALTHOUGH little has been written about Lucy Tappan Bowen (1825-1863), the sitter of this portrait, sufficient details are known about her father and husband to provide some idea of her probable interests and character. Her father Lewis Tappan (1788-1873), once a New York silk merchant, established the first credit-rating agency in the country. By 1849 he had retired from business to devote himself to social concerns. Tappan was one of the founders of the New York Anti-Slavery Society and of the American Missionary Association.<sup>1</sup> Lucy Tappan's husband Henry Chandler Bowen (1813-1896) was, like her father, dedicated to the abolitionist cause. He became the publisher of the *Independent*, a Congregationalist journal with abolitionist principles. In 1850 the firm of Bowen and McNamee was attacked by the *Journal of Commerce* for its refusal to join a group of merchants who endorsed the fugitive slave law. The card they printed in response stated that, as silk merchants in New York, they wished "it distinctly understood that our goods, and not our principles, are on the market."<sup>2</sup> One might speculate that their involvement in the abolitionist cause provided Bowen and his wife the opportunity to know Francis Carpenter, who appears to have shared the same sympathies.

Lucy Maria Tappan, who was born in Boston on 17 February 1825, was the granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Tappan of Northampton, Massachusetts, whose portraits by Gilbert Stuart are also in the collection of the National Gallery.<sup>3</sup> Her mother, Susanna Aspinwall Tappan, gave birth to six children, Lucy being the youngest of five daughters. Lucy married Henry Bowen on 6 June 1844, and they had seven sons and three daughters.<sup>4</sup> She died on 25 March 1863 in Brooklyn at the age of thirty-eight.

Her gown is depicted in all its sumptuousness. While paying strict attention to details and textures was common practice for skilled portraitists such as Francis Bicknell Carpenter, the lavish quality of the costume also may serve to recall Henry Chandler Bowen's profession as an importer of fine fabrics.

DC

#### Notes

1. *DAB* 18:303-304.

2. *DAB* 2:505.



Francis Bicknell Carpenter, *Lucy Tappan Bowen (Mrs. Henry C. Bowen)*, 1961.10.1

3. See *Benjamin Tappan* [1970.34.2] and *Mrs. Benjamin Tappan* [1970.34.3], both painted in 1814 and both the gift of Lady Vereker.

4. Their children were Henry Eliot, Edward Augustus, Mary Louisa, Grace Aspinwall, Clarence Winthrop,

Alice Linden, Herbert Wolcott, John Eliot, Franklin Davis, and Winthrop Earl. This and the other biographical information concerning Lucy Tappan Bowen is from Tappan 1915, 40.

## John William Casilear

1811 – 1893

JOHN WILLIAM CASILEAR was born in New York City on 25 June 1811. Like Asher B. Durand and John F. Kensett, his fellow Hudson River School landscapists, Casilear worked as an engraver before turning to painting. In 1826 Casilear was apprenticed to the engraver Peter Maverick (1780–1831), and at first he primarily executed bank notes. Durand encouraged him to attempt other subjects, and during the 1830s he made engravings after some of the most prominent paintings of the day, including Daniel Huntington's *Sybil* (1839, NYHS). In 1832 he began submitting engravings to the exhibitions held at the National Academy of Design, and he first showed paintings there in 1836. Casilear was elected an associate of the academy in 1833; he was elevated to the status of full academician in 1851.

In 1840 Casilear accompanied Durand, Kensett, and another painter, Thomas P. Rossiter (1818–1871), on a trip to Europe, where they studied and copied paintings by the Old Masters, especially Claude Lorraine (1600–1682), and made sketches from nature. When he returned to New York three years later, Casilear resumed his career as an engraver. By 1854 he was able to open his own studio in New York and to paint landscapes full time.

Casilear's paintings were purchased by some of the leading collectors of the period, including Marshall O. Roberts, Robert L. Stuart, and Robert M. Olyphant. At their best his works are meticulously painted with precise brushstrokes and convey subtle atmospheric effects. As Henry Tuckerman wrote in *Book of the Artists* in 1867: "His pictures . . . are finished with great care, and the subjects are chosen with fastidious taste; . . . there is nothing dashing, daring, or off-hand; all is correct, delicate, and indicative of a sincere feeling

for truth." Nevertheless, Casilear's works only rarely reach the level of the best efforts attained by his distinguished contemporaries, such as Durand and Kensett.

In June of 1857 Casilear again went abroad, where he spent that summer and the next sketching, mainly in Switzerland. Throughout the 1860s and 1870s he continued to travel, regularly revisiting favorite sites in the Northeast and making a trip to the West in 1873. He painted into the early 1890s, by which time his style had shifted to a somewhat looser and more tonal handling influenced by Barbizon art. He died on 17 August 1893. Today Casilear's earlier works, such as those that Tuckerman praised in 1867, are the most admired.

FK

### Bibliography

Tuckerman, *Book*, 1867: 521–522.  
Sears 1947: 109–113.  
Novak and Blaugrund 1980: 53–56.  
Keyes 1985: 15–23.  
*American Paradise* 1987: 141–144.

1978.6.1 (2715)

### *View on Lake George*

1857  
Oil on canvas, 50.5 × 76 (19 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 29 <sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)  
Gift of Frederick Sturges, Jr.

### Inscriptions

At lower center: JWC [in ligature] .57<sup>1</sup>

**Technical Notes:** The support is a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric that has been lined. The original tacking margins have been removed, but cusping is visible along all four edges. The ground is thin and white.

Underdrawing is visible in the trees at the left, and infrared reflectography reveals further underdrawing along the contour of the mountains. Using a fairly elaborate layering system, the paint was applied thinly in the sky and lake and thicker in the mountains and foreground. A pentimento in the lake has been heavily inpainted. There are scattered small losses throughout, and the surface of the lake appears abraded and worn. The widespread traction crackle and wrinkling of the paint film are due to the artist's technique. In 1978 the painting was relined, discolored varnish was thinned, and the painting was restored. The varnish has become yellowed and milky.

**Provenance:** Possibly Jonathan Sturges [1802–1874], New York, and Fairfield, Connecticut;<sup>2</sup> his son, Frederick Sturges [d. 1917], New York, and Fairfield, Connecticut; his son, Frederick Sturges, Jr. [1876–1977], New York, and Fairfield, Connecticut.<sup>3</sup>

**Exhibited:** *The Hudson River School and the Early American Landscape Tradition*, AIC; WMAA, 1945, no. 21, as *Heart of the Catskills. One Hundred Years, 1846–1946*, M. Knoedler & Co., New York, 1946, no. 18, as *Heart of the Catskill Mountains*.<sup>4</sup>

JOHN CASILEAR, like other members of the Hudson River School, often painted views of Lake George, one of the most scenic spots and popular attractions for artists and travelers in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup> He began sketching scenes of the lake by 1855, and during the later 1850s through the 1860s and 1870s he regularly exhibited works entitled *Lake George* in New York, Brooklyn, Boston, Philadelphia, and elsewhere.<sup>6</sup> Most of his paintings of the lake rely on the same basic composition, with large trees framing a scene of the lake running diagonally into the distance, and with mountains beyond.<sup>7</sup> Henry Tuckerman wrote of one of these: "The immediate foreground is a rocky promontory, looking down upon the lake, studded with huge boulders, and a group of white birch trees leaning over the water. The glassy surface of the lake, its smoothness disturbed only by the ripples caused by leaping trout, spreads beyond and across to the opposite hills. A small boat, propelled by one person, leaves a slender wake behind it. A few light clouds hover above the hill-tops and summer's peace seems to pervade the scene."<sup>8</sup> Although this description neatly fits *View on Lake George*, owing to the repetitiveness of Casilear's compositions it could apply equally to many of his other paintings of the lake.<sup>9</sup>

Casilear was essentially a modest talent, and while a competent practitioner of the Hudson Riv-

er School style, he was neither especially inspired nor innovative. Works such as *View on Lake George* reflect the influence of more prominent artists, notably Asher B. Durand.<sup>10</sup> With the death of Thomas Cole in 1848, Durand assumed a leading role in American landscape painting, and his ideas became widely influential. Advocating a more direct and less romantic approach than that practiced by Cole, Durand recommended that artists make sketches and drawings outdoors for use in preparing paintings once back in the studio. In particular, he suggested a careful study of atmospheric effects. The soft haze that partially obscures the distant mountains in *View on Lake George* is similar to that found in many of Durand's paintings and also recalls the works of Sanford Robinson Gifford (1823–1880). Casilear followed Durand's advice about sketching outdoors as well, creating meticulous pencil drawings of the sites he visited.<sup>11</sup> The artist shown sketching in the left foreground of *View on Lake George* may be Casilear himself, one of his fellow artists, or simply a generic figure who represents a standard practice of the Hudson River School.

FK

#### Notes

1. When it was given to the National Gallery in 1978, the donor said this painting was a view in the Catskills by Thomas Cole. The presence of Casilear's initials and general stylistic evidence clearly indicate the current attribution is correct. The National Gallery assigned the title *View on Lake George* to this painting based on its similarity to other known depictions of the lake by Casilear.

2. According to letters of 27 August and 7 December 1981 from Frederick Sturges III (in NGA curatorial files), family tradition held that paintings in the Sturges collection were all originally purchased by Jonathan Sturges. In this instance, however, as with several other paintings (see Durand's *Forest in the Morning Light* and *Pastoral Scene* [1978.6.2 and 1978.6.3] and Kensett's *Beacon Rock, Newport Harbor* and *Beach at Beverly* [1953.1.1 and 1978.6.]) no certain evidence establishes ownership by Jonathan Sturges (see Edmonds' *Bashful Cousin* [1978.6.4] for more on Jonathan Sturges as a collector). No works by Casilear are mentioned in the discussion of the Jonathan Sturges collection in Cummings 1865, 141, or Tuckerman, *Book*, 1867, 627. In 1860 Frederick Sturges lent a work by Casilear, entitled *A Reminiscence of Switzerland*, to the Artists' Fund Society in New York (Yarnall and Gerdt 1986, 1: 604, no. 14703). Although it is conceivable *A Reminiscence* was this painting (which would mean the present title is inaccurate), it seems unlikely. Most of Casilear's early Swiss works (such as *Swiss Scene*, 1859, NAD; Novak and Blaugrund 1980, 54) show identifiably Alpine terrain, with distinctive snow-capped mountains.

3. Frederick Sturges, Jr., died on 14 October 1977,



John William Casilear, *View on Lake George*, 1978.6.1

according to Frederick Sturges III (letter of 27 January 1982 in NGA curatorial files). *View on Lake George* came to the National Gallery as a bequest with four other paintings.

4. In a letter dated 3 September 1946 Mrs. Charles P. Burr, granddaughter of Casilear (AAA microfilm D-177, fr. 815), states, "In April Knoedler had a Centennial [sic] Exhibition in which they showed *A Catskill* scene by my grandfather painted in 1857. This was the same painting (owned by Frederick Sturges of Fairfield Conn) which was shown at the Whitney Museum in the exhibition I had written to you about previously."

5. According to Tuckerman, *Book*, 1867, 521, "One of his most congenial and successful American subjects is Lake George." On the general interest in Lake George, see *Artists of Lake George* 1976.

6. *American Paradise* 1987, 142. Lake George subjects by Casilear began appearing at the National Academy in 1857.

7. For a similar work, see Casilear's *Lake George* (1857, MMA); Gardner and Feld 1965, 1:256.

8. Tuckerman, *Book*, 1867, 521–522.

9. In *American Paradise* 1987, 143, Tuckerman's passage is associated with the *Lake George* of 1860 (Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford). Tuckerman, *Book*, 1867, 522, also commented on the "remarkable evenness in the landscapes of Casilear," by which he apparently meant their tendency to look alike.

10. As one critic observed in 1857: "[Durand's] landscape theory must be fundamentally about identical to Casilear's" ("Fine Arts, The Academy Exhibition," *The Albion*, 6 June 1857, 273).

11. See Keyes 1985 for a discussion of Casilear's drawings and working methods.

## References

- 1981 Williams: 116–117, repro.  
1988 Wilmerding: 11.

## William Merritt Chase

1849–1916

WILLIAM MERRITT CHASE was born in Williamsburg (later Ninevah), Indiana, on 1 November 1849, the oldest of the six children of Sarah Swaim Chase and her husband, David Hester Chase. The family moved to Indianapolis when William was twelve years old. His father hoped that the young man would follow him into the women's shoe business, but Chase, who said "the desire to draw was born in me," resisted his father's commercial ambitions for his own artistic ones. His artistic training began in 1867, when he received instruction from Indianapolis artist Barton S. Hays, and was followed two years later with study at the National Academy of Design in New York with Lemuel P. Wilmarth (1835–1918). In 1871 Chase moved to St. Louis, where he painted still lifes professionally. He attracted the attention of local patrons, who, in the autumn of 1872, offered to send him abroad to further his education. In his response, Chase expressed an essential aspiration of his artistic generation when he said, "My God, I'd rather go to Europe than go to heaven." He chose to study at the Royal Academy in Munich, and his time there formed the most decisive part of his artistic training. The bold and

brilliant painterly style he learned in Munich was permanently influential, as were the Old Master paintings he experienced for the first time in Europe, which he compared to "being converted to a religion." Chase was one of a sizable group of Americans then studying in Munich, including Frank Duveneck and later John Twachtman (1853–1902). After an extended visit to Venice with Duveneck and Twachtman in 1878, Chase returned to New York, where he began teaching at the newly founded Art Students League. He devoted much of his time and energy to teaching—at, in addition to the league, the Brooklyn Art Association, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and the Shinnecock Summer School of Art and the New York School of Art, both of which he founded—and was the most celebrated teacher of his time. As a leader of the insurgent younger painters who challenged the authority of the National Academy of Design, he was a founding member of the Society of American Artists and, in 1880, was elected its president. His large, sumptuously decorated studio in the Tenth Street Studio Building, which he took soon after his return to New York, was the most famous artist's studio in

America and a virtual manifesto of his and his generation's artistic practices and beliefs, and of the dignity of the artistic calling. In 1886 he married Alice Gerson, who frequently served as his subject (in *A Friendly Call* [1943.1.2], for instance), as did their many children. Working with equal brilliance in oil and pastel, Chase painted a wide range of subjects, figures, landscapes and cityscapes, studio interiors, still lifes, and, increasingly later in life, portraits.

Chase died in New York City in 1916.

NC

### Bibliography

Roof 1917.  
Cikovsky 1976: 2–14.  
Pisano 1979.  
Pisano 1983.  
Atkinson and Cikovsky 1987.  
Bryant 1991.  
Gallati 1995.

1943.1.2 (703)

### *A Friendly Call*

1895  
Oil on canvas, 76.5 × 122.5 (30 1/8 × 48 1/4)  
Chester Dale Collection

### Inscriptions

At lower left: Wm. M. Chase / copyright 1895

**Technical Notes:** A translucent off-white ground covers the medium-weight, plain-weave fabric. The tacking margins were removed, but cusping is found along all four edges. The paint is applied in layers of both wet-in-to-wet and wet-over-dry, with some scratching through the layers caused by the use of a stiff-bristled brush. In general, infrared reflectography shows no evidence of underdrawing, although pencil and incised lines are used in the vertical window that is reflected in the mirror at the right. There are some small scattered losses, but the paint is in good condition. The artist used abrasion as a conscious technical device, particularly in the upper part of the painting. Discolored varnish was removed when the painting was lined in 1970.

**Provenance:** Samuel T. Shaw, 1895;<sup>1</sup> (his sale, American Art Association, New York, 21–22 January 1926, no. 193); Chester Dale [1883–1962], New York.

**Exhibited:** Society of American Artists Annual, 1895, no. 270. *Pan-American Exposition*, Buffalo, New York, 1901, no. 522. *Catalogue of the Eighth Annual Exhibition of Oil Paintings, Sculpture, and Ceramics by American Artists*, Ne-

braska Art Association, Lincoln, 1901–1902, no. 17. *Official Catalogue of Exhibitors, Universal Exposition*, St. Louis, Missouri, 1904, no. 131. *William Merritt Chase Retrospective Exhibition*, National Arts Club, New York, 1910, no. 1.<sup>2</sup> *Loan Exhibition of Paintings by William M. Chase*, MMA, 1917, no. 21. *American Genre: The Social Scene in Painting & Prints*, WMAA, 1935, no. 20. *An Exhibition of American Genre Paintings*, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, 1936, no. 21. *An Exhibition of American Paintings from the Chester Dale Collection*, Union League Club, New York, 1937, no. 33. *Life in America: A Special Loan Exhibition of Paintings Held during the Period of the New York World's Fair*, MMA, 1939, no. 284. *Masterpieces of Art: Catalogue of European & American Paintings, 1500–1900*, New York World's Fair, 1940, no. 311. *An Exhibition of Great Paintings in Aid of the Canadian Red Cross and of Small Paintings by Members of the Ontario Society of Artists*, Art Gallery of Toronto, Canada, 1940, no. 115. *American Painting from the Eighteenth Century to the Present Day*, Tate Gallery, London, 1946, no. 41a. *American Impressionist Painting*, NGA; WMAA; Cincinnati Art Museum; North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, 1973, no. 20 (exhibited only at NGA). *William Merritt Chase: Summers at Shinnecock, 1891–1902*, NGA; Terra Museum of American Art, Evanston, 1987, no. 21 (exhibited only at NGA).

TWO DAYS A WEEK each summer, from 1891 to 1902, William Merritt Chase taught a class at the Summer Art School at Shinnecock, on eastern Long Island near the village of Southampton. *A Friendly Call* was painted in the studio of the house designed by Stanford White that Chase and his family occupied during their summers at Shinnecock. It depicts his wife Alice Gerson Chase at the right and an unidentified caller, who is seated against the accurately depicted west wall of the richly decorated studio (fig. 1). The studio was located in the west end of the building and reached by the door and a short flight of stairs on the opposite wall, both of which are reflected in the large mirror at the right (fig. 2). The cane chair at the right was part of the studio furnishings (fig. 3). The work reflected in the mirror behind Mrs. Chase's head is unmistakably a print, probably Gustave Mercier's engraving after Henri Regnault's *Automedon and the Horses of Achilles*.<sup>3</sup>

*A Friendly Call* was first exhibited by that title in 1895 at the annual exhibition of the Society of American Artists, of which Chase was president, and from which it was acquired by its first owner, Samuel T. Shaw. Its critical reception by the press, although in certain cases brief and in others dismissive, was generally favorable. “‘A Friendly Call’ is a large painting of a studio interior, with two ladies engaged in the perfunctory forms of social interchange,” said the *New York Sun*. “In composition



Fig. 1. Chase's studio, Shinnecock Hills, gelatin printing-out paper, c. 1895, Southampton, The William Merritt Chase Archives, The Parrish Art Museum, Gift of Jackson Chase Storm, neg. no. 42



Fig. 2. Chase in his studio, Shinnecock Hills, gelatin printing-out paper, c. 1896, Southampton, The William Merritt Chase Archives, The Parrish Art Museum, Gift of Jackson Chase Storm, neg. no. 11



Fig. 3. photograph of chair, Chase's studio, Shinnecock Hills, The Collection of Mr. Wayne Morrell



William Merritt Chase, *A Friendly Call*, 1943.1.2

the picture is admirable, and in color quality it is beautiful. The drawing is unexceptionable, of course.”<sup>4</sup> *Art Amateur* noted, “‘A Friendly Call’ [is] an extremely clever painting of a studio interior with two figures. The figures are well done, but are of no great importance in the composition, in which they count for almost less than the embroidered cushions and the tall mirror which reflects with just the proper lowering of tone the opposite side of the room.”<sup>5</sup> The longest and most important discussion of the painting was by Royal Cortissoz in *Harper’s Monthly*:

It is vivacious in color and in style, the scene is handled briskly, with an authoritative elegance and its dainty light charm is made the most of with an evident enjoyment of the technical facility needed for the exploitation of such a thin motive. The theme is certainly not a lofty one, yet undoubted ability has gone into this celebration of it, and while its painter may not seem a man of high imagination, he is just as plainly a technician of good taste, one with a feeling for the suave picturesqueness of some social life. No one could grudge Mr. Chase his triumph, however slight this performance and all his other spirited works in this exhibition might seem. . . . Few of his competitors, if so they may be called, have the same airiness of touch.<sup>6</sup>

Two themes recur in these comments: the painting as social document, and its subject as a pretext for the display of Chase’s exceptional technical facility. Although Cortissoz found one “thin” and the other “slight,” both were very much part of Chase’s understanding of modern painting, of which *A Friendly Call* was one of the most ambitious enact-

ments. To Chase, modern painting was both a depiction of modern life—a record of contemporary manners, mores, and dress—and an art, freed from literature and imaginative invention, that stressed, as the strategy for its liberation, the purely visual as well as the means and methods of painting itself. The chief contemporary model for Chase’s depiction and interpretation of modern life was Belgian painter Alfred Stevens (1823–1906), whom he met in Paris in 1881. Chase purposely visited the Antwerp Salon in 1885 to see a number of Stevens’ paintings, and he himself owned at least nine canvases by Stevens.<sup>7</sup> *The Salon of the Painter* (fig. 4), which was purchased directly from Stevens in 1880 by William K. Vanderbilt of New York, is in several respects so closely related to *A Friendly Call*, that it indeed may be considered its principal artistic source.

Stevens’ advice also modernized Chase’s artistic perspective. Prompted by Chase’s *The Smoker*—a portrait (now lost) of the artist’s friend Frank Duveneck cast in the style of seventeenth-century Dutch art and shown in the Paris Salon of 1881—Stevens commented, “Chase, it is good work,” but, he advised, “don’t try to make your pictures look as if they had been done by the old masters.” “I saw the truth of his remark,” Chase confessed. “Modern conditions and trends of thought demand modern art for their expression.”<sup>8</sup>

Ironically, an Old Master, seventeenth-century Spanish painter, Diego Velázquez, was for Chase the most potent example of modernism. “Of all the

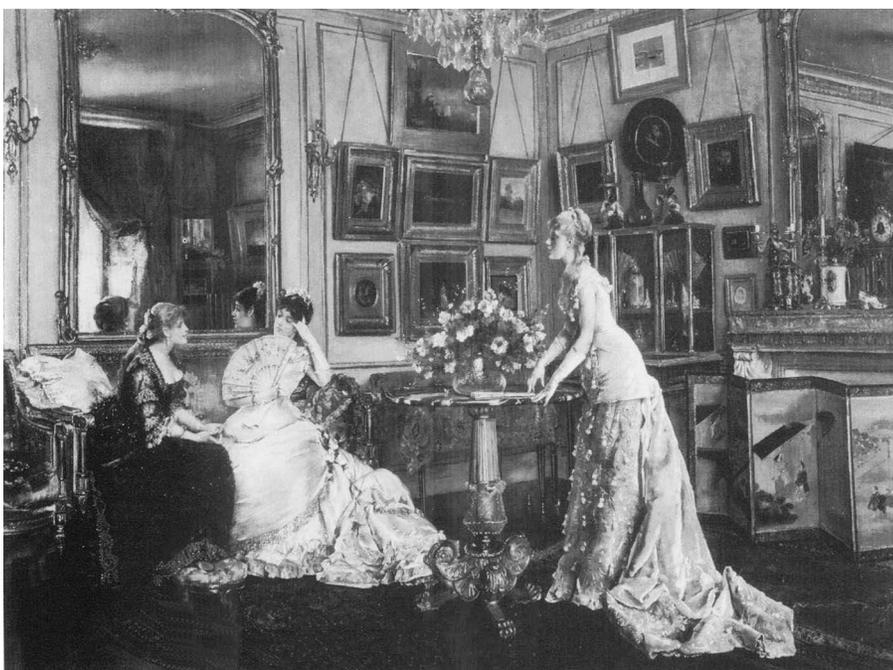


Fig. 4. Alfred Stevens, *The Salon of the Painter*, oil on canvas, 1880, private collection, Belgium



Fig. 5. Diego Velázquez, *Las Meninas*, oil on canvas, 1656, Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado

old masters he is the most modern,” Chase observed.<sup>9</sup> For, as he explained, Velázquez “felt the need of choosing new forms and arrangements, new schemes of color and methods of painting, to fit the time and place he was called upon to depict.”<sup>10</sup> Velázquez also justified Chase’s emphasis on technique: “People talk about poetical subjects in art,” Chase said, “but there are no such things. The only poetry in art is the way an artist applied his pigments to the canvas. A yellow dog with a tin can tied to his tail would have been enough inspiration for a masterpiece by a consummate genius like Velázquez.”<sup>11</sup> Stevens’ accomplishments were also worthy of praise. “Alfred Stevens’ women in ridiculous hoopskirts are still among the ineffably lovely creations of art—all because of the treatment, the technique. It is never the subject of a picture which makes it great; it is the brush treatment, the color, the line. There is no great art without a great technique behind it.”<sup>12</sup>

If *A Friendly Call* owes a debt of inspiration to Alfred Stevens’ *Salon of the Painter*, it owes one also to Velázquez’ greatest painting, *Las Meninas* (fig. 5).<sup>13</sup> The light-filled open doorway reflected in the mirror at the right, and the device of using a mirror to

reflect things not present in the picture space, are both derived from two of the most intriguing parts of *Las Meninas*. More significantly, following the modernity of Velázquez’s example as he understood it, Chase fitted his painting to “the time and place he was called upon to depict.”<sup>14</sup>

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## Notes

1. The painting was awarded the annual Shaw Fund prize of \$1,500 at the 17th exhibition of the Society of American Artists, 25 March–27 April 1895. Shaw received all paintings awarded the Shaw Fund prize.

2. Reynolds Beal Papers, AAA microfilm 286, fr. 30. Chase 1910; information courtesy of Wendy Kail, The Phillips Collection, Washington.

3. See Atkinson and Cikovsky 1987, fig 15. It is also depicted in Chase’s pastel *In the Studio (Interior: Young Woman at a Table)*, 1892 or 1893 (Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, SI).

4. “Society of American Artists, Opening of the Seventeenth Annual Exhibition,” *New York Sun*, 24 March 1895.

5. “Society of American Artists,” *Art Amateur* 32, May 1895, 157.

6. Royal Cortissoz, “Spring Art Exhibitions, The Society of American Artists,” *Harper’s Weekly* 39, 6 April 1895, 318.

7. Seven paintings by Stevens were included in a 1912 sale of Chase’s paintings, and two others were in the sale of paintings and artistic effects that followed his death in 1916; see Chase 1912, and Chase 1917.

8. “Import” 1910, 442.

9. William Merritt Chase, “Velázquez,” *Quartier Latin* 1, July 1896, 4.

10. “Import” 1910, 442.

11. Perriton Maxwell, “William Merritt Chase—Artist, Wit and Philosopher,” *Saturday Evening Post* 172, 4 November 1899, 347.

12. Perriton Maxwell, “William Merritt Chase—Artist, Wit and Philosopher,” *Saturday Evening Post* 172, 4 November 1899, 347.

13. Another of Chase’s Shinnecock interiors, the large pastel *Hall at Shinnecock* (Terra Museum of American Art, Chicago) owes the same debt to Velázquez.

14. “Import” 1910, 442.

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 1947 "Tate": no. 23, repro. 103.  
 1948 Walker: 324, color repro. 320.  
 1949 Peat.  
 1963 Walker: 331, repro. 328.  
 1965 Dale: no. 703, repro. 40.  
 1967 Wilmerding: 24, color repro. 82, as *Una Visita Amicherole*.  
 1971 Campbell: 268.  
 1972 Hoopes: 42, color repro. 43.  
 1972 Maass: repro. 178, pl. 28.  
 1973 Domit: 39, 72, 77, no. 20, repro. 77.  
 1975 Wilmerding: 16, color repro. 74, as *A Friendly Visit*.  
 1976 Wilmerding: 145, repro. no. 175.  
 1977 Young: repro. 103.  
 1980 Wilmerding: 10, 16, 130, no. 46, color repro. 131.  
 1981 Canaday: 281, repro. 280.  
 1981 Hoopes: 56, color repro. 56–57.  
 1981 Williams: 186, color repro. 162.  
 1982 Betsky: 38, color repro. cover.  
 1983 Pisano: 11, 163, repro. 165.  
 1984 Walker: color repro. 561.  
 1987 Cikovsky, "Interiors": 49–50, 56, 60–63, 91, fig. 18, color repro. 21.  
 1987 Cikovsky, "Chase": 295, 298, color repro. 300.  
 1988 Gaechtgens: 118, repro. 118, as *Ein freundlicher Besuch*.  
 1988 Wilmerding: 11, 19, 152, no. 53, color repro. 153.  
 1989 Gere: 351, no. 430, color repro. 351.  
 1991 Bryant: 142 and 164, repro. 165.  
 1991 Gordon: 94, color repro. 93.  
 1995 Gallati: 43.

1995.47.1

## Nude

c. 1901  
 Oil on canvas, 50.6 × 41 (20 × 16 1/8)  
 Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

### Inscriptions

At lower right: Chase.

**Technical Notes:** The support is a medium-weight twill fabric that has been lined. A cool beige ground was applied overall and covers the tacking margin remnants on the bottom, left, and top edges of the painting. The initial sketch outlining the sitter's contours is probably graphite. Paint was fluidly applied in the hair and back-

ground, and more thickly, with brushmarkings left visible, in the flesh tones. The thin varnish layer has not discolored and the painting is in very good condition, with only a tiny retouch at the lower center edge.

**Provenance:** Content Johnson [d. 1949], New York, about 1901; Mrs. J. A. Bennet, New York, by 1948; by inheritance to her granddaughter [name currently unknown], until 1980; (Hirschl & Adler Galleries, New York); private collection, 1983–1984.

**Exhibitions:** *William Merritt Chase Memorial Exhibition*, MMA, no. 11.<sup>1</sup> *Exhibition of the Works of William Merritt Chase*, American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, 1928, no. 6, as *Nude*. *William M. Chase 1849–1916*, American British Art Center, New York, 1948, no. 23, as *The Red Shawl*. *The Art of Collecting*, Hirschl & Adler Galleries, New York, 1984, no. 33, as *Seated Nude from the Rear*.

IN HIS TIME William Merritt Chase was perhaps as well-known for his talented teaching as he was for his work as an artist. This oil sketch is one of Chase's instructional examples, painted as a demonstration in one of his classes at the New York School of Art.<sup>2</sup> It was subsequently presented to Miss Content Johnson, a student and friend.<sup>3</sup>

The lively, slashing brushwork so typical of Chase's renowned bravura handling is particularly evident in the roughed-in area surrounding the figure. The soft flesh of the model's torso is, however, expertly sculpted from delicate hatched strokes in an effect that is similar to that seen in Chase's lovely pastel, *Back of a Nude* (c. 1888, Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Horowitz).

DC

### Notes

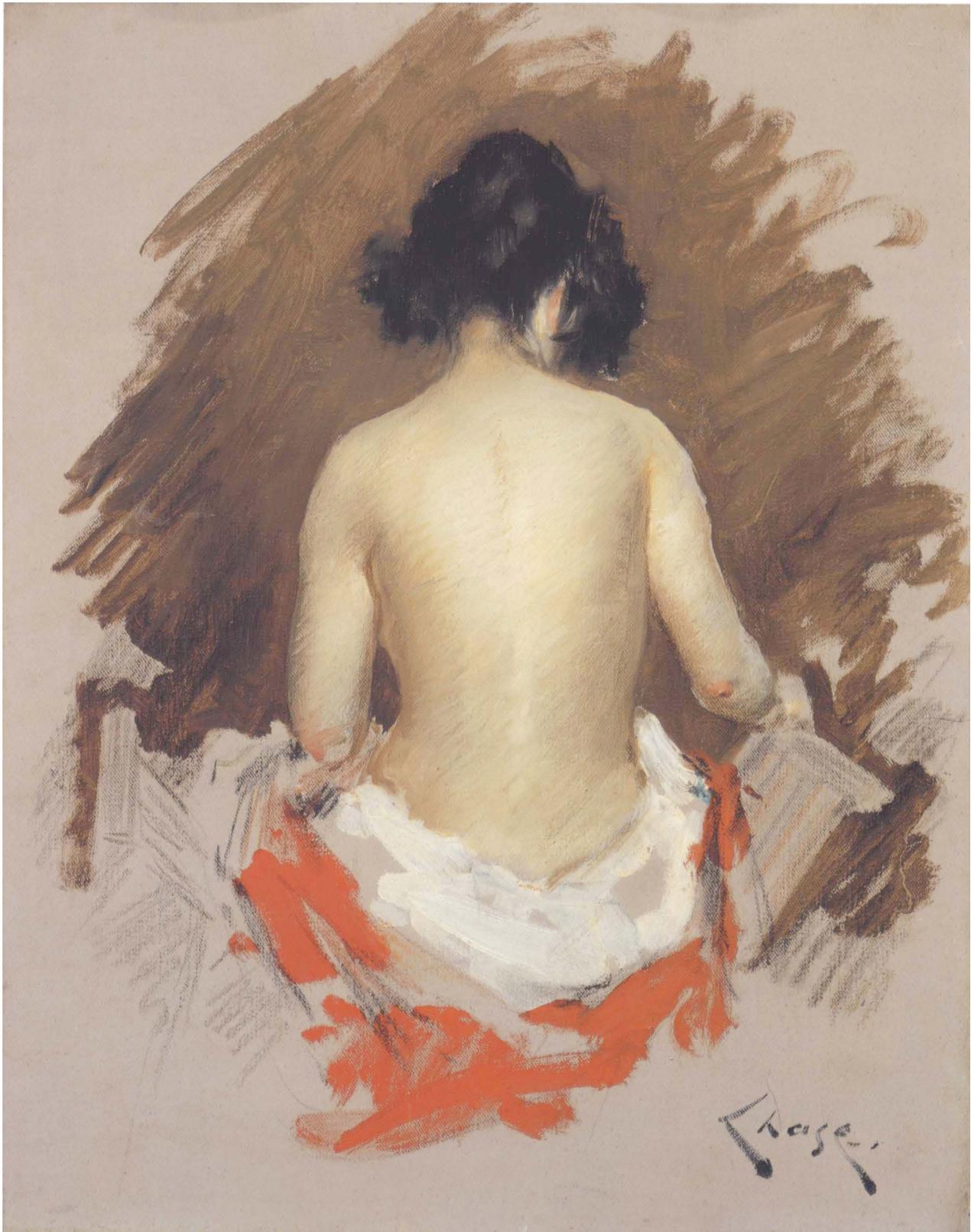
1. In the accompanying catalogue the painting was listed as "11 NUDE / Study of a young girl's back, with a white and red drapery below the waist. Pastel [*sic*] and oil on canvas . . . Lent by Miss Content Johnson."

2. According to Ronald Pisano, who is preparing the catalogue raisonné of Chase's work, "The artist, an excellent and highly revered teacher, would occasionally give these works to his students." Donor's notes (in NGA curatorial files).

3. Content Johnson became an artist herself, exhibiting eight times at the National Academy of Design between 1907 and 1932, and working as a successful portrait painter in California. She died 9 November 1949.

### References

1949 Peat: as *The Red Shawl (Nude)*.



William Merritt Chase, *Nude*, 1995-47.1

# Frederic Edwin Church

1826 – 1900

FREDERIC EDWIN CHURCH was born in Hartford, Connecticut, on 4 May 1826, the only son of a wealthy businessman. Although his father hoped he would become a physician or enter the world of business, Church persisted in his early desire to be a painter. In 1842–1843 he studied in Hartford with Alexander H. Emmons (1816–1879), a local landscape and portrait painter, and Benjamin H. Coe (1799–after 1883), a well-known drawing instructor. In 1844 Church's father, at last resigned to his son's choice of a career, arranged through his friend, art patron Daniel Wadsworth, two years of study with Thomas Cole. Church was thus the first pupil accepted by America's leading landscape painter, a distinction that immediately gave him an advantage over other aspiring painters of his generation. Early on, Church showed a remarkable talent for drawing and a strong inclination to paint in a crisp, tightly focused style. In 1845 he made his debut at the annual exhibition of the National Academy of Design in New York, where he would continue to show throughout his career. Two years later four of his paintings were shown at the American Art-Union, which established him as one of the most promising younger painters in New York. In 1849, at the age of twenty-three, he was elected to full membership in the academy, the youngest person ever so honored.

During the late 1840s and early 1850s Church experimented with a variety of subjects, ranging from recognizable views of American scenery (*West Rock, New Haven*, 1849, New Britain Museum of American Art, Connecticut) to highly charged scenes of natural drama (*Above the Clouds at Sunrise*, 1849, Warner collection of Gulf States Paper Corporation, Tuscaloosa), to imaginary creations based on biblical and literary sources and much indebted to Cole (*The Deluge*, 1851, location unknown). Gradually, however, he began to specialize in ambitious works that combined carefully studied details from nature in idealized compositions that had a grandeur and seriousness beyond the usual efforts of his contemporaries. Church traveled widely in search of subjects, first throughout the northern United States and then, in 1853, to South America. Inspired by the writ-

ings of the great German naturalist Alexander von Humboldt, he spent five months in Colombia and Ecuador. His first full-scale masterpiece, *The Andes of Ecuador* (1855, Reynolda House Museum of American Art, Winston-Salem), a 48- by 72-inch canvas depicting a vast tropical mountain panorama, astounded viewers with its combination of precise foreground detail and sweeping space. Two years later the exhibition of *Niagara* (1857, CGA) in New York, London, and other cities secured Church's reputation as America's most prominent landscape painter. A second trip to South America took place in 1857 and resulted two years later in Church's most famous painting of the tropics, *Heart of the Andes* (1859, MMA).

During the 1860s Church was at the height of his powers and created a remarkable series of large landscapes, including *Twilight in the Wilderness* (1860, Cleveland Museum of Art), *The Icebergs* (1861, Dallas Museum of Art), *Cotopaxi* (1862, Detroit Institute of Arts), *The Aurora Borealis* (1865, NMAA) and *Rainy Season in the Tropics* (1866, The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco). He continued to travel, with important works resulting from trips to Jamaica in 1865 (*The Vale of St. Thomas, Jamaica*, 1867, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford) and to Europe and the Near East in 1867–1868 (*Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives*, 1870, Nelson-Atkins Museum, Kansas City).

By the early 1870s Church's reputation was in decline: American critics and patrons increasingly faulted his detailed and grand style as being out of touch with the times. Church more and more devoted his time and energy to his family and to the construction and furnishing of Olana, his palatial home set high on a hill overlooking the Hudson. He painted relatively few important works after 1880, although he continued to produce wonderfully fresh oil sketches of the view from Olana in changing conditions of light and weather into the 1890s. When he died on 7 April 1900 he was largely forgotten, and interest in his work only revived in the 1960s. He is now once again generally considered one of the most important proponents of landscape painting in mid-nineteenth-century America. FK

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1965.14.1 (1949)

## *Morning in the Tropics*

1877

Oil on canvas, 138.1 × 213.7 (54 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 84 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>)  
Gift of the Avalon Foundation

## Inscriptions

At lower right: F. E. Church / 1877

**Technical Notes:** The support is a relatively thin and fine plain-weave fabric mounted on the original stretcher. The panel-back stretcher has eleven members with mortise-and-tenon joins. A white ground layer was applied, over which a thin brown layer may have been laid. The paint was applied very thinly in most areas, with the darks particularly built up with many glazes. The highlights were more thickly painted, with some areas of impasto. The paint layer is generally in very good condition, with only scattered small losses and minor areas of abrasion. In 1988 discolored varnish was removed and the painting was restored. This conservation effort removed significant passages of inpaint from the trees in the middle distance at the center of the painting. The inpainting hid pentimenti formed by brushed underpaint that the artist used in laying out the major characteristics of the composition; the pentimenti were then subsequently inpainted to minimize visual disruption.

**Provenance:** William Earl Dodge, Jr. [d. 1903], New York; his wife, Mrs. William Earl Dodge, Jr. [d. 1909], New York; her grandson, William Earl Dodge IV [d. 1927], New York;<sup>2</sup> his wife, Ella Lynch Dodge [d. 1964], New York; her stepdaughter, Diana Dodge Ryan, Newport;<sup>3</sup> given in 1965 to the Preservation Society of Newport County, Rhode Island.

**Exhibited:** Century Association, New York, 1877, no. 5, as *A Tropical Morning*.<sup>4</sup> *Exposition Universelle Internationale*, Palais du Champ de Mars, Paris, 1878, no. 20, as *Le matin sous les tropiques*. Possibly Union League Club, New York, 1878, no cat.<sup>5</sup> *Loan Collection of Paintings*, MMA, 1880, no. 111, as *The River of Light. Paintings by Frederic E. Church, N. A.*, MMA, 1900, no. 13. *Frederic Edwin Church*, National Collection of Fine Arts, Washington; Albany Institute of History & Art; M. Knoedler & Co., New York, 1966, no. 97 (exhibited only in Washington). *The Hudson River School*, Fine Arts Center, State University College, Geneseo, New York, 1968, no. 60. *In Memoria, Ailsa Mellon Bruce*, NGA, 1969, no cat. *The Beckoning Land*, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, 1971, no. 51. *Frederic Edwin Church*, NGA, 1989–1990, no. 49.

*Morning in the Tropics* was Church's last full-scale painting of the South American landscape.<sup>6</sup> He had not visited South America for some twenty years, so in composing the picture he had to rely on his acute visual memory and on the hundreds of drawings and oil sketches he accumulated during his 1853 and 1857 journeys.<sup>7</sup> This had been his practice when painting other large South American works, such as the famous *Heart of the Andes* of 1859 (MMA), in which he strove not for precise geographical and topographical accuracy but to represent the essential character of a whole region of the earth. Although creating idealized compositions based on sketches from nature was espoused by Church's teacher Thomas Cole (who was, in turn, much influenced by seventeenth-century European precedents), it was Alexander von Humboldt's advice in *Cosmos* that was of particular importance. After calling on artists to "seize, with the first freshness of a pure youthful mind, the living image of manifold beauty and grandeur in the humid mountain valleys of the tropical world," Humboldt prescribed a specific creative process.<sup>8</sup>

It is only by coloured sketches taken on the spot, that the artist, inspired by the contemplation of these distant scenes, can hope to reproduce their character in paintings executed after his return. He will be able to do so the more perfectly, if he also accumulated a large number of separate studies of the tops of trees, of branches clothed with leaves, adorned with blossoms, or laden with fruit, of fallen trunks of trees overgrown with pothos and orchideæ, or portions of rocks and river banks, as well as the surface of the ground in the forest, all drawn or painted directly from nature.<sup>9</sup>

Humboldt tempered the scientific specificity of this advice with a more romantic view of the landscape painter's ultimate goal, for he believed the artist had to process these direct impressions in his mind and then create "a free work of art." As he concluded: "Heroic landscape painting must be a result of the visible spectacle of external nature, and of this inward process of the mind."<sup>10</sup>

In the optimistic years before the Civil War, Church's heroic landscapes gave voice to many of the aspirations and beliefs of the young nation. His landscapes of the early 1850s, such as *New England Scenery* (1851, George Walter Vincent Smith Art Museum, Springfield, Massachusetts) and *Mount Ktaadn* (1853, YUAG) were visions of an ideal world where American nature and American civilization coexisted in peaceful harmony. His first South American pictures, shown to critical and popular

acclaim at New York's National Academy of Design in the spring of 1855, revealed a world of exotic beauty and intriguing potential.<sup>11</sup> *Niagara* (1857, CGA), the picture that catapulted Church to international fame, was a stunning tour-de-force of realism that captured the power and majesty of America's best-known natural wonder. It was also the first of Church's so-called Great Pictures, large-scale, complex paintings intended to be shown by themselves and promoted with carefully managed publicity.<sup>12</sup> In *Heart of the Andes* Church created the most ambitious and most complex work of his career, addressing in one large painting myriad issues of science, religion, and national identity.

Although Church continued to paint and exhibit major landscapes through the 1860s, the certainty of vision and faith in American destiny that underlay his earlier works gradually gave way to less clear-cut, but perhaps more profound meanings. Thus in *Twilight in the Wilderness* (1860, Cleveland Museum of Art) the exuberant celebration of a pristine wilderness with a blazing sunset sky above was tempered by an undertone of melancholy and foreboding.<sup>13</sup> In works such as *The Icebergs* (1861, Dallas Museum of Art) and *Cotopaxi* (1862, Detroit Institute of Arts) the world is a place of great natural beauty rent by powerful and unrelenting tensions and forces.

Many reasons for the change in Church's art have been postulated, ranging from disillusionment brought on by the Civil War to the impact of Darwin's theories to personal change and maturation in the artist himself. In the decade following the Civil War, Church struggled to adapt his art to a changed world and sought out new subject matter (the Old World), but taste in America gradually, yet decisively, turned against him. Although criticism of his meticulous detail had been visited on Church occasionally since early in his career, it now became increasingly common. His art came to be viewed as melodramatic and extravagant, motivated by outmoded ideas and beliefs and out of touch with the realities of postwar America. In 1875 Henry James, faced with evaluating one of Church's most recent tropical landscapes, could only say, "As we looked at Mr. Church's velvety vistas and gem-like vegetation . . . we felt honestly sorry that there was any necessity in this weary world for taking one's self to be a critic. . . . Why not accept this lovely tropic scene as a very pretty picture and have done with it?"<sup>14</sup> For influential art critic William C. Brownell, writing in 1880, *Morning in the Tropics* was nothing more

than "a magnificent drop-curtain. A drop-curtain may be the work of incontestable genius; it may have a thousand merits; . . . it is simply not painting."<sup>15</sup>

Recent scholarship, although generally more favorable, has often echoed Brownell's sentiments; however, David Huntington, in his seminal monograph of 1966, discussed the painting in a more positive light, calling it "Church's last and perhaps greatest psychic landscape."<sup>16</sup> Indeed *Morning in the Tropics* is inherently different from Church's earlier South American epics. At once a summation of Church's fascination with the tropical landscape, it also shows new stylistic directions in his art and a fundamental reassessment of the ways in which landscape painting could convey meaning.

In *Morning in the Tropics* Church continued the tightly focused realism and detailed handling found in his earlier South American pictures, yet its overall effect is quite different. Church's large pictures had sometimes been faulted by critics for sacrificing "unity and repose" to detail, but *Morning in the Tropics*, with its limited range of hues, is a remarkably cohesive and coherent composition.<sup>17</sup> As one critic observed: "The subject is simple and broad, notwithstanding its richness of detail, and the key of color is considerably lower than in most of Mr. Church's later works. But just these qualities were necessary to emphasize the strength and harmony of the composition and the happy union of truth and sentiment."<sup>18</sup> Whereas earlier works might be seen as several pictures in one, *Morning in the Tropics*, with its overall tonal unity, restrained coloring, and light-filled atmosphere, is too pressing and immediate to afford such a division.<sup>19</sup> But perhaps the most significant change that distinguishes *Morning in the Tropics* from earlier pictures involves Church's selection of the viewpoint. Rather than situating the viewer on an invisible precipice overlooking a vast distance, Church made the scene more limited geographically and more accessible by lowering the vantage point.<sup>20</sup> *Morning in the Tropics* is a landscape that invites the viewer mentally to step into its space rather than one that encourages a detached, awed response. In the foreground a fallen tree running diagonally from the lower center edge of the composition serves as a bridge into the picture space, and the delicate leaves of the tropical plants reach out invitingly. This is a corner of the world that may be measured in feet rather than miles, a space that demands direct experience. Inexorably the viewer is drawn into the distant focus of the pic-



Frederic Edwin Church, *Morning in the Tropics*, 1965.14.1

ture—the opening in the forest-jungle where the river disappears into steaming, light-filled mists. Confronted not with a wide-open and seemingly limitless vista but with a mysterious environment that vision alone cannot penetrate, we are left to ponder what lies beyond. Thus, *Morning in the Tropics* was perhaps better attuned to the mood and taste of the late 1870s than critics such as Brownell may have realized. The programmatic and didactic character of Church's earlier works was now replaced by a more introspective and contemplative mood that looked more to the future of American landscape painting and to such artists as George Inness than it did to the past.<sup>21</sup>

Central to the psychological impact of the picture is the role of the river itself. Although the painting was at one time known as *The Amazon*, it is uncertain whether Church intended such specificity.<sup>22</sup> More likely he was portraying an archetypal tropical river and was transcending the association to any individual body of water. Intriguingly, in 1877 and 1880 *Morning in the Tropics* was exhibited as *The River of Light*.<sup>23</sup> Although the title is descriptively accurate, it also carries allegorical and metaphysical connotations. The “river of light” becomes a fusion of air, water, and light literally spanning the composition from top to bottom and symbolically bridging the earthly and heavenly spheres. We are reminded of *Old Age* (p. 106) from Church's teacher Thomas Cole's four-part series *The Voyage of Life*, in which the traveler has reached the end of his earthly journey and is met by a band of angels descending to the water from heaven along a radiant pathway of light leading through vaporous clouds. That Church might have looked back to the older man's art once more is by no means unlikely, for as he said in 1885, “Thomas Cole was an artist for whom I had and have the profoundest admiration.”<sup>24</sup> Indeed, the pupil never abandoned the grand aspirations of his master; he simply tied them more securely to the depiction of natural facts. Thus, *Morning in the Tropics* could be both a wonderfully detailed and evocative depiction of the tropics and a meditation on the course of life itself. The voyagers on “the river of light”—the white birds, the distant canoeist, the spectator, and ultimately the artist himself—embark on both a real and an allegorical journey. For Cole's traveler the promise of salvation was clearly manifested, but Church offers no easy answers to what lies at the journey's end, beyond the cloaking mists. Such certainty was no longer current in the late 1870s. *Morning in the Trop-*

*ics*, then, as Church's “last and perhaps his greatest psychic landscape,” was both a summation of his lifelong interest in the tropics and a moving and eloquent statement on the profound complexities of existence.<sup>25</sup>

FK

## Notes

1. William Earl Dodge, Jr., was the son of a prominent New York merchant. His brother, David Stuart Dodge, was a missionary and a founder of Syrian Protestant College in Beirut (present-day American University of Beirut), where he was the first professor of modern languages. D. S. Dodge accompanied Church on his travels in Syria and the Holy Land in 1868; see Huntington 1966, 93, and Davis 1987, 81. Although it is reasonable to assume that D. S. Dodge was instrumental in arranging the commission of *Morning in the Tropics*, there is no evidence documenting his role.

2. William Earl Dodge IV was the son of William Earl Dodge III, who died in 1884.

3. William Earl Dodge IV bequeathed the painting to his daughter, Diana Dodge (later Ryan), but gave his second wife, Ella Lynch Dodge, a life interest. Ryan (letter of 3 March 1966 in NGA curatorial files) saw the painting twice: in 1921, when it was hanging in the dining room of her father's yacht; and then next “in early 1965,” a few months after her stepmother's death in October 1964.

4. Letter of 8 August 1980 from Andrew Zaremba, librarian, Century Association, along with photocopy of typescript page from the Association's Exhibition Records (in NGA curatorial files).

5. “Art at the Union League Club,” *New York Post*, 28 February 1878, 2, notes that the works on view were borrowed “from private galleries in this city for exhibition” and that “Mr. F. E. Church [was represented] by a morning in the tropics.” There are no records at the Union League Club concerning this exhibition, making it impossible to verify if this was the National Gallery painting.

6. A small painting of the same title (c. 1858, Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore) also shows a river bordered by a dense jungle. Although Church painted several significant tropical landscapes after 1877, including *Evening in the Tropics* (1881, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford) and *Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta* (1883, Washington University Gallery of Art, St. Louis), none is as successful as the National Gallery *Morning in the Tropics*.

7. On Church's tropical drawings (including those done during a visit to Jamaica in 1865), see Dee 1984, 26–47; for the oil sketches see Stebbins 1978, 22–25, 35–38, 64–67, 76–86. Montgomery 1889, 2:774, specifically described *Morning in the Tropics* as “an elaboration and arrangement of all sorts of South American studies.”

8. Humboldt 1848, 2:84. Several editions of *Cosmos* (the earliest dated 1849) are in Church's library at Olana; quotations given here are from the translation by Edward Sabine.

9. Humboldt 1848, 2:85, 91. Humboldt recommended: "Enchanting effects might be obtained by means of characteristic studies sketched . . . and still more so if these sketches were aided by photographs, which cannot indeed render the leafy canopy, but would give the most perfect representation possible of the form of the giant trunks, and of the mode of ramification characteristic of the different kinds of trees." The role of photographs in Church's South American paintings remains uncertain. According to Lindquist-Cock 1973, 72, Church used photographs of tropical scenery in composing *Morning in the Tropics*; however, as Stebbins 1978, 48, points out, the specific photograph published by Lindquist-Cock dates from 1896, almost twenty years after the painting's completion. To be sure, there are instances in which Church based finished pictures on photographs—most notably his *Parthenon* (1871, MMA)—but there is no evidence of their use in *Morning in the Tropics*.

10. Humboldt 1848, 2:90.

11. The four South American landscapes shown at the academy were *Tamaca Palms (Scenery of the Magdalena River)* (1854, CGA); *The Cordilleras: Sunrise* (1854, Hirsch & Adler Galleries, New York); *La Magdalena* (1854, NAD); and *Tequendama Falls, Near Bogotá, New Granada* (1854, Cincinnati Art Museum). In 1855 Church painted an even larger and more expansive South American picture, *The Andes of Ecuador* (Reynolda House Museum of American Art, Winston-Salem).

12. Carr 1980, 21–30, discusses the Great Picture tradition and Church's place in it.

13. Kelly, *Church*, 1988, 113–122.

14. "On Some Pictures Lately Exhibited," *Galaxy* 20, July 1875, 96.

15. William C. Brownell, "The Younger Painters of America," *Scribner's Monthly* 20, May 1880, 324.

16. "In the 1870s he continued to paint his favorite subjects, though his skills had declined noticeably; thus his *Morning in the Tropics* . . . has none of the excitement of observation and discovery of his tropical views of the 1850s" (Stebbins 1973, 116). *The Vale of St. Thomas, Jamaica* (1867, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford) "is perhaps the last of Church's convincing world-views; it was followed by *Morning in the Tropics* . . . where the same issues are pushed to an almost overstated extreme" (Nancy Troy in Stebbins 1976, 51). "In one magnificent effort—*Morning in the Tropics*—Church tried to recapture his earlier cosmic vision but managed instead a kind of Wagnerian bombast, recalling the transcendentalism of Cole" (Brown 1977, 339). "Later works, such as *Morning in the Tropics* . . . seem benign, even conventional, after the stirring impact of *Rainy Season in the Tropics*" [1866, The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco] (Stebbins, Troyen, and Fairbrother 1983, 249, no. 46). Huntington 1966, 106.

17. See, for example, "Review of *Heart of the Andes*," *The Crayon* 6, June 1859, 193: "What the picture lacks is repose and unity . . . or, in other words, concentration of interest."

18. *New-York Daily Tribune*, 1877, 5.

19. As Theodore Winthrop (1859, 12) observed of *Heart of the Andes*: "It is not an actual scene, but the subtle essence of many scenes." See also Huntington 1966, 52.

20. Stevens 1966, 46. Church used the compositional device in several major works and perhaps most effectively in *Heart of the Andes*, in which he heightened the illusion by an elaborate frame that simulated the effect of looking out a window; see Kelly, Gould, and Ryan 1989, 55–58, and Avery 1986, 52–72. *The Icebergs* (1861) is an exception, for there the viewer seems to stand on the edge of an ice flow; however, the very instability of such a location and the looming height of the icebergs create a sense of awe in the presence of nature that is similar to that conveyed by works with an elevated vantage point. Three smaller paintings from earlier in the 1870s, *South American View* (1872, location unknown [photograph, NGA photographic archives]), *Tropical Scenery* (1873, The Brooklyn Museum) and *The Valley of the Santa Ysabel* (1875, Berkshire Museum, Pittsfield, Massachusetts), are similar to *Morning in the Tropics* in the depiction of vaporous atmosphere; however, in composition—each has large framing trees, bodies of water in the middle distance, and mountainous backgrounds—and elevated vantage point, they relate more to Church's earlier works than to *Morning in the Tropics*. *Tropical Moonlight*, a vertical composition from 1874 (private collection, on loan to The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; engraving in Montgomery 1889, 2: 771), with its low vantage point and a view through dense foliage toward a bright source of illumination (the moon), is perhaps the only relevant prototype in Church's work for *Morning in the Tropics*.

21. This is not to say that Church might not have been influenced by earlier works when painting *Morning in the Tropics*. First, there was his own small picture of 1858, also entitled *Morning in the Tropics*, which has a closely related composition, and then his *Tropical Moonlight* of 1874. It is also possible that works by other artists played a role in the creation of the 1877 *Morning in the Tropics*. An 1868 painting by Church's close friend Martin Johnson Heade, *South American River* (MFA), may have been a prototype (memorandum of November 1966 from Theodore E. Stebbins, in NGA curatorial files). Although much smaller (26 × 22 1/2 inches), Heade's painting also shows a tropical river bordered by dense undergrowth and includes a line of white birds and a canoeist. Heade had traveled in South America on Church's advice, but he was not drawn to the type of vast and dramatic scenes that had captivated the younger painter, preferring more intimate and close-focused views. His favorite subject became the tiny hummingbirds of Brazil, which he depicted in their jungle habitats (see *Cattleya Orchid and Three Brazilian Hummingbirds* [p. 293]). If the two small birds perched on a branch near the center of *Morning in the Tropics* are hummingbirds (*Calliphox amethystina*, according to Stebbins), Church may have drawn inspiration from Heade's more personal vision of South America as he reformulated his own approach.

22. Huntington 1966, 105: "According to the descendants of the original owner . . . the painting was at first called *The Amazon*." As Church never actually visited the Amazon, Huntington proposes that he may have been inspired by the illustrations of the river in Marçoy 1875, a copy of which he owned and is still in the library at Olana.

23. See *New York Herald*, 8 May 1877, 5, where the painting is called "El Rio de Luz"; I am grateful to Ger-

ald L. Carr for this reference. In William C. Brownell, "The Younger Painters of America," *Scribner's Monthly* 20, May 1880, 323, it is titled "The River of Light."

24. Letter of 11 September 1885, from Church to John D. Champlin, AAA microfilm DDU1.

25. Recent interpretations have stressed the introspective and ambiguous nature of the painting: "[It] is less heroic and more suggestive, less about the world at large than it is about Church's own psyche" (Kelly 1987, 32); "The artist, who had once portrayed in monumental scale the paradisiac heights of the Andes, by 1877 conceived the deepest recesses of the Amazon as mysterious and threatening" (Manthorne 1989, 60). Miller 1989, 115–116, following Huntington, cites Marçoy 1875 and draws attention to a particularly suggestive passage: "Nothing more attractive can be imagined than this spot, so still, so freshly cool, so mysterious. . . . This charming little haven, which the reader might admire upon the faith of our description, and whose waters, always calm, seem to invite the stranger to taste the pleasures of the bath, is a dreadful haunt of alligators. There the voracious monsters lurk behind the pendant branches . . . only waiting for a favourable moment to spring upon their prey. O dreamer, O poet! whom your instinct might draw into this pleasant haven, to dream at your ease and string your rhymes at your pleasure, avoid its deceitful shades!" For Miller, in *Morning in the Tropics*, "this last of Church's great tropical works, the sinister undertones of the swamp emerge in the heart of the tropics. The apparition, arising from the remains of the broken synthesis of knowledge and faith, evokes the desperate struggle for survival at the core of nature."

#### References

- 1877 "New Pictures by Church and Colman." *New York Daily Tribune* (7 May): 5.  
1877 *New York Herald* (8 May): 5.

## Alvan Clark

1804–1887

REMEMBERED LARGELY for his pioneering work in optics and astronomy, Alvan Clark is less well known as an artist, although he is thought to have executed some 500 oil portraits and miniatures. Clark was born in Ashfield, Massachusetts, where he spent his early years on his father's farm, working at the family lumber and grist mills. After a brief stint in a wagon-maker's shop, he took up drawing and engraving, spending the winter season of 1824 in Boston, where he was encouraged by moderate professional success.

Returning to western Massachusetts, he briefly

- 1878 "Art at the Union League Club." *New York Post* (28 February): 2.  
1878 "American Art in Paris." *Art Journal* 4 (May): 160.  
1879 French: 134.  
1880 Brownell, William C. "The Younger Painters of America." *Scribner's Monthly* 20 (May): 323–324.  
1889 Montgomery: 2:774.  
1966 Huntington: 49, 93, 103, 194, 105–106, 108–109, 126, 129, figs. 90, 91.  
1966 Stevens: 46.  
1966 *Church*: 18, 68, no. 97.  
1971 Campbell: 270.  
1973 Lindquist-Cock: 72, repro. 70.  
1973 Stebbins: 116.  
1975 Walker: 550, no. 831, color repro.  
1976 Stebbins: 51.  
1977 Brown: 339, repro. 340.  
1977 Lindquist-Cock: 119, pl. 35 (detail), 227.  
1978 Stebbins: 48.  
1979 Wilmerding: repro. 29.  
1980 Wilmerding: 100, color repro. 101.  
1980 Wilmerding et al.: 17, 36, 121, 174, 184, repro. 120.  
1981 Williams: 121–122, repro. 119 (detail), color repro. 102–103.  
1982 Mrozek: 20.  
1983 Stebbins, Troyen, and Fairbrother: 249.  
1984 Walker: 546–547, no. 822, color repro. 546.  
1987 Kelly: 32, 33, fig. 16.  
1988 Kelly, *Church*: 126.  
1988 Wilmerding: 114, color repro. 115.  
1989 Kelly, Gould, and Ryan: 12, 14, 67–68, 163–164, 170, 203, no. 49, color repro. 125.  
1989 Manthorne: 1, 60, repro. 61.  
1989 Miller: 113–116, fig. 4.2; pl. 5, misdated 1876.  
1996 Davis: 197.

worked in the Connecticut River Valley as an itinerant painter of watercolor and ink portraits, but by late 1825 he had become an engraver of cylinders used to print calico patterns. For the next ten years he labored within the booming textile industry, initially in Lowell, and later in Providence, New York City, and Fall River. During these years, Clark also studied painting, exhibiting miniatures for the first time at the National Academy of Design in 1829, and at the Boston Athenaeum in 1830. By 1836 he had moved to the Boston area, where he relied on

miniature commissions for his livelihood. For more than two decades he continued to paint portraits, increasingly in oil, maintaining a studio in Boston and a home in nearby Cambridgeport.

Concurrent with Clark's artistic development was his growing interest in science and mechanics. In 1840 he patented a "false loading muzzle" for rifles, which greatly increased accuracy and diminished the time needed between shots. The turning point in his life, however, came several years later, when an increased popular interest in astronomy followed the appearance of the Great Comet of 1843. In an effort to help his older son construct a small telescope, Clark taught himself to grind and polish a glass refracting lens. Working outside of established scientific communities, he and his two sons, George Bassett and Alvan Graham Clark, gradually improved their understanding of optics and refined their techniques until they became the preeminent manufacturers of telescope lenses in the world. The firm of Alvan Clark & Sons eventually became suppliers to all the major observatories in North America and Europe.

The growing success in optics led in 1860 to a commission worth thousands of dollars for an unprecedented 18½-inch lens. This windfall prompted Clark to close his portrait studio and to purchase a large compound on the Charles River, where he built a factory and three houses for himself and his sons. Although he won international renown for his work with lenses and his discoveries of new stars, Clark preferred to dwell on his career as an artist, insisting that visitors to his factory also view his work in portraiture. Several years before his death in Cambridgeport, Clark resumed his earlier vocation, taking up his brushes again to execute several family portraits.

JD

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- "Recent Deaths: Alvan Clark." *Boston Daily Evening Transcript* (19 August 1887).  
"Autobiography of Alvan Clark." *New-England Historical and Genealogical Register* 43 (January 1889): 52-58.  
Warner 1968.

1947.17.30 (938)

### *The Artist's Brother*

c. 1840

Oil on canvas, 69.5 × 56.5 (27<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 22<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight, plain-weave fabric support remains unlined and on its probably original four-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher. Stenciled on the reverse of the fabric is: "PREPARED BY/P. CAFFE/NEW YORK." Two thin ground layers were applied after the fabric was stretched: the lower is white; the upper is warm red. The latter is visible through the subsequent thin paint in areas of the coat and green background. There is slight impasto in the area of the face. X-radiography indicates that the nose and eyes have been reworked several times. The painting has only minor wear and losses, but the inpainting in the background has discolored. The yellowed varnish has become somewhat streaky.

**Provenance:** Caroline Amelia Eastman, granddaughter of the artist, Cambridge, Massachusetts; her sister, Elizabeth Willard Grogan, Cambridge;<sup>1</sup> sold 1919 to Francis Hill Bigelow, Cambridge;<sup>2</sup> (his sale, Anderson Galleries, New York, 17 January 1924, no. 29);<sup>3</sup> Thomas B. Clarke [1848-1931], New York; his estate; sold as part of the Clarke collection 29 January 1936, through (M. Knoedler & Co., New York), to The A.W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

**Exhibited:** *Exhibition of the Earliest Known Portraits of Americans by Painters of the Seventeenth, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, Union League Club, New York, March 1924, no. 13. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered.

THROUGHOUT HIS CAREER as a portrait painter, Clark often turned to members of his family as subjects; in addition to his four children, he had eight siblings who lived to adulthood.<sup>4</sup> By the time the National Gallery's portrait descended to the artist's grandchildren, tradition had established the sitter as his older brother, Barnabas Clark (1799-1890).

The costume, with its loose black cravat swathed around an upturned collar and a double-breasted coat showing very little of the shirt front, corresponds to styles prevalent during the early 1840s. In addition, the stencil mark on the back of the canvas denotes the firm of Philibert Caffé, listed as a seller of "artist canvas" in New York City directories between 1837 and 1840.<sup>5</sup> By 1840, however, Barnabas Clark was forty-one, older than the sitter appears to be. Indeed, a miniature tentatively dated 1835, and said to be a likeness of Barnabas when he was thirty-six, shows a man who, while resembling the Na-



Fig. 1. Alvan Clark, *Barnabas Clark*, watercolor on ivory, Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts

tional Gallery's sitter in the chin, mouth, and large nose curving at the tip, is obviously older (fig. 1).<sup>6</sup> William P. Campbell noted this discrepancy in 1966 and suggested the artist's youngest brother William (1814–1854)—who was twenty-six in 1840—as an alternate identification for the National Gallery's portrait.<sup>7</sup>

The theory that the portrait depicts a Clark brother is buttressed by the obvious family resemblance of the National Gallery and Worcester sitters and the fact that the two works were owned by the artist's grandchildren. After their marriages, both Barnabas and William moved west (the former to Iowa, the latter to Indiana); their absence from Massachusetts may have made it easier for later generations of Clark relatives to confuse the sitter's identity.<sup>8</sup>

With the exception of the streak of white fabric at his neck, the young man's face stands out as the only bright area of the portrait. A nineteenth-century account of Clark's working methods described his use of a "prism" (camera lucida) as well as a network of canvas pins to establish the focal points of a

portrait.<sup>9</sup> The precise red lines of the facial contours, still visible in certain areas of the luminous head, are probably evidence of this scientific attempt at systematically fixing his likeness.

JD

#### Notes

1. Letter from Alvan Clark Eastman (son of Caroline Amelia Eastman), 24 September 1952 (in NGA curatorial files), identifies the sitter as Barnabas Clark, states that the portrait hung for a number of years in his mother's home, and remarks that it was sold by Grogan during his mother's lifetime.

2. A statement signed by Elizabeth W. Grogan and addressed to "Mr. Bigelow" (in NGA curatorial files) identifies the sitter as Barnabas Clark. The statement is inscribed in another hand, "Cambridge Mar 10, 1919."

3. Although the 1924 Anderson Galleries catalogue (*Colonial Furniture, The superb Collection of Mr. Francis Hill Bigelow of Cambridge, Mass.*) gives the date as 17 January, an annotated copy of *Clarke* 1928 in the NGA library lists the auction date as 18 January.

4. The genealogy is drawn largely from Radasch and Radasch 1972, 158–162.

5. Katlan 1987, 61. There are later listings for Caffé as "merchant" and "importer" in the 1840s and 1850s, but none earlier than 1837.

6. The miniature is reproduced and discussed in Strickler 1989, 45–46. Like the NGA portrait, it descended within the Clark family. Alvan Clark's self-portrait (MFA) shows the same distinctive nose; see *MFA* 1969, 2: fig. 236.

7. Letter of 2 May 1966 from Campbell to Louisa Dresser (copy in NGA curatorial files). Other possible choices are brothers Samuel Clark (1805–1865) and Daniel Clark (1807–?).

8. Genealogical records indicate that William left Massachusetts sometime after his first marriage in 1836. By 1845, he was in Fayetteville, Indiana, having lived previously in Ohio and New Albany, Indiana. Barnabas was probably in Iowa by the early 1850s. See Radasch and Radasch 1972, 158–159, 161.

9. Samuel L. Gerry, "The Old Masters of Boston," *New England Magazine*, February 1891, 687. See also Warner 1968, 8.

#### References

- 1952 Rutledge and Lane: 116.  
1968 Warner: 115.



Alvan Clark, *The Artist's Brother*, 1947.17.30



Alvan Clark, *Thomas Whittemore*, 1950.8.1



Alvan Clark, *Lovice Corbett Whittemore (Mrs. Thomas Whittemore)*, 1950.8.2

1950.8.1 (1054)

*Thomas Whittemore*

1844

Oil on canvas, 75.9 × 63.8 (29<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 25<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>)  
Gift of Thomas Whittemore

**Inscriptions**

On reverse: Æt. 44./ 1844

**Technical Notes:** The unlined, plain-weave fabric support is tacked to the original butt-jointed stretcher. The white ground is thick and smooth. Subsequent paint layers generally are thick and opaque and seem to have been rapidly applied. The paint is thinner in the shadowed areas, where it was applied wet-into-wet. The uneven varnish is hazy and has become moderately discolored.

**Provenance:** The sitter [1800–1861]; by descent to his grandson, Thomas Whittemore.<sup>1</sup>

**Exhibited:** Possibly *Second Exhibition of the Boston Artists' Association*, 1843, no. 61, as "Portrait" owned by "Rev. T. Whittemore."<sup>2</sup>

1950.8.2 (1055)

*Lovice Corbett Whittemore*  
(*Mrs. Thomas Whittemore*)

1845

Oil on canvas, 76.2 × 63.5 (30 × 25)  
Gift of Thomas Whittemore

**Inscriptions**

On reverse of the original canvas: Æt 43/ 1845<sup>3</sup>

**Technical Notes:** The finely woven, plain-weave support has been lined. Cusping along all four cut edges suggests that the image has not been reduced. The white ground is thick and smooth, and subsequent paint was applied rapidly and thickly, except in the dark dress and shadowed areas, where the paint is thinner. X-radiography indicates several changes: in the profile of the bonnet, in the right sleeve, and in the upper portion of the dress where the bonnet's ties have been covered by dark paint. In 1952 the painting was relined, discolored varnish was removed, and the painting was restored. There is some minor inpainting around the sitter's left eye, on her right shoulder, on her neck, and along the bottom edge. A pervasive system of thin, branched cracks runs through the paint film. The glossy varnish has become discolored.

**Provenance:** same as 1950.8.1.

THOMAS WHITTEMORE (1800–1861) and Lovice Corbett (1802?–1882) were married in Milford, Massachusetts, in 1821.<sup>4</sup> Although little is known about Lovice, Thomas Whittemore was a prominent force in the Universalist religious movement during the first half of the nineteenth century. Raised in a climate of moderate Calvinism in Charlestown, Massachusetts, Whittemore left his family following the death of his father, a baker, in 1814. After several unsuccessful apprenticeships, he eventually joined the household of a Boston bootmaker, where he remained until the age of 21. As a means of earning extra money during his apprenticeship, Whittemore served as a vocalist and instrumentalist for several church choirs in Boston.

Through this employment he was first exposed to Universalism, a Protestant sect—considered heretical by many of his contemporaries—that opposed Calvinist predestination as well as traditional concepts of hell and punishment. Universalists' liberal doctrine held that a benevolent god would see to the final salvation of every soul on earth, regardless of degree of sin. Whittemore's first pastoral assignment was with the Universalist church in Milford, where he met his wife, the daughter of Universalist farmers. The following year they moved to Cambridgeport, with Whittemore serving as a pastor there for the next decade. Although they remained in Cambridgeport for the rest of their lives, eventually raising nine children, he resigned his post in 1831 and became a well-known itinerant preacher. His primary occupation, however, was as editor and publisher of the *Trumpet and Universalist Magazine*, a combative periodical, which, under his guidance, launched aggressive attacks on more conservative denominations. He also wrote a number of religious books, served in the state legislature, and became president of both the Cambridge Bank and the Vermont and Massachusetts Railroad. After his death, Lovice Whittemore continued to live quietly in Cambridgeport, where she was active in the First Universalist Church.

Clark's portraits of the Whittemores were likely meant to hang as pendants, with the couple turning as if to acknowledge one another. Thomas Whittemore's face and thickly painted white collar stand out from the relatively undifferentiated, dark composition. In the small turn of the head and neck, Clark hints compellingly at a slight fleshiness in his sitter, yet the massive bulk of Whittemore's torso—he weighed more than 200 pounds and according to his biographer, "indulged quite freely when at the

table”—blends almost imperceptibly into the background.<sup>5</sup> Lovice Whittemore’s gaze seems less focused and alert than her husband’s. Her pose is also less animated, her fixed profile more deferential in its implicit focus on her husband’s likeness. The only hint of movement in her portrait comes from the streaky highlights in the lace surrounding her face. She is seated at the edge of an orange-red sofa, her elbow leaning on its upholstered arm to form a bracket of closure on the right side of the painting. Opposite, the contour of the top edge of the sofa parallels her own line of vision, leading back to the minister.

Prior to his move in 1860, Clark had been a neighbor of the Whittemores in Cambridgeport. The minister took an interest in the artist’s work with telescopes and was known to visit him on occasion to examine the night sky. He also wrote appreciatively of Clark as a “first-class painter of portraits,” but there seems to have been one more interest linking the two men.<sup>6</sup> In his autobiography, Clark confessed that although he had never been a member of any church, his “faith in the universality of God’s providence [was] entire and unswerving.”<sup>7</sup> His remark suggests that Universalism, known as a relatively unscholarly, simple denomination in contrast to other university-based sects, held something of an appeal for Clark, who took pride in the fact that his own accomplishments had occurred without benefit of professional training or schooling.

JD

## Thomas Cole

1801 – 1848

THOMAS COLE, America’s leading landscape painter during the first half of the nineteenth century, was born on 1 February 1801 in Bolton-le-Moor, England. Before immigrating with his family to the United States in 1818, he served as an engraver’s assistant and as an apprentice to a designer of calico prints. Cole worked briefly as an engraver in Philadelphia before joining his family in Steubenville, Ohio, in 1819. While in Ohio he apparently learned the rudiments of oil painting from an itinerant portrait painter named Stein. In

## Notes

1. Following the death of Thomas Whittemore in 1861, the portrait and its pendant presumably remained in the possession of his widow until her death in 1882, at which point they likely passed to her only surviving son, Joseph Whittemore [d. 1894] and subsequently to his wife, Elizabeth Whittemore [d. 1904] (who, in her husband’s will, docket no. 37300, Middlesex County [Massachusetts] Probate Records, was named the recipient of all his personal property). Their sole surviving child was Thomas, the donor of the picture to the NGA. See Whittemore 1893, 27.

2. The exhibition took place during autumn 1843, ostensibly several months before the application of the inscription, which dates the work and gives the sitter’s age as forty-four (Whittemore turned forty-four on 1 January 1844). It is conceivable that the inscription was added following the exhibition, at the time that the portrait passed back into the hands of the sitter.

3. The inscription, recorded in a photograph (in NGA curatorial files), is now concealed by the lining that was attached to the original fabric in 1952.

4. Biographical and genealogical sources provide little information as to Lovice Whittemore’s date of birth; however, the inscription on her portrait and her husband’s description of her as “about two years younger than myself” indicate the year 1802. See Whittemore 1859, 281. Another useful biographical source is Adams 1878.

5. Adams 1878, 372.

6. Adams 1878, 269.

7. “Autobiography of Alvan Clark,” *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 43, January 1889, 52–58.

## References

1968 Warner: 119.

1823 during a stay in Pittsburgh, Cole began drawing from nature, creating closely observed, intensely expressive images of trees and branches. Later that year he returned to Philadelphia, where he studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and worked in a variety of art-related jobs.

His family had relocated to New York, and after joining them in April 1825 Cole spent the summer on an extensive sketching tour up the Hudson River and into the Catskill Mountains. In late Oc-

tober 1825 three of his landscapes—*Lake with Dead Trees* (1825, Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio), *View of Fort Putnam*, and *Falls of Kaaterskill* (locations unknown)—were sold to three prominent figures in the young nation's art community, John Trumbull (1756–1843), William Dunlap (1766–1839), and Asher B. Durand. In January 1826 Cole was a founding member of the National Academy of Design, and his works were increasingly in demand with leading patrons such as Daniel Wadsworth (1771–1848) of Hartford and Robert Gilmor, Jr. (1774–1848), of Baltimore.

Although Cole had ample commissions in the late 1820s to paint pictures of American scenery, his ambition was to create a “higher style of landscape” that expressed moral or religious meanings. His first major efforts in this vein, *The Garden of Eden* (1827–1828, Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth) and *The Expulsion from the Garden of Eden* (1828, MFA), met with mixed reviews, and he decided study and travel in Europe were necessary. In June 1829 Cole sailed for England, where he studied the works of Old Masters and met Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775–1851) and John Constable (1776–1837), before continuing on to France and then Italy, with lengthy stays in Rome and Florence. While in Italy he conceived of a multipart landscape series tracing the rise and fall of an archetypal civilization. Although he failed to interest Gilmor in commissioning the series, upon his return to America in 1832 Cole convinced retired New York merchant Luman Reed (1785–1836) to support his grand project. The result, the five-canvas *Course of Empire* (NYHS), was completed in 1836 and received considerable popular attention and generally favorable reviews.

Cole continued to paint American landscapes in the 1830s and early 1840s, but much of his energy went into the creation of complex imaginary works such as *Departure* and *Return* (1837, CGA) and the two versions of *The Voyage of Life* (see following entries). In 1836 he married Maria Barstow and settled in Catskill, New York, a small village on the west side of the Hudson and close to the mountains. That same year Cole, who was throughout his career a prolific writer of prose and poetry, published his “Essay on American Scenery” in the *American Monthly Magazine*,

in which he expressed many of his most deeply felt convictions about landscape painting.

In 1841 Cole made a second trip abroad, with extensive travel in Italy, including a memorable visit to Sicily that resulted in several views of Mount Etna. He returned to Catskill in 1842; in 1844, on Daniel Wadsworth's recommendation, he accepted the young Frederic Edwin Church as a pupil. In the mid and late 1840s Cole painted many impressive American landscapes, such as *View of the Falls of Munda* (1847, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design), which are notable for an increased accuracy in the depiction of atmosphere and light. At the same time he labored, ultimately without success, to complete a five-part series called *The Cross and the World*, in which he endeavored to portray the individual's quest for spiritual knowledge and salvation.

Cole's death on 11 February 1848 at the age of forty-seven was universally mourned, and a comprehensive memorial exhibition of his works was quickly organized in New York. His influence on the course of American landscape painting was profound and his works influenced numerous younger painters who matured in the late 1840s and early 1850s, most notably Jasper F. Cropsey and Church.

FK

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- Truettner and Wallach 1994.

1989.24.1

### *Sunrise in the Catskills*

1826

Oil on canvas, 64.8 × 90.1 (25 1/2 × 35 1/2)  
 Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd, in Honor of the  
 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art

### Inscriptions

At lower center: T. Cole / 1826

**Technical Notes:** The support is a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric that has been lined. Over a thin reddish brown ground, the paint was applied in fairly thin

layers. In several areas, notably the sky and the background mountains, the ground shows through, contributing to the tonality. Areas of moderate impasto include the highlights of the trees and rocks and the brightly lit clouds in the sky. The overall paint surface is slightly abraded, especially in the sky, and the light colors have become more transparent with age, allowing the dark ground to show more prominently than was originally intended. Discolored varnish was removed and the painting was restored in 1990.

**Provenance:** Commissioned 1826 by Robert Gilmore, Jr. [d. 1848], Baltimore.<sup>1</sup> Robert Hall, Hamden, Connecticut, until 1968;<sup>2</sup> (Kennedy Galleries, New York), 1968; Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd, New York.

**Exhibited:** *American Art: An Exhibition from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd*, The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; WMAA, 1976, no. 33. *NGA* 1991, 140–141.

FOLLOWING the dramatic discovery of Cole and his work in autumn 1825, word of the young artist's talent for painting landscapes quickly spread.<sup>3</sup> In November of 1825 John Trumbull advised Robert Gilmore, Jr., a highly knowledgeable and sophisticated collector in Baltimore: "A young man of the name of T. Cole has just made his appearance here from the interior of Pennsylvania, who has surprised us with some landscapes of uncommon merit. We shall thus have some interesting novelties for your next visit."<sup>4</sup>

Gilmore met Cole in New York in the spring of 1826, and after reviewing the artist's sketches commissioned a view of the Catskill Mountain House from the road leading up to it.<sup>5</sup> By this time Cole's reputation had spread and he was finding it difficult to fulfill his numerous commissions. In the summer he relocated to Catskill, New York, a small village on the Hudson east of the Mountain House. Although he devoted much of his time to sketching in the mountains in search of new material and fresh inspiration, he also managed to complete several paintings; however, Gilmore's commission was not among them. In July Cole had admitted to Gilmore that the subject was causing him difficulty, and proposed he be allowed to select a new subject to "ensure a better picture."<sup>6</sup> Gilmore promptly replied, "I leave you at perfect liberty to select your own subject," but proceeded to offer copious advice regarding the style Cole should use and the details to include, recommending in particular a body of water, one or more Indians, or perhaps a deer or some cattle.<sup>7</sup> For Cole, the opportunity to correspond with such an astute and knowledgeable (albeit

highly opinionated) connoisseur proved of great importance. He was still forming his artistic beliefs, and expressing his intentions to Gilmore on paper during the very time he was fulfilling the commission forced him to clarify his ideas both in his own mind and on canvas. Indeed, their correspondence provides fascinating evidence of a lively, and occasionally argumentative, interplay between artist and patron, with Cole often required to justify his own thoughts and opinions and always having to react to Gilmore's incessant advice.<sup>8</sup>

Cole finally completed *Sunrise in the Catskills* in early December, and it was delivered to Baltimore on Christmas Day.<sup>9</sup> The scene, according to the artist, was in the vicinity of the headwaters of the Delaware River, and represented a "Sunrise from the Fly [Vly] mountain."<sup>10</sup> This information allows identification of the scene as a view eastward from Vly Mountain (elevation 3529 feet), about eight miles from the East Branch of the Delaware River.<sup>11</sup> Cole knew this territory well; it was close to the sites of several paintings he had done in the vicinity of Kaaterskill Clove. But if the location was familiar to the artist, the compositional means he employed to capture it on canvas were not. *Sunrise in the Catskills* has a daringly elevated vantage point. The viewer is poised looking out at several other mountains and at valleys filled with mist shining in the morning light. In the foreground are tangled bits of underbrush, contorted and fallen trees, and rough outcroppings of rock precariously situated at the edge of the slope.<sup>12</sup> This is not a tamed and cultivated portion of the American landscape but a remote, wild area with no evidence of human presence.

Modern observers have tended to read *Sunrise in the Catskills* as an early affirmation of the value and sanctity of the untouched American wilderness.<sup>13</sup> As such it would seem to anticipate the editorial voice of *The Crayon* some three decades later: "Our country *is* wild, and must be looked at by itself, and be painted as it is . . . untamed nature everywhere asserts her claim upon us, and the recognition of this claim represents an essential part of our Art."<sup>14</sup> Cole's early landscapes were among the first successful pictorial expressions of such attitudes; however, there is evidence in the painting that Cole may have been aware that the American wilderness was not indestructible and was, in fact, already being transformed. His inclusion of a mullein plant prominently placed on the outcropping of rock at the left is particularly suggestive in this connection. The mullein, a vigorous and highly invasive plant

introduced by European settlers, appears frequently in Cole's paintings and in works by many other American landscape painters, and this suggests that the mullein held specific meaning for Americans of Cole's day. A passage in Henry David Thoreau's *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* hints at the nature of that meaning: "The white man's mullein soon reigned in Indian cornfields, and sweet-scented English grasses clothed the new soil. Where, then, could the Red Man set his foot?"<sup>15</sup> If the mullein was a symbol of the ascendancy of European civilization in the new land, then in Cole's painting its presence is telling: That it has spread to a mountain summit in the very heart of a previously untouched wilderness is evidence of its adaptability and vitality. Significantly, Cole posed the three mullein stalks in positions that precisely echo the two trees at the left side of the composition and the bent, twisted tree at the lower center. By visually linking the vibrant plant stalks with the dead and dying tree forms, Cole may have been alluding to the inevitable passing of the old order of things—an order largely determined by nature's actions and causes—to a new one influenced and ultimately dominated by a transplanted European civilization.

Such meanings cannot be proved conclusively, but we do at least know Gilmor's opinion of *Sunrise in the Catskills*. Upon receiving the picture he wrote immediately to Cole: "It is extremely well painted, with great truth of nature. I have seen a thousand such scenes when in the mountains, and though the task was a very difficult one, yet you have perfectly succeeded in rendering the mists of the valley rising as the sun began to peep over the summits of the mountains." Although generally pleased with the painting, Gilmor nevertheless could not restrain himself from offering some informed criticism:

It is as you say a scene of wild desolation, and perhaps for that reason more monotonous in its general effect than it would otherwise have been. You have very judiciously however broken this sameness in part by your foreground; on the rocks & twisted tree you have shiny gleams of sunlight which are very desirable. I think you have hardly given enough of this light to the tops of the trees or the rock, which should first have caught it, & perhaps a little more of its effect in warming the mountain-side where the mists rise, would have given more force to the cold shadowy form of the center of the mountain, which is extremely fine.<sup>16</sup>

Gilmor again lamented the absence of figures, noting that one or more Indians "would have done a

great deal to assist its effect, while the wildness of the scenery would have lost nothing by it." This advice was not lost on Cole, who in many subsequent works, including the version of *The Last of the Mohicans* he painted for Gilmor in 1827 (New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown), added figures.<sup>17</sup> Gilmor conceded that "the twisted branches of the tree, struck with lightning or blown down by storms has a very happy effect, & is something of a substitute for figures, by implying action of some kind or other." That understanding accorded perfectly with Cole's own beliefs: "Treading the mosses of the forest, my attention has often been attracted by the appearance of action and expression of surrounding objects, especially of trees. I have been led to reflect upon the fine effects they produce, and to look into the causes. They spring from some resemblance to the human form." Trees were capable of conveying human emotions: "There is an expression of affection in intertwining branches,—of dependency in the drooping willow," and of expressing the very adversity of life itself: "On the mountain summit, exposed to the blasts, trees grasp the crags with their gnarled roots, and struggle with the elements with wild contortions."<sup>18</sup> His use of anthropomorphized trees as key iconographic elements in his wilderness pictures was clearly understood by at least Gilmor and probably others.

*Sunrise in the Catskills*, both as Cole's first fully expressed wilderness painting and as a document of his relationship to his important early patron Gilmor, is a pivotal work in the story of nineteenth-century American landscape painting. It contains the seeds of Cole's own later masterpieces such as *Schroon Mountain, Adirondacks* (1838, Cleveland Museum of Art) and anticipates the great wilderness pictures his pupil Frederic Edwin Church would create in the 1850s and 1860s.

FK

## Notes

1. The commission is documented in a series of letters between Cole and Gilmor during July-December 1826 (Dreer Collection of American Artists, HSP; and New York State Library, Albany); these are printed in Merritt, "Correspondence," 1967, 43-50. On Robert Gilmor and his collection, see Rutledge, "Precocious Taste," 1949, 28-29, 51; Rutledge, "Gilmor," 1949, 18-39; Novak 1962, 41-53; and *Taste* 1984, 1-7. Gilmor's will (14 December 1848, Baltimore City Register of Wills) does not mention *Sunrise in the Catskills* specifically and indicates that the distribution of his pictures was left up to his widow.



Thomas Cole, *Sunrise in the Catskills*, 1989.24.1

2. Jules D. Prown (letter of 12 June 1991 in NGA curatorial files) states: "The painting came to my attention in February/March of 1968 when I was Curator of American Art in the Yale Art Gallery. It was then owned by Mr. Robert Hall . . . [of] Hamden, Connecticut." According to Prown, Hall indicated that he had received the painting from his father. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to trace this individual or to establish whether he was a Gilmor descendant. There are Gilmor descendants with the surname Hall, and at least two of them were named Robert. However, there is no evidence that either of these Robert Halls ever owned *Sunrise in the Catskills* or lived in Hamden. I am grateful to Lance Humphries, who is researching a doctoral dissertation on Gilmor, for his assistance. In 1967 Merritt ("Correspondence," 46) listed *Sunrise in the Catskills* as being in a private collection in New Haven; however, in a letter of 25 April 1993 (in NGA curatorial files) Merritt indicated that although the telephone call came from New Haven, the owner may well have lived in Hamden.

3. For an account of Cole's discovery by Trumbull, Durand, and Dunlap, see Dunlap 1834, 3:149. Dunlap had earlier given a fuller account of the event in an article published in the *New-York Evening Post* of 22 November 1825 (quoted in Parry 1988, 25–26).

4. Letter dated November 1825 from Trumbull to Gilmor (Dreer Collection, HSP), as quoted in Parry 1988, 27.

5. That Gilmor had chosen a view of Mountain House is indicated in Cole's letter to him of 28 July 1826 as quoted in Merritt, "Correspondence," 1967, 43. Catskill Mountain House, the first of the great resort hotels of the Catskills, opened in 1823. It was located at the very heart of the region's most dramatic scenery, with such sites as Catskill Falls and Kaaterskill Clove just a short hike away. The house was situated on a ledge some 2,200 feet above sea level and was especially famous for its commanding view eastward across the Hudson River Valley; see Van Zandt 1966 and Myers 1987, 37–63.

6. Letter of 28 July 1826 from Cole to Gilmor as quoted in Merritt, "Correspondence," 1967, 43–44.

7. Letter of 1 August 1826 from Cole to Gilmor as quoted in Merritt, "Correspondence," 1967, 43–44. Gilmor suggested that "Salvator's [Salvator Rosa] style would be that you would be most likely to adopt" and boasted that he owned "certainly the finest Salvator Rosa" then in America, a work called *The Augurs* (location unknown). Cole was almost certainly well aware of Rosa's style already, for he had had ample opportunity to examine the large *Landscape with Mercury and Argus* owned by the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia when he studied there in 1823. The painting (sold by PAFA in 1990 and currently in a private collection) offered ample evidence of the basic characteristics of Rosa's manner, especially his use of dramatic contrasts of light and dark, twisted and contorted trees, and rocky settings. See also Wallace 1979, 34–35, 87, 112–121; and Parry 1988, 63. Gilmor gave Cole a second commission on 1 August: "In addition to the one I ordered you will oblige me by executing a companion for it, though I do not mean it should be a *similar* subject exactly. I would rather it should evince your talent in two kinds of subjects." This second painting, entitled *Corroway [Chocorua]*

*Peak, N.H., after Sunset* (location unknown), was delivered to Gilmor on 12 December 1827 (Gilmor to Cole, 13 December 1827 as quoted in Merritt, "Correspondence," 1967, 54–58). Judging from an ink record drawing (Detroit Institute of Arts; see Merritt, "Correspondence," 1967, fig. 23; and Parry 1988, fig. 33) the painting—the composition of which was strikingly like that of Gilmor's *Augurs*—was both complement and contrast to *Sunrise*, for it depicted a view from a low foreground across a middle ground lake toward a high mountain peak and, of course, a sky showing the hues of sunset. It thus effectively reversed the main elements of the earlier picture, but remained compatible in subject and composition.

8. Without question, these letters are among the most informative and justly celebrated documents in the history of American art. Forty letters (all quoted in Merritt, "Correspondence," 1967), dating from 1826–1837, between Cole and Gilmor have survived, and several others are known to have existed. Cole painted four pictures for Gilmor: *Sunrise in the Catskills*; *Chocorua Peak, N.H., after Sunset*; *Scene from "Last of the Mohicans"* (1827 New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown); and *A Wild Scene* (1831–1832, Baltimore Museum of Art). A comparable series of letters between Cole and his Hartford patron Daniel Wadsworth (see McNulty 1983) provides a revealing complement to the Gilmor letters. Wadsworth was less demanding and certainly less prone to dispense artistic advice. In the case of at least one painting, *Landscape Composition, St. John in the Wilderness* (1827, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford), Wadsworth received a painting that Gilmor thought he had already purchased, suggesting that Cole gave preferential treatment to the Hartford collector (see Gilmor to Cole, letter of 5 December 1827 in Merritt, "Correspondence," 1967, 50–51).

9. On 4 December 1826 Cole announced the completion of the picture and described it to Gilmor. Something of the content of this important but unlocated letter can be deduced from Gilmor's response of 13 December (Merritt, "Correspondence," 1967, 44–45) in which he expressed his hope that it might include figures and "at least a glimpse of the river. . . . Water always adorns a picture." Cole replied on 25 December: "If your picture had not been sent off before I received your letter I might have introduced some living object in the foreground, though I do not think it would add much to the effect."

10. Parry 1988, fig. 1. Parry 1988, 22, reproduces Cole's list of pictures painted in New York in 1825–1826, and no. 23, "Sunrise from the Fly [*sic*] Mountain," has Gilmor's written name beside it. The first letter of the fourth word has been written over with what appears to be an "F," making the original first letter illegible. Gilmor consistently refers to the painting as *Sunrise in the Catskills*.

11. I am grateful to Ernie Barringer of the United States Geological Survey in Washington for his assistance in identifying the site. Vly Mountain is located in present-day Halcott Township, about four miles northwest of the town of West Kill. Although there is a Fly Mountain southwest of Kingston, New York, it is only 370 feet high, is not surrounded by other mountains, and is certainly not near the headwaters of the Delaware. The

“F” over Cole’s writing thus might either represent a mistake by a later hand or, perhaps, an attempt by the artist himself at a phonetic spelling because the “V” in Vly might well have sounded like an “F” in local pronunciation.

12. These foreground details recall the highly expressive studies of trees and vegetation Cole made in 1823; see Merritt 1982, nos. 1–7; and Parry 1990, 7–17.

13. For E. P. Richardson 1976, 90, the painting expressed Cole’s “feeling for the beauty of the vast, wild, untamed continent so unlike the inhabited landscape of the Old World.”

14. “Sketchings; Exhibition of the National Academy of Design, No. III,” *The Crayon* 1, 11 April 1855, 234. Wolf 1982, chap. 5, while not discounting the importance of the wilderness theme, provides a markedly different interpretation of *Sunrise in the Catskills* using the psychoanalytic theories of Freud and Jacques Lacan. Parry takes vehement exception to Wolf’s approach; see Parry 1988, 43–45; and Parry 1991, 391–392.

15. Thoreau 1849, 44. Beecher, “A Discourse on Flowers,” 1855, 95–96, also singled out the mullein.

16. Letter of 27 December 1826 from Gilmor to Cole, as quoted in Merritt, “Correspondence,” 1967, 47. Gilmor had difficulty finding a place to hang *Sunrise in the Catskills* and almost a year later admitted it was among the “at least 15 to 20 pictures which I have not room to hang up” (letter of 5 December 1827, as quoted in Merritt, “Correspondence,” 1967, 52).

17. *Sunny Morning on the Hudson River* (1827, MFA) elaborates on this compositional scheme and has a foreground that is similarly devoid of people; however, the majority of Cole’s landscapes after 1826 do include figures of people or animals.

18. As quoted in Vesell 1964, 41–42.

## References

- 1834 Dunlap: 3:274.  
1967 Merritt, “Correspondence”: 43–57, 128, repro. 46.  
1982 Czestochowski: 64–65, color repro.  
1982 Wolf: 194, 198–210, repro. 199.  
1983 Johnston: 153n.1.  
1986 Parry, “Cole”: 173–174.  
1987 Myers: 83–84n.59.  
1988 Parry: 22, 43–45, pl. 2.  
1990 Powell: 30, color pl., 32.  
1991 Cikovsky and Kelly: 569, pl. 4, 570.  
1991 Parry: 389–393, 399, color repro. (reversed), 414.  
1994 Kelly, *Cole*: 19, repro.

1993.55.1

## *Italian Coast Scene with Ruined Tower*

1838

Oil on canvas, 86.4 × 116.8 (34 × 46)

Gift of The Circle of the National Gallery of Art

### Inscriptions

At lower right: T. Cole [last letter partially obscured by rock]

**Technical Notes:** The support is a medium-weight, coarsely textured plain-weave fabric that has been lined. Although the original tacking margins have been removed, there is cusping along all four edges. The mortise-and-tenon panel-back stretcher appears to be original. The continuous ground layer is off-white and of medium thickness. A thin pink imprimatura was applied over the ground in the areas of the sky and water; the land forms and tower were painted directly on the white ground. The paint was built up with rich, slightly blended, flowing strokes that give the painting a distinctly brushy quality with low impasto. Infrared reflectography shows extensive underdrawing defining major compositional elements in several areas. The only area indicating significant changes is along the horizon at the left, where underdrawing shows another island with arched architectural forms; the position of the moon was changed several times. There are no major losses and only scattered areas of small paint loss, particularly in the sky. Some darker areas, especially the foreground hillside and the tower, have drying cracks that were minimized by inpainting in 1993.

**Provenance:** Possibly Hugh D. Scott, Boston, Massachusetts; his daughter, Helen Livingston Scott Greenway [1903–1980], Wellesley and Needham, Massachusetts;<sup>1</sup> her son, James C. Greenway III, Fairfield, Connecticut, and Easton, Maryland, 1962–1993; sold through (Martin Chasin Fine Arts, Fairfield, Connecticut).

**Exhibited:** Possibly Athenaeum Gallery, Boston, 1839.<sup>2</sup>

*Italian Coast Scene with Ruined Tower*, unknown to modern scholarship on Cole until its acquisition by the National Gallery in 1993, is a significant document in the story of the artist’s long-time fascination with Old World ruins. In “Essay on American Scenery” of 1836, Cole compared the landscape of the New World to that of Europe, noting: “American associations are not so much of the past as of the present and the future. Seated on a pleasant knoll, look down into the bosom of that secluded valley. . . . You see no ruined tower to tell of outrage—no gorgeous temple to speak of ostentation.”<sup>3</sup> During his first trip to Europe, 1829–1832, Cole saw



Fig. 1. Thomas Cole, *Torre Maschio, Volterra, Italy*, pencil, 1831, The Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, William H. Murphy Fund, 39.562.35

many ruined towers and ostentatious temples, both actual ones in real landscapes and painted ones in the canvases of Claude Lorrain (1600–1682), Salvator Rosa (1615–1673), and other Old Masters. Contemplating the ruins of man’s most ambitious structures—whether medieval buildings in Britain, the Colosseum in Rome, the Claudian aqueduct in the Campagna, or Greek temples at Paestum—released a veritable flood of associations in Cole. A landscape with a ruined tower or temple was for him “ground which has been the great theater of human events . . . made sacred in our minds by heroic deeds and immortal song—over which time and genius has suspended an imperishable halo.”<sup>4</sup>

It did not take Cole long to begin expressing such sentiments in his art; ruins became a favorite subject. His European sketchbooks contain many studies of ruins, and ruined structures began appearing in his finished paintings as early as 1832. In many instances, it was the architecture of the classical past that fired his imagination, as in *Aqueduct near Rome* (1832, Washington University Gallery of Art, St. Louis). Indeed, the imaginary civilization in his great five-part series *The Course of Empire* painted for the New York patron Luman Reed (1833–1836, NYHS) was modeled on ancient Rome. But the architectural relics of the Middle Ages fascinated Cole. He wrote of Gothic architecture: “All is lofty, aspiring and mysterious. Its towers and pinnacles climb toward the clouds like airy fabricks. Ever

hovering on the verge of the impossible, on it the mind does not dwell with satisfied delight, but takes wing & soars into an imaginary world.”<sup>5</sup> Cole found circular fortified towers particularly appealing and powerfully evocative of the age of chivalry and feudal warfare. He had ample opportunity to see such towers in England and Italy, and their lonely locations, guarding strategically important sites such as harbors, coastlines, or mountain passes, must have struck him as particularly rich in pictorial possibilities. The tower of the great fourteenth-century fortress at Volterra—“a fine specimen of Castle architecture”—became the subject of a detailed drawing (fig. 1).<sup>6</sup>

That Cole was susceptible to the associations engendered by ruined towers owed a great deal to his own romantic sensibilities and the expectations he had for how the European landscape should look—sensibilities and expectations that had been shaped by art. Many of Claude’s compositions included prominent sentinel towers.<sup>7</sup> Ruined castles also populated Rosa’s paintings. (In his small oil study *Salvator Rosa Sketching Banditti* [c. 1832, MFA] Cole included a ruined circular tower perched on the background cliffs.) But even more important, John Constable (1776–1837), whose works he had long admired, featured a ruined tower in a painting Cole surely knew.<sup>8</sup> One of the first things Cole arranged upon his arrival in England in 1829 was an introduction to Constable, and at the June exhibition of the Royal Academy he had the opportunity to study the monumental *Hadleigh Castle: The Mouth of the Thames—Morning After a Stormy Night* (fig. 2). *Ruined Tower* (fig. 3) indicates just how strongly Cole was affected by Constable’s painting, for in virtually every significant respect it is a mirror image of the Constable. A shattered circular tower stands high on a hill overlooking the water, with a stormy, cloudy sky above; wheeling birds encircle the tower, and plants festoon every nook and cranny of the dilapidated masonry.<sup>9</sup>

Constable’s *Hadleigh Castle* held more than its powerful formal beauty as a drawing card for Cole. When it was shown at the Royal Academy lines from James Thomson’s well-known “The Seasons” accompanied the catalogue entry:

Wildly, through all his melancholy bounds  
Rude ruins glitter; and the briny deep,  
Seen from some promontory’s top,  
Far to the dim horizon’s utmost verge  
Restless, reflects a floating gleam.<sup>10</sup>

The poetry, so suggestive of nature’s restless energy



Thomas Cole, *Italian Coast Scene with Ruined Tower*, 1835.1

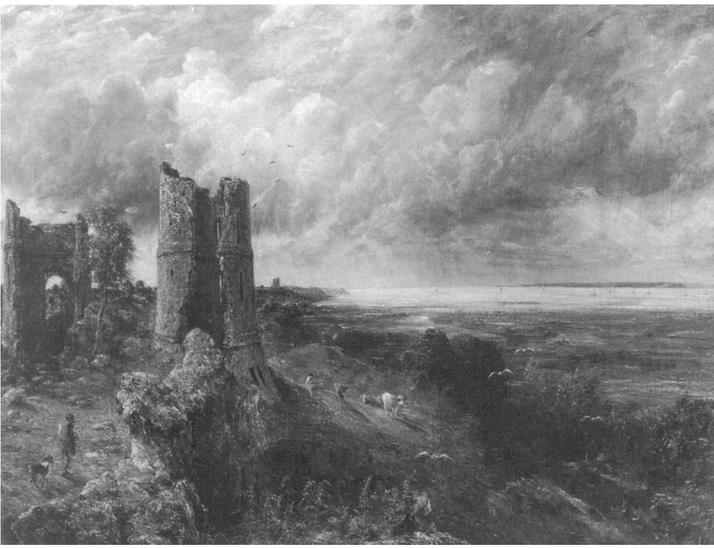


Fig. 2. John Constable, *Hadleigh Castle*, oil on canvas, 1829, New Haven, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1977.14.42

and the transience of human endeavors, unquestionably appealed to Cole, who was both poet and painter.

In the 1830s Cole featured medieval towers in several works. A ruined circular tower appears prominently in one of his first major European paintings, *Landscape Composition, Italian Scenery* (c. 1831–32, Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester; see fig. 3, p. 90), and in a small, possibly related, oil study entitled *Castle and River* (c. 1832, The Brooklyn Museum).<sup>11</sup> In his *Landscape (Moonlight)* of circa 1833–1834 painted for Luman Reed (NYHS), the circular tower is not ruined but still in use, as its intact roof and lighted window make evi-

Fig. 3. Thomas Cole, *Ruined Tower*, oil on canvas, Collection of the Albany Institute of History & Art, 1965.1



dent; however, Cole used it to set the time in the past, for he had based the painting on Byron's poem "Parasina," a tale of tragic love that is set in the Renaissance.<sup>12</sup> Cole also used a tower as the subject for one of the four door panels he painted in 1836 for Reed's picture gallery, for which the initial plans reportedly involved a complicated series of ideas centered around the theme of the Four Elements, with the ruined tower symbolizing earth.<sup>13</sup> Because the final panels—*The Mullein Stalk*, *The Ruined Castle*, *Balloon Ascension* (all Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford), and *Seascape with Waterspout* (Alexander Gallery, New York)—do not precisely correspond with the elements (there is no image of fire), it is possible that Cole intended other associations. In particular, the four may be read as two pairs: *The Mullein Stalk* and *The Ruined Castle* feature prominently grounded vertical objects silhouetted against the sky; *Seascape with Waterspout* and *Balloon Ascension* depict something airborne. Given the association of the mullein with the New World (see p. 77) and of medieval ruins with the Old World, it seems possible Cole was drawing in the first pair a contrast between America and Europe. In a parallel way, the other pair might have represented on the one hand nature's untamed force and, on the other, man's mastery of the elements.

In 1838 Cole's interest in painting ruined towers resurged. Two commissions seem to have been in large part responsible. First, in December 1837 Cole received an order from the New York collector Thomas Hall Faile for a 34- by 46-inch canvas depicting a "Scene from the Corsair"; however, Cole crossed out this notation and wrote in "My own choice of Subject Something of Chivalry Days."<sup>14</sup> The second commission, from Peter G. Stuyvesant, was for a pair of pictures, but no subject was immediately specified. Cole's satisfying of these two commissions must be considered in some detail here, for the National Gallery's *Italian Coast Scene with Ruined Tower* was an indirect result of that process.

Cole began with Faile's commission, which, his journal entry indicates, was to be a landscape with Medora and Conrad based on Byron's narrative poem "The Corsair." As Parry has discussed, Cole ran into problems with this subject almost immediately, but did get as far as envisioning a landscape depicting the corsair's rocky island, complete with a tower, and a sunset over the ocean.<sup>15</sup> Worried that the figures would prove too small to satisfy Faile, in January 1838 he proposed a new subject drawn from Coleridge's "exquisite poem called an 'Intro-

duction to the Tale of the Dark Ladie.’” In particular, Cole had in mind the following lines:

Oh! ever in my waking dreams  
I dwell upon that happy hour  
When midway on the mount I sate  
Beside the ruined tower.

The moonshine stealing over the scene  
Had blended with the lights of even;  
And she was there, my hope, my joy,  
My own dear Genevieve.

She lean’d against the armed man,  
The statue of the armed Knight,  
She stood and listened to my Harp  
Amid the lingering light.

I play’d a sad and doleful air  
I sang an old and moving story—  
An old rude song that fitted well  
That ruin wild and hoary.<sup>16</sup>

Faile apparently readily agreed to this change, for Cole produced a small oil (fig. 4) that must have been a study for the proposed picture. The rocky setting and ruined tower were retained, but the locale is in the mountains over which the moon is rising rather than the sun setting, in keeping with the poetic source. If Cole did produce this sketch soon after proposing the new subject, he seems not to have begun a larger canvas based on it immediately because other matters diverted him. In February he received further word from Stuyvesant saying that he would be happy to accept two pictures like those Cole had painted for the Rensselaer family (that is, *Departure* and *Return*, 1837, CGA). This must have set his mind to musing on how he might produce yet another pair of major works on a medieval theme. In March, Cole turned his attention to another subject on his mind, creating (without a patron) a major picture called *The Dream of Arcadia* (Denver Art Museum) that was set in the classical past.

By May 1838 Cole was apparently ready to begin work again on Faile’s commission, but his mood was troubled. As he wrote in his journal on the 19th:

When I remember the great works produced by the masters, how paltry seem the productions of my own pencil; how unpromising the prospect of ever producing pictures that shall delight, and improve posterity, and be regarded with admiration and respect. Is it my own deficiency, or the fault of the times and the society in which I live? This I know, I have the ambition, the desire and industry to do as much as any man has done. . . . I do feel that I am not a mere leaf-painter. I have higher conceptions than a mere combination of inanimate, uninformed nature. But I am out of place; every thing around, except

nature herself, conflicts with my feelings: there are few persons of real taste; and no opportunity for the true artist to develop his powers.<sup>17</sup>

Cole expressed such sentiments throughout his career (although not always with such assertive clarity); indeed, this personal struggle was the central element in what was for him a recurring artistic crisis. And, in this instance, Cole’s feelings were sufficiently troubled to interfere with his ability to paint and to complete the commission for Faile. As he wrote to Asher B. Durand the following day:

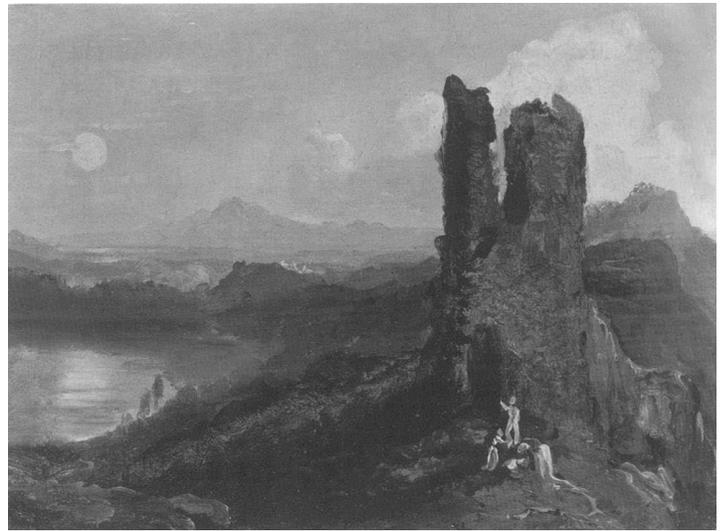


Fig. 4. Thomas Cole, *Genevieve*, oil on canvas, private collection, photograph courtesy of Kennedy Galleries, Inc., New York

You ask me what I am doing. Alas, scarcely anything. I commenced Mr. Faile’s [*sic*] picture, dashed along and the road seemed all clear, but staring about me my Hack got capsized into a Bog & there I have been floundering day after day—ragged[?] & [word illegible] I’m out at last but my Hack & Steeds are clean gone. In fact I commenced with Sweet Genevieve & her Lover & have ended with a Solitary Tower & Shepherd Boy looking *dead* into the moon’s eyes. My subject was swamped. I must attempt something else for Mr. Fail. I am sorry very sorry but it can’t be helped. You shall see the pieced[?] fragments when I come down.<sup>18</sup>

We may surmise that as Cole began work on Faile’s picture, the conception of which had already given him trouble, he decided his imagination was shackled by a subject that did not fully interest him. More to the point, to judge from his words of 19 May, Cole was chafing—as he so often did—under the de-

mands of producing a picture suitable to a general standard of taste that he perceived as wanting. His “higher conceptions” had collided with the pragmatic task of producing a suitably finished work that was an illustration of someone else’s poetic imagery. Technical evidence suggests that Cole did not get very far in transferring the essential elements of his sketch for “Genevieve” to the larger canvas, for there is no trace of the distant mountains or the figures in the underdrawing. In the end, unable to complete what he had set out to paint, Cole transformed his picture into something completely different: “A Solitary Tower & Shepherd Boy looking *dead* into the Moon’s eye.”<sup>19</sup>

*Italian Coast Scene with Ruined Tower*, the result of this remarkable transformation, thus speaks tellingly of the complexity of Cole’s vision and artistic process at a moment when doubts and dissatisfaction were compelling him to rethink and even redirect his art. He had recently reinvigorated his depiction of the American landscape in such works as *The Oxbow* (1836, MMA) and *Schroon Mountain* (1838, Cleveland Museum of Art). *Departure and Return*, with their mingling of the elegiac and the tragic, had convinced Cole that he could achieve a new level of poetic meaning and sentiment in pictures of his own conception. But as his notebook of 22 May makes clear, there were problems.

I am now engaged in painting a Picture representing a Ruined & Solitary Tower that stands on a craggy promontory whose base is laved by a calm unruffled ocean. Some rocky Islets rise from the sea at various distances, but the line of the Horizon is unbroken but by the Tower. The spectator is supposed to be looking east just after sunset. The moon is ascending from the ocean like a silver vapour. around her are towering clouds still lighted by the sun. The Moon the Clouds the Islets are all reflected in the tranquil waters. On the summit of the cliff around the ruin & on the grassy steeps below are seen sheep & goats & in the Foreground seated on some fragment of the Ruin is a lonely Shepherd. he appears to be gazing intently on a distant vessel that lies becalmed on the deep. Sea Birds are flying around the Tower & afar till almost invisible through distance below his feet. This picture will not be painted in my most finished style; I think it will be poetical, there is a stillness, a loneliness about it that may reach the Imagination. The mellow subdued tone of Evening Twilight, the silvery lustre of the rising moon, the glassy ocean which mirrors all upon its Bosom, the ivy-mantled Ruin, the distant Bark, the solitary Shepherd Boy who apparently in dreams of distant lands suggested by the sagging [?] sail, has forgotten that night approaches & his flocks are yet straggling among the rocks & precipices around. These objects combined must surely, if executed with ordinary skill

produce in a mind capable of feeling, a pleasing & poetical effect—a sentiment of tranquility and solitude. But this picture will probably remain on my hands. it is not the kind of work to sell—it would appear empty & vague to the multitude. Those who purchase pictures alas are like those who purchase merchandise they want *quantity, material*—they want something to show, something palpable—*things not thoughts*.<sup>20</sup>

Cole was describing *Italian Coast Scene with Ruined Tower*, without question less finished and more suggestive than works of the same period such as *Schroon Mountain* or *Dream of Arcadia*, and forward looking, in that its expansive sky and fresh sense of light and atmosphere suggest effects found in works of the mid and late 1840s such as *Home in the Woods* (1847, Reynolda House Museum of American Art, Winston-Salem). But what most distinguishes it today is precisely what the artist hoped would give it special resonance: “a pleasing & poetical effect—a sentiment of tranquility and solitude.” And that, too, is forward-looking, although its impact was more immediate. In the autumn of 1838 Cole would at last turn his attention to the Stuyvesant commission for two pictures on a medieval theme. His experience painting *Italian Coast Scene with Ruined Tower* must have convinced him anew of the great possibilities of the subject, for he chose a circular medieval tower as the central motif of this new pair. The result was *Past*, showing the tower and its castle as they were originally, and *Present* (both 1838, Mead Art Museum, Amherst College), showing them in ruins. And of these two, the latter, with its “massive and lofty tower that seemed to bid defiance to man and the elements [now] dilapidated and crumbling to decay,” ranks as one of Cole’s most evocatively beautiful works.<sup>21</sup> Cole was greatly pleased with it and painted several close variants, including *Landscape with Tower in Ruin* (1839, Currier Gallery, Manchester, New Hampshire) and *An Italian Autumn* (1844, MFA).

In the end, *Italian Coast Scene with Ruined Tower*, like so much of Cole’s art, was the result of a complicated, but imaginatively rich, sequence of events. What began as an attempt to illustrate a poetic source, first Byron, then Coleridge, ultimately turned into a completely personal statement. And this personal statement, in turn, both drew from the artist’s past experience and from earlier works like *Ruined Tower* (fig. 3) and informed the great works that would follow. Yet *Italian Coast Scene with Ruined Tower* is not merely transitional. It also stands as a fully successful and deeply affecting work in its own

right, a pictorial equivalent of sentiments concerning the mutability of man's creations and the fleeting nature of life that Cole so often expressed in his poetry:

Or is it that the fading light reminds  
That we are mortal and the latter day  
Steals onward swiftly, like the unseen winds,  
And all our years are clouds that quickly pass away.<sup>22</sup>

FK

## Notes

1. A temporary loan label on the stretcher from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, states that the picture was lent to the museum by Mrs. Augustin H. Parker, Charles River, Massachusetts, from January to April 1934 (information provided by Eric Hirschler, Assistant Curator of American Paintings, MFA, in a telephone conversation with the author, 22 June 1993). According to James C. Greenway III, no one by that name ever owned the painting; his mother, Helen Livingston Scott Greenway, did, however, reside on Charles River Street in Boston at one point during the time she owned the picture (information provided by Martin Chasin, in a telephone conversation with the author, 31 October 1995).
2. No. 140, "Italian Seashore, with Tower," owned by R. S. Fay; see Perkins and Gavin 1980, 38.
3. Thomas Cole, "Essay on American Scenery," *American Monthly Magazine* 1, 1836.
4. Thomas Cole, "Essay on American Scenery," *American Monthly Magazine* 1, 1836, 3.
5. Cole, "Letter to the Publick," Cole papers, New York State Library, Albany, as quoted in Parry 1988, 206.
6. See Cole 1991, 6.
7. Chambers 1983, 13.
8. Parry 1980, 36, 45.
9. Chambers 1983, 10.
10. Royal Academy catalogue June 1829 as quoted in Chambers 1983, 14.
11. For a reproduction of the latter, see Powell 1990, 56.
12. See Foshay 1990, pl. 3, 75, 126–127.
13. Parry 1980, 33–45; see also Foshay 1990, 119.
14. Cole papers, New York State Library, Albany, as quoted in Parry 1988, 200.
15. Parry 1988, 202.
16. Cole to Asher B. Durand, 31 January 1838, Cole papers, New York State Library, Albany, as partially quoted in Parry 1988, 202. Cole, who was stranded in Catskill because of severe winter weather, was using Durand as a go-between in his negotiations with Faile in New York. His transcription of Coleridge's verses was inexact, and he omitted one stanza; see Ashe 1893, 2: 39–40, 300–301.
17. Cole, journal entry of 19 May 1838 as quoted in Noble 1853, 195–196.
18. Cole, journal entry of 20 May 1838, Cole papers, New York State Library, Albany.
19. In 1841 Faile finally received *Landscape, The Vesper*

*Hymn: An Italian Twilight* (Toledo Museum of Art); see Strickler 1979, 35.

20. Cole, journal entry of 22 May 1838, Cole papers, New York State Library, Albany. This passage is also quoted in Noble 1853, 196, but with considerable amendments and deletions; the version in Noble also appears in Goldwater and Treves 1945, 281–282.

21. Cole 1848, 17.

22. Tynn 1972, 78–79: "Evening Thoughts."

## References

- 1853 Noble: 263–264.  
 1945 Goldwater and Treves: 281–282.  
 1964 Vesell: 196.  
 1964 Cole: 13.  
 1969 Novak: 73–74.  
 1983 Chambers: 32.  
 1988 Parry: 200–202, 208.  
 1989 Parry: 127.  
 1994 Kelly, *Cropsey*: 3.

1967.8.1 (2328)

## *A View of the Mountain Pass Called the Notch of the White Mountains (Crawford Notch)*

1839  
 Oil on canvas, 102 × 155.8 (40<sup>3/16</sup> × 61<sup>5/16</sup>)  
 Andrew W. Mellon Fund

## Inscriptions

At lower left: T. Cole. / 1839

**Technical Notes:** The support is a fairly rough woven fabric that has been lined. The ground appears to be white and infrared reflectography reveals considerable underdrawing. The paint was applied using a great variety of techniques, ranging from smoothly textured passages, such as in the sky, to loose, energetic, and heavily impasted brushwork in the foreground. Under the mountains and in the stormy half of the sky, a reddish brown imprimatura layer appears to have been used. Generally the painting is in very good condition, with only scattered small losses, some slight abrasion in the sky, and some minor flattening of the highest areas of impasto. The varnish has become slightly discolored.

**Provenance:** Commissioned 1839 by Rufus L. Lord [1782–1869], New York.<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Sturges [1802–1874], New York, and Fairfield, Connecticut;<sup>2</sup> his son, Henry C. Sturges [d. 1924], Fairfield, Connecticut; his wife, Mrs. Henry C. Sturges, Fairfield, Connecticut; LeRoy Ireland, Philadelphia, probably early 1930s, but certainly by 1944;<sup>3</sup> purchased June 1944 by (Vose Galleries, Boston);<sup>4</sup> sold 5 April 1945 to Sanitary Scale Company, Belvidere, Illinois;<sup>5</sup> acquired 1966 by (Kennedy Galleries, New York).

**Exhibited:** NAD, New York, 1840, no. 49, as *A View of the Mountain Pass called the Notch of the White Mountains. Catalogue of Pictures by Thomas Cole N.A.*, NAD, 1843–1844, no. 9, as *A View of the Notch in the White Mountains, New-Hampshire. Exhibition of Paintings of the Late Thomas Cole*, American Art-Union, New York, 1848, no. 40, as *A View in the Notch of the White Mountains of New Hampshire. Inness and the Hudson River School*, Robert C. Vose Galleries, Boston, 1944, no. 40, as *The Notch of the White Mountains. The Hudson River School*, AIC; WMAA, 1945, no. 64, as *The Pass Which is Called "The Notch of The White Mountains (Crawford Notch, New Hampshire)." Thomas Cole, One Hundred Years Later*, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, 1948–1949, no. 31, as *The Pass which is called "The Notch of the White Mountains." Paintings, Drawings, and Sculpture Collected by Yale Alumni: An Exhibition*, YUAG, 1960, 33, no. 32, as *The Pass Called "The Notch of the White Mountains." Thomas Cole*, Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester; Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica; Albany Institute of History & Art; WMAA, 1969, no. 39. *Our Land, Our Sky, Our Water: An Exhibition of American and Canadian Art*, International Exposition, Spokane, 1974, no. 1. *En Ny Värld: Amerikanst landskapsmåleri 1830–1900 och ett urval samtida skandinaviskt landskapsmåleri*, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm; Gothenburg Art Museum, Sweden, 1986–1987, no. 26, as *Pass in The White Mountains (Notch in the White Mountains). Thomas Cole: Landscape into History*, NMAA; Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford; The Brooklyn Museum, 1994–1995, fig. 67.

IN THE SUMMER of 1826 Daniel Wadsworth, Cole's wealthy patron from Hartford, made a tour of the White Mountains of New Hampshire. Wadsworth was deeply impressed by the rugged beauty of the area, which is characterized by numerous dramatic peaks (including Mount Washington, the highest point in the northeastern United States), precipitous valleys, and striking glaciated rock formations. The following year he recommended Cole take a similar tour, and provided a detailed itinerary that included Crawford Notch.<sup>6</sup> After two weeks sketching in the White Mountains, Cole declared himself "encompassed by beautiful scenery."<sup>7</sup> He had already come to know the particular charms of the Catskills and the environs of Lake George, but this landscape affected him even more powerfully: "It is here, in such sublime scenes that man sees his own nothingness; and the soul feels unutterably."<sup>8</sup>

Thus began for Cole an association with the White Mountains that would bear fruit in many fine and important pictures over the rest of his career. In the months following his return to New York he painted works featuring readily identifiable New Hampshire scenery for Robert Gilmore (*Corroway [Chocorua] Peak, N. H., After Sunset*, 1827, location

unknown), for Wadsworth (*View in the White Mountains*, 1827, and *View on Lake Winnipiseogee [sic]*, 1828, both Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford), and for Stephen Van Rensselaer (*Landscape view on the Winnipisogn [sic] Lake*, c. 1827–28, Albany Institute of History & Art), among others. Cole also drew on specific elements of the White Mountains—Chocorua and Lake Winnepesaukee in particular, in formulating the two versions of *The Last of the Mohicans* painted for Wadsworth (*Scene from "The Last of the Mohicans," Cora Kneeling at the Feet of Tamenund*, 1827, Wadsworth Atheneum) and Gilmore (*Scene from "The Last of the Mohicans,"* 1827, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown).

The features of Crawford Notch, however, do not seem to have entered his pictorial vocabulary immediately. The notch, one of three famous deep valleys in the heart of the White Mountains (the others are Pinkham Notch and Franconia Notch), was first seen by white men in 1771. It quickly became an important route through the mountains, with a primitive road built by the 1780s.<sup>9</sup> A more substantial turnpike was completed in 1804, and before long it had become a regular stop on tourist itineraries. The scenery alone, including distinctive Mount Webster (altitude 3,875), with its nearly perpendicular granite cliffs and celebrated Silver Cascade, and tiny Saco Lake, source of the Saco River, were initially more than enough to guarantee the region fame. But a particular event caused Crawford Notch to enter the realm of legend. This was the avalanche of 29 August 1826, which swept away the entire family of Samuel Willey, who had a small farm in the very midst of the notch. An unusually hot and dry summer had made the slopes of the area particularly susceptible to disturbance, and a sudden downpour broke loose a stream of rock and debris that hurtled some 2,000 feet directly toward the Willey's House. The family, hearing the noise, fled their home for a safer haven. Instead, they ran into the very path of disaster; at the last moment the slide divided, changed course, and missed the house completely. A rescue party arriving the next day searched feverishly for the family. The bodies of Mr. and Mrs. Willey, two children, and two farmhands were eventually located, but no trace of the other three children was ever found.<sup>10</sup>

The dramatic and tragic story of the Willey family's demise, so symbolic of man's frailty in the face of wild nature, and of the ultimate uncertainty of life itself and the power of divine will, became widely known. It inspired numerous literary treat-

ments, among the most prominent of which were Lydia Sigourney's "The White Mountains: After the Descent of the Avalanche in 1826" (1828), Grenville Mellen's long poem, "The Buried Valley" (1833), "The Ambitious Guest" (1835), one of Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Twice-Told Tales," and Isaac McLellan's *Avalanche of the White Hills* (1846).<sup>11</sup> Cole himself recalled in the autumn of 1828:

The sight of that deserted dwelling the Willie [*sic*] House standing with a little patch of green in the midst [of] the dread wilderness of desolation called to mind the horrors of that night the 28th of August 1826 when these mountains were deluged and rocks and trees were hurled from their high places down the steep channelled sides of the mountains. . . . A dreadful mystery hangs over the events of that night—We walked among the rocks and felt as though we were but as worms insignificant and feeble for as worms a falling rock could crush us—We looked up at the pinnacles above us and measured ourselves and found ourselves as nothing—<sup>12</sup>

Obviously aware of potential interest in images of the now-famous site, Cole around 1828 prepared a lithograph (fig. 1).<sup>13</sup> It and a drawing from Cole's second visit to the site in 1828 (fig. 2) were his only depictions of Crawford Notch until ten years later.<sup>14</sup>

The circumstances that led Cole once again to the subject of Crawford Notch, and to paint this major work—*A View of the Mountain Pass Called the Notch of the White Mountains (Crawford Notch)*—are known in detail.<sup>15</sup> In 1831 while he was residing in Florence, Cole met Rufus L. Lord (1782–1869). Lord, having retired the year before after making a fortune in the dry goods business, was on a tour of Europe and was acquiring works to furnish the large new house he had constructed on St. John's Park in New York. In June 1831 Lord commissioned a work from Cole, leaving the subject up to the artist, but stipulating that it fit one of the mantelpieces in his parlor measuring 5 1/2 to 6 feet in width.<sup>16</sup> Cole completed that picture, *Landscape Composition, Italian Scenery* (fig. 3) the following summer. With its assemblage of elements—wayside shrine, rustic wooden bridge, ruined medieval tower, hill town, and picturesque staffage—this painting was a composite view of Italian scenery, evoking both the past and the present. Cole's experience of the landscape of the Old World, and of Italy in particular, had led him to think of paintings that would take the cycles of time for their subject. (Ultimately that train of thought would find fullest expression in the five-part *Course of Empire* [1832–1836, NYHS], which Cole began for Luman Reed fol-

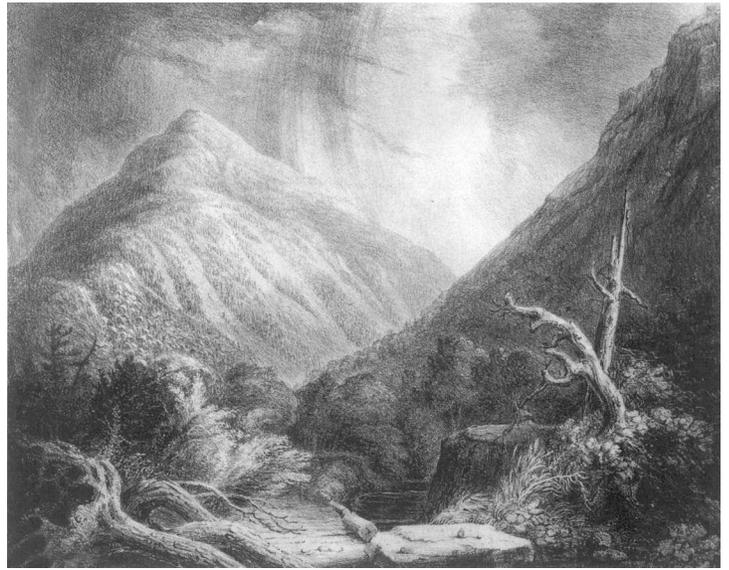


Fig. 1. Anthony Imbert, *Distant View of the Slides that Destroyed the Whilley [*sic*] Family*, lithograph, c. 1828–1829, Collection of the Albany Institute of History & Art, 1965.68.4

lowing his return to New York in 1832, but such ideas informed numerous other works, including *Landscape Composition, Italian Scenery*.) Indeed, Lord's picture, with its background sentinel mountain symbolizing (as does the very similar mountain in the *Course of Empire* series) the enduring permanence of nature, reads as one of Cole's first attempts to convey complex issues concerning man, his achievements, and the cycles of time through landscape imagery.

In 1839 Lord gave Cole a second commission: "For R. L. Lord, New York a picture as companion to the one he now possesses—size 5 ft. by 3 ft., 4 in. subject American scenery."<sup>17</sup> From this it would seem that other than specifying the nationality of

Fig. 2. Thomas Cole, *White Mountain Notch*, pen and black ink on paper, 1828, The Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, William H. Murphy Fund, 39.196.12A





Fig. 3. Thomas Cole, *Landscape Composition: Italian Scenery*, oil on canvas, 1831-1832, Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester, Purchased through the Marion Stratton Gould Fund and with the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas H. Hawks, 71.73

the new picture, Lord again left the specific subject up to Cole. Most of Cole's creative energy in the late 1830s had gone into the production of elaborately conceived imaginary works, including *Departure and Return* (both 1837, CGA), *Past and Present* (both 1838, Mead Art Museum, Amherst College), and *Dream of Arcadia* (1838, Denver Art Museum), but this same period had also seen the creation of two major American scenes, *The Oxbow* (1836, MMA) and *Schroon Mountain* (1838, Cleveland Museum of Art). For each of the two grand American scenes, Cole had begun by making a detailed pencil sketch

that subsequently served as the basis for the finished canvas. Precisely that same process would lead to *Crawford Notch*.

In late June and early July 1839 Cole traveled to the White Mountains in the company of fellow painter Asher B. Durand.<sup>18</sup> By 3 July they were at Crawford Notch.<sup>19</sup> Cole made his own drawing of the site (fig. 4), which in its detailed nature and its extensive notations suggests Cole already had in mind a finished picture.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, the elaborateness of this drawing contrasts with Cole's usual, more summary manner, making it evident he took pains



Fig. 4. Thomas Cole, *Notch in the White Mountains from above/with the Notch House [Crawford Notch]*, pencil, 1839, Thomas Cole Sketchbook, Folio 4 recto, The Art Museum, Princeton University, Gift of Frank Jewett Mather, Jr.



Thomas Cole, *A View of the Mountain Pass Called the Notch of the White Mountains (Crawford Notch)*, 1867.8.1

to record every salient feature of the scene, including the profile of Mount Webster, the steep walls of the notch itself, with the rocky outcropping known as the “Elephant’s Head” immediately above at the left, and the well-known Notch House, an inn established by Abel Crawford and his son Ethan Allen Crawford in 1828.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, Cole did make some exaggerations to the actual topography: Mount Webster is too steep and the rock walls of the notch are too close.<sup>22</sup>

Cole may have begun work on the painting immediately upon his return to Catskill in late July 1839, but he did not finish the picture until late in the year. (The artist presented Lord with a bill for \$500 the following March.)<sup>23</sup> The fairly extensive use of underdrawing suggests that Cole transferred much of his pencil sketch to the canvas itself. Indeed, the painting does closely follow the drawing—with certain changes and additions. Cole replaced the rather confusing foreground jumble of stumps arrayed across the space with two blasted trees flanking the composition and two sawn stumps in the middle. The drawing shows little evidence of a path or roadway, but in the painting a clear path runs diagonally into the picture space, leading to the Notch House, and then zig-zagging through the notch. Along it rides a man on a black horse; two figures and a dog stand near the inn; in the distance a stagecoach is about to pass through the notch. The barn, which in the drawing is close to the Notch House, has been moved further to the right and diminished in scale. The drawing has some scattered lines in the sky vaguely suggesting a specific meteorological effect, but the grandly conceived atmospheric drama of the painting must have been wholly invented by the artist. And, of course, the autumnal colors of the painting were obviously not present when Cole sketched the site in July.

The resultant painting must be considered one of Cole’s finest American scenes of the late 1830s and, indeed, of his entire career. It was an immediate success when exhibited at the National Academy of Design in the spring of 1840, being singled out for particular praise by the critic of the *Knickerbocker*: “This is truly an American picture. The boldness of the scenery itself, the autumnal tints which are spread over the forest, and the wild appearance of the heavens, give it a character and stamp that we never see in the works of foreign schools; and we pronounce the artist a master, without a rival among his own countrymen.”<sup>24</sup> Although the evaluation is couched in language that borders on the

clichéd, even for criticism of the 1840s, it underscores an important point: A major part of the painting’s appeal lay in its stirring evocation of national scenery. It still holds that appeal today. But grasping Cole’s full achievement here, as in so many of his works, requires tracing the multiple threads of deeper meaning that are so deftly woven within his pictorial imagery. Some of these meanings involve associations that are generally found in Cole’s North American landscapes; others, however, depend on issues relevant only to this particular painting.

First, *Crawford Notch*, like *The Oxbow* and *Schroon Mountain*, is fundamentally, and perhaps even obviously, a picture about the varied forces of nature. Evidence of such forces is everywhere apparent: the twisted trees of the foreground, the skeletal, gesturing dead trees of the middle distance, the V-shape form of the notch, seemingly riven by some supernatural process, the upward thrusting rocky outcrops, and the dark, sweeping clouds. Although other landscapes by Cole are equally emblematic of natural force, *Crawford Notch* itself was a compendium of geological processes. Some scientists had theorized that the features of the area must have been formed by the biblical Deluge.<sup>25</sup> Wadsworth’s scientist-friend Benjamin Silliman had observed that the terrifying force of slides, such as the one that killed the Willey family, although minor compared to the imagined fury of the Deluge, vividly demonstrated the effects water could have on a seemingly immutable physical environment. Thus, this one site engendered associations about nature’s forces that ranged far beyond its specific identity.

*Crawford Notch* also vividly presents evidence of the cycles of nature and time. The dead trees of the foreground and middle distance offer stark contrast to the living evergreens and brightly colored deciduous trees on the mountain slopes. With the coming of winter, of course, only the evergreens would retain their foliage; the other trees would enter a season of dormancy, a kind of living death. For Cole, nature’s ever-repeating seasonal cycle, and the cycle of life and death of living things, were indicative of a fundamental order in the working of the world. To interrupt those processes—by, for instance, recklessly felling trees and clearing land (something that Cole decried throughout his career)—was to risk upsetting the natural order. Even so majestic and seemingly permanent a place as *Crawford Notch*, which seemed to have come into being through forces that were beyond one’s wildest

imaginings, was susceptible to change by man's actions. The sawn tree stumps of the foreground, the road, and the rudely cleared, stump-filled field of the middle distance provide ample evidence of such change. Cole, like so many others of his time, was profoundly aware of the conundrum implicit in the tendency to read aspects of national identity in the physical reality of the American landscape. If the greatness and uniqueness of the nation were confirmed by the majesty of the land, then any changes wrought by man on the land risked undermining that identity. Cole was never able to resolve that issue in his own works, and it is one of the ingredients that infuses his best American landscapes with a certain tension that augments their power and force.

Given the prominence of Crawford Notch as the site of the Willey disaster, and the widespread treatment of that subject in contemporary literature, it seems inescapable that at least some contemporary viewers of *Crawford Notch* would have associated the painting with the story. Cole probably welcomed such associations, if only of the most general kind, for they were inextricably linked with the landscape he chose to portray. And although he did not show the actual site of the disaster, or the Willey House (which was still standing), he did include the bare areas on the flank of Mount Webster where the landslide had started. Indeed, allowing for the slightly different vantage point and changed foreground details, *Crawford Notch* basically repeats the format of Cole's earlier *Distant View of the Slides That Destroyed the Whilley [sic] Family* (fig. 1). Yet it is also possible that Cole intended an even more specific association with the Willey story, or, more precisely, with the most dramatically effective literary work inspired by it, Hawthorne's "The Ambitious Guest."<sup>26</sup>

Cole, who was extremely well read and always alert to the pictorial possibilities of specific works of contemporary literature, may well have found in Hawthorne's story ideas to work in concert with his painting. As John Sears has shown, Hawthorne took the well-known historical facts of the Willey disaster and transformed them into something more far reaching and emblematic.<sup>27</sup> The key to this transformation was the addition of a character who had not been part of the historical event: the "Ambitious Guest," a young traveler setting out to make a name for himself in the world. After an arduous day of travel, with the wind blowing down the notch as if from "a great pair of bellows," the

man stops for the night at the home of a family living in the valley. As Hawthorne wrote: "The secret of this young man's character was a high and abstracted ambition. He could have borne to live an undistinguished life, but not to be forgotten in the grave."<sup>28</sup> Although convinced he must make his own path to fame and fortune, this young man is powerfully attracted to the peaceful domestic life of the family, realizing that for the moment his own quest must necessarily exclude a comparable bliss for himself. In setting up this opposition in the young man's feelings between personal happiness and driving ambition, Hawthorne drew a parallel with the American nation, which was at the point of transforming itself from an agrarian state to one ruled by commerce and industry. Hawthorne's irony is that this anonymous visitor does not live to see his ambitions realized, for he perishes with the family, so utterly obliterated that no one ever even knew of his existence. The avalanche that guaranteed the family name immortality thus equally guaranteed the oblivion of the ambitious guest.

Without being a literal illustration of Hawthorne's tale, *Crawford Notch* palpably alludes to it. There is, for instance, the figure of the youth on horseback, who rides towards the house. Whoever he may or may not be, this youth clearly travels alone; that is made obvious by the contrast of the stagecoach, a vehicle capable of transporting several individuals (tiny faces can be made out in its windows). And where this lone youth is headed is to Crawford Notch, toward the very site of the Willey disaster. Thus, without illustrating "The Ambitious Guest," *Crawford Notch* sets up a similar narrative, and it is sufficiently close to suggest that Cole was indeed aware of Hawthorne's text. Without question, the potent moralizing of "The Ambitious Guest," with its emphasis on the transitory nature of human life and the illusions of ambition, would have appealed to Cole's sensibility and would have fit perfectly with the themes he often expressed in his own works.

Finally, in unraveling the threads of meaning for *Crawford Notch*, we must return to its companion painting in Lord's house, *Landscape Composition, Italian Scenery* (fig. 3). Since 1831–1832 Cole's art had matured considerably, and his ability to convey complex meanings through paired or serial images had advanced greatly. In the two most prominent examples of his paired paintings from this period, *Departure and Return* and *Past and Present*, it is evident that the underlying systems depended on em-

phatically obvious contrasts. *Departure* is a vibrant spring or summer morning with knights riding optimistically out of the landscape to do battle; *Return* has the defeated warriors coming home on an autumnal afternoon. *Past* and *Present* offer a greater temporal contrast, showing a great medieval fortress as the active center of life it was in its own day and as the dilapidated ruin it has become. Surely it is reasonable to posit that a similar play of contrasting meanings was in Cole's mind when he painted *Crawford Notch* to accompany the *Landscape Composition, Italian Scenery*. Most obviously the two works contrast scenery of the Old World in a composed view with that of the New in an actual view and, in doing so, set up an opposition between a world of the past and one of the present and the future. For if the various civilizations that once held sway in the Italian landscape have all faded from glory, American civilization has taken only tentative hold in the wild landscape of New Hampshire for Cole.

American associations are not so much of the past as of the present and the future. . . . You see no ruined tower to tell of outrage—no gorgeous temple to speak of ostentation; but freedom's offspring—peace, security, and happiness, dwell there, the spirits of the scene. . . . And in looking over the yet uncultivated scene, the mind's eye may see far into futurity. Where the wolf roams, the plough shall glisten; on the gray crag shall rise temple and tower—mighty deeds shall be done in the now pathless wilderness; and poets yet unborn shall sanctify the soil.<sup>29</sup>

Perhaps this straightforward contrast of the old and the new, of the past, present, and future, was all that Rufus Lord had in mind when he commissioned an American scene from Cole. But for Cole, ever fascinated by the multiplicity of meanings that could be expressed through landscape, it must have been that the various threads of content possible in the subject of *Crawford Notch* could be integrated into a richly textured whole. Like *The Oxbow* and *Schroon Mountain*, the painting reads as a potent example of Cole's North American landscape imagery. Thus, the vast and unpredictable forces of nature, the cycles of the season and the inexorable passing of time, the story of a family lost in a cataclysmic natural event, and the fictional tale of an ambitious young man who perished before making a name for himself could all serve as components in the portrayal of an America that was still in the process of forming itself, of coming to terms with its identity, and of reckoning with its own "futurity." For the often pes-

simistic Cole, the past was indeed prologue; the lessons of the Old World, with its visible manifestations of failure in its ruined towers and temples, were not enough to guarantee that the New World would succeed. He could not reconcile that question in his own mind—the landslide might always come, unpredictably, even capriciously, to destroy the family living peacefully in the midst of the glory of nature and to dash the ambitions of the young. And it is that unresolved tension, expressed both pictorially and thematically, that ultimately animates *Crawford Notch* and gives it such remarkable resonance. At once vibrant, vital and beautiful, it is also provocatively expressive of instability, change, and uncertainty.

FK

### Notes

1. Lord commissioned the painting from Cole in 1839; see Stebbins 1968, 138.

2. Although there is no documentation, the Sturges family believed that Jonathan Sturges acquired the painting either directly from Rufus Lord or from his estate (letter of 10 November 1967 from Dudley Parker, in NGA curatorial files). Howard Merritt concurs in his letter of 29 October 1967 (in NGA curatorial files).

3. The date Mrs. Sturges sold the painting and to whom are unknown to the Sturgeses. Parker's letter of 10 November 1967 (in NGA curatorial files), states that it was sold "in the depth of the great depression." In a letter of 2 June 1967 (in NGA curatorial files) Robert C. Vose, Jr., states that Vose Galleries purchased the painting from LeRoy Ireland, who "got it from the collection of Mr. H. C. Sturges of Fairfield, Connecticut."

4. According to Vose (letter of 2 June 1967 in NGA curatorial files), the painting was sold to the Sanitary Scale Company while on view in the *Hudson River School* exhibition at the AIC.

5. Letter of 13 June 1973 from John V. Farwell III (in NGA curatorial files).

6. McNulty 1983, 8–9; see also Saunders and Raye 1981, 26–27.

7. Letter of 4 August 1827 from Cole to Wadsworth as quoted in McNulty 1983, 10.

8. Letter of 4 August 1827 from Cole to Wadsworth as quoted in McNulty 1983, 11.

9. See *New Hampshire* 1938, 393.

10. *New Hampshire* 1938, 391–392.

11. Lydia Sigourney, "White Mountains, After the Descent of the Avalanche in 1826," *Ladies Magazine* 1, 1828, 340–341; Mellen 1833, 267–297; Hawthorne 1835, 161–166; McLellan 1846. For an excellent overview of the impact of the Willey disaster on contemporary American writing and tourism, see Sears 1989, 72–86.

12. Cole, autumn 1828 journal entry, as quoted in Erwin 1990, 30; see also Parry 1984, 39–40.

13. The print was to be published by Anthony Imbert, New York, but apparently was never distributed,

perhaps because of the error in the spelling of the Willey name; see Flint 1978, 126; and Merritt 1982, 58.

14. McGrath 1980, 60–61, proposes that the print was after a now lost painting by Cole; however, Parry 1984, 45, points out that there is no evidence such a painting ever existed.

15. See Stebbins 1968, 136–138, and Cole 1969, 27, 34.

16. Cole 1969, 27.

17. Cole papers, New York State Library, Albany, as quoted in Stebbins 1968, 138.

18. Parry 1988, 218.

19. July 3 is inscribed on Durand's drawing, *Notch House, White Mountains* (NYHS); see Durand 1983, 70.

20. Hawes 1956, 7; Parry 1988, 219.

21. *New Hampshire* 1938, 393–394.

22. See for comparison the photograph of the site in Stebbins 1968, 139.

23. Parry 1988, 219; Stebbins 1968, 138. Cole's account book, begun 9 November 1837 (Albany Institute of History & Art), lists on page 13: "Rufus L. Lord, March 1840, For a Picture a View of 'The Notch of the White Mountains'—including frame \$500."

24. "The Fine Arts, National Academy of Design," *Knickerbocker* 16, July 1840, 81.

25. Sears 1989, 79–80.

26. The possible connection between Hawthorne's story and Cole's painting was first brought to my attention in a conversation with Ulysses Dietz in 1979.

27. Sears 1989, 81.

28. Hawthorne 1835, 162.

29. Thomas Cole, "Essay on American Scenery," *American Monthly Magazine* 1, 1836, 1–12, as quoted in McCoubrey, *American Art*, 1965, 108–109.

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1843 Lanman, Charles. "Cole's Imaginative Paintings." *The United States Magazine and Democratic Review* 12 (June): 509, as *Notch of the White Mountains*.

1844 "A Few Words about Mr. Cole's Paintings." *New World* 8 (17 February): 217.

1844 "Editor's Table." *The Knickerbocker* 23 (February): 196, as 'The Notch in the White Mountains' of *New Hampshire*.

1845 Lanman: 66, as *Notch of the White Mountains*.

1853 Noble: 96–97, 274.

1949 Cole: 13, 27, 37, no. 31, as *The Pass which is called "The Notch of the White Mountains."*

1954 LaBudde: 38, 40–41, 43, repro. 218, as *The Notch of the White Mountains*.

1956 Hawes: 7–8, 10, 20, 21, 22, as *The Notch in the White Mountains*.

1964 Cole: 22, as *The Notch in the White Mountains*.

1964 Vesell: 67, 204.

1967 Callow: 127, 138, 155, as *The Notch of the White Mountains, The Pass Called "The Notch of the White Mountains,"* and *View in the White Mountains*.

1968 Birmingham: 19, as *Autumn-Crawford Notch, New Hampshire*.

1968 Stebbins: 132–145, repro. 132, 140, 141.

1969 Cole: 34, no. 39.

1970 Riordan: 2:384, 385, as *The Notch of the White Mountains*.

1973 Moore: 56.

1974 Moore: 123, 264, color fig. 81, as *The Notch of the White Mountains*.

1977 Janson: 203, repro. 204, as *Crawford's Notch*.

1978 Campbell: 94, 97, 98, repro. 95, as *The Notch of the White Mountains*.

1978 Powell: 116, 117 repro.

1980 Wilmerding: 10–11, 14, 86, no. 24 color repro.

1981 Baigell, Cole: 60, color repro. 60–61.

1980 Campbell et al.: 42, 43, 44, 74, repro. 45.

1981 Williams: 112 repro.

1984 Walker: 547, color repro. 546.

1985 Campbell: 38, color repro. cover.

1985 Gerdts, "Landscape": 56, 59, repro. no. 32.

1985 Keyes: 21, as *The Notch of the White Mountains*.

1986 Yarnall and Gerdts: 775.

1987 *American Paradise*: 149.

1987 Myers: 54, as *Notch of the White Mountains*.

1988 Parry: 219, 223, 244, repro. 220, as *A View of the Mountain Pass called the Notch of the White Mountains*.

1988 Wilmerding: 17–18, 100, color repro. 101.

1989 Sears: 77, repro. 77.

1990 Cotter: 36, 38, repro. 37.

1990 Ruskin: 24.

1990 Powell: color repro. jacket, 95.

1990 Wilmerding: 3, 6, 14, as *The Notch of the White Mountains and Crawford Notch*.

1991 Gretchko: 132, repro. 133 and 135.

1991 Troyen: 22, as *Notch in the White Mountains*.

1994 Truettner and Wallach: 58, 172, no. 67, color repro. 58.

1971.16.1–4 (2550–2553)

## *The Voyage of Life: Childhood*

1842

Oil on canvas, 134.3 × 195.3 (52<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 76<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>)

Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund

### Inscriptions

At lower left: 1842 / T. Cole / Rome

## *The Voyage of Life: Youth*

1842

Oil on canvas, 134.3 × 194.9 (52<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 76<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>)

Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund

### Inscriptions

At lower left: Rome / 1842 / T. Cole

## *The Voyage of Life: Manhood*

1842

Oil on canvas, 134.3 × 202.6 (52<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 79<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>)  
Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund

## *The Voyage of Life: Old Age*

1842

Oil on canvas, 133.4 × 196.2 (52<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> × 77<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>)  
Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund

### Inscriptions

At bottom edge, left of center: T. Cole / 1842

At bottom edge, right of center: Rome

**Technical Notes:** All four paintings were executed on herringbone twill fabric with moderately fine threads and a moderately rough surface. The paintings were lined (apparently for the first time) and the original panel-back stretchers were replaced during treatment in 1970–1971. The presence of unused tack holes and the pattern of wear on the canvas edges suggest that the paintings were originally stretched and painted on slightly larger stretchers, and then restretched by the artist on the panel-backed stretchers. All four paintings have white ground layers; in specific areas of each painting (see individual comments, below) secondary ground layers of different colors were applied. Infrared reflectography reveals only minimal underdrawing. Paint was applied moderately thinly and with low and broad brushstrokes in some areas such as the skies, and more thickly and with some high impasto in details such as the figures and foliage. In general, the paintings are in excellent condition, with only scattered small losses, some craquelure, and minor abrasion. In 1970–1971, discolored varnish was removed and the paintings were restored.

1971.16.1 (*Childhood*): Secondary ground layers include red under the top left corner; yellow under the boat and angel; red under the center in the light area of mountain; red under top right corner in the light area of sky; red under the water around the boat. Infrared reflectography reveals some underdrawing of mountain contours in the right middle and far distance. There are scattered small losses along the edges, a small loss below the boat, and craquelure throughout.

1971.16.2 (*Youth*): Secondary ground layers include yellow under the boat and surrounding area; red under the sky across the top. Infrared reflectography reveals underdrawing of the central mountain peak, the castle/temple, and aura. A tear in the upper center of the sky has been repaired. There is abrasion along the lower edges, scattered losses along the edges, and craquelure throughout.

1971.16.3 (*Manhood*): Secondary ground layers include yellow under the figure and boat, the brown rocks, the dark sky, and the figures in the clouds; red under the water at lower right edge, under the water at the right side of the boat, and under the angel and the surrounding light area. Infrared reflectography reveals underdrawing in the figure in the boat, with changes to the leg contours. There are scattered small losses and craquelure throughout.

1971.16.4 (*Old Age*): Secondary ground layers include yellow under the man, the boat, and the angel; red under the dark sky at the top right. Infrared reflectography reveals underdrawing in the central rock formation, with a change of contour near the horizon line; and a possible slight change in the man's left hand. There is a pentimento of two angels at the bottom of the line of angels in the center of the sky. There are scattered small losses and craquelure throughout.

**Provenance:** Sold by the artist to George K. Shoenberger [1809–1892], Cincinnati, perhaps as early as 1845 and no later than May 1846;<sup>1</sup> Shoenberger heirs, after 20 January 1892;<sup>2</sup> purchased 1908 by Ernst H. Huenefeld, Cincinnati;<sup>3</sup> gift 1908 to Bethesda Hospital and Deaconess Association of Methodist Church of Cincinnati;<sup>4</sup> sold 1971 through (Hirschl & Adler Galleries, New York).

**Exhibited:** Luther Terry's studio, Orto di Napoli, Rome, 1842.<sup>5</sup> *Annual Exhibition of Modern Artists*, Piazza del Popolo, Rome, 1842, no cat.<sup>6</sup> *Second Exhibition*, Boston Artists' Association, 1843, nos. 1–4. *Pictures by Thomas Cole N.A. . . . The Voyage of Life! A Series of Allegorical Pictures*, NAD, 1843–1844, nos. 1–4.<sup>7</sup> *Paintings Exhibited . . .*, PAFA, 1844, nos. 1–4. Western Art Union, Cincinnati, 1848, no cat. *Pictures at the Ladies' Gallery*, Cincinnati, 1854, nos. 20–23, as *Infancy, Youth, Manhood, and Old Age*. *A New World: American Paintings 1760–1900*, MFA; CGA; Grand Palais, Paris, 1983–1984, nos. 25–28. *The Voyage of Life by Thomas Cole, Paintings, Drawings, and Prints*, Museum of Art, Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica, 1985, nos. 33, 38, 41, 46. *Thomas Cole: Landscape into History*, NMAA; Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford; The Brooklyn Museum, 1994–1995, figs. 115–118.

THESE FOUR PICTURES are the second version of Cole's most famous series, *The Voyage of Life*; the first set of paintings, which these essentially replicate, was completed in 1840 and is in the collection of the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute in Utica, New York (figs. 1–4). Given the close association of the two versions and their shared iconography, it is necessary here to trace Cole's interest in the subject from its inception.

When Cole conceived of painting a four-canvas series showing a stream and a voyager as metaphors for the course of human life is unknown; his earliest written description of the project dates from autumn 1836.<sup>8</sup> Cole was then at an important



Fig. 1. Thomas Cole, *The Voyage of Life: Childhood*, oil on canvas, 1839-1840, Utica, New York, Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Museum of Art



Fig. 2. Thomas Cole, *The Voyage of Life: Youth*, oil on canvas, 1840, Utica, New York, Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Museum of Art



Fig. 3. Thomas Cole, *The Voyage of Life: Manhood*, oil on canvas, 1840, Utica, New York, Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Museum of Art



Fig. 4. Thomas Cole, *The Voyage of Life: Old Age*, oil on canvas, 1840, Utica, New York, Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Museum of Art

junction in his career. He had just completed his first monumental series, *The Course of Empire* (NYHS), and was undoubtedly thinking of a suitable sequel. Charting the progression of human life, as he had done with the life of a great imaginary civilization in *The Course of Empire*, may long have been in his mind,<sup>9</sup> but the death of his friend and patron Luman Reed in June 1836 must surely have made the idea all the more poignant.<sup>10</sup>

Cole's 1836 written description, "Allegory of Human Life—a series," is sufficiently detailed to

suggest his thinking was already fairly advanced:

1st—the source of a river—issuing from a cave & a child in a boat—with a guardian Angel steering—

2nd—The child become a youth is seen in the boat—the river has increased & the scene become extensive & grand—the guardian just stepping out of the boat & pointing forward—leaving the youth to his own reason for guide.

4 [sic] The river tumbles over rocks—a stormy scene—the boat dashes among troubled waters—the man struggling to save himself & bark—guardian still seen at a distance watching.

5 View of a dark ocean—the boat with an old man just entering on it. Chaos and darkness spread before—but through an opening in the clouds a glorious city seen—and seen approaching the old man the guardian who points to the city—Words or verses might be inscribed on rocks or elsewhere explanatory—on the mouth of the cave. In the second scene in the distance might be a palace—castles—in the distance—visions—<sup>11</sup>

In the spring of 1839 Cole found a patron willing to commission *The Voyage of Life*. This was Samuel Ward, a New York banker and collector, who signed a contract for “four paintings . . . to be executed in the style of those by the same artist known as the Course of Empire.”<sup>12</sup> On 14 September 1839 Cole reported to Ward: “During the summer I have been engaged in making finished Studies of the subject—introducing and arranging in them all the necessary objects[,] determining the Chiaroscuro &c—so that when I have the large canvasses before me I shall [be] enabled to proceed with a certainty and facility that could not be obtained otherwise.”<sup>13</sup> The “finished studies,” four small panels (fig. 5), are of particular importance in tracing the translation of his written imagery into pictorial form.

The studies make evident the very different compositional problem that Cole faced. In *The Course of Empire* the point of view, although slightly altered in each canvas, remained fundamentally constant. The same large background mountain anchored the composition in each case. Time changed but not the basic stage upon which the drama unfolded. In *The Voyage of Life* Cole’s choice of a stream to symbolize life necessitated depicting both changes of time (accomplished most obviously by showing the traveler aging) and landscape to indicate that each stage of life occurred at a different point along the stream. Originally Cole may have intended to place the studies in a continuous row, similar to the scheme he had used in his *Italian Scenery at Four Times of Day* (c. 1833–1836, Albany Institute of History & Art).<sup>14</sup> And his initial conception had the boat moving in the same direction in all four works, with the time of day progressing from early morning to dark and the seasons from spring to winter. Perhaps because Ward’s house lacked sufficient wall space for lining four large pictures in a row, or perhaps because Cole ultimately preferred two pairs of complementary pictures, or both, he reversed the flow of the stream and the course of the boat in the second and fourth paintings of the completed series. Other significant changes occurred between the execution of the

sketches and the final paintings, most notably in the last two images. In *Manhood* Cole replaced what appears to be a turbulent ocean coast with a rock-hemmed gorge; in *Old Age* he eliminated virtually all traces of land.

Samuel Ward died on 27 November 1839. Cole, clearly distressed by the loss of his patron, wrote in his journal: “There would seem almost a fatality in these commissions. Mr. Reed died without seeing his series completed. Mr. Ward died soon after his was commenced.”<sup>15</sup> Cole anxiously added: “I trust there will be no desire on the part of the family that the commission be discontinued; in fact there can be no change without my consent or theirs in a written agreement. This work is one in which I have much hope. I should consider it a great misfortune to have to abandon it.”<sup>16</sup> Initially, Cole’s interactions with the Ward family went well; however, once matters concerning the Ward estate were turned over to James S. Huggins, a New York lawyer, Cole found himself increasingly in an adversarial position.<sup>17</sup> He and Huggins disagreed on numerous issues, but the one of paramount importance to the artist concerned whether or not he would be allowed to exhibit the series. This issue became particularly heated in autumn 1840, as the series neared completion. Cole insisted that an artist had the right to show works that were commissioned before delivering them, and Huggins argued that any proceeds from such an exhibition would have to be shared with the estate.

Cole eventually secured permission from the Ward family to show the paintings, and they went on view at the National Academy of Design in New York in November 1840. Worried about the fate of *The Voyage of Life* once the canvases left his possession at the close of the exhibition, Cole took steps to ensure that he could paint another set. On 22 November 1840 he and his nephew Henry Bayless had decided to make full-size tracings of each picture and oil copies of the figures “so that with them and the large tracing I can any time paint large pictures.”<sup>18</sup> Cole’s fears about the disposition of the paintings and his access to them proved well founded, for after they were delivered to the Ward family they remained hung and unseen. He considered various options, including reacquiring the set from the family and painting a reduced scale replica for the Wards.<sup>19</sup> He then began negotiating to take the set to Europe, where he promised to exhibit it and seek a buyer, but Huggins would not release the pictures without payment of a reserve fee. This Cole re-

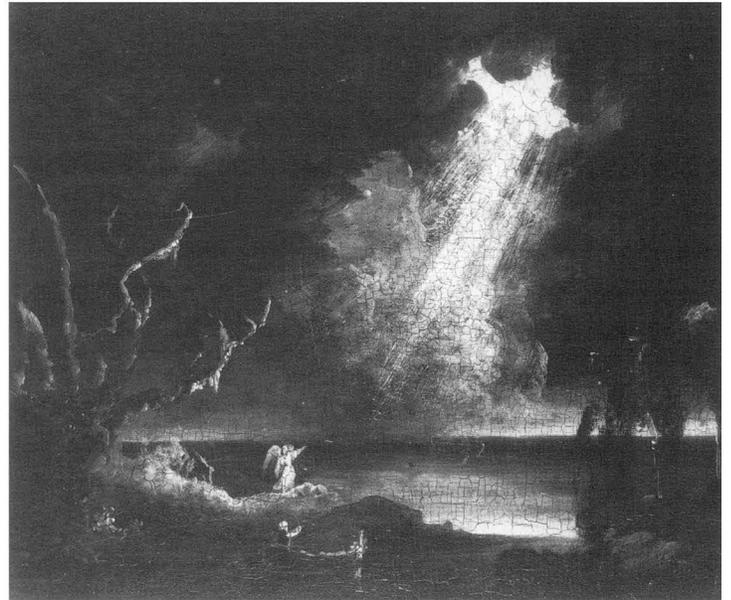


Fig. 5. Thomas Cole, *The Voyage of Life: Childhood* (above left), *Youth* (above right), *Manhood* (below left), *Old Age* (below right), oil on wood, 1839, Collection of the Albany Institute of History & Art

fused to pay, and on 7 August 1841 he sailed for Europe, convinced that all the creative energy he had expended on *The Voyage of Life* was meaningless if the series could not be seen. Determined to salvage the situation, Cole wrote to his wife on the day of his departure that he intended to paint a replica set while residing abroad.<sup>20</sup>

Over the next few months Cole's resolve to repaint *The Voyage of Life* waxed and waned, for he

knew it would be a lengthy task and that his time might better (and more profitably) be spent on new subjects; however, by November 1841 several acquaintances, including George Washington Greene, American Consul in Rome and a Ward family cousin, had persuaded Cole to paint a second set.<sup>21</sup> He had brought with him the full-size tracings (a few fragments of which survive; see, for example, fig. 6) and his oil studies. The absence of extensive



Fig. 6. Thomas Cole, Tracing of the figures in *The Voyage of Life*, graphite on paper, c. 1840, The Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, William H. Murphy Fund, 39.364

underdrawing in the National Gallery paintings suggests that he did not work up the designs completely by drawing directly on the canvas, but used some other means of transfer. Traces of red chalk remaining on the reverse of some tracings indicate that he may have transferred the designs by laying the paper directly on the canvas and drawing over the lines.<sup>22</sup>

Cole apparently began the new set with the third canvas, *Manhood*, for by mid-December he reported to his wife that he was progressing “bravely with the third picture of the series.”<sup>23</sup>

That he began with *Manhood* may have been due to dissatisfaction with the first version (fig. 3), for it is the one in which he introduced the most significant changes and for which he made the most new studies (fig. 7). He changed the slightly awkward pose of the traveler standing in the boat to show him kneeling on one leg, which did not fully resolve the problem. Cole also gave the man a fuller, darker beard, presumably to make him seem more mature. He reworked the blasted trees that close the right side of the composition, the rock formations of the middle distance, and the level of the horizon.<sup>24</sup> Cole’s intention, however, was to paint a faithful replica of the series, with only minor alterations, so the most noticeable difference between the two sets is the somewhat brighter color of the National Gallery’s canvases.<sup>25</sup> Whether this brighter result was deliberate or was the consequence of a difference in available pigments is unknown.

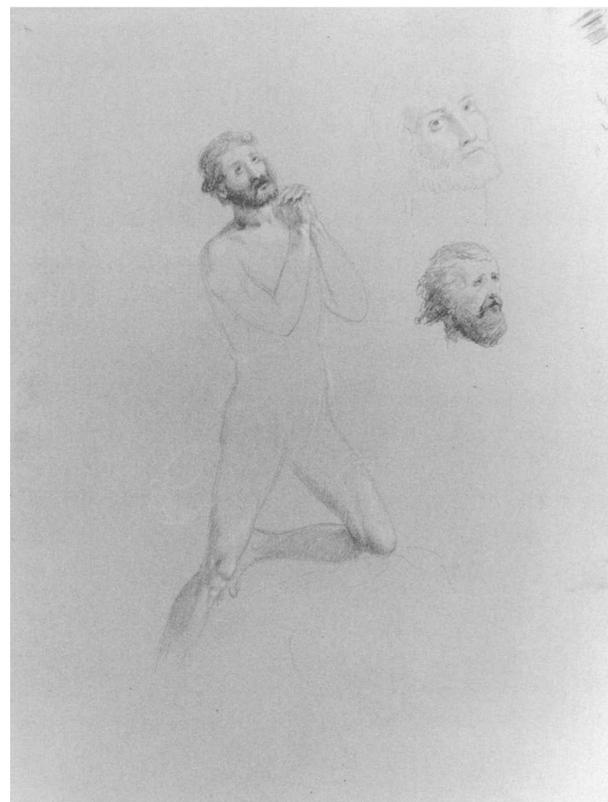
Cole worked on the remaining three canvases over the course of the spring of 1842; by mid-March he had completed *Childhood*, *Youth*, and *Manhood*, noting with obvious satisfaction in a letter to his wife that he had done the work in twelve weeks and six days.<sup>26</sup> As he worked on *Old Age*, however, Cole was visited by doubts regarding the wisdom of having painted the replicas:

I dread the idea of taking them to England with me [because] there will be such an expense, risk and delay, and I sometimes think I have sacrificed my time in producing them when I might have been studying figures all winter. The taste of the English, particularly the artists, is so opposite to mine, that I fear my pictures will be scarcely looked at. They think nothing of poetical conceptions—and think a little sketchy effect of chiaroscuro and color is worth all the thought and poetry that can be put into a picture.<sup>27</sup>

Nevertheless, Cole was too far along to abandon the effort, and by the end of March or early April he had completed the replicas.

While Cole was engaged in painting the second version of *The Voyage of Life*, numerous admiring visitors came to his studio to see the work in progress. The most famous was Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen, whose reaction soon became well known, thanks in part to the efforts of Greene (who wrote

Fig. 7. Thomas Cole, *Nude Male Figure Praying, Two Heads*, The Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, William H. Murphy Fund, 39.438



an account of the visit) and Cole himself. After examining each painting carefully, he thanked Cole for the great pleasure he had received and asked to come again. According to Greene, Thorvaldsen spoke of Cole in the most glowing terms from that moment on and pronounced him “A great artist!” Of the series he said “What beauty of conception! what an admirable arrangement of parts! what an accurate study of nature! what truth of detail!”<sup>28</sup> This was precisely the sort of response Cole had hoped for, and it must have encouraged him to think the series would indeed sell. He arranged to show them for approximately six weeks in an exhibition held in the Piazza del Popolo, where they were well received. Yet by April the season was late in Rome, and “few of the picture lovers and purchasers were there.”<sup>29</sup> The pictures did not sell.

Although Cole had thought of sending the paintings to England for exhibition, he finally decided against this and returned to America on 30 July 1842. By the end of August he was still awaiting shipment of his possessions from Rome, presumably including *The Voyage of Life*.<sup>30</sup> The pictures eventually arrived and Cole began to make plans to exhibit them. The first order of business was to forestall exhibition of the Ward set, which the National Academy of Design was hoping to borrow for display in the spring of 1843. As Cole informed one officer of the Academy: “You know I have another set which I intend to exhibit and it would injure me to have Ward’s exhibited now.”<sup>31</sup> During the course of the next year or so, Cole arranged to have his set before the public at exhibitions in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. Thus, the replica set played a major role in establishing the fame of *The Voyage of Life*.

The Ward set returned to public view in 1845–1846 at the New-York Gallery of the Fine Arts. (Recent scholarship has confused this point, maintaining that the second set appeared in this exhibition; however it was unquestionably the Ward set, as the catalogue clearly states.)<sup>32</sup> Possibly as early as 1845, and certainly by 1846, Cole had sold his version to George K. Shoenberger of Cincinnati. Although the second set of pictures was not completely inaccessible in Cincinnati—they were shown there in 1848 and 1854 and were known to numerous artists of the city—from 1847 on it was the Ward set that brought *The Voyage of Life* further fame and recognition.

Public interest in the pictures increased dramatically after Cole’s unexpected death in February

1848. The first version of *The Voyage of Life* was included in the March 1848 memorial exhibition held at the American Art-Union, and in June the Art-Union voted to purchase the four pictures for \$2,000 and distribute the set by lottery. The organization further decided that in order “to take advantage of the interest attached by the public to the memory of Mr. Cole,” an engraving after *Youth* would be commissioned from James Smillie and distributed to the membership in 1849.<sup>33</sup> As the December 1848 lottery neared, membership in the Art-Union swelled to unprecedented numbers, largely because of the possibility of winning *The Voyage of Life*. (The winner was J. Taylor Brodt of Binghampton.)<sup>34</sup> Smillie’s engraving of *Youth* was completed late in 1849, and some 20,000 copies were distributed, making the second picture by far the best known (and most often copied) of the four. Smillie subsequently engraved the remaining three paintings, and other prints of the series were also produced and distributed widely. Indeed, during the course of the nineteenth century *The Voyage of Life* attained a level of fame equaled by few other American works of art.

Cole—who died before completing his third great series of pictures, *The Cross and the World* (thus confirming his own morbid musing about there being “a fatality in these commissions”)—considered *The Course of Empire* and *The Voyage of Life* by far his most important creations. That view was shared by many contemporaries, and it has been properly emphasized in recent scholarship. *The Voyage of Life* has been particularly scrutinized. As Parry has aptly noted:

In the twentieth century myriad sources have been cited for Cole, beginning with the biblical image of the river of life, continuing through the emblematic literature of the seventeenth century, especially Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, and ending with a host of similar ideas in British and American poems, essays, and sermons of the romantic era. Any chronological list of recent works Cole might have read and drawn inspiration from would have to include the following works: Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s *Kubla Khan* (1797?–1800); William Wordsworth’s *Ode: Intimations of Mortality from Recollections of Early Childhood* (1802–1804); the First Canto of *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* by Lord Byron (1812); Percy Bysshe Shelley’s *Alastor, or, The Spirit of Solitude* (1816); several poems by William Cullen Bryant, beginning with *Thanatopsis* (1817); and a number of lesser-known writings, such as the 1823 sermon by the English minister Reginald Heber; James C. Percival’s poem *The Voyage of Life* (New York, 1823); Josiah Priest’s short essay, “The Voyage of Life: An Allegory” in *The Wonders of Nature and Providence*,

*Displayed* (Albany, 1825); and R. Pollok's epic poem in ten books, *The Course of Time* (Edinburgh, 1827).<sup>35</sup>

Such a list could go on, as could one enumerating possible pictorial sources Cole may have drawn upon, ranging from seventeenth-century Dutch emblems to prints by Joseph Mallord William Turner.<sup>36</sup> But no matter how wide-ranging Cole's search for inspiration, and no matter how many of his sources may or may not have been recognized by his contemporaries, he still faced the monumental task of creating coherent visual images of a subject that had never—to his knowledge (or, indeed, to ours)—been so fully and clearly delineated.

Cole was obviously well aware, as were others, that using pure landscape alone to express an allegory of human life entailed the risk of making the meaning insufficiently clear. As John Constable (1776–1837), whom Cole met in England in 1829, observed of Jacob Ruisdael's *The Jewish Cemetery* (c. 1668–1672, Detroit Institute of Arts): "He attempted to tell that which is outside the reach of the art . . . there are ruins to indicate old age, a stream to signify the course of life, and rocks and precipices to shadow forth all its dangers. But how are we to discover all this?"<sup>37</sup> Taking no chances his meanings would lie undiscovered, Cole made his intentions in *The Voyage of Life* absolutely explicit: The traveler clearly ages; the stream and the landscape change character; the hour glass empties; life passes.

Although it seems virtually inconceivable that Cole's audience would have missed the point, the artist also prepared detailed explanatory texts for each picture. These texts were printed in magazines such as *The Knickerbocker* and in the catalogues of exhibitions that included the series. In that they succinctly express Cole's thinking and manage to do so with a certain eloquence, they are worth quoting in full here. But more to the point, no matter how often *The Voyage of Life* is analyzed as a whole or as component parts, in the end Cole's own words still serve as the best guide to this particular pictorial journey:

#### FIRST PICTURE : CHILDHOOD

A stream is seen issuing from a deep cavern, in the side of a craggy and precipitous mountain, whose summit is hidden in clouds. From out the cave glides a Boat, whose golden prow and sides are sculptured into figures of the Hours: steered by an Angelic Form, and laden with buds and flowers, it bears a laughing Infant, the Voyager whose varied course the artist has attempted to delineate.

On either hand the banks of the stream are clothed in luxuriant herbage and flowers. The rising sun bathes the mountains and the flowery banks in rosy light.

The dark cavern is emblematic of our earthly origin, and the mysterious Past. The Boat, composed of Figures of the Hours, images the thought, that we are borne on the hours down the Stream of Life. The Boat identifies the subject in each picture. The rosy light of the morning, the luxuriant flowers and plants, are emblems of the joyousness of early life. The close banks, and the limited scope of the scene, indicate the narrow experience of Childhood, and the nature of its pleasures and desires. The Egyptian Lotus in the foreground of the picture is symbolical of Human Life. Joyousness and wonder are the characteristic emotions of childhood.

#### SECOND PICTURE : YOUTH

The stream now pursues its course through a landscape of wider scope and more diversified beauty. Trees of rich growth overshadow its banks, and verdant hills form the base of lofty mountains. The Infant of the former scene is become a Youth, on the verge of Manhood. He is now alone in the Boat, and takes the helm himself; and in an attitude of confidence and eager expectation, gazes on a cloudy pile of Architecture, an air-built Castle that rises dome above dome in the far-off blue sky. The Guardian Spirit stands upon the bank of the stream, and with serious yet benignant countenance seems to be bidding the impetuous voyager 'God Speed.' The beautiful stream flows directly toward the aerial palace, for a distance; but at length makes a sudden turn, and is seen in glimpses beneath the trees, until it at last descends with rapid current into a rocky ravine, where the voyager will be found in the next picture. Over the remote hills, which seems to intercept the stream and turn it from its hitherto direct course, a path is dimly seen, tending directly toward that cloudy Fabric, which is the object and desire of the voyager.

The scenery of this picture—its clear stream, its lofty trees, its towering mountains, its unbounded distance, and transparent atmosphere—figure forth the romantic beauty of youthful imaginings, when the mind magnifies the Mean and Common into the Magnificent, before experience teaches what is the Real. The gorgeous cloud-built palace, whose most glorious domes seem yet but half revealed to the eye, growing more and more lofty as we gaze, is emblematic of the day-dreams of youth, its aspirations after glory and fame; and the dimly-seen path would intimate that Youth, in his impetuous career, is forgetful that he is embarked on the Stream of Life, and that its current sweeps along with resistless force, and increases in swiftness as it descends toward the great Ocean of Eternity.

#### THIRD PICTURE : MANHOOD

Storm and cloud enshroud a rugged and dreary landscape. Bare impending precipices rise in the lurid light.



Thomas Cole, *The Voyage of Life: Childhood*, 1840.16.1



Thomas Cole, *The Voyage of Life: Youth*, 1840.16.2



Thomas Cole, *The Voyage of Life: Manhood*, 1840.16.3



Thomas Cole, *The Voyage of Life: Old Age*, 1840.16.4

The swollen stream rushes furiously down a dark ravine, whirling and foaming in its wild career, and speeding toward the Ocean, which is dimly seen through the mist and falling rain. The boat is there, plunging amid the turbulent waters. The voyager is now a man of middle age: the helm of the boat is gone, and he looks imploringly toward heaven, as if heaven's aid alone could save him from the perils that surround him. The Guardian Spirit calmly sits in the clouds, watching with an air of solicitude the affrighted voyager. Demon forms are hovering in the air.

Trouble is characteristic of the period of Manhood. In Childhood there is no cankering care; in Youth no despairing thought. It is only when experience has taught us the realities of the world, that we lift from our eyes the golden veil of early life; that we feel deep and abiding sorrow; and in the picture, the gloomy, eclipse-like tone, the conflicting elements, the trees riven by tempest, are the allegory; and the Ocean, dimly seen, figures the end of life, to which the voyager is now approaching. The demon forms are Suicide, Intemperance, and Murder, which are the temptations that beset men in their direst trouble. The upward and imploring look of the voyager, shows his dependence on a Superior Power, and *that* faith saves him from the destruction that seems inevitable.

#### FOURTH PICTURE: OLD AGE

Portentous clouds are brooding over a vast and midnight Ocean. A few barren rocks are seen through the gloom—the last shores of the world. These form the mouth of the river, and the boat, shattered by storms, its figures of the hours broken and drooping, is seen gliding over deep waters. Directed by the Guardian Spirit, who thus far has accompanied him *unseen*, the voyager, now an old man, looks upward to an opening in the clouds, from whence a glorious light bursts forth, and angels are seen descending the cloudy steps, as if to welcome him to the Haven of Immortal Life.

The stream has now reached the Ocean, to which all life is tending. The world, to Old Age, is destitute of interest. There is no longer any green thing upon it. The broken and drooping figures of the boat show that Time is nearly ended. The chains of corporeal existence are falling away; and already the mind has glimpses of Immortal Life. The angelic Being, of whose presence until now the voyager has been unconscious, is revealed to him, and with a countenance beaming with joy, shows to his wondering gaze scenes such as the eye of mortal man has never yet seen.

FK

#### Notes

1. For a discussion of a possible 1845 date, see *Cole* 1969, 35. Other sources place the acquisition a bit later than 1845; see Paul D. Schweizer, “*The Voyage of Life: A Chronology*,” in *Cole* 1985, 45 (“December 1846?”), and Parry 1988, 332 (“sometime late in 1846 or, more likely, early in 1847”); however in a *Boston Transcript* article enti-

tled “*The Voyage of Life*,” which appeared 21 May 1846, the pictures are mentioned as then belonging to “a wealthy gentleman of Cincinnati.”

2. A letter of April 1979 from Mrs. Robert Heuck (in NGA curatorial files) specifies: “Mr. Shoenberger died in 1892, at which time many of the belongings of the home were given to heirs.” Shoenberger died 20 January 1892; for additional information, see *Biographical Cyclopaedia* 1895, 6:1457–1458.

3. Mrs. Robert Heuck, letter of April 1979 (in NGA curatorial files) states: “In 1908 Mr. and Mrs. Ernest W. [sic] Huenefeld purchased the land [and the house and contents].”

4. Dwight and Boyle 1967, 62.

5. Cole to Asher B. Durand, Rome, 8 March 1842, Cole papers, New York State Library, Albany.

6. Greene 1860, 112.

7. “Receipt (daily) of Exhibition Monday, Dec. 18, 1843 to Saturday, March 2, 1844,” Receipt book, Cole papers, New York State Library, Albany.

8. *Cole* 1969, 35.

9. Schweizer in *Cole* 1985, 8, notes that “voyage of life” imagery appears in several poems Cole wrote in the early 1830s.

10. Merritt, “Cole’s List,” 1967, 90; *Cole* 1969, 34–35; Schweizer in *Cole* 1985, 8.

11. Merritt “Cole’s List,” 1967, 90. Cole eventually abandoned the idea of providing texts within each picture to assist in explicating their meaning, but not before he had drafted several possible accompanying lines. For the first picture an inscription over the mouth of the cave would have read “Life issues from the womb of dark oblivion. . . . And angels guide & watch it through the vale of Earth.” For the second, a rock by the side of the stream would carry the words “When boyhood’s season is past, reason must guide while guardian spirits watch.” For the third, “the prime of life is trouble & unrest & pain. But the Guardian Spirit is still near though hidden to human eye.” And for the fourth, “Pass on ye voyagers of Life’s wild stream. Before you open mysterious gates of the great Heaven of the Soul.”

12. Cole’s description as quoted in *Cole* 1969, 35; see also Parry 1988, 226–228.

13. Letter of 14 September 1839 from Cole to Ward as quoted in Parry 1988, 230.

14. Parry 1988, 230.

15. Cole journal as quoted in Schweizer in *Cole* 1985, 12.

16. Cole journal as quoted in Schweizer in *Cole* 1985, 12.

17. See Schweizer in *Cole* 1985, 12–26, for a detailed account of these events.

18. Cole’s letter of November 1840 as quoted in Schweizer in *Cole* 1985, 18.

19. Cole began work on the replicas on 25- by 37-inch canvases, two of which—*Manhood* (1840–1841, Mr. and Mrs. John W. Merriam, Wynnewood, Pennsylvania) and *Old Age* (1840–1841, Neuberger Museum, State University of New York at Purchase)—survive; see Schweizer in *Cole* 1985, 22.

20. Schweizer in *Cole* 1985, 28.

21. For Greene’s friendship with Cole and his interest in *The Voyage of Life*, see Greene 1860, 103, 105, 110–113.

22. Schweizer in *Cole* 1985, 25, 27.  
 23. Letter of 17 December 1841 from Cole as quoted in Schweizer in *Cole* 1985, 31.  
 24. These changes and other less obvious and less significant ones are detailed in Schweizer in *Cole* 1985, 30–41.  
 25. Although this difference in color may be noticed in very good color reproductions, it was particularly apparent when the two sets were viewed side by side in Utica in 1985.  
 26. Schweizer in *Cole* 1985, 32.  
 27. Letter of 18 March 1842 from Cole to Maria Cole as quoted in Schweizer in *Cole* 1985, 32.  
 28. Noble 1853, 240, quoting Greene's recollections, which appear in Greene 1860, 110–111, and were quoted in numerous other sources.  
 29. Letter of 14 December 1844 from Cole to Thomas Crawford, giving his recollections of 1842 as quoted in Schweizer in *Cole* 1985, 34.  
 30. Schweizer in *Cole* 1985, 36.  
 31. Letter of 16 February 1843 from Cole to Cornelius Ver Bryck as quoted in Schweizer in *Cole* 1985, 36.  
 32. Schweizer in *Cole* 1985, 45; Parry 1988, 312. I am grateful to Laurette McCarthy for resolving the 1845–1846 exhibition history. *Catalogue of the Exhibition of the New-York Gallery of Fine Arts*, New York, 1845, 10–13.  
 33. Schweizer in *Cole* 1985, 48.  
 34. The drawing was held on 22 December. In May 1849 Brodt sold the pictures to the Reverend Gorham D. Abbot of the Spingler Institute in New York, an educational institution for young ladies; the pictures were thus once again accessible in New York; see Schweizer in *Cole* 1985, 48.  
 35. Parry 1988, 228.  
 36. See Parry 1988, 230–240; Wallach 1977.  
 37. Constable as quoted in Parris and Fleming-Williams 1991, 304.

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N.B.: The references cited below are for the replica set only. A more complete list of references to both sets and to Cole's interest in the voyage of life theme is in Schweizer in *Cole* 1985, 66–69.

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 1954 LaBudde: 171, 212.  
 1962 Devane: 6A.  
 1964 Vesell: 220–224, 231, 233–235, 237, 239–240, 264.  
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 1973 Wallach: 70–72, 106.  
 1976 Kurland: 105–109, 172. *Childhood and Youth* repro. 227, *Manhood and Old Age* repro. 228.  
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# Jasper Francis Cropsey

1823 – 1900

JASPER FRANCIS CROPSEY was born 18 February 1823 on his father's farm in Rossville, Staten Island, New York. He was the eldest of eight children in a family descended from Dutch and French Huguenot immigrants.

In 1837, at the age of fourteen, Cropsey won a diploma from the New York City Mechanics Institute Fair for a model house that he built, and the same year he began a five-year apprenticeship with architect Joseph Trench. After eighteen months, Cropsey's proficiency in drawing had earned him the responsibility for nearly all the office's finished renderings. His employer also agreed to provide him with paints, canvas, and a space in which to study and perfect his artistic skills. Before leaving Trench's office in 1842, Cropsey received lessons in watercolor from the English-born Edward Maury (active 1835–1840), and encouragement and advice from American genre painters William T. Ranney (1813–1857) and William Sidney Mount (1807–1868). In 1843 Cropsey first exhibited a painting, a quite well-received landscape entitled *Italian Composition*, probably based on a print, at the National Academy of Design. He was elected an associate member of the Academy the following year and a full member in 1851.

While supporting himself by taking commissions for architectural designs in 1842 and 1843, Cropsey had begun to make landscape studies from nature. A two-week sketching trip to New Jersey resulted in two paintings of Greenwood Lake that were accepted at an 1843 exhibition at the American Art-Union. During one of his several subsequent trips to Greenwood Lake, the artist met Maria Cooley, whom he married in May 1847. After traveling in Britain for the summer of 1847, the Cropseys spent a year among the colony of American artists settled in Rome.

Once back in the United States in 1849, Cropsey visited the White Mountains and then took a studio in New York City from which, over the next several years, he traveled in the summers through upstate New York, Vermont, and New Hampshire. When sales of his works were low, as they sometimes were in these early days, he turned

to teaching to supplement his income. The only one of his pupils to gain substantial recognition was the landscape painter David Johnson.

In June 1856 Cropsey and his wife sailed for England and soon thereafter settled into a studio at Kensington Gate in London. There they established an active social life, counting among their friends John Ruskin, Lord Lyndhurst, and Charles Eastlake. Cropsey's commissions included pictures of English landmarks for patrons in the United States and scenes of America for the British audience. In museums and galleries he was exposed to the naturalistic landscapes of John Constable and the romantic paintings of J. M. W. Turner. He also explored and recorded the Dorset Coast and the Isle of Wight.

Cropsey and his wife returned to America in 1863, and shortly thereafter the artist visited Gettysburg to record the battlefield's topography in a painting. He also began to accept architectural commissions once again and produced his best-known designs, the ornate cast and wrought iron Queen Anne-style passenger stations of the Gilbert Elevated Railway along New York's Sixth Avenue. For himself, beginning in 1866, Cropsey built a twenty-nine-room mansion in Warwick, New York. After being forced to sell this home in 1884, he purchased a house at Hastings-on-Hudson, New York, to which he added a handsome studio.<sup>1</sup>

For fifteen years Cropsey continued to paint in his home on the Hudson. Although he exhibited regularly at the National Academy of Design, his realistic, meticulously detailed, and dramatically composed scenes were eclipsed in popularity by the smaller scale, softer, mood-evoking landscapes of Barbizon-inspired painters such as George Inness. After suffering a stroke in 1893, Cropsey, a founder of the American Society of Painters in Watercolor (later the American Watercolor Society), turned increasingly to this medium. He died on 22 June 1900 at the age of seventy-seven.

DC

## Notes

1. The Newington-Cropsey Foundation maintains the site, called Ever Rest, as a museum.

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1978.12.1 (2721)

## *The Spirit of War*

1851

Oil on canvas, 110.8 × 171.6 (43<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 67<sup>9</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)

Avalon Fund

### Inscriptions

At lower left: J.F. Cropsey 1851

**Technical Notes:** The moderately heavy, twill-weave fabric support has been lined and mounted to an old stretcher. Over a thin red ground, the paint layer was applied in a medium paste with low and free brushstrokes. An old, 7.5 cm tear near the top right corner has been repaired. A few small, scattered losses appear throughout.

**Provenance:** Sale of Cropsey's work, New York, April 1856;<sup>1</sup> John Rutherford, New Jersey;<sup>2</sup> sold by May 1856 to Joseph Harrison, Jr. [1810–1874], Philadelphia; by inheritance to his wife, Sarah Poulterer Harrison [1817–1906], Philadelphia; her estate; (her estate sale, M. Thomas & Sons at Philadelphia Art Galleries, Philadelphia, 12 March 1912 [postponed from 26 February], no. 8);<sup>3</sup> Joseph T. Kinsley [b. 1859], Philadelphia; (sale, Hiram Parke New Galleries, New York, 15–16 March 1916,

2nd day, no. 175);<sup>4</sup> (J.G. Leroy, agent). (sale, Philadelphia Art Galleries, Philadelphia, 29 May 1917, no. 767).<sup>5</sup> Sarah Clark Goodman, New York and Newport; (her sale, Plaza Art Rooms, Inc., New York, 13–15 November 1919, 3rd day, no. 499);<sup>6</sup> Herbert Kaufman. Adele Gardiner, Tarrytown, New York, 1929;<sup>7</sup> private collection, from 1929; acquired 1977 by (Vose Galleries, Boston).

**Exhibited:** NAD Annual, 1852, no. 48. *The Washington Exhibition in Aid of the New-York Gallery of the Fine Arts*, American Art-Union Gallery, New York, 1853, no. 58. PAFA Annual, 1854, no. 326. Boston Athenaeum, 1855, no cat. PAFA Annual, 1856, no. 308. PAFA Annual, Autumn 1856, no. 99. PAFA Annual, 1857, no. 250. *Jasper Francis Cropsey's 'The Spirit of War' and 'The Spirit of Peace,'* NGA, 1994–1995, brochure. *The Spirit of War and The Spirit of Peace*, The Woodmere Art Museum, Philadelphia, 1995, no cat.

DURING their first trip to Europe, in 1847–1848, Cropsey and his wife lived in the building on the Via Babuino in Rome that had once been Thomas Cole's studio. Whether this choice of location was practical or purely symbolic is unknown, but it is clear that Cropsey held Cole in the greatest esteem and would have been pleased to follow in his footsteps, figuratively and literally. Indeed, in *The Spirit of War* and its pendant *The Spirit of Peace* (fig. 1), the younger artist emulates Cole's ambitious themes, grand compositions, fluid application of paint, expressive color, and pairing of subjects. The former painting also displays elements of Cole's visual vocabulary of craggy rocks, turbulent and dramatically lit sky, and twisted and broken vegetation.<sup>8</sup>

The subject of *The Spirit of War*, set as it is in medieval times, may have also been influenced by Cole, whose pair of paintings *The Departure* and *The Return* (both 1837, CGA) illustrate episodes in the Middle Ages.<sup>9</sup> Both artists appear to have been inspired by the popular writings of Walter Scott and chose to illuminate the theme of their works by quoting from the poet's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*.

Now over Border, dale and fell,  
Full wide and far was terror spread;  
For pathless marsh and mountain cell,  
The peasant left his lowly shed.  
The frightened flocks and herds were pent  
Beneath the peel's rude battlement;  
And maids and matrons dropped the tear,  
While ready warriors seized the spear.  
From Branksome's towers, the watchman's eye  
Dun wreaths of distant smoke can spy,  
Which, curling in the rising sun,  
Showed southern ravage was begun.<sup>10</sup>

Fig. 1. Jasper Francis Cropsey, *The Spirit of Peace*, oil on canvas, 1851, Philadelphia, Woodmere Art Museum, Charles Knox Smith Collection





Jasper Francis Cropsey, *The Spirit of War*, 1978.12.1

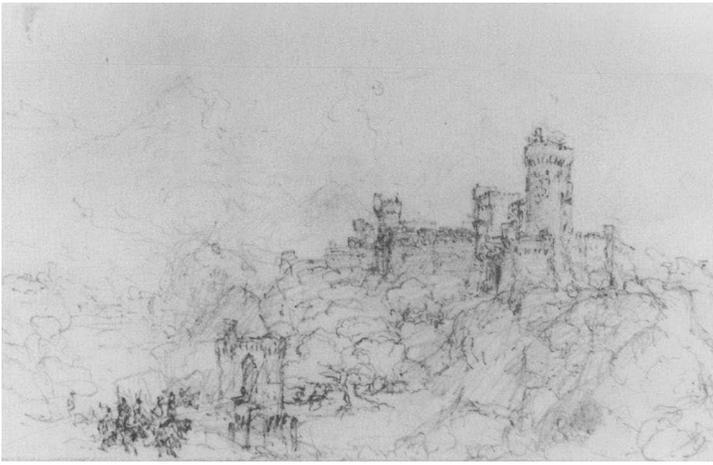


Fig. 2. Sketch for *The Spirit of War*, pencil on paper, date unknown, William T. Blodgett Album, Collection of Mrs. John C. Newington, Hastings-on-Hudson, New York

Numerous sketches and an occasional painting from the 1847–1849 period indicate that Cropsey was fascinated with medieval edifices. And while as a trained architect he was quite capable of painting authentic, detailed portraits of castles, the looming building in *The Spirit of War* appears to be a composite created for its dramatic potential and romantic aura.<sup>11</sup> In the irregularity of its outline it is the man-made counterpart of the jagged peak in the near background and similarly lacks the civilized virtues of balance and order. The castle's tower seems to pierce the sky, to pull down and hold the dense, gathering storm clouds, as if to participate in the destruction they portend.

Even as many other American artists were establishing important reputations based solely on their landscapes, Cropsey relished the challenge of allegorical images. In 1850 he had contributed two designs to a large series illustrating Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, and his notebooks from this period contain jottings concerning similarly complex, morally instructive subjects.<sup>12</sup> *The Spirit of War* and *The Spirit of Peace* were, however, his first completed efforts of this type.<sup>13</sup> Cropsey's small pencil sketches of these subjects were recently discovered. It is unclear whether these drawings were made before or after the paintings. Their diminutive size—the sketch for *The Spirit of War* (fig. 2) is  $2\frac{3}{16}$  by  $4\frac{1}{8}$  inches—suggests they might have been made after the fact, as part of Cropsey's records rather than as aids in composing the paintings. They do, however, differ in some significant details from the finished works, such as in the placement of figures.<sup>14</sup>

Rarely has the foundation of a work of art been as well documented as for these paintings. In a

remarkable draft letter, fifteen pages in length, Cropsey explained his intentions regarding the works and provided some observations on the nature of art in general. An artist “should seek to express on his canvass[sic] the highest intellectual expressions”; “his thoughts should be pure and noble . . . not wasted on trifles”; and he should dwell “upon detail where the subject required it.”<sup>15</sup> (This last observation is particularly telling, for Cropsey was well known—and sometimes criticized—for his fondness for detail. His penchant for accurately recording flora and the minutiae of a range of natural phenomena may have surpassed even Cole's.)<sup>16</sup>

Cropsey carefully and concretely laid out every aspect of the narrative in the paintings. Many of the details and comparisons he used in the pair are extraordinarily explicit. The goatherd and flock that scurry toward the protection of the castle keep in the lower left of *The Spirit of War*, for instance, have their counterpart in the peacefully wandering creatures in the foreground of the pendant. The mother and child who collapse exhausted in their efforts to reach the castle in one painting are found happily strolling and picking flowers in the other.

Cropsey's contemporaries acclaimed both *The Spirit of War* and *The Spirit of Peace* for the clarity with which their lofty ideas were represented.<sup>17</sup> The latter depicts an Arcadian landscape with tiny figures engaged in various pastoral pursuits. The center of the composition is anchored by a circular temple containing symbols of peace. The clear skies, soft light of sunset, and placid waters filled with sailing vessels bespeak tranquility and prosperity. By contrast, *The Spirit of War* depicts a brutal and hostile environment, bathed in a hellish, fiery light, described in the artist's own words as “promising nought but the uncertain and gloomy future of war-like times.”<sup>18</sup> Thus Cropsey chose:

the incidents of the feudal times, that period when constant strife existed among the ‘knights’ Barons . . . the early dawn of morning after a stormy and rainy night—red, lurid clouds hurry across the heavens, deep snow bathed in the same red flush of light, cap the summit of wild jagged mountains in the distance<sup>19</sup> . . . beacon fires blaze on the summitt [sic] of the mountains announcing the enemy's approach, and bidding them to arm for deeds of strife and blood. . . . Keeping [sic] pace with the sentiments of the times, and as an eppisode [sic] to the spirit of the picture, will be seen in the mouth of the grotto on the right hand side, the wizard practising his evil incantations. Pastoral life and Domestic Happiness find only desolation in war.<sup>20</sup>

The themes of war and peace, expressed as historically distant allegories, had a more immediate emotional significance for Cropsey's audience. The recent Mexican War (1846–1848) and the subsequent strident debate over whether the western territories would join the nation as free or slave states (tempered only by the slim hopes for peace held by the tenuous Compromise of 1850) contributed to the strained national atmosphere in the decade preceding the Civil War.<sup>21</sup>

First shown at his New York studio on the corner of Center and White Streets, Cropsey's allegorical pair went on to become the most exhibited of his works, shown seven times between 1852 and 1857. The National Gallery's painting is fraught with message and constructed for melodrama, yet somehow stubbornly observant of aspects of the natural world. In this carefully conceived *tour de force* the earnest young artist created a powerful and lasting image of the fear and hopelessness brought about by war, eerily prefiguring the bloody conflict that would envelop his country in the following decade.

DC

## Notes

1. ["Cropsey sale,"] *Statten Islander*, 12 April 1856.
2. This was not the first painting by Cropsey to be purchased by Rutherford. Tuckerman, *Book*, 1867, 535, lists a *Jedburgh Abbey*, painted by Cropsey in Rome, in the collection of "John Rutherford, Esq., of New Jersey."
3. An annotated copy of the 1912 sale catalogue gives the name of the buyer of the Cropsey as Thomas E. Kingsley, as does a 13 March 1912 newspaper article from *The North American* inserted inside the cover of this copy of the catalogue. It is probable, however, that the annotator got the name wrong. The same article indicates that he purchased "for his private collection" three paintings at the sale: the Cropsey, one by Clara von Wille, and one by Christian Schuessele. The first two are indeed annotated in the sale catalogue with his name. However, the Schuessele is annotated with the name of Joseph T. Kinsley, and another article about the sale, on 16 March 1912, in the *Philadelphia Press*, confirms the purchase "to Joseph T. Kinsley." Both the Cropsey and the von Wille appear in a sale of Kinsley's collection in April 1915; the Schuessele is listed in the 1916 Kinsley sale, but does not appear to have sold until his 1922 sale. Although a Thomas E. Kinsey, superintendent with the Pullman Company, appears in Philadelphia city directories and the 1910 U.S. census, it seems more likely that it was Joseph T. Kinsley who purchased all three paintings, including the Cropsey (see note 4).
4. There was a 1915 sale in Philadelphia (14–16 April) of more than 200 paintings in Joseph T. Kinsley's collection. *The Spirit of War* was no. 66 in this sale, but apparently it did not sell. The 1916 sale catalogue is titled *Illustrated Catalogue of Valuable Paintings by Foreign and*

*American Artists Belonging to Mr. Joseph T. Kinsley, Philadelphia . . . and Mr. William Hogencamp . . . Jersey City, N.J.* According to the *Encyclopedia of Pennsylvania Biography* (vol. xiv, p. 5), Joseph T. Kinsley was the president and general manager of the Pennsylvania Garage and Service Company, having earlier headed a large plumbing business. The 1916 sale included more than 100 paintings from his collection.

5. The reference to this sale in the 1917 *American Art Annual* describes it as "107 water colors and paintings belonging to the estates of Harriet W. Norriss, G. Hudson Mackuen, and several other estates." A copy of the catalogue has not yet been located.

6. The 1919 sale was "The Sarah Clark Goodman Sale." This is the only documentation thus far of her ownership. *The New York Times* obituary notice of 13 April 1919 identifies Mrs. Goodman as the wife of the Rev. Frederic W. Goodman and "the inventor of the 'vibratone piano'."

7. A letter of 26 February 1981 from Robert C. Vose, Jr. (in NGA curatorial files), states: "Apparently, this Gardiner also built a house in the Adirondacks, which was eventually purchased by the man from whom we got the Cropsey. He still wishes to be anonymous. Our source found the painting face to the wall in the barn."

8. For a discussion of the influence of Cole's paired paintings, see Kelly, "Pairs," 1994, 650–651. The relationship of Cropsey's work to Cole's was recognized repeatedly by his contemporaries. Writing on *The Spirit of War* and *The Spirit of Peace*, one reported: "Mr. Cropsey, who in many respects resembles Mr. Cole, has lately been carrying the resemblance still farther, by painting two pictures in that epico-allegorical style, if we may call it, in which our great landscape painter delighted," in "The Chronicle: Art and Artists in America," *Bulletin of the American-Art Union*, 1 December 1851, 149.

9. Cropsey would use the medieval setting again in *Days of Elizabeth* (1853, Newington-Cropsey Foundation), an ambitious painting that depicts a hawking party out for sport in an expansive landscape. As in *The Spirit of War*, a castle dominates the hill above the field and forest where the action takes place.

10. "Lay of the Last Minstrel," verse 3, canto 4. Cropsey quotes the poem in a draft letter of 12 May 1854 concerning the painting (Cropsey papers, Newington-Cropsey Foundation). Franklin Kelly discovered that the same verse had earlier been chosen by Cole to describe his painting *The Departure* and was printed in the checklist of the Cole memorial exhibition at the American Art-Union in 1848.

11. See entry for Cropsey's *Warwick Castle* [1991. 142.1].

12. Talbot 1977, 105–106. Cropsey Notebooks, Miscellaneous Letters, Diaries, Sketches, and Memorandums of Jasper Francis Cropsey, 1845–1886, Newington-Cropsey Foundation, Hastings-on-Hudson, New York (AAA microfilm 336), for example, contains thoughts on *The Genius of the Republic*, *Sowing and Reaping*, and *Pilgrims of the Cross*.

13. J. Gray Sweeney ("The Advantages of Genius and Virtue: Thomas Cole's Influence, 1848–1858," in Truettner and Wallach 1994, 134n.37) states that Cropsey might have been influenced in his choice of subject by Ed-

win Landseer's (1802–1873) pair of works, *War and Peace*, which were exhibited in New York in June 1851. However, an entry in Cropsey's journal indicates that he was at work on the pair by the Spring of 1851. "August 2nd 1851, West Milford," he relates "Am at the old place with my usual quiet and seclusion. Began this spring here my Peace and War." See letter of 4 June 1851 from Kenneth W. Maddox, Historian, Newington-Cropsey Foundation, Hastings-on-Hudson, New York (in NGA curatorial files).

14. Kenneth Maddox kindly brought these drawings to our attention. They are part of an album of Cropsey sketches, now in the Collection of Mrs. John C. Newington, Hastings-on-Hudson, New York, that once belonged to Cropsey's patron William T. Blodgett.

15. Draft letter, 12 May 1854, from Cropsey, Cropsey papers, File 149, Newington-Cropsey Foundation, Hastings-on-Hudson, New York. A complete transcription was kindly provided by Gertrude Wilmers, Research Curator. The document was formerly thought to be dated "12th May 1852"; however, Wilmers feels certain that the date, in Cropsey's hand, reads 1854. It is unknown to whom the letter was intended, but the closing includes regards to "yourself and Mrs. M."

16. For example, Cropsey painted an  $8\frac{3}{8} \times 11\frac{7}{8}$  inch oil study of skunk cabbage (Hirschl & Adler Galleries in 1978) that may have been the model for that species as included at the lower left of *The Spirit of War*.

17. A reviewer of the annual National Academy of Design exhibition wrote of Cropsey's "fine poetic imagination" and described the conception of *The Spirit of War* as "grand in the extreme, and nothing can exceed the vigour and felicity with which the idea is interpreted and diffused over the larger portions of the canvas." The same critic, however, went on to regret "the unfinished look of all the parts nearest the eye." ("Fine Arts: The National Academy of Design," *The Albion* 2, 24 April/8 May 1852, 201–202.)

18. Cropsey, letter of 12 May 1854, Newington-Cropsey Foundation, Hastings-on-Hudson, New York.

19. Cropsey's footnote to his description of the Temple of Peace with "its band of porphyry girdling it as it were with belts of love," states that "red in art in a good sense expresses love, faith & [missing text] but in a bad sense it expresses blood, carnage &c." Cropsey letter of 12 May 1854, second fragment, second section, Newington-Cropsey Foundation, Hastings-on-Hudson, New York.

20. Cropsey letter of 12 May 1854, first fragment, selections from sections two through eight, Newington-Cropsey Foundation, Hastings-on-Hudson, New York.

21. Angela Miller writes: "If *The Spirit of War* spoke to the growing fears of a fratricidal conflict threatening the Union, *The Spirit of Peace* lauded the efforts of compromise through which disunion would be averted. The symbolism of the lion and the lamb in *The Spirit of Peace* may thus allude to the reconciliation of opposing systems and to the necessity of laying aside sectional conflict in order to embrace a higher principle of national harmony" (Miller 1993, 124–125).

## References

- 1851 "The Chronicle: Art and Artists in America." *Bulletin of the American Art-Union* (1 December): 149.  
 1851 "Fine Arts." *Literary World* (13 December): 471.  
 1851 "Fine Arts." *Home Journal* 2 (27 December): 5.  
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 1852 "Fine Arts: The National Academy of Design." *The Albion* 2 (24 April/8 May): 201.  
 1852 "Fine Arts." *Home Journal* 2 (8 May): 6, 7.  
 1855 *The Crayon* (11 July): 24.  
 1856 *Home Journal* 1 (26 January): 1–4.  
 1856 ["Cropsey sale."] *Statten Islander* (12 April).  
 1867 Tuckerman, *Book*: 535–536.  
 1879 Sheldon: 83.  
 1968 Birmingham: 13.  
 1970 Talbot: 28–29.  
 1977 Talbot: 106–111, 365–367.  
 1987 Foshay and Finney: 25.  
 1988 Wilmerding: 11, 18, 22, 110, color repro. 111.  
 1993 Miller: 68–69, 107, 122–123, 125.  
 1994 Kelly, *Cropsey*: fig. 1.  
 1994 Kelly, *Cole*: 45, fig. 45.  
 1994 Kelly, "Pairs": 650–657.

1991.142.1

## Warwick Castle, England

1857

Oil on canvas,  $81.1 \times 132.3$  ( $31\frac{15}{16} \times 52\frac{1}{16}$ )

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Norman Hirschl, in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art

## Inscriptions

At lower right: J.F. Cropsey / .1857.

**Technical Notes:** The support is a fine, plain-weave fabric that has been lined. The ground, a warm, rosy buff color, is used as a mid-tone in the sky and is visible on the tacking margins. Paint is sparsely applied, with impasto restricted to highlights such as in the foliage and the central castle chimney. Various techniques, including scumbling in the sky and water and transparent multilayer glazing over opaque and transparent base colors in the foliage and castle, were employed. A transparent brown wash appears to have been laid under the darker areas of foliage, reflections, and cottages, while the architecture appears to have been built upon a layer of white paint interposed between the ground and the rendering. Lighter foliage areas are underpainted in an ocher-toned base, then richly glazed with layers of transparent red, green, and brown. Pentimenti are visible in the lowering of the tree line at left and shifting of a spire at right, but no major changes in composition are evident. There is a 4-cm vertical scratch in the right foreground just below the white cottage and limited inpainting in the sky at left. A past lining has caused several alterations to the painting, including an overall weave emphasis and the formation

of numerous lumps in the upper half of the painting. The varnish has not discolored.

**Provenance:** Commissioned by Cyrus W. Field [1819–1892], New York; his daughter, Mrs. William Francis Judson; her son, Cyrus Field Judson; his daughter, Mrs. Frank McCoy, Washington; (Hirschl & Adler Galleries, New York), from 1977; sold 1982 to private collection.

**Exhibited:** NAD Annual 1857, no. 191. *Recent Acquisitions of American Art 1769–1938*, Hirschl & Adler Galleries, New York, 1979, no. 22. *The Art of Collecting*, Hirschl & Adler Galleries, New York, 1984, no. 13. *Adventure and Inspiration: American Artists in Other Lands*, Hirschl & Adler Galleries, New York, 1988, no. 25.

WARWICK CASTLE was a subject perfectly suited to Jasper Cropsey's aesthetic proclivities.<sup>1</sup> In several images from the first part of his career, including *The Spirit of War* [1978.12.1], he had demonstrated a fascination with the drama of the age of chivalry, particularly as evoked by Sir Walter Scott.<sup>2</sup> During his 1847–1849 trip abroad he visited Warwick Castle and made two sketches, both dated 30 June 1849, that illustrate the feature known as Caesar's Tower rising above the treetops.<sup>3</sup> (From another dated drawing it is known that Cropsey had visited Kenilworth Castle, some five miles distant, just the day before. Both of these sites, situated in Warwickshire, at the very heart of England, have thoroughly illustrious histories.)<sup>4</sup>

The building of the first Warwick Castle was begun in 914 at the direction of Lady Æthelflaed, daughter of King Alfred the Great. William the Conqueror gave to Henry de Newburgh the title of earl of Warwick and a grant of the castle, town, and suburbs. Ownership passed from the de Newburgh family to the Mauduit family and then to the de Beauchamp family. The castle was the site of many skirmishes during the Wars of the Barons and suffered the destruction of its walls. Henry III made it his headquarters while gathering forces to besiege Kenilworth. The de Beauchamp family repaired and improved the fortifications, building Caesar's Tower and Guy's Tower. Henry V, in 1417, and Richard III, in 1583, both stayed at Warwick, and Edward IV was taken there as prisoner in 1469. During the reign of Edward VI the castle came into possession of the Crown and was granted to the Dudley family, which subsequently entertained Elizabeth I there in 1572 and 1575.<sup>5</sup> After the earl of Dudley's death, James I granted the property to Sir Fulke Greville, in whose descendant's possession it

remained at the time of Cropsey's visits.<sup>6</sup> Tourists in the mid-nineteenth century could inspect the castle's towers, courtyard, Great Room, and other spaces but not the family's private apartments, the contents of which were described in Henry Cooke's Warwickshire guidebook.

Cropsey produced the National Gallery's view of Warwick Castle during his second stay in England. It must have been completed in the early months of 1857, for it was included in the annual exhibition at the National Academy of Design that spring. The painting is based upon a remarkable drawing (fig. 1) that Cropsey made at the site on 30 September 1856. The pencil rendering corresponds almost exactly to the work on canvas, even to the notation of birds alighting from Guy's Tower. Most fascinating are the artist's detailed working notes, which served to remind him that the river was "slightly muddy," with a band of blue indicated at lower left, and had "vivid refle—." Cropsey labeled the "lightest part of the willows" and the most shadowed areas of the massed trees. A numbered key at the top itemizes "two white windows" (no. 7) in reference to those clearly visible in the reflection of the central area of the castle.

It appears that Cropsey's vantage point for this view must have been the bridge that spans the Avon about a quarter of a mile from the castle.<sup>7</sup> The crumbling remains of an older bridge are seen at the center of the composition. The castle itself, a warm brown color, is constructed of sandstone. Below the windows of the family apartments "the ancient cedars spread feathery branches, and the river flows tranquilly by, till it ripples over the Weir, bordered in many places by magnificent elms centuries old." Cropsey's loving attention to the lush greenery allowed one ungenerous critic to refer to the painting as "one of the best specimens of spring vegetables I have ever seen on canvas."<sup>8</sup> Compared to Cropsey's rousing allegorical productions such as *The Spirit of War* or his grand, poetic landscapes like *Autumn—On the Hudson River* [1963.9.1], *Warwick Castle* is a somewhat dry and straightforward exercise, but it captures with utmost precision the awesome beauty of the imposing structure, and its peaceful, verdant surroundings. With the swans gliding in the foreground—these ubiquitous denizens of castle waterways may also be allusions to royalty and the Greville family crest, for they are a feature not in the drawing—the scene looks as stately, bucolic, and English as can be imagined.

Cropsey undertook the subject as a commission

from renowned American entrepreneur Cyrus W. Field (1819–1892).<sup>9</sup> Having begun his career as an errand-boy in a dry-goods store, the ambitious, adventurous Field eventually became an enormously successful businessman. He is best known as the person responsible for the laying of the first transatlantic telegraph cable. In August of 1858, after years of perseverance in the face of public skepticism and enormous financial and technical obstacles, his company forged the link between Europe and America. Queen Victoria sent a transmission to President Buchanan to commemorate the event, and Field's faith in the enterprise was vindicated.<sup>10</sup>

*Warwick Castle* was begun at a time when both Cropsey and Field were residing in London, and the businessman was in the midst of negotiating support for his project. The painting was completed in 1857, the year the laying of the cable began. Although it depicts a popular tourist destination, it must have had special significance for the entrepreneur. This faithful depiction “of the foundations upon which old England herself was builded” not only represented an important historical site from the land of Field's ancestors, but served as a constant reminder of his own role as a maker of history in providing the ultimate tangible connection between the Old World and the New.<sup>11</sup>

DC

## Notes

1. Talbot 1977, 2:389, notes that another version of the subject, in addition to the NGA painting, was sold by Cropsey in 1859.

2. See the entry for Cropsey's *Spirit of War* [1978.12.1]. Talbot 1977 lists, for example, three sketches—*Citadel at*

*Naples* (p. 344, no. 30, fig. 31) and *Tower at Ravello* (p. 342, no. 27, fig. 35), both Italy, 1848; *Penrhyn Castle, near Bangor, Wales* (p. 355, no. 47), 1849—and one painting—*Doone Castle, Scotland* (p. 351, no. 41, fig. 21), Rome, 1848. See also two drawings—*Jedburgh Abbey*, 1849, and *St. Anthony's Chapel*, 1847—reproduced in Maddox 1979, nos. 13 and 14.

3. The seventy-second page of Cropsey's sketchbook is a strong, vertical sketch inscribed “Warwick Castle / June 30. 1849.” The seventy-fourth page is a slighter, horizontal image inscribed “Warwick Castle. June 30th. 1849.” Cropsey Papers, Newington-Cropsey Foundation, Hastings-on-Hudson, New York (AAA microfilm 337).

4. In the mid-nineteenth century, a trip to Warwickshire typically included visits to Stratford-on-Avon, Warwick Castle, and Kenilworth Castle; Cooke 1851 and Beecher 1855, letters 1 and 2.

5. Information concerning the history of the castle is from Holland 1906, chap. 4: “The Story of Warwick Castle.”

6. Francis Greville (1719–1773), Lord Brooke, obtained the services of Canaletto (1697–1768), which resulted in five paintings and three drawings of Warwick Castle by the visiting Venetian artist; see Parkington 1993, 313.

7. The frontispiece of Cooke 1851 shows a view of the castle from the same angle but includes the bridge, with sightseers on it, in the foreground.

8. Holland 1906, 81. *Harper's Weekly*, 6 June 1857, 355.

9. Cropsey received payment on account for this work from Field, 23 September 1856; see Talbot 1977, 388.

10. Biographical information concerning Field is taken from *DAB* 4:357–359 and Judson 1896. Field was also a friend of Frederic E. Church, with whom he traveled in South America in 1853.

11. Beecher 1855, 20. In actuality, the cable reached not from England to the United States, but from Valentia, Ireland, to Newfoundland.



Fig. 1. Jasper Francis Cropsey, *Castle and Moat*, pencil drawing on brown paper, 1856, New Haven, Yale University Art Gallery, 1970.8.1



Jasper Francis Cropsey, *Warwick Castle, England*, 1891.142.1

## References

- 1857 *Harper's Weekly* (6 June): 355.  
1857 *The Crayon* (July): 221.  
1867 Tuckerman, *Book*: 536.  
1970 Talbot: 31.  
1972 Talbot: 1:127; 2:290, 316, 388–389.

1963.9.1 (1906)

### *Autumn—On the Hudson River*

1860

Oil on canvas, 151.8 × 274.9 (59<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 108<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>)  
Gift of the Avalon Foundation

#### Inscriptions

At center foreground: Autumn, - on the Hudson River /  
J. F. Cropsey / London 1860

**Technical Notes:** The support is a coarse but tightly woven, plain-weave fabric that has been lined. A whitish ground was applied evenly in a very thin layer, over which paint was added in a variety of techniques. In most areas the artist laid thin washes of color, then painted into them or drew over them using a thicker paste. There are numerous bits of impasto, primarily in the foliage. Some have been flattened, probably as a result of a lining treatment that increased the prominence of the support's weave pattern. There are scattered small losses and scratches throughout the image. Discolored varnish was removed and the painting was restored most recently in 1986.

**Provenance:** Purchased 1862 from the artist by Thomas Slattery, London.<sup>1</sup> Arthur Jocelyn Charles, 6th Earl of Arran [1868–1958]; (Earl of Arran sale, Sotheby's, London, 11 July 1951, no. 150); "Duke"; private collection; (John Nicholson Gallery, New York), by November 1959.

**Exhibited:** Pall Mall, London, 1860, no cat.<sup>2</sup> *London Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations*, London, 1862, no. 2871. *Art of the United States 1670–1966*, WMAA, 1966, no. 57. *Jasper F. Cropsey, 1823–1900: A Retrospective View of America's Painter of Autumn*, University of Maryland Art Gallery, College Park, 1968, no. 19. *In Memoria, Ailsa Mellon Bruce*, NGA, 1969, no cat. *Jasper F. Cropsey 1823–1900*, Cleveland Museum of Art; Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica; National Collection of Fine Arts, Washington, 1970–1971, no. 35. Presidential inaugural luncheon, U.S. Capitol, Washington, 21 January 1985. *American Paradise: The World of the Hudson River School*, MMA, 1987–1988, 206–207. *Bilder aus der Neuen Welt: Amerikanische Malerei des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts*, Orangerie des Schlosses Charlottenburg, Berlin; Kunsthaus, Zurich, 1988–1989, no. 19.

AS A YOUNG MAN, the American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–1882) described in

verse the beauties of the season to which Cropsey was to pay such effective tribute with paint and canvas some three decades later:

And when the silver habit of the clouds  
Comes down upon the autumn sun, and  
with

A sober gladness the old year takes up  
His bright inheritance of golden fruits,  
A pomp and pageant fill the splendid  
scene.

There is a beautiful spirit breathing now  
Its mellow richness on the clustered trees,  
And, from a beaker full of richest dyes,  
Pouring new glory on the autumn woods,  
And dipping in warm light the pillared  
clouds.<sup>3</sup>

When completed in London in the early spring of 1860, *Autumn—On the Hudson River* was the most ambitious painting, both in size and conception, that Jasper Cropsey had ever created. Two years later, when it was included in the international exposition in London, it was called the "great adornment" of the American section. Today it is probably the most widely recognized of Cropsey's works and the finest example of the theme with which he became most closely associated both at home and abroad: the depiction of the American autumn.<sup>4</sup>

In executing this work on such an ambitious scale Cropsey may have been inspired by the success of his countryman, Frederic Church. He had witnessed the excitement created in London by the exhibition of Church's *Niagara* in the summer of 1857 and *Heart of the Andes* in 1859. (As did Church, Cropsey first exhibited this impressive work in his studio, although there is no evidence that he followed the common practice, sometimes used by Church, of charging an admission fee to visitors.) The painting took at least one year to complete but was an immediate success.<sup>5</sup> The positive response was so widespread that the artist was able to gather fourteen laudatory press notices and print them as a pamphlet. The recognition eventually led to his being presented to Queen Victoria on 27 June 1861.

Critics discussing *Autumn—On the Hudson River* praised both the artist's poetic imagination and, without apparent contradiction, his absolute fidelity to nature. Many called attention to Cropsey's bold use of color, taking issue with those Britons who were skeptical that the powerful blaze of red and gold foliage was a reality across the Atlantic.<sup>6</sup> His depiction of autumn as "not the wasting away of the year, but its joyous crowning festival . . . its heavenly aspiring and rapturous apotheosis" was at



Jasper Francis Cropsey, *Autumn - On the Hudson River*, 1863.9.1

odds with the general European perception of that season as a time of death and decay; however, travelers who had visited the United States affirmed the veracity of the artist's treatment.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the truthfulness of Cropsey's work was the object of much attention since he had combined a broad, dramatically constructed vista with the most meticulously observed elements. Each of the carefully individualized foreground trees, for example, is identifiable by species. "The birch with its silver trunk and elegant and more subdued foliage is distinguishable among a group of other trees of bright and varied colouring. . . . The details of the picture have been elaborated with great care, and add immensely to its value. The rugged bark of the trees, the felled trunks, and the gnarled roots are represented with a marvelous degree of minuteness."<sup>8</sup>

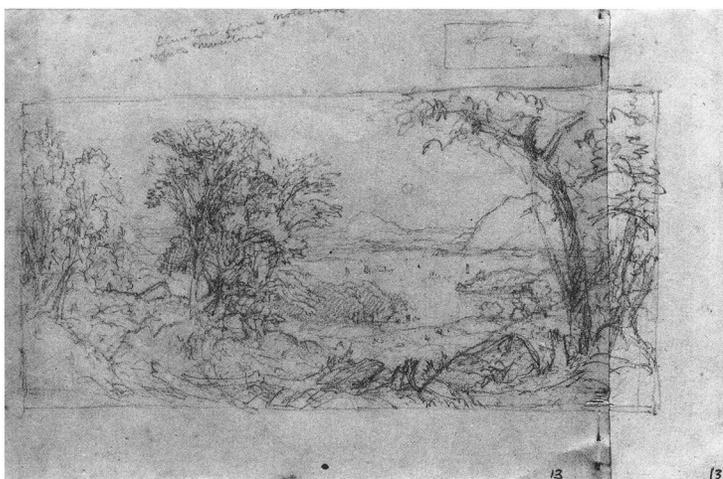


Fig. 1. Jasper Francis Cropsey, sketch for *Autumn on the Hudson*, c. 1860, Hastings-on-Hudson, The Newington-Cropsey Foundation

Cropsey long gathered his visual information on sketching trips, and some of these he subsequently incorporated into his finished works.<sup>9</sup> A small pencil study (fig. 1) contains a notation in the upper margin above a clump of trees: "Elm tree from notebook in White Mountains." The drawing is executed on a sketchbook sheet to which Cropsey added a right margin because his vision of the sweeping, panoramic scene exceeded the standard proportions of the sheet.

One British critic, who found "the composition—the arrangement, proportion, and shape of the masses" in the painting to be "unusually elegant and beautiful" likened it to the work of Turner; the

"refined feeling for aerial tenderness, and light, and repose throughout" he termed "Turneresque."<sup>10</sup> The similarity was probably not unintended; Cropsey was a great admirer of the artist. Five years earlier in "Up among the Clouds" he termed Turner, "the only artist, ancient or modern, that has given us successful studies of the beautiful clouds of this [cirrostratus] region."<sup>11</sup> In the same essay Cropsey recommended that artists pay particular attention to studying the "luminous, palpating air." This description of the qualities of atmosphere so prominent in Turner's work could well apply to the golden afternoon painted by Cropsey.

*Mr. Cropsey's Autumn on the Hudson River*, presumably written by the artist himself, accompanied the painting during one of its earliest exhibitions and provides insight as to Cropsey's intent:

The scene is chosen on the west bank of the Hudson, looking down towards its mouth, about sixty miles from New York, between Newburgh and West Point.

The time of year is the month of October, when those changes in the foliage have taken place so peculiar to the North American forest. The tall luxuriant trees—the red oak, the maple, the birch, and the chestnut—have assumed their various shades of yellow and brown, scarlet and orange, intermingled here and there with the unchanging hemlock and pine.

Looking away from these coloured masses of foliage on either side, and the wild half cultivated foreground of the picture, the scene opens on a richly wooded country, through which wanders the Moodna, a clear stream from the hill country of Orange County, until we approach the half hidden village of New Windsor; from thence widens out the broad river studded with steamers and other craft, the next turn of which is hidden from us by a bold, broken sweep of hills, known as the Highlands—hills which are rendered classic to the American by Washington Irving having resided among them, and by the present residence of N[athaniel] P[arker] Willis, Miss Wetherell, and other literary people. The time of day is about 3 o'clock in the afternoon of a dreamy, warm day.

The object of the painter has been chiefly to convey an idea of the vastness and magnitude of the American landscape, the clearness and beauty of the atmosphere, and the richness and variety of colour in the foliage during the "Indian summer" period of the year.<sup>12</sup>

A distinctive landmark of the site is the sharp profile of Storm King Mountain at right, a feature frequently recorded by artists working in the Hudson River Valley. The area of the Hudson in general was also rich in historical and literary associations that were not lost on the British audience. One reviewer wrote: "Most brave and generous things, it seems, were done on the banks of this river in the 'War of Independence'; and several of those who

have laid the foundation of American literature dwelt hereabouts.”<sup>13</sup> The authors Washington Irving and Nathaniel Parker Willis (1806–1867), both of whom were mentioned in the exhibition pamphlet, were well-known figures in England.

Cropsey made another view of this area of the Hudson titled *Indian Summer* (1866, Detroit Institute of Arts) which, at 53 by 95 inches, is the only one of his works to approach *Autumn—On the Hudson River* in size as well as subject. It, in effect, repeated the theme of the earlier work for the American audiences who had read about, but had never seen the enormously successful image. Three other versions of the National Gallery’s painting (locations unknown) may have existed. An oil study of the subject is noted as having been sold on 7 March 1860, and Cropsey, in an inventory of works left in the care of his London solicitor in 1862, lists a “small Autumn on the Hudson River,” about 20 by 40 inches.<sup>14</sup> Another study, termed “the original from which this picture [*Autumn—On the Hudson River*] was painted and enlarged” was exhibited in Boston.<sup>15</sup> The artist also intended the work to be reproduced in an engraved form and sold such rights to Messrs. Thompson and Company, on 7 July 1860. Although about three dozen subscription forms exist among Cropsey’s papers, no print of the painting has ever been found, so probably the project was never carried out.

In response to his dramatic view of autumn in America, Cropsey “sought for a corresponding view to show Summer in England” and “painted a parallel picture of great size.”<sup>16</sup> The resulting canvas, *Richmond Hill in the Summer of 1862* (54 by 96 inches, Bonham’s, London), depicts a historic estate on the Thames near Hampton Court, and was deemed “a charming picture of a charming spot.” It is a successful representation of established monuments of British life nestled in a long-cultivated and managed countryside.

The appeal of *Autumn—On the Hudson River*, by contrast, lies in the wonder and promise of a young civilization carved out of the wilderness. Signs of industry abound (buildings, smokestacks, steamboats) but do not overshadow the raw splendor of the landscape. Even though on close inspection a bit of distant shoreline can be discerned across the water, the first impression of the vista is one of a limitless horizon: The painting resonates with a sense of optimism and endless possibilities. Cropsey’s particular talent, manifested so clearly in this work, was his ability to create a scene of grandeur tem-

pered by accessibility. Like the hunters that rest under the towering trees in the foreground of the painting, we are fortunate observers, aware of the man-made order in the distance below while partaking fully of divinely conferred beauty all around.<sup>17</sup> As nineteenth-century Americans, the inhabitants of this land were beneficiaries of not only a glorious season so closely identified with their country, but of a unique relationship with a natural world they had learned to use, but had not yet conquered completely.

DC

## Notes

1. Cropsey was paid \$2,000 by Slattery, the largest sum he had earned for a single work to that date; Talbot 1977, 416.

2. Among Cropsey’s papers (Newington-Cropsey Foundation, Hastings-on-Hudson, New York) is a printed explanation of the painting inscribed at the top “The picture was on exhibition in Pall Mall London for a few weeks—this circular was used for this purpose.”

3. “Autumn,” lines 10–14, in *Longfellow* 1975. Excerpts of this poem were included in discussions of *Autumn—On the Hudson River* that appeared in *The Crayon*, May 1860; “Art Items,” *New York Daily Tribune*, 12 May 1860; and *Home Journal*, 9 June 1860.

4. Review in *London Builder*, as quoted in Tuckerman, *Book*, 1867, 537. The first of Cropsey’s images of the American autumn to be exhibited before the British public was *Indian Summer in the White Mountains* (Currier Gallery of Art, Manchester, New Hampshire), which was included in the Royal Academy exhibition in 1857.

5. Talbot 1977, 415, quotes a letter dated 8 October 1858 from Daniel Huntington to Cropsey asking “how the large landscape is getting on.” In June 1859 *Cosmopolitan Art Journal* described a large Hudson River scene on which Cropsey was working.

6. Cropsey reportedly provided tangible proof of America’s brilliant autumn foliage with some leaves pasted on cardboard; see Talbot 1977, 154n.5, citing comments in a review in *The Guardian*, 6 June 1860.

7. *Art Journal* (London), July 1860, 199, reproduced in Talbot 1977, appendix 2.

8. *Morning Chronicle* (London), 16 April 1860, reproduced in Talbot 1977, appendix 2.

9. At least one small element of *Autumn—On the Hudson River* was not a recorded detail of America. Cropsey’s sketch of a squirrel, the tufted-ear variety found in Europe (p. 33 of his sketchbook, Newington-Cropsey Foundation, Hastings-on-Hudson), appears to be the source for one of the creatures in the foreground.

10. *Art Journal* (London), July 1860, 199, reproduced in Talbot 1977, appendix 2.

11. Jasper Cropsey, “Up Among the Clouds,” *The Crayon*, 8 August 1855, 79.

12. A photocopy of the pamphlet was kindly provided by Mei Wu, Research Archivist, Newington-Cropsey Foundation, Hastings-on-Hudson, New York.

13. *Art Journal* (London), July 1860, 199, reproduced in Talbot 1977, appendix 2.

14. This was sold to a J.W. Brown; Talbot 1977, 415.

15. According to the *Boston Evening Transcript*, 18 May 1860, 2, the painting was on view "in the gallery of Sowie & Jenks, in Sumner Street."

16. London *Builder* as quoted in Tuckerman, *Book*, 1867, 537.

17. Many nineteenth-century viewers perceived the natural landscape as a manifestation of God's power and presence. A sonnet addressed to "Cropsey's 'Autumn on the Hudson,'" for instance, concludes with the lines "In your far world, this master's hand reveals, / Wafting in our blest sight from dimmed streets away,— / With what rare power!—to where our awed soul kneels / To Him who made these splendours light the day" (W.C. Bennett, "Cropsey's 'Autumn on the Hudson'" [sonnet], (London), *Art Journal*, July 1860, 336.

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1862 *London Times* (7 April).

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1867 Tuckerman, *Book*: 536–537.

1879 Sheldon: 83–84.

1947 Sears: 173–174.

1968 Birmingham: 26–27.

1970 Talbot: 33–37, 86–87.

1972 Howat: 144, color repro no. 25.

1974 Moore: 49, 171–173.

1977 Talbot: 154–159, 256–257, 415–417, 483–486.

1980 Talbot: 153–155.

1986 Novak: 13.

1988 Wilmerding: 18, 110, 182.

1993 Miller: 160–161.

## Joseph Decker

1853 – 1924

JOSEPH DECKER'S varied career encompassed more than thirty productive years. Born to a carpenter and his wife in Württemberg, Germany, Decker immigrated with his family to America at the age of fourteen. He was first apprenticed to a Brooklyn house painter, then worked as a sign painter. In the late 1870s he began to take evening drawing classes at the National Academy of Design and by the end of that decade he was exhibiting portraits and landscapes both there and at the Brooklyn Art Association.<sup>1</sup> In autumn 1879 Decker traveled to Munich, where during the next year he studied with the conservative and highly respected history painter Wilhelm Lindenschmidt (1829–1895).

Upon his return to the United States, Decker exhibited his work in the annual shows of the National Academy of Design, the Brooklyn Art Association, the Society of American Artists, and the Art Institute of Chicago. Despite a lack of critical approbation, he felt secure enough by the end of the decade to take a studio in Manhattan. In 1889 he exhibited at the Buffalo international fair. Although he tackled varied subjects throughout the 1880s, his primary concern was still-life painting,

in which he concentrated on edible subjects such as fruits and nuts rather than man-made objects.

The following decade was one of transformation for the artist. He returned to Brooklyn, stopped exhibiting his work, and showed increased interest in landscapes. Most importantly, his style in all subjects showed a dramatic change from a crisp and linear method to a softer, more atmospheric approach. His admiration for the landscapes of George Inness was finally expressed in the Barbizon- and tonalist-inspired scenes he created.

In addition to still lifes and landscapes, Decker also painted genre subjects, a few portraits, images of his pet squirrel, and novelties such as the pictures in which he incorporated the shape of the artist's palette with a finger-hole into the compositions.<sup>2</sup> He became, as well, a restorer of Chinese porcelains for Thomas B. Clarke, a well-known American collector.<sup>3</sup> Clarke was Decker's most important patron, eventually owning eight of Decker's paintings.

Although he had a wife and five children, Decker often traveled to Germany for long periods and was reported to have been an inattentive hus-

band and father. He died in the charity ward of a Brooklyn hospital on 1 April 1924. His work, virtually forgotten until its rediscovery by art historian Alfred Frankenstein in 1949, was not widely known until the 1960s. DC

#### Notes

1. Gerdts 1988, [4], suggests that Decker and William Michael Harnett attended the same classes at the NAD for a year and a half.

2. Of the sixty-three titles of works by Decker listed in the Inventory of American Paintings, slightly less than half are described as still-life subjects.

3. Regarding Decker's experience with Clarke, and the changes in his still-life style, Cooper 1978, 68, writes that "perhaps it was ultimately the porcelains with their chaste depictions of single white flowers or fruit on solid white grounds which suggested similarly pure compositions to the artist."

#### Bibliography

Cooper 1978: 55–71.  
Gerdts: 1988.

1994.59.4

### *Green Plums*

c. 1885

Oil on canvas, 22.9 × 28.0 (9 × 10<sup>15/16</sup>)

Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

#### Inscriptions

At lower right: J. DECKER

**Technical Notes:** The fine, light-weight, plain-weave fabric was primed with a light beige ground and painted prior to stretching, as elements are found over all the tacking margins except the top. The painting is not lined and the four-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher is probably original. Infrared reflectography reveals the presence of extensive underdrawing outlining the plums, probably in pencil, showing both their current positions and the positions from which they were changed. Paint was thinly blended, using a wet-into-wet technique. Fine gradations of tone were accomplished with thinner glazes. Elements of the design are found over all the edges of the fabric except the top. The painting is in excellent condition with only a few tiny paint losses.

**Provenance:** (Christie, Manson & Woods, New York, 9 December 1983, no. 80, as *Greenings*); (Berry-Hill Galleries, New York); sold March 1984 to Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, Upperville, Virginia.

*Green Plums* comes from the first of two stages of the artist's career as a still life painter. Often described

as Decker's "hard" style, it is characterized by crisp edges; close-up, sometimes cropped views; harsh lighting; strong, sometimes acid colors; and an absence of soft shadows. The works are often startling in their realism, but a closer look reveals that their paint is applied in a practiced, easy fashion. The illusion of waxy green spheres of plums in the National Gallery's painting is accomplished with flat, visible strokes of many hues of green, briskly accented with white. Two plums, at the center left and just inside the basket at center right, are suggested with the merest coloring that barely defines them as spheres. The perceived "hard" quality of the image is accomplished not by small meticulous strokes but by the firm outlines and the emphatic geometry, and by the spotlight-bright illumination that defines them.

At least one critic found Decker's unorthodox approach disconcerting and wrote, apropos of a related painting of approximately the same date: "And what has got into Mr. Decker's head with cholera coming on to offer us his hard green pears and harder peaches? What can be his ideas of the pictorial art, when he presents to us, as pictures, such unrelieved and impossible masses of raw green and rawer red?"<sup>1</sup>

Several nineteenth century still-life painters used the subject of fruit spilling from an overturned basket.<sup>2</sup> In Decker's versions the baskets are often audaciously cropped, with fruit falling out of the picture frame, sharing some of the boldness of his close-up views of boughs of pears and apples. The objects in *Green Plums*, having tumbled aggressively toward the viewer from a shallow space, nevertheless fall nicely onto the polished table in a calm, careful arrangement. It is the lack of mitigating atmosphere or heavy shadow that makes their forms so insistent and assertive.

Decker used plums as his subject on at least two other occasions.<sup>3</sup> One of these images, *Plums in a Basket* (formerly Berry-Hill Galleries, Inc.; location unknown), is in several aspects a formal opposite of *Green Plums*. It depicts a bright red variety of the fruit falling out of the side of a broken basket lined with crisp white paper.<sup>4</sup> The upper half of the background is dark and shadowy, the tabletop is a soft white. Extraordinary freshness and liveliness are the characteristics shared by the two images.

DC

#### Notes

1. "The National Academy of Design," *Studio* 11, April 1885, 210.



Joseph Decker, *Green Plums*, 1994-59-4

2. Among Decker's contemporaries are Bryant Chapin, William Mason Brown, and Virginia Granberry; Cooper 1978, 61. The subject of the overturned basket of fruit also was used often by Levi Wells Prentice (1851–1935). This artist's distinctive works are brightly colored and hard-edged, as are Decker's early paintings, but somewhat primitively exaggerated in their intensity.

3. A late, subdued depiction of the subject is *Twelve Plums* (1896, private collection); see Cooper 1978, fig. 12.

4. See Gerdts 1988, pl. 8.

1994.59.3

## Grapes

c. 1890/1895

Oil on canvas, 22.9 × 30.5 (9 × 12)

Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

### Inscriptions

At lower right: J. Decker

**Technical Notes:** The light-weight, plain-weave fabric support was primed with a medium thick, warm beige ground prior to stretching. It has been lined and attached to a four-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher that appears to be original. X-radiography shows another painting upside-down beneath the current composition, depicting an overturned, broken basket of spilled plums. Paint was applied wet-into-wet, with deep transparent tones on top to create shadows. An extensive system of wide cracks has been inpainted and in the wall above the grapes are some relatively large areas of inpainting. Some shadows are abraded. There are residues of an older, discolored varnish layer.

**Provenance:** (Berry-Hill Galleries, New York); sold January 1986 to Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, Upperville, Virginia.

**Exhibited:** *Brooklyn's Bounty: Natural Splendor and Domestic Opulence*, Museum of the Borough of Brooklyn at Brooklyn College, New York, 1985, no. 17.

IN 1889 Decker exhibited a work titled *Hung on the Line* (location unknown), which was described as "bunches of fresh grapes suspended in a row from a cord."<sup>1</sup> It is not known how or if *Grapes* might be related to that work; however, the National Gallery image is in keeping with the simple, modest still-life subjects that Decker particularly preferred later in his career.

There was a proliferation of still-life painters in America in the latter half of the nineteenth century. A great many chose to paint fruit, and a surprising number of these concentrated much of their efforts on depicting grapes. Andrew John Henry Way (1826–1888), a Baltimore painter, achieved a sub-

stantial reputation for his exceedingly accurate images of different varieties of the fruit. He received a medal "for excellence in still life" at the Philadelphia centennial exposition for two panels of grapes that were exhibited there, and he recorded the prized products of the vineyard of Baltimore's most famous patron of the arts, William T. Walters.<sup>2</sup>

Decker's choice and placement of the bunches of fruit in the National Gallery's painting had considerable immediate precedent. Writing about Andrew Way, Gerdts noted that "his grapes, like those depicted by many American still-life painters in the 1860s, were often shown hanging against a wall, if not actually growing on a vine. This again was a Ruskinian feature, the display of grapes in their 'natural' position, rather than laid out horizontally—and artificially—on a tabletop, Lacroix, Morston Ream, Sarah Wenzler, and especially George Hall painted the hanging grape still life."<sup>3</sup> While keeping still-life objects in their natural surroundings, rather than in man-made containers, on tabletops, harks back to John Ruskin's exhortation to draw directly from Nature, the act of isolating the hanging bunches against a flat surface endows them with artificial emphasis.

Decker's *Grapes*, painted in the softer, more atmospheric style of his later works, are so carefully arranged that they almost become objects of meditation. At the same time, they are palpably real, demonstrating the formal properties that have traditionally made this fruit an interesting object for depiction. (In *Natural History* [25:65], the ancient Roman Pliny wrote of Greek artist Zeuxis painting grapes so realistically that birds swooped down to peck at them.) The irregular groupings, deeply creviced bunch formations, sometimes translucent colors, frosty-waxed surfaces, and pinpoint highlights, have long presented gratifyingly challenging models for the still-life artist's attention. Decker rose ably to this task. His grapes (perhaps the Concord variety), which the viewer's mind perceives as purple in color, are expertly formed from black and brown pigment modeled by films of gray blue and gray green. With their delicate brown shadows and quiet symmetry, they are objects with a restrained, classical elegance.

DC

### Notes

1. Gerdts 1988, [24]. This painting was exhibited at AIC in 1889 and at PAFA, as *On the Line*, in 1891.

2. Gerdts, *Humble Truth*, 1981, 110.

3. Gerdts, *Humble Truth*, 1981, 111.



Joseph Decker, *Grapes*, 1994.59.3

# Thomas Wilmer Dewing

1851–1938

THOMAS DEWING was born on 4 May 1851 in Newton Lower Falls, Massachusetts. As a child he was interested in both drawing and playing the violin; this early interest in music would later reappear in the themes of many of his paintings. By 1872, after a period of apprenticeship in a lithography shop, Dewing was listing his profession as “artist.” He studied paintings in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, especially the works of Jean-Baptiste Siméon Chardin (1699–1779), and attended student-organized life classes at the Boston Art Club and possibly the lectures on anatomy given in Boston by artist William Rimmer (1816–1879) in 1874–1875. After working briefly in Albany, he sailed for Europe in July 1876 and entered the Académie Julian. There the course of instruction under Gustave Boulanger (1824–1888) and Jules-Joseph Lefebvre (1836–1911) centered on anatomical drawing and modeling. While in Paris Dewing became acquainted with William Merritt Chase, who was studying at the Royal Academy in Munich, and both men shared a developing interest in Spanish painting.

Dewing returned to America early in 1878, stopping first in New York, and subsequently became an assistant at the newly founded school of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. In the late 1870s he participated in several Boston exhibitions, showing paintings that recalled the fashionable academic works of French artists such as Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824–1904) and Jean-Louis Hamon (1821–1874). Deciding that New York provided greater opportunities for an aspiring artist, Dewing moved there in 1880, took a studio on 57th Street, and soon came into contact with many of the young artists who had formed the Society of American Artists out of dissatisfaction with the National Academy of Design. He was elected a member of the society in 1880 and in 1881 began teaching at the Art Students League, where he renewed his friendship with Chase. In 1881 he married artist Maria Oakey, through whom he had been introduced to an active cultural circle that included painters Abbott H. Thayer (1849–1921) and John La Farge. In 1886 the Dewings moved to the famous Tenth Street

Studio Building; his works were exhibited regularly in New York shows and elsewhere.

By the late 1880s Dewing had formed his basic style and subject matter—elegant, refined women portrayed with an extremely limited range of colors and placed in sparse interiors or outdoors in soft green fields. He drew inspiration from the poetic and gentle paintings of Johannes Vermeer (1632–1675) and from the aesthetics of James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903) and English artist Albert Moore (1841–1893). His brushwork became increasingly soft and blurred.

In December 1897, Dewing resigned from the conservative Society of American Artists and joined a group of Boston and New York painters in forming The Ten. Most of The Ten worked in impressionist styles that had little in common with Dewing’s more subdued technique. Dewing continued to paint in the early years of the twentieth century, receiving several awards and enjoying the patronage of such noted collectors as Charles L. Freer and John Gellatly. He did little work during the last decade of his life, and died at the age of eighty-seven in New York on 5 November 1938.

FK

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Caffin 1908: 714–724.  
Tharp 1914: 155–161.  
White 1929: 253–261.  
Hobbs 1981: 4–35.  
Hobbs 1985: 3–32.

1978.60.1 (2733)

## *Lady with a Lute*

1886  
Oil on wood panel, 50.8 × 40 (20 × 15 5/8)  
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Walter Timme

## Inscriptions

At lower left: T W Dewing / 86

**Technical Notes:** The support is a Winsor and Newton prepared mahogany artist's panel (1.2 cm thick) with the grain running vertically. The reverse is coated with white and gray paint, on which the colormen's label is adhered. The ground is a moderately thick tan layer. The paint layers were applied thinly in most areas, with some more thickly handled passages such as the woman's throat, bodice, and lute. The more thickly painted areas have a scattered, fine crackle pattern. Overall the painting is in excellent condition, with few losses and minimal abrasion. The varnish has yellowed.

**Provenance:** Purchased 1889 from the artist by Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, Massachusetts;<sup>1</sup> (sale, Gimbel's, New York, 1946). Dr. and Mrs. Walter Timme, Cold Spring, New York, by May 1947.<sup>2</sup>

**Exhibited:** *Seventh Annual Exhibition of Selected Paintings by American Artists*, Buffalo Fine Arts Academy, 1912, no. 51, as *A Lute Player*. *Special Exhibition of American Paintings in Honor of the Philadelphia Museum of Art Diamond Jubilee*, Milch Galleries, New York, 1950, no. 4, as *Lady with Lute*.

*Lady with a Lute* is a fine early example of a subject that would become one of Dewing's favorites: views of seated women, often with musical instruments, in spare and mysterious interiors.<sup>3</sup> Dewing greatly admired James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903), and his own artistic beliefs closely paralleled those of the expatriate painter.<sup>4</sup> The impact of Whistler's painting style is apparent in this canvas in the freely brushed areas of the skirt and the overall modulation of color. *Lady with a Lute* may also reflect Dewing's interest in Vermeer's seventeenth-century images of solitary women absorbed in their own activities.<sup>5</sup> The finely detailed, almost enamel-like paint surfaces of the lute and the upper portions of the woman's dress and body indicate Dewing's familiarity with the techniques of the Old Masters generally, and with Vermeer's handling of paint specifically. This gradually gave way in the 1890s to the softer and more diaphanous techniques for which the artist is best known today.<sup>6</sup>

In its mysterious, introspective mood and restrained, somber coloring, *Lady with a Lute* invites comparison with works by other artists of this period, whether the still lifes of William Harnett, with their closed, isolated worlds, the probing portraits painted by Thomas Eakins, or the evocative visions of Albert P. Ryder (1847–1917). Yet the effect of Dewing's paintings is like none of these. According to the artist, the realm depicted in his paintings was "the poetic and the imaginative world where a few choice spirits live."<sup>7</sup> Although he claimed there was no "intellectual motive" in his pictures, Dewing's

images of women are infused with an air of psychological meditation. As a contemporary observed, they "seem to be detached. . . . They live apart, in a medium of their own; they are no longer personal, individual; they are not figures. . . . They are Presences."<sup>8</sup>

Women with musical instruments was a common theme in the late nineteenth century and one with many possible meanings. In *Lady with a Lute*, the woman is deeply absorbed in plucking the strings of the instrument, her eyes half-closed as she concentrates on aural experience. Psychologically and physically removed from the world of the viewer and seemingly indifferent to her surroundings, she exists in a realm of sensations, feeling the touch of a string and the gentle vibrations of a single note. Dewing's fascination with music's evocative powers was lifelong. In the same year he painted *Lady with a Lute* he installed a small harp on his studio door, "which gave forth delicate music as the door opened and shut."<sup>9</sup> His interest in linking music and painting was reminiscent of Whistler, who often titled his works after musical forms (symphonies, nocturnes) and by the general interest of Symbolist painters in musical themes.<sup>10</sup>

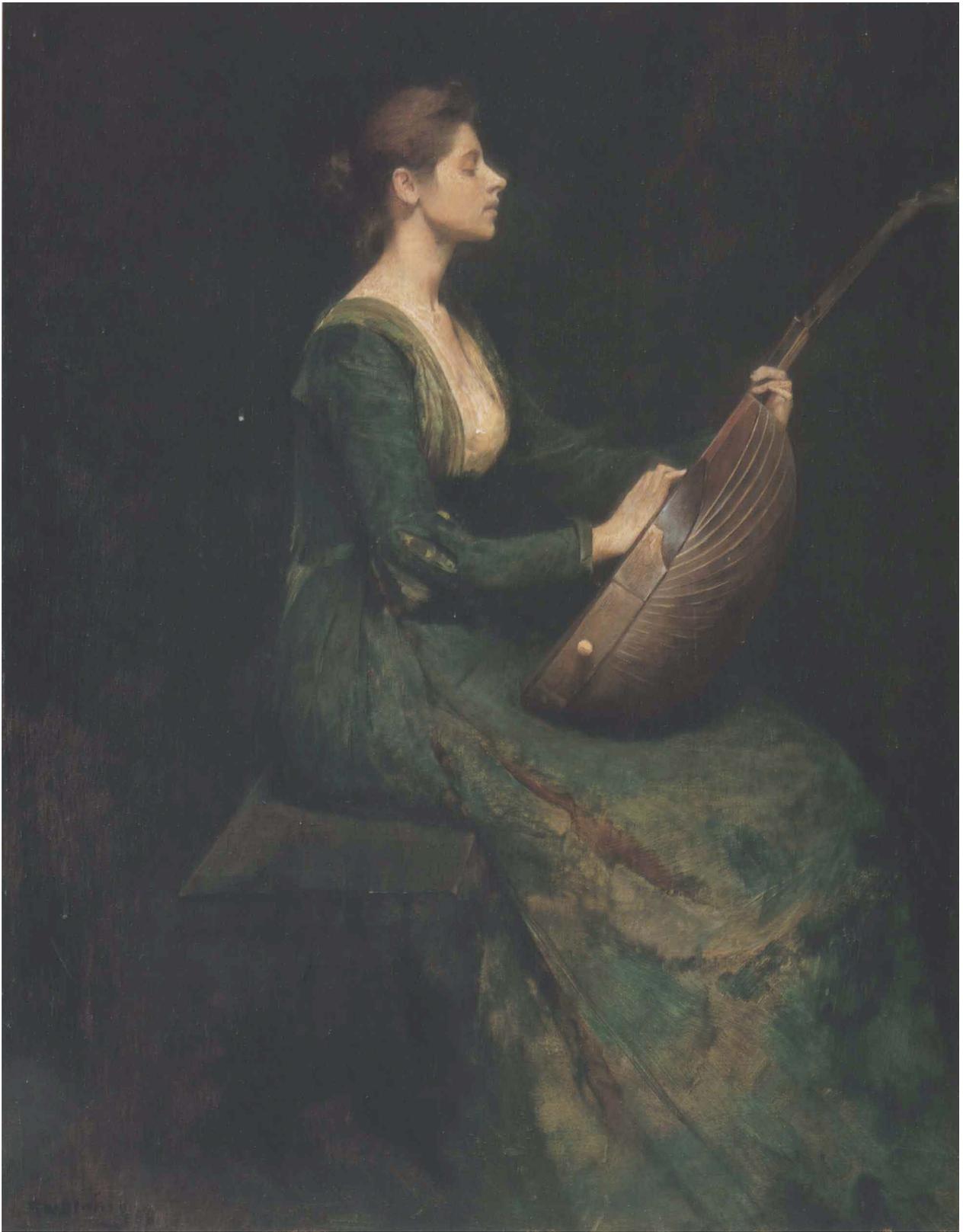
*Lady with a Lute* also contains an unmistakable undercurrent of eroticism. The swelling curves of the model's bosom (which is almost fully revealed to the viewer's gaze by the low cut of her gown) are echoed by the bulging form of the lute, creating a sensuous rhythm.<sup>11</sup> Dewing himself, in contrast to his refined, otherworldly images, was a robust man. His "interest in women extended beyond their mere depiction on canvas to include flirtations and liaisons with beautiful models and friends," but we do not know if this particular woman was the object of such attention.<sup>12</sup> In his later works such erotic content is generally suppressed as the women themselves become ever more ethereal and otherworldly.<sup>13</sup> Thus *Lady with a Lute*, both in terms of style and content, is a work that predicts the artist's mature manner but retains much of the thematic directness and solidity of form typical of Dewing's early work.

FK

#### Notes

1. Letter from Linda Muehlig, curator at Smith College, dated 4 May 1983 (in NGA curatorial files), states that the painting was bought directly from the artist in 1889. While in the Smith College collection the painting was titled *A Lute Player*.

2. According to a letter of 30 August 1978 from Susan Hobbs (in NGA curatorial files), Mrs. Timme ac-



Thomas Wilmer Dewing, *Lady with a Lute*, 1978.60.1

quired the painting at the Gimbel's auction; however, in a letter of 16 May 1947 to Frederick Hartt, acting director of the Smith College Art Museum (Smith College Art Museum archives; photocopy in NGA curatorial files), Dr. Timme states that he had "paid nearly three times what Gimbel's had sold it for," which clearly implies there was an intermediary owner. Timme also observed: "The 'Lute Player' . . . was thought by many people to be [Dewing's] masterpiece. I have known a number of people both painters and connoisseurs who made a pilgrimage to Northampton just to see that picture. To some people your gallery was known by this picture, if by none other. . . . Some weeks ago a friend of mine, connected with the National (Mellon) Gallery in Washington, came to my home, saw it and asked for the donation of it as an outstanding example of Dewing."

3. According to Hobbs (letter of 30 August 1978, in NGA curatorial files), it is the earliest known example of a profile seated figure by Dewing. She further notes that *Lady with a Lute* is similar to the panel entitled *Lady in Yellow* (1888, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston; Hadley 1981, 105 repro.) and that Dewing repeated the basic composition in several later works.

4. As Dewing observed, "the purpose of the artist is to see beautifully," quoted in Cortissoz 1945, as cited by Hobbs 1981.

5. Whistler's thoughts about art were most succinctly expressed in his famous "Ten O'Clock" lecture (*Ten O'Clock: A Lecture by James A. McNeill Whistler*. Reprint, Portland, Maine, 1916).

5. Lyczko 1979, 152-157.

6. Dewing's late works are considered major examples of the style known as tonalism; see Corn 1972.

7. Letter of 16 February 1901 from Dewing to C. L. Freer, as quoted in Hobbs 1981, 5.

8. Caffin 1908, 724.

9. Cortissoz, "Dewing," 1939, as cited in Hobbs 1981, 27. As Cortissoz noted, "That is what characterized his art, an exquisite music." The evocative qualities of music had served as the theme for earlier American painters, perhaps most notably William Sidney Mount (for example, *The Power of Music [Music Hath Charms]*, 1847, Cleveland Museum of Art).

10. The most complete discussion of American symbolist painting is found in Eldredge 1979, which does not devote very much attention to the importance of musical themes.

11. A similar play of shapes is found in Elihu Vedder's *Girl with a Lute* of 1866; see Wilmerding 1981, 65, fig. 54. Eldredge 1979, 74-77, discusses the use of inanimate objects to echo the female form.

12. Hobbs 1981, 6. According to Abbott H. Thayer (1849-1921) the woman who posed for Dewing's *Lady with a Lute* was also the model for Thayer's *Winged Figure* (AIC); undated letter from Thayer to curator of Smith College Art Museum, Smith College Archives, (photocopy in NGA curatorial files). While there is some similarity between the women in the two paintings, it seems Thayer remembered incorrectly. Brumbaugh 1978, 24-32, has convincingly demonstrated that the model for Thayer's painting was Clara Adelaide May (1872-1946). Judging from the photographs he published, she is not the woman depicted in *Lady with a Lute*. Indeed, Clara May would have been only fourteen years old in 1886, and Dewing clearly shows a somewhat older woman. Brumbaugh agrees that Dewing's model for *Lady with a Lute* was not Clara May (letter of 12 May 1983 in NGA curatorial files). Quite possibly the same woman does appear in Dewing's *The Letter* of 1889 (Canajoharie Library and Art Gallery, New York; *Canajoharie* n.d., no. 64, repro.), but she has not been identified (letter of 23 October 1991 from Edward W. Lipowicz, Curator, Canajoharie Library and Art Gallery, in NGA curatorial files).

13. Caffin 1908, 723, considered the women in Dewing's paintings to be "of his own New England race. How frequently have I seen the type, looking exotic in our cosmopolitan jumble of types; women whose face and figure recall those Florentine women of the fifteenth century." For Hartmann 1901, 1:302, 304-307, these women all seem "to possess large fortunes and no inclination for any professional work . . . their long, tapering fingers like to glide over all sorts of stringed instruments, and there they sit and stand and dream or play the lute. . . . [Dewing] does not merely get their aesthetic elegance, but succeeds in making them express psychological suggestions (produced by indolence in an artistic atmosphere) with a vague mixture of the Parisian demi-monde, a rare combination of piquancy, refinement, and dream-like qualities." A recent discussion of Dewing's portrayals of women is Pyne 1993, 13-29.

## References

- 1912 Buffalo: 49-51, repro. 50.
- 1925 *Smith*: 15.
- 1937 *Smith*: 3, repro. 48.
- 1980 Wilmerding: 17, 124, color repro. 125.
- 1981 Williams: 188-190, color repro. 163.
- 1983 Wilmerding: 145, repro. 142.
- 1988 Wilmerding: 20, 144, color repro. 145.
- 1990 Merrill: 97 n.276.
- 1991 Hiesinger: 113, 238, repro. 82.

# Thomas Doughty

1793 – 1856

THOMAS DOUGHTY was born on 19 July 1793 in Philadelphia and lived there until 1828. Although little is known about his formal education, he apparently showed a strong talent for drawing from an early age. When he was fifteen or sixteen Doughty was apprenticed to a leatherworker, and by 1814 the city directory listed him as a “currier.” Two years later he was described as a “painter” when he exhibited a landscape at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Doughty’s early career as an artist seems to have met with little success, and from 1818 to 1819 he was working once again as a leather currier. He continued to paint during these years and finally, in 1820, made landscape painting his full-time career.

Doughty was largely self-trained, and he relied heavily on copying European landscapes. From these he learned the established conventions of landscape painting, which he then applied to American scenes. He made sketching trips to record details, and his paintings came to be much admired for their comparative realism and truth to nature. Doughty was thus one of the founders of the native American landscape school, and his works from the 1820s recorded the beauties of the scenery of the eastern United States. Yet he was never simply a topographical painter, for he painted many types of landscapes, ranging from classical compositions inspired by the Old Masters, to scenes inspired by English and American literature, to purely imaginary subjects.

In 1828 Doughty moved to Boston, but he had resumed residence in Philadelphia by 1830, where for the next two years he and his brother John edited a monthly magazine called *The Cabinet of Natural History and American Rural Sports*, which also published Doughty’s hand-colored lithographs of various animals. The magazine ceased publication in 1832, and Doughty returned to Boston, remaining there for five profitable years. During this time he exhibited frequently and taught drawing and painting. His works from this period, such as the National Gallery’s *Fanciful Landscape* (1834) and *In Nature’s Wonderland* (1835, Detroit Institute of Arts), proved extremely popular although they were less realistic and more romantic

than his earlier efforts. William Dunlap, the first historian of American art, considered Doughty “in the first rank as a landscape painter.”<sup>1</sup>

Doughty made his first trip abroad at the age of forty-five, going to England for a brief stay in 1838. He visited England, Ireland, and France between 1845 and 1847. The last years of his life were spent in New York, and after 1853 Doughty painted only rarely. Although the artist usually managed to find buyers for his works, he was continually short of money, and when he died on 22 July 1856, he and his family were living in near poverty.

FK

## Notes

1. Dunlap 1834, 3:176.

## Bibliography

- E. Anna Lewis. “Art and Artists of America—Thomas Doughty, N.A.” *Graham’s Magazine* 45 (November 1854): 483–484.  
Doughty 1941.  
Doughty 1947.  
Sears 1947: 3–23.  
Goodyear 1969.  
Goodyear 1973.

1963.9.2 (1907)

## *Fanciful Landscape*

1834

Oil on canvas, 76.3 × 101.5 (30<sup>1/16</sup> × 39<sup>15/16</sup>)  
Gift of the Avalon Foundation

## Inscriptions

At lower right: T Doughty / Boston / 1834

**Technical Notes:** The support is a plain-weave fabric that has been lined, but the original tacking margins are intact. The ground, applied prior to stretching, is a white or pale gray layer of moderate thickness, allowing some of the weave texture to show through. Textured and relatively full-bodied paint describes the sky and the cliffs at left; thinner paint and glazes are found in the cliff at right and the darker areas. The leaves are highlighted with dabs of bright yellow. There are no significant losses, but there is minor inpainting scattered throughout the lower section of the painting. The varnish has not discolored.

**Provenance:** Possibly William Warner Hoppin [1807–1890], Providence, until 1855 or later.<sup>1</sup> Private collection, near Sheffield, Massachusetts; acquired summer 1963 by (Lois W. Spring, Sheffield, Massachusetts); sold 1963 to (Vose Galleries, Boston).<sup>2</sup>

**Exhibited:** Possibly *Artist's Exhibition*, Harding's Gallery, Boston, 1834, no. 41.<sup>3</sup> Possibly *Second Exhibition*, Rhode Island Art Association, Providence, 1855, no. 87, as *Landscape. Arts of the Young Republic: The Age of William Dunlap*, William Hayes Ackland Memorial Art Center, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1968, no. 104. *In Memoria, Ailsa Mellon Bruce*, NGA, 1969, no cat. *Thomas Doughty 1793–1856: An American Pioneer in Landscape Painting*, PAFA; CGA; Albany Institute of History & Art, 1973–1974, no. 28. *The Gothic Revival Style in America, 1830–1870*, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1976, no. 169.

*Fanciful Landscape*, painted in Boston in 1834, is considered the finest of Doughty's imaginary landscapes.<sup>4</sup> In the 1820s his paintings had usually depicted specific scenes, such as *View of the Water Works on Schuylkill—Seen from the Top of Fair Mount* (1826, private collection), or generalized American landscapes such as *On the Beach* (1827–1828, Albany Institute of History & Art).<sup>5</sup> By 1829, in works such as *A Swiss Scene* (private collection), he was beginning to experiment with purely fanciful landscapes—mountainous scenery with waterfalls and cascades, jagged peaks, ruined buildings, and small figures, serving to give scale to the forms of nature—that may have been inspired by popular European novels.<sup>6</sup> Such imagined scenes, with their rugged forms and dramatic contrasts of light and shade, doubtless owe much of their inspiration to the landscapes of Salvator Rosa (1615–1673) and Jacob van Ruisdael (1628/1629–1682).<sup>7</sup> Other more idyllic and wistful paintings, such as *Romantic Landscape with a Temple* (1834, MFA), recall the works of Claude Lorrain (1600–1682) and Aelbert Cuyp (1620–1691).<sup>8</sup>

Doughty's familiarity with the works of such European masters came primarily from reproductive prints and the few original paintings and copies available to him in American collections. In particular, Doughty had access in the early 1820s to the important collection of Robert Gilmor, Jr., of Baltimore, who briefly became his patron.<sup>9</sup> Although Gilmor believed American landscape painters should be conversant with the work of the Old Masters, he became disenchanted with Doughty by 1826, and complained to Thomas Cole:

As long as Doughty *studied & painted* from nature (who is always pleasing however slightly rendered in drawings or paintings made on the spot) his pictures were pleasing,

because the scene was real, the foliage varied & *unmannered*, and the broken ground & rocks & moss had the very impress of being after *originals*, not *ideals*. His *compositions* fail I think in all these respects, & have now so much uniformity of manner in them that they excite no longer the same agreeable feelings in me that his very *earliest* sketches did. 'Tis true they have more *effect*, & sometimes some spirit in consequence, but these do not compensate for the pleasing verity of *nature*.<sup>10</sup>

In spite of the validity of Gilmor's observations, Doughty during the late 1820s and 1830s generally abandoned the depiction of actual scenes in favor of invented landscapes. Whether meaning to evoke the scenery of America (such as *In the Catskills*, 1846, Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, Massachusetts) or Europe, Doughty tended to repeat standard compositional formulas and to rely on artificially contrived patterns of light and shade. By the early 1830s he could employ these devices with considerable assurance, and his works usually found ready buyers.

*Fanciful Landscape* blends two seemingly divergent landscape types, the pastoral and the dramatic: The hazy, golden light coming from behind the dark hill at the right surrounds the trees with a soft glow and evokes a Claudian mood; the craggy mountains, mysterious medieval ruins, tiny travelers, and sharp contrasts of light and shade, on the other hand, create a more dramatic feeling. Although there is undeniably a rather generic quality to the landscape, *Fanciful Landscape* has a sense of grandeur and majesty that sets it apart from the majority of Doughty's productions. It was almost certainly a major work for the artist and may be the painting called *Source of the Rhine* that Doughty exhibited in Boston in 1834. That painting was accompanied in the catalogue by the following lines:

—a solitary spot!

Above, the blue old Alps in Grandeur rose,  
Their glaciers bright with sunbeams, and their sides  
Dark with thick forests and o'erhanging cliffs!  
Gray, crumbling Castles here and there were seen,  
Relics of olden days and warlike pride.  
No more the feudal flag above them flew,  
Nor martial bands upon the ramparts stood,  
But the green ivy waved triumphant there!  
And the wild fir tree crowned each mouldering wall.  
Beneath, the golden waters of the Rhine  
Began their course—fed by a thousand brooks  
Just from their rocky prison-house set free,  
Far up the icy hills.—*McLellan*<sup>11</sup>

Although the identification of the National Gallery's painting as *Source of the Rhine* must remain



Thomas Doughty, *Fanciful Landscape*, 1863.9.2

tentative, no other known work by Doughty so closely approximates, both in detail and in spirit, this poetic text.

Doughty's paintings from the 1830s often show a noticeable decline in quality from those of the 1820s, particularly in their careless drawing and uninspired compositions. During these years he also began to repeat himself, frequently creating several versions of the same painting.<sup>12</sup> *Fanciful Landscape* suffers from none of these defects. The handling of the paint, especially in the grassy foreground, the foliage, and the snow-capped distant peaks, is free but not hasty, and the softly glowing sky gives evidence of Doughty's mastery of the "silvery tone."<sup>13</sup> The composition is carefully balanced, with an orderly recession into space and a harmonious arrangement of the masses. The emphatic contrasts of light and shade, though more suggestive of artifice than of nature, work in concert with the arrangement of forms to animate the canvas. Nevertheless, by 1834 Doughty's imaginative and romantic approach to landscape was already growing old-fashioned. As Tuckerman later explained: "Cole, Durand, Brown, and others made native landscape more familiar and available."<sup>14</sup>

FK

## Notes

1. Graphite inscriptions on the stretcher and on the frame appear to read "Hoppin"; however, the stretcher is not believed to be original, and it is not known whether the inscription was transferred from an earlier stretcher. Robert C. Vose (letter of 26 October 1963 in NGA curatorial files) argued that "the name Hoppin on the back does represent an earlier owner. There was a very prominent family of that name in Providence, Rhode Island." At the *Second Exhibition of the Rhode Island Art Association* in 1855 a work by Doughty called *Landscape* was lent by W[illiam] W[arner] Hoppin. Hoppin (1807–1890) was then the governor of Rhode Island (*DAB* 9:227–228) and cousin of Thomas Frederick and Augustus Hoppin (*Appleton's* 1888, 3:261–262). Another of his cousins, lawyer William Jones Hoppin, was closely involved with several cultural and artistic organizations in New York, including the American Art-Union and the Century Association, and helped organize the 1848 Thomas Cole Memorial Exhibition at the American Art-Union. I am grateful to Laurette E. McCarthy, intern in the department of American and British Paintings, NGA, for her diligent research on the Hoppin family.

2. According to Robert C. Vose (letter of 26 October 1963 in NGA curatorial files) the painting was purchased "from a small dealer [Lois W. Spring]." Lois W. Spring (letter of 10 December 1963 in NGA curatorial files) reported, "two decorators . . . stopped here one day last summer and had the painting in the back of their station wagon. They said they had just come from delivering some draperies to a customer and she had given them this painting to sell." It has not been possible to establish the name of the "customer" who owned the painting prior to Spring.

3. The exhibition included forty-three paintings by Doughty, several of which had titles that might have been applied to the painting now known as *Fanciful Landscape* (such as no. 26, *A Swiss Scene, Sunset*; no. 39, *Swiss Scene*; no. 24, *View on the Rhine*; and no. 41, *Source of the Rhine*).

4. Goodyear 1973, 26; Howat 1974, 101.

5. For reproductions, see Goodyear 1973, nos. 7, 11.

6. See Goodyear 1973, no. 17.

7. Other examples of this type include *Morning Among the Hills* (1829–1830, PAFA; Goodyear 1973, no. 19) and *Round Tower on the Rhine* (c. 1830, private collection; Goodyear 1973, no. 23).

8. Goodyear 1973, no. 29.

9. On Gilmor, see Rutledge, "Gilmor," 1949, 18–39; and *Taste* 1984, 1–8. Although the detailed inventory Gilmor prepared of his collection is unlocated, it is known that he owned works by or after Claude, Ruisdael, Cuyp, Rosa, and many other European artists; see Dunlap 1834, 3:272–275.

10. Letter of 13 December 1826 from Gilmor to Cole as quoted in "Correspondence" 1967, 45.

11. *Catalogue of Paintings at the Artist's Exhibition in Harding's Gallery*, New York, 1834, 3, no. 41. McLellan presumably is Isaac McLellan (1806–1899), a Boston poet and newspaper editor who had published two popular collections of poetry by 1834.

12. Goodyear 1973, 17, attributes these failings to Doughty's desire to produce large numbers of saleable works, even if it was at the expense of his own artistic development.

13. Tuckerman, *Book*, 1867, 507, considered such atmospheric effects virtually a signature of Doughty's style.

14. Tuckerman, *Book*, 1867, 507.

## References

- 1969 Goodyear: vi, 38, 77, repro. 39.  
 1971 Walker: 5, no. 41.  
 1973 Goodyear: 17, 26, no. 28.  
 1974 Howat: color repro. 103, 106.  
 1974 Moore: 45, color fig. 28.  
 1975 Walker: 551, no. 835, color repro.  
 1980 Wilmerding: 84, color repro. 85.  
 1981 Williams: 110, repro. 111.  
 1984 Walker: 547, no. 826, color repro.  
 1988 Wilmerding: 98, color. repro. 99.

# Asher Brown Durand

1796 – 1886

ASHER B. DURAND was born on 21 August 1796 in Jefferson Village (present-day Maplewood), New Jersey, and studied engraving with his father, a watchmaker and silversmith. Following a five-year apprenticeship with New Jersey engraver Peter Maverick, he and Maverick formed a partnership in 1817 and opened a branch of the firm in New York. Around 1818 Durand began informal study at the American Academy of Fine Arts, where he made drawings of the plaster casts. His work came to the attention of the Academy's president, John Trumbull (1756–1843), who in 1820 commissioned Durand to engrave his painting *The Declaration of Independence* (1787–1820, YUAG). Durand became a leading engraver and enjoyed considerable success producing bank notes, book illustrations, portraits, and copies after other artists' works.

In the 1820s and 1830s Durand opened a series of printmaking firms and was active in New York cultural circles. In 1825 he helped organize the New York Drawing Association, which in 1826 became the National Academy of Design, with Durand as one of fifteen founding members. In these same years he was also involved with several other arts groups, including James Fenimore Cooper's Bread and Cheese Club and the Sketch Club.

In the early 1830s Durand worked less frequently as an engraver and began painting portraits. Around 1835, inspired by Thomas Cole and encouraged by prominent New York merchant and art patron Luman Reed (1785–1836), Durand ended his career as an engraver in favor of painting. Continuing to produce portraits, he also created in the mid-1830s a number of paintings based on historical subjects and genre themes. In 1837 he accompanied Cole on a sketching trip to the Schroon Lake region in the Adirondacks and the following year he contributed nine landscapes to the annual National Academy of Design exhibition. In 1838 and 1839 he again made summer sketching trips and contributed landscapes to the Academy exhibitions. In 1840 he exhibited *Landscape, Composition, Morning* and *Landscape, Composition, Evening* (both NAD), an allegorical pair inspired by Cole.

In the summer of 1840 Durand went with fellow artists John F. Kensett, John Casilear, and Thomas P. Rossiter (1818–1871) to Europe, where he studied the works of Old Masters, especially Claude Lorrain (1600–1682). After his return to New York in July 1841 he exhibited paintings of European scenery, but he soon resumed summer sketching tours in the Catskills and the Hudson River Valley. In 1845 Durand was elected president of the National Academy, a position he would hold until 1861. He increasingly believed that direct study of nature should be the primary inspiration for American artists and began producing meticulously painted works such as *The Beeches* (1845, MMA) that were much admired for their faithful depictions of natural forms and light and atmosphere. These works also expressed sentiments similar to those in the poetry of his friend William Cullen Bryant, and several of his paintings of the 1850s were directly inspired by Bryant's poems.

Following Cole's death in 1848 Durand assumed a leading role in the American landscape school and exerted considerable influence on younger painters. His *Kindred Spirits* of 1849 (NY-PL), painted in memory of Cole, almost immediately became one of the best-known paintings in the country. By the 1850s Durand had perfected the two compositional types that became basic to Hudson River School painting, the vertical forest interior—epitomized by *In the Woods* of 1855 (MMA)—and the landscape panorama—a typical example is *View Toward the Hudson Valley* (1851, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford). With the publication of nine "Letters on Landscape Painting" in *The Crayon* in 1855, Durand codified the tenets and practices of the Hudson River School as instructions addressed to an imaginary student. Espousing theories similar to those held by influential British critic John Ruskin (1819–1900), he advised American painters to work directly from nature and to give precedence to New World subjects over European ones.

In April 1869 Durand moved from New York to a new house and studio built on family property in Maplewood, where he lived for the rest of his

life. He continued to paint, and most of his works of the 1870s (his last picture was completed in 1878) repeated compositions from earlier decades, although often with a more atmospheric and tonal handling of light. He died on 17 September 1886.

FK

### Bibliography

- Daniel Huntington. *Asher B. Durand: A Memorial Address*. New York, 1887.  
John Durand. *The Life and Times of A.B. Durand*. New York, 1894.  
Lawall 1971.  
Lawall 1977.  
Lawall 1978.

1947.17.2 (910)

## *Gouverneur Kemble*

1853  
Oil on canvas, 86.3 × 68.6 (34 × 27)  
Andrew W. Mellon Collection

### Inscriptions

At lower right: A.B.D. 1853

**Technical Notes:** The painting is on a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric support with a selvage along the bottom edge. It is attached to its original four-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher and remains unlined. A colormen's stencil, "PREPARED/BY/ED<sup>WD</sup> DECHAUX/NEW YORK" and "27 × 34," appears once on the reverse. The ground is a thin, even, grayish white layer with a transparent, reddish brown imprimatura layer that is visible through some of the more thinly painted passages, as in the hair. The paint was applied with moderately thick blended brushstrokes in the flesh areas and the vest of the sitter, and in fairly thin, random brushstrokes in the coat and background. There are minor areas of inpainting in the hair and the left cheek of the sitter, and a toned varnish over the sitter's face and vest. The varnish is slightly yellowed.

**Provenance:** (Rose M. de Forest [Mrs. Augustus de Forest], New York); purchased 9 May 1922 by Thomas B. Clarke [1848–1931], New York;<sup>1</sup> his estate; sold as part of the Clarke collection 29 January 1936, through (M. Knoedler & Co., New York), to The A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

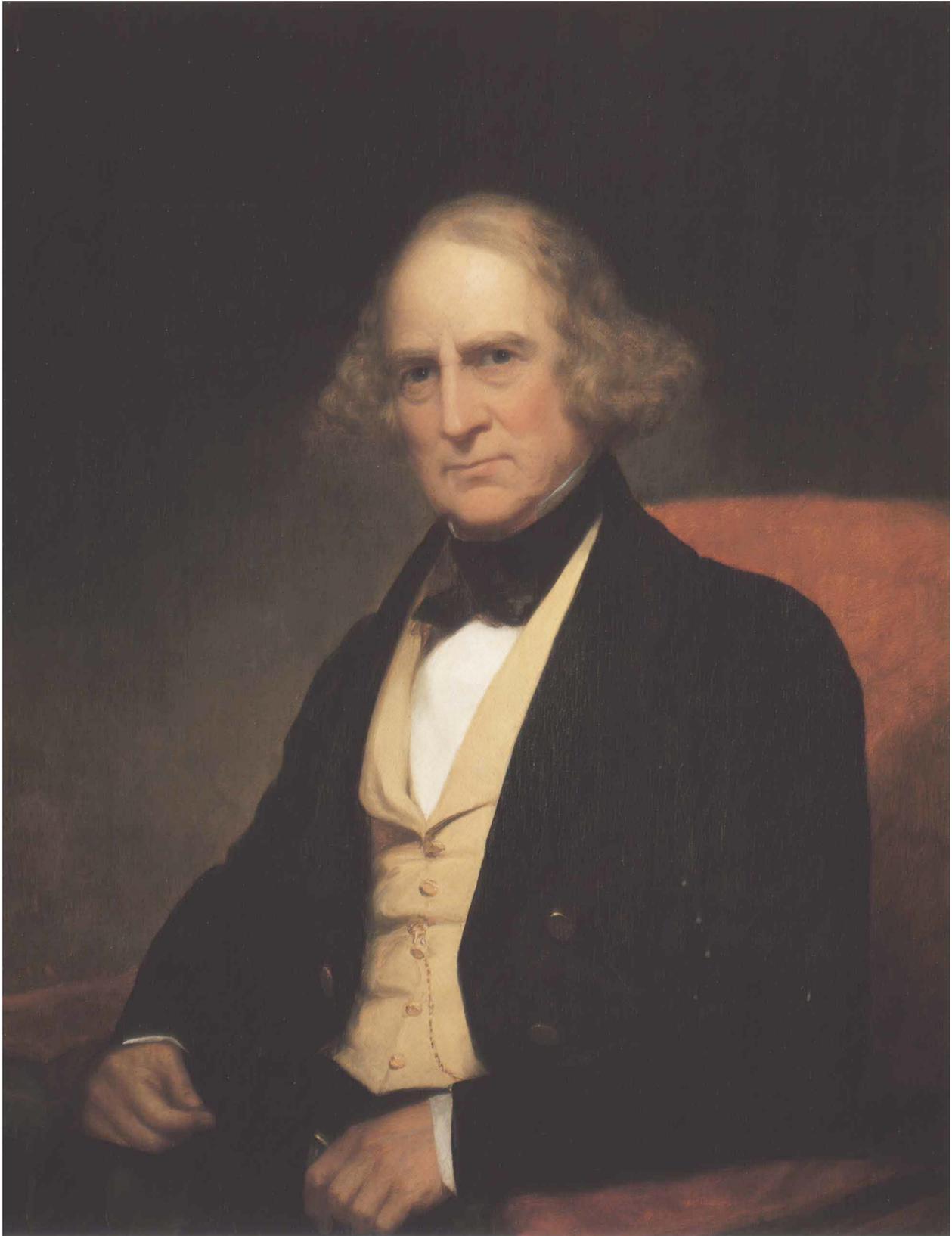
**Exhibited:** *Exhibition of Portraits by Early American Portrait Painters*, Union League Club, New York, 1923, no. 17. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered. *Famous Americans*, Washington County Museum of Fine Arts, Hagerstown, Maryland, 1955, no cat. NPG, on long-term loan, 1967–1980.

GOVERNEUR KEMBLE (1786–1875), the eldest son of Gertrude Gouverneur and Peter Kemble, had an active career in business and politics.<sup>2</sup> He was United States Consul at Cadiz under President James Monroe, and served two terms in the House of Representatives (1837–1841) during the administration of Martin Van Buren. In the mid-1810s he established the West Point Foundry Association in Cold Spring, New York, the first of its kind in this country. Employing techniques Kemble had observed in Spain, the foundry manufactured cannon and other ordnance for the military and was depicted in two large paintings by Kemble's friend John Ferguson Weir (1841–1926): *The Gun Foundry* (1866, Putnam County Historical Society, Cold Spring) and *Forging the Shaft: A Welding Heat* (1867, destroyed; replica of 1877, MMA).

Although highly regarded in political and business circles, Kemble was perhaps best known for his associations with literary and intellectual figures of his day and for his support of the visual and literary arts. In *Salmagundi* (1807–1808), by Kemble's lifelong friends Washington Irving and James K. Paulding, "Cockloft Hall," the Kemble family home on the Passaic River in New Jersey, was celebrated as an aristocratic country residence.<sup>3</sup> Kemble frequently hosted social gatherings at his Cold Spring home (dubbed "The Bachelor's Elysium" by Irving) and became so well known for his hospitality that he was once called "the most perfect gentleman in the United States."<sup>4</sup> He collected paintings by Spanish and Italian masters as well as works by contemporary American artists, including Durand's *Early Morning at Cold Spring* (1850, Montclair Art Museum, New Jersey). Kemble and Durand were among those who founded the Century Association in 1847, and the two quite possibly became acquainted through that organization.<sup>5</sup>

The National Gallery's portrait is virtually identical to another portrait that has descended in the family.<sup>6</sup> Given their histories, it seems likely the family version is the original and the National Gallery picture the copy.<sup>7</sup> Durand occasionally created duplicate portraits, for example, in 1854 and 1855 he painted identical portraits of his friend William Cullen Bryant (*Sleepy Hollow Restorations*, Tarrytown, New York, and the Century Association, New York) or his multiple portraits of the patron Luman Reed.

Although documentary evidence confirms that Durand painted Kemble in 1853, the circumstances of the original commission and the creation of the



Asher Brown Durand, *Gouverneur Kemble*, 1947.17.2

duplicate are unclear.<sup>8</sup> The most likely scenario is that Kemble's sister Mary Kemble Parrott or her husband Robert Parker Parrott commissioned the portrait, with the arrangements being made by Kemble's younger brother William. Parrott and Gouverneur Kemble were business partners in the Cold Spring Foundry, and Parrott took over the operation following Kemble's retirement in 1851. William Kemble, a founding member of the Century Association and a member of the Sketch Club, was evidently well acquainted with Durand, for the two vacationed with a group of mutual friends in the summer of 1853.<sup>9</sup> A letter of payment to Durand from Parrott dated 28 June 1853 suggests that the portrait was commissioned through William Kemble, presumably to hang in the Parrott home in Cold Spring.<sup>10</sup>

Owing to his success as a landscape painter, Durand painted relatively few portraits after the 1840s, and when he did they were generally of friends or individuals he admired. Such would seem to have been the case with his portrait of Gouverneur Kemble, which one contemporary termed "an accurate likeness and the best head . . . ever painted by the President of the National Academy."<sup>11</sup>

FK

#### Notes

1. The name of the seller and the date of the purchase by Clarke are recorded in an annotated copy of Philadelphia 1928 in the NGA library. According to de Forest, the painting was purchased from the estate of Abraham Van Buren, son of President Martin Van Buren. Although Kemble and Martin Van Buren were friends, Abraham Van Buren's ownership of this portrait is unverified. His will (copy in NGA curatorial files) makes no mention of the painting.

2. For biographical information, see: *Appleton's* 1888, 3:511; Delancey 1889: xv-xxiii; *DAB* 10:316-317; and Pelletreau 1975: 615-617.

3. Delancey 1889, xx; see Irving 1983, especially 131-132 and 263-269, for descriptions of Cockloft Hall.

4. Gen. Winfield Scott as quoted in Delancey 1889, xx.

5. See *Century* 1947, 363-490, for a complete list of the founding members.

6. A photograph of the family version is in the Thomas B. Clarke collection files, NGA.

7. The Kemble family version has not been examined by me or, as far as is known, by any NGA staff member, nor have the two ever been studied together. An unsigned note in the Thomas B. Clarke collection files, NGA, states that the family picture has a face that is "more vital. . . . The modelling suggests that it was the original, of which NGA [1947.17.2] is a replica or a copy." That conclusion apparently was formed solely by comparing photographs of the two versions; I have examined

the same photographs and can see no such distinction between the two.

8. An undated letter from Kemble to Durand (Asher B. Durand papers, NYPL [microfilm, AAA N21, fr. 260]) makes arrangements for the sittings. Two dated letters to Durand, one of 28 June 1853 from Robert Parker Parrott (Kemble's brother-in-law and former business partner) and the other of 7 July 1853 from Kemble's brother William, address payment for the completed portrait (Durand papers, NYPL [microfilm, AAA N20, frs. 752, 754-756]). In the list of references I provide below, the first that unquestionably mentions NGA 1947.17.2 is Sherman 1930. Earlier ones are not sufficiently specific to determine which version is being discussed, nor do they mention the existence of two identical paintings.

9. Letters of 12 and 17 June 1853 from Caroline Durand to Mrs. A. B. Durand and letters of 7 July 1853 and 2[?] July 1954 from William Kemble to Asher Durand (Durand papers, NYPL [microfilm, AAA N20, frs. 744-745, 746-747, 754-756, 836]), refer to stays in Olive City, and discuss plans for an upcoming trip together.

10. Letter of 28 June 1853 from Parrott to Durand, Durand papers, NYPL (microfilm, AAA N20, fr. 752). The Parrotts did have an art collection, although it was apparently not extensive (letter of 20 June 1990 from David R. Meschutt, in NGA curatorial files).

11. "Fine Arts," *Home Journal* 2, 8 October 1853, 6.

#### References

- 1853 "Fine Arts." *Home Journal* 2 (8 October): 6.  
 1867 Tuckerman, *Book*: 188.  
 1888 *Appleton's*: 2:268.  
 1930 Sherman: 41; reprinted in Sherman, "Durand," 1930, 316.  
 1966 Lawall: 3:154-155.

1978.6.2 (2716)

### *Forest in the Morning Light*

c. 1855  
 Oil on canvas, 61.5 × 46.2 (24<sup>3/16</sup> × 18<sup>3/16</sup>)  
 Gift of Frederick Sturges, Jr.

#### Inscriptions

At lower right: ABD

**Technical Notes:** The support is a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric. The painting has been lined and the original tacking margins have been removed, but cusping exists on the right edge. The white, textured ground layer, applied evenly across the surface of the canvas, is rather thick in comparison to the paint. Infrared reflectography indicates what may be chalk or charcoal underdrawing or possibly underpainting executed in very dry paint. Two linear depressions along the trunk of the central tree are visible through x-radiography, suggesting that the artist scratched an initial compositional detail into the wet ground. Indications of changes and alter-

ations occur throughout the paint layer, particularly in the tree branches along the top edge. Inpainting is found only along one crack at the right edge of the painting. The varnish has not discolored.

**Provenance:** Possibly Jonathan Sturges [1802–1874], New York, and Fairfield, Connecticut;<sup>1</sup> his son, Frederick Sturges [d. 1917], New York, and Fairfield, Connecticut; his son, Frederick Sturges, Jr. [1876–1977], New York, and Fairfield, Connecticut.<sup>2</sup>

**Exhibited:** Possibly NAD annual, 1854, no. 140, as *Landscape*.<sup>3</sup>

THIS FOREST INTERIOR is most likely one of Durand's studies from nature, which he executed in great numbers from the mid-1840s to the mid-1870s.<sup>4</sup> These studies often depict forest interiors, with carefully observed details of rocks, vegetation, and tree trunks and branches.<sup>5</sup> Although landscape vistas are occasionally included in the backgrounds, usually only small patches of open sky and perhaps the profile of a background hill or mountain suggest a far distance. Painted with carefully controlled brushwork and often with considerable glazing, Durand's studies were clearly regarded by him as finished works in their own right. He regularly exhibited such studies at the National Academy of Design and elsewhere and he held a major sale of them during his lifetime.<sup>6</sup> His sketches were well known to his contemporaries and were considered "the attraction of his studio in the city and . . . as authentic materials for the elaborate landscapes with which his name is so gratefully identified."<sup>7</sup>

Determining the date and location for individual studies is difficult at best, for Durand painted them on a regular basis during his summer sketching trips and maintained a remarkably consistent style. Nevertheless, *Forest in the Morning Light* is generally similar to several other forest studies believed to date from the mid-1850s, including *Woodland Interior* (c. 1854, Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, Massachusetts), *Through the Woods* (1856, Vassar College Art Gallery, Poughkeepsie, New York), and *Group of Trees* (fig. 1).<sup>8</sup> In these Durand investigated various configurations of tilted tree trunks, arrangements of fallen trees and underbrush, and patterns of light and shade. These tree studies are, in turn, closely related to the series of major studio paintings of forest interiors that was initiated with *The Primeval Forest* (1854, location unknown) and continued with *In the Woods* (1855, MMA) and *A*

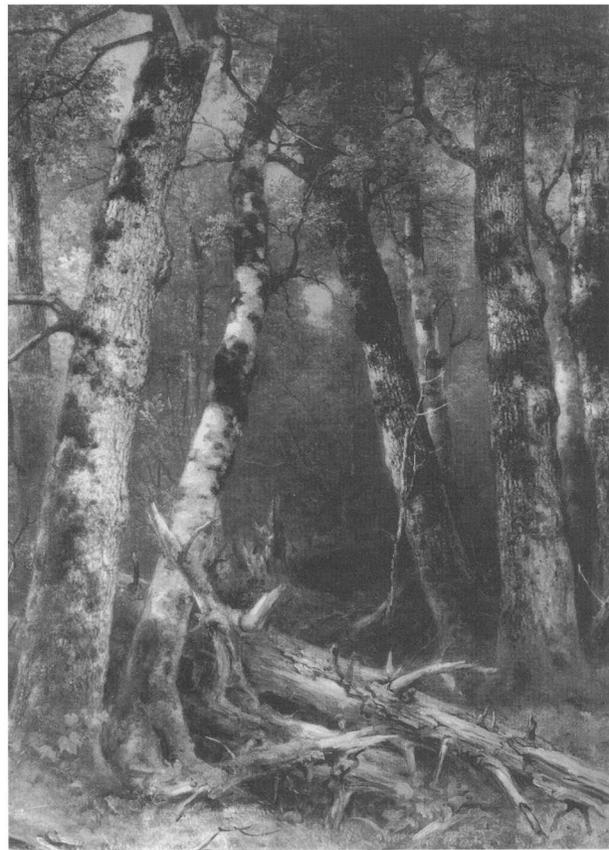


Fig. 1. Asher Brown Durand, *Group of Trees*, oil on linen, c. 1855–1857, Collection of The New-York Historical Society, 1887.<sup>8</sup>

*Reminiscence of the Catskill Clove* (1859, Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore).<sup>9</sup>

Greatly admired both in the artist's day and in the present for their meticulous realism, Durand's forest interior paintings embody his belief that the artist should aspire to the greatest possible fidelity in capturing the actual appearance of the natural world. In "Letters on Landscape Painting" Durand made a point of instructing his imaginary student to exercise particular care when depicting trees: "If your subject be a tree, observe particularly wherein it differs from those of other species; in the first place, the termination of its foliage . . . the character of its trunk and branches, the manner in which the latter shoot off from the parent stem. . . . Every kind of tree has its traits of individuality."<sup>10</sup> Durand's contemporaries considered him "unsurpassed in the representation of American trees; it is not that he gives the characteristic bark, branch, leaf, form and color of each species only—but that he transfers the natural language—the arborescent



Asher Brown Durand, *Forest in the Morning Light*, 1978.6.2

character and sentiment itself to canvas.”<sup>11</sup> This achievement was not, however, an end in itself, for Durand’s emphasis on the faithful depiction of nature also embraced a higher moral purpose. As he wrote: “The external appearance of this our dwelling-place, apart from its wondrous structure and functions that minister to our well-being, is fraught with lessons of high and holy meaning, only surpassed by the light of Revelation.”<sup>12</sup> Lest the viewer of his pictures fail to grasp such meaning, Durand on occasion included complementary lines of poetry in exhibition catalogues, as was the case with *The Primeval Forest*, which was accompanied by lines from William Cullen Bryant’s “A Forest Hymn.”<sup>13</sup> Bryant’s well-known poem presented an evocative image of American forests as natural sanctuaries, and the same associations were not uncommonly applied to Durand’s paintings. Such meanings were associated both with large-scale exhibition pieces such as *The Primeval Forest* or *In the Woods* and with smaller works such as this example. The Reverend Elias Magoon, first owner of *Through the Woods* observed: “As my eye rests on those great, calm children of the woods in the foreground, and then irresistibly falls back reach after reach through the glorious perspective to the still mightier hills in the remote distance, I have the fitting aisle of a majestic cathedral wherein to extemporize te Deums and High Masses at my own sweet will.”<sup>14</sup>

FK

## Notes

1. Jonathan Sturges owned a number of Durand’s studies from nature (Lawall 1978, nos. 354, 384, and 411), but this painting is not listed in “Our Private Collections, No. II,” *The Crayon* 3, February 1856, 57–58, an article that discusses Sturges’ paintings by Durand, nor is it mentioned in Cummings 1865, 141, which records paintings by Durand in the Sturges collection, nor is it in the list of the Sturges collection in Tuckerman, *Book*, 1867, 627; however, Frederick Sturges III was told by his father, Frederick Sturges, Jr., that all the Durands in the family collection came from Jonathan Sturges (letters dated 27 August and 7 December 1981 from Frederick Sturges III, in NGA curatorial files). The family tradition may be inaccurate, for two letters known from Frederick Sturges—one of 16 June 1858 to Asher B. Durand (Asher B. Durand papers, NYPL) and the other of 22 June 1858 to John Durand (John Durand papers, NYPL)—indicate that he, too, purchased paintings directly from the artist. Nevertheless, in the absence of evidence indicating that Frederick Sturges acquired this painting, the possibility of ownership by Jonathan Sturges cannot be excluded. For more on Jonathan Sturges as a collector, see the entry for Francis William Edmonds’ *Bashful Cousin* [1978.6.4].

2. Frederick Sturges, Jr., died 14 October 1977 (letter of 27 January 1982 from Frederick Sturges III in NGA curatorial files); this painting came to the National Gallery as a bequest in 1978 with four other paintings (see Durand, *A Pastoral Scene* [1978.6.3]; Casilear *View on Lake George* [1978.6.1]; Edmonds, *The Bashful Cousin* [1978.6.4]; and Kensett *Beach at Beverly* [1978.6.5]).

3. *Landscape* was lent by Jonathan Sturges. Durand’s tendency to exhibit finished paintings at the National Academy of Design with titles such as *Landscape* or *Composition* and studies simply as *Study from Nature* makes it virtually impossible to identify exhibited paintings without detailed descriptions from contemporary newspapers or journals. No descriptions have been found for *Landscape* in the 1854 exhibition, therefore, given the tenuous nature of the evidence supporting Jonathan Sturges’ ownership, the likelihood that the National Gallery’s painting was exhibited at the Academy in 1854 must be regarded as slight. Moreover, in a purely descriptive sense, the title “Landscape” is better suited to works such as *A Pastoral Scene* [1978.6.3] than it is to this close-up forest view.

4. The studies are listed in Lawall 1978, 169–208. Lawall did not know of *Forest in the Morning Light* until after his catalogue was published, and he has since termed it “an excellent example of a forest study—doubtless painted on the spot” (letter of 14 April 1980 in NGA curatorial files). According to Ross Merrill (memorandum of 26 August 1992 in NGA curatorial files), it was probably painted out-of-doors over the course of several sittings, and may have been touched up by the artist in the studio. Virtually all Durand’s studio compositions were signed with the artist’s full last name; many studies were initialed “A.B.D.,” as is the case with the present picture.

5. See Lawall 1978, nos. 370–381.

6. *Catalogue of Oil Paintings Executed by A.B. Durand . . .*, New York, 1867; this sale was occasioned by Durand’s decision to move to New Jersey. According to Lawall 1978, 196, none of the studies from this sale has been identified.

7. “Durand’s Studies,” *Daily Evening Transcript*, Boston, 25 November 1867.

8. According to David B. Lawall (letter of 14 April 1980 in NGA curatorial files), *Forest in the Morning Light* is probably not the original title of 1978.6.2. These other three paintings are discussed in Lawall 1978, nos. 371, 373, and 375. Although Lawall does not give a date for the latter, it is listed as “probably 1855–57” in Koke 1982, 1:341.

9. Lawall 1978, nos. 184, 196, and 228. Although the location of *The Primeval Forest* is unknown, its general appearance is known from a monochrome cartoon in NYHS (Lawall 1978, no. 185). *In the Woods*, the most celebrated of the series, was commissioned by Jonathan Sturges.

10. Asher B. Durand, “Letter II,” *The Crayon* 1, 17 January 1855, 34.

11. “Durand’s Studies,” *Daily Evening Transcript*, Boston, 25 November 1867.

12. Asher B. Durand, “Letter II,” *The Crayon* 1, 17 January 1855, 34.

13. “These dim vaults, / These winding aisles, of hu-

man pomp and pride / Report not," as quoted in *NAD Annual* 1854, 27.

14. Letter of 4 February 1856, Asher B. Durand papers, NYPL, as quoted in Lawall 1978, 180; see also Foshay and Mills 1983, 51–52.

#### References

- 1978 Lawall: possibly no. 183.  
1980 Wilmerding: 11, repro.  
1981 Williams: 113, color repro. 104.  
1988 Wilmerding: 12, repro. 13.

1978.6.3 (2717)

### *A Pastoral Scene*

1858

Oil on canvas, 55.5 × 82.3 (21<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 32<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>)

Gift of Frederick Sturges, Jr.

#### Inscriptions

At lower edge, left of center: A B Durand / 1858

**Technical Notes:** The support is a fine, plain-weave fabric. A thin white ground was applied in one smooth layer. The paint surface was built up through many layers, with glazes often employed. Although there is some impasto in the whites, the brushstrokes are generally restrained, with minimal texture evident. Drying cracks and wrinkling are visible in several areas, most notably in the landscape of the middle distance and the mountains at the center. In 1979 the painting was relined, discolored varnish was removed, and the painting was restored. The most disfiguring areas of craquelure and several small losses along the edges were inpainted. The varnish has not discolored.

**Provenance:** Frederick Sturges [d. 1917], New York, and Fairfield, Connecticut;<sup>1</sup> his son, Frederick Sturges, Jr. [1876–1977], New York, and Fairfield, Connecticut.<sup>2</sup>

*A Pastoral Scene* is typical of the bucolic landscapes painted by Durand throughout his career and contains elements that by 1858 were familiar ingredients in his works.<sup>3</sup> The cattle graze near a quiet stream, rocks and plants are carefully delineated in the foreground, large trees frame the composition, and a vista of woods and pastures leads to a distant mountain. The relatively sharp foreground focus gradually softens in the middle and far distance, enhancing an orderly recession of the landscape elements with atmospheric perspective.<sup>4</sup>

Durand had perfected these compositional and stylistic means by the mid-to-late 1840s, as is evident in such major works as *Landscape Composition*,

*Hudson River, Looking Towards the Catskills* (1847, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown).<sup>5</sup> In formulating his version of the pastoral landscape Durand was greatly influenced by the works of seventeenth-century painters such as Claude Lorrain (1600–1682), whose paintings he had seen during his European travels in 1840–1841. Even though his first encounter with original works by the Old Masters did not meet his expectations fully—he was, in particular, slightly disappointed in Claude's works—he still considered having seen them “worth a passage across the Atlantic.”<sup>6</sup> Later, when he had visited Florence and seen more works by the French artist, Durand still held reservations, but did acknowledge “[Claude's] greatness in [depicting] the glowing atmosphere.”<sup>7</sup>

Critics and patrons deemed Durand's pastoral landscapes of the 1850s and 1860s expressive of the calm charms of nature's most peaceful moods. Unlike his vertical forest interiors of the same years, which generally took for their subject undisturbed, primeval scenes of the American wilderness, works such as *A Pastoral Scene* presented idealized “middle landscapes” poised, literally and figuratively, between civilization and nature.<sup>8</sup> The cleared fields and pastures, rustic paths, and the occasional house, farm building, or church, suggest that the changes wrought by mankind have not fundamentally diminished the beauty of American nature. Human figures appear only infrequently, and are always engaged in activities such as picnicking, harvesting, shepherding, or walking that are completely in keeping with the pastoral mood. Cows and sheep, staples of the pastoral landscape tradition for well over two centuries by Durand's day, are regularly included.<sup>9</sup>

The buyers of Durand's pastoral landscapes were generally not those who actually lived and worked in such places, but the rising class of urban merchants and businessmen.<sup>10</sup> Durand himself was well aware of the appeal his works held for such an audience, for in his fourth “Letter on Landscape Painting” he noted that a “rich merchant or capitalist” of the city might find them “soothing and strengthening to his best faculties.”<sup>11</sup> Although Durand's meticulous handling of paint suggested that his landscapes depicted actual scenes, he often arranged trees and minor elements to provide balanced, harmonious compositions.<sup>12</sup> His celebrated realism, then, in both studio paintings and outdoor studies, was augmented by a conviction that the landscape painter's productions ought to serve



Asher Brown Durand, *A Pastoral Scene*, 1978.6.3

some higher purpose than the mere transcription of the natural world. Paintings such as *A Pastoral Scene* were consciously idealized visions of landscape that affirmed and asserted the fundamental rightness of the American scene, where man and nature existed in perfect equilibrium. They found their greatest popularity and appeal in the 1850s, the very years when the aggressive expansion of the built environment was making such scenes ever more rare in the real landscapes of the northeastern United States.

FK

#### Notes

1. Although family tradition held that all the Durand paintings in the Sturges collection were first owned by Jonathan Sturges, no evidence supports that assumption for *A Pastoral Scene*. Even though the evidence is inconclusive, it is more likely that Jonathan's son, Frederick Sturges, Sr., purchased the painting from the artist in 1858. In June 1858 Frederic Sturges, Sr., wrote to the artist: "I beg to enclose my check for five hundred and fifty dollars and I would again thank you for my beautiful picture" (letter of 16 June 1858, Durand papers, NYPL, as quoted in Lawall 1978, 120). Lawall (letter of 14 April 1980 in NGA curatorial files) agrees that *A Pastoral Scene* may be the painting referred to in this letter, but notes that \$550 would have been an appropriate price in 1858 for a painting measuring 30 × 40 inches, considerably larger than *Pastoral Scene*. Paintings by Durand of the size of the present example likely would have cost about \$250–\$300 in 1858 (see, for example, Lawall 1978, nos. 206 and 236), and even smaller pictures sold for about \$100 (letter from Sturges to John Durand, 22 June 1858, John Durand papers, NYPL, as quoted in a letter of 2 April 1982 from Wayne Craven in NGA curatorial files).

2. On Frederick Sturges, Jr., see the entry on Durand's *Forest in the Morning Light* (1978.6.2).

3. As in the case of *Forest in the Morning Light*, this is a modern descriptive title. Durand's original title for the painting is unknown. *A River Landscape*, also of 1858 (32 1/4 × 48 1/8 inches, The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; see Lawall 1978, no. 226, 120), is very similar to 1978.6.3 in composition and details.

4. Durand explicitly described such effects in his "Letters on Landscape Painting" (Asher B. Durand, "Letter V," *The Crayon*, 7 March 1855, 146).

5. See Lawall 1978, no. 112, 61–62.

6. As quoted in John Durand, *The Life and Times of A.B. Durand*, New York, 1894, 147.

7. As quoted in John Durand, *The Life and Times of A.B. Durand*, New York, 1894, 160.

8. On the concept of the "middle landscape," see Marx 1964; and Stein 1981, especially 11–15.

9. Durand took particular care in painting cows, as is evident as early as 1847, when a critic praised "his cows whose American character is very marked" (as quoted in *Democratic Review*, June 1847, 571). This remark was apparently in reference to the inferiority of other American depictions of cows that took their inspiration from German and Dutch cattle-pieces rather than from actual observation.

10. Durand's surviving correspondence provides ample documentation of the men who commissioned his paintings; see the entries for individual paintings in Lawall 1978 for details.

11. Asher B. Durand, "Letter IV," *The Crayon*, 14 February 1855, 98.

12. Durand did not, however, sanction wholesale liberties with topography; see Asher B. Durand, "Letter IX," *The Crayon*, 11 July 1855, 16.

#### References

- 1978 Lawall: 120, no. 225 possibly.  
 1981 Williams: 113–114, repro.  
 1992 Cushman: 23, 24, repro.

1991.96.1

### *Pastoral Landscape*

1861

Oil on canvas, 99 × 152.5 (39 × 60 1/16)

Gift (Partial and Promised) of The Manoogian Foundation, in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art

#### Inscriptions

At left: ABD Durand/ 1861

**Technical Notes:** The support is a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric that has been lined and mounted on what is presumed to be the original panel-back stretcher, which has two vertical crossbars and mitered joins. The ground is pale rose and has a pebbly texture, both of which affected the final appearance of the painting. This is particularly noticeable in the clouds and the sky, where the ground remains very visible. The paint was applied in layers with considerable texture, impasto, and strong brushwork. There are, especially in the greens of the various areas of foliage, many obvious pentimenti, areas of dried impasto beneath upper layers, and extensive drying cracks, all of which indicate the artist reworked the image considerably. On the whole, the painting is in good condition, with only minor areas of inpainting. The varnish has not discolored.

**Provenance:** Possibly B. F. Gardner, Baltimore, by 1862.<sup>1</sup> Private collection, Switzerland, until 1980;<sup>2</sup> (sale, Sotheby's, New York, 25 April 1980, no. 17); (Alexander Gallery, New York); sold 1980 to Richard Manoogian, Grosse Pointe, Michigan.

**Exhibited:** *The Hudson River School: Congenial Observations*, Alexander Gallery, New York, 1987, no. 5, as *View of Kingston, New York*.<sup>3</sup> NGA 1991, supplement.

By 1861, when Durand executed this large and impressive picture, he had fully perfected his approach to landscape painting and was creating

works that stand as epitomes of the Hudson River School aesthetic. For Tuckerman, writing in 1867, “the full power of his taste and talent, and especially his feeling for nature, found memorable expression in a series of American landscapes . . . [including] Forest Scenes, Lake Scenes, The Franconia Mountains, Wood Scenes, our Primeval Forest, Sunset, The Rainbow, Sunday Morning, The Catskills from Hillsdale, and other similar subjects.”<sup>4</sup> All the principal elements that Tuckerman and other contemporaries found so appealing are present here: a detailed foreground of precisely painted rocks and underbrush; large, painstakingly individualized trees; and a serene, orderly transition through space to a radiantly glowing sky. Indeed, seemingly everything that Durand had learned about nature and about art from his meticulous outdoor studies (such as *Forest in the Morning Light* [1978.6.2]) and from his generalized pastoral compositions (such as *A Pastoral Scene* [1978.6.3]) informs this summary example of his mature style.

If it is accordingly correct to characterize *Pastoral Landscape* as one of Durand’s major achievements, it should be possible to identify it as a work he either exhibited or painted on commission. Although documentation for such works in Durand’s oeuvre generally exists, identification of the present painting has proven elusive. With virtually nothing known of *Pastoral Landscape*’s history prior to 1980, its original identity remains the subject of speculation. But certain relevant facts can be established. First, and most important, *Pastoral Landscape* is the largest, most ambitious, and most accomplished of Durand’s paintings from 1861. Admittedly, only a few such works are known (for example, *Catskill Meadows in Summer*, 17 by 24 inches, Wellesley College Museum, Wellesley, Massachusetts), but painting *Pastoral Landscape* represented a substantial commitment of time by the artist, who was not known as an unusually fast worker. Second, even allowing for the fact that Durand’s pastoral compositions share a certain family resemblance, the scenery in this painting is most like that of the Hudson River Valley, where he spent considerable time and from which he drew inspiration for many works. Third, the painting contains several works of architecture—an Italianate villa just beyond the woods at the left, an arched stone bridge, the gabled house across the water, and an English Gothic revival church in the center distance—that may, or may not, indicate that the artist was depicting a specific, identifiable place. And finally,

*Pastoral Landscape* in certain respects—most notably the presence of a house nestled in the woods, a church, and an arched bridge—bears a strong resemblance to Durand’s important work of the previous year, *Sunday Morning* (fig. 1).

These facts do not in themselves lead to a secure identification, but they do point to a work entitled *Hillsdale* that Durand probably painted in the autumn and winter of 1861, but which has been unlocated since the nineteenth century. Durand spent part of the summer of 1861 sketching in the vicinity of Hillsdale, New York, a small village in Columbia County about twenty miles east of the Hudson River.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately for us, the products of that sketching trip are unlocated, although several small works with “Hillsdale” in their titles were hung in nineteenth-century exhibitions.<sup>6</sup> In spring 1862 Durand exhibited a work entitled *Catskill Mountains, from Hillsdale* at the Boston Athenaeum, presumably the same painting referred to by Tuckerman and listed by John Durand as “‘Hillsdale,’ scenery of Columbia County, State of New York.”<sup>7</sup> And this same *Hillsdale* was discussed in several letters between Durand and B. F. Gardner of Baltimore, the eventual purchaser.<sup>8</sup>

Gardner had placed an order, probably in 1860, for a large picture. He subsequently came to own Durand’s 40- by 60-inch *Lake George* of 1863 (location unknown), but before receiving that picture the artist managed to convince Gardner to purchase the similarly sized *Hillsdale*, which had not, in fact, been painted specifically to fulfill the commission.<sup>9</sup> Although there is little in the Durand-Gardner correspondence that is conclusive for equating *Pastoral Landscape* with *Hillsdale*, that the artist priced *Hillsdale* at \$1200 and said it had cost “him a winter’s work” accords perfectly with a picture of the size and complexity of *Pastoral Landscape*. (Durand priced the slightly larger and somewhat more detailed close-up forest picture he painted in 1859 for another Baltimore patron, William T. Walters [*A Reminiscence of the Catskill Clove*, Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore], at \$1,500.)<sup>10</sup>

Although Gardner accepted *Hillsdale* and paid Durand’s price for it, he was not entirely satisfied with the painting; however, we do not know why.<sup>11</sup> Perhaps it was that he preferred different scenery.<sup>12</sup> But it is also possible, if *Hillsdale* and *Pastoral Landscape* are indeed one and the same, that Gardner found its similarity to *Sunday Morning* (painted for Walters) troubling.<sup>13</sup> Perhaps Gardner wished for a major Durand in his collection that would stand

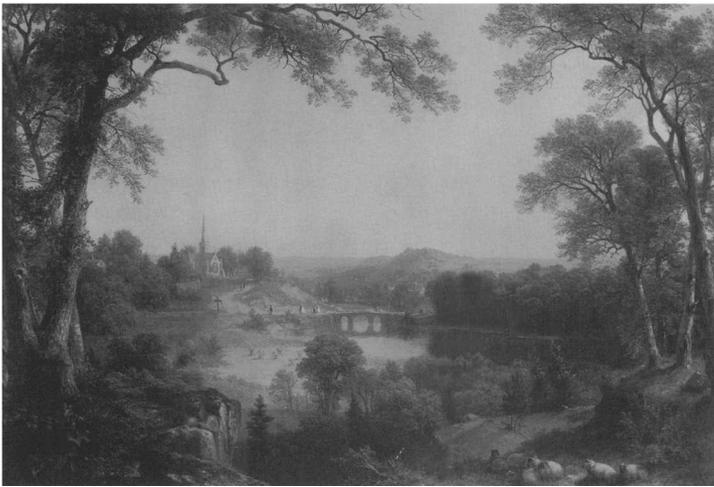


Fig. 1. Asher Brown Durand, *Sunday Morning*, oil on canvas, 1860, From the collection of the New Britain Museum of American Art, Connecticut, Charles F. Smith Fund, photo credit: E. Irving Blomstrann

apart from the ones owned by the far more prominent Walters?

It would, of course, be a particularly satisfying answer to the question if the Gallery's *Pastoral Landscape* included elements that proved conclusively whether it does, or does not, depict Hillsdale or its immediate environs. Unfortunately, that is not the case. The scenery depicted in *Pastoral Landscape* resembles that around present-day Hillsdale, which is characterized by rolling hills and meadows, a few

Fig. 2. Asher Brown Durand, *Progress*, oil on canvas, 1853, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, The Warner Collection of Gulf States Paper Corporation



small mountains of the Taconic Range, many streams, and one sizable body of water, Copake Lake. If the Catskill Mountains could be seen from Hillsdale, as the nineteenth-century titles of Durand's painting indicate, they could only appear as relatively minor features on the horizon, with the Hudson River visible in between. Without entirely straining credulity, the space in *Pastoral Landscape* can be read as showing mountains from the Taconic Range in the middle distance, a thin, barely visible blue line representing the Hudson beyond, and the Catskills at the horizon appearing as they would if some twenty-five to thirty miles away. Residents of the area, however, question whether the painting actually depicts Hillsdale, for no one knows of such buildings or, especially, a stone bridge, ever having existed there.<sup>14</sup>

We are thus left to conclude that of Durand's known works, only *Pastoral Landscape* can possibly be equated with the unlocated *Hillsdale*, but that identification must be considered tentative at best. If *Pastoral Landscape* is *Hillsdale*, then what Durand created was a composition of scenery expressive of the area, not a literal, topographical view. In spite of their seeming specificity, the buildings merely would be generic examples of the eclectic styles common to the Hudson Valley in the mid-nineteenth century, styles that were well known through the publications of Andrew Jackson Downing and others. Durand often used this kind of generalized composition, as in *Sunday Morning* of 1860, which contains an equally specific-looking church.

Regardless of its precise identity, *Pastoral Landscape* is unmistakably one of Durand's grandest and most successful panoramic compositions. Perhaps its closest pictorial parallel is the great *Progress* of 1853 (fig. 2). In a highly programmatic and direct fashion *Progress* presents an idealized vision of American nature as expressive of the actual course of American civilization. *Pastoral Landscape*, although by no means so assertive in its message, is equally successful as "an ideal of American scenery."<sup>15</sup>

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#### Notes

1. Gardner's possible ownership of the painting is discussed in the entry.

2. According to Holly Goetz of Sotheby's, New York (memorandum of phone conversation, 24 June 1993, in NGA curatorial files), this individual is deceased and those administering the estate refuse to divulge any in-



Asher Brown Durand, *Pastoral Landscape*, 1991.96.1

formation whatsoever about how and when the painting was acquired.

3. The title *View of Kingston, New York* was apparently assigned to the painting by the staff at the Alexander Gallery, based on the supposed similarity of its landscape to the area surrounding Kingston; however, there is no evidence that Durand ever painted a work of that title or subject.

4. Tuckerman, *Book*, 1867, 189.

5. According to Lawall 1978, 205–206, Durand's presence in Hillsdale in 1861 is documented by a letter of 26 June from his daughter Caroline to her brother John.

6. Lawall 1978, 206. The only work known that depicts scenery and trees similar to that in *Pastoral Landscape* is *River Scene* (location unknown; Lawall 1978, 131), also of 1861. Given its apparently finished quality, this 12 1/8 × 18 1/8-inch painting seems to have been an independent work rather than a study for *Pastoral Landscape*.

7. Perkins and Gavin 1980, 52; Tuckerman, *Book*, 1867, 189; Durand 1894, 177–178. John Durand erroneously listed the painting under his entry for the year 1863.

8. See Lawall 1978, 132–133, for details of this transaction.

9. That *Hillsdale* was similar in size to *Lake George* is made clear by Gardner's letter 19 May 1862 to Durand

(Durand papers, NYPL, as quoted in Lawall 1978, 132).

10. Lawall 1978, 121–122.

11. In his letter to the artist of 19 May 1862 Gardner requests a “subject more to my liking” (Durand papers, NYPL, as quoted in Lawall 1978, 132).

12. Gardner also already owned Durand's *Lake Scene, Sunset* (1843, location unknown); see Lawall 1978, 37–40.

13. Lawall 1978, 127, documents that Gardner had seen *Sunday Morning*.

14. The description of Hillsdale scenery is based on the author's visit to the area on 17 May 1991. The opinions of local residents summarized here are based on the author's conversations with James Ryan, Site Manager of Olana State Historic Site in Hudson, New York, who showed photographs of the National Gallery's painting to friends and neighbors. There were several well-known stone bridges in the Hudson Valley, the most famous of which was that in Leeds, New York, on the west side of the river. The bridge in *Pastoral Landscape* does not resemble any known example. Mike Reed, a long-time resident of Hillsdale, has suggested in conversation that the mountain in the middle distance of the painting looks like Mount Merino, which is located on the east bank of the Hudson River near the town of Hudson.

15. The words are from John Durand's description of *Sunday Morning*; see Durand 1894, 177.

## George Henry Durrie

1820 – 1863

BORN IN NEW HAVEN, the son of a Connecticut stationer, Durrie remained in that city virtually his entire life. Married to a choirmaster's daughter, Sarah Perkins, in 1841, he immersed himself in the quiet pursuits of family and church. While he did not achieve the fame of the most renowned nineteenth-century American landscape painters, he appears to have had a fulfilling, productive career. His letters show that he was content to work in his community, although he once briefly took a studio in New York and exhibited there regularly at the National Academy of Design.<sup>1</sup>

As young men George Durrie and his brother John Jr. studied intermittently with local portraitist Nathaniel Jocelyn (1796–1881) from 1839 to 1841. Around the same time, Durrie began working as an itinerant artist, and he sold portraits during his visits to the Connecticut towns of Bethany, Hartford, Naugatuck, and Meriden. He also made successful sales trips to Freehold, New Jersey, and Petersburg, Virginia, several times in

the 1840s. Framing and decorative painting provided income for him early in this decade as well.

By 1845 local newspapers carried advertisements for Durrie's “snow pictures,” and his *Sleighing Party* was exhibited at the National Academy of Design in that year. Landscapes, which had first appeared as backgrounds in his portraits, became his primary focus. He painted local landmarks such as East Rock and West Rock as well as composite scenes of rural life. Country inns and barnyards, scenes of human activity, became his most oft-used subjects. While he painted these in all seasons, his winter depictions were most numerous, growing in frequency between 1854 and 1863.

Almost all his compositions are relatively small in scale, few exceeding 18 by 24 inches, and his views are quiet and intimate. He knew and admired the works of Thomas Cole and may have tried to emulate certain aspects of Cole's style, yet he eschewed the Hudson River School's compositional complexity and expansiveness. The litho-

graphic firm of Currier and Ives successfully reproduced ten of Durrie's scenes, and these, in turn, became popular calendar illustrations in the twentieth century. As a result, Durrie's depictions of mid-nineteenth century rural life are now among the most familiar images in all of American art; however, the prints fail to convey the keen sensitivity to and understanding of conditions of atmosphere and light that is so pronounced in Durrie's paintings.<sup>2</sup>

The artist died in New Haven on 17 October 1863.

DC

#### Notes

1. He exhibited also at the Pennsylvania Academy of Design in 1862 and at the Boston Athenaeum in 1863.

2. Hutson 1977, 175.

#### Bibliography

Durrie 1966.

Hutson 1977.

1994.59.1

### *Winter in the Country*

c. 1858

Oil on canvas, 45.7 × 61.1 (18 × 24 1/16)

Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

#### Inscriptions

At lower left: DURRIE / N HAVEN

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight, plain-weave fabric support is stretched onto a simple mortise-and-tenon stretcher. The painting is unlined and the stretcher is original. The reverse of the fabric bears a colormen's stencil in the shape of an artist's palette that reads: "From Raynolds Devoe & Pratt / Importers / Artists & Painters Materials / 106 & 108 Fulton St. / New York."<sup>1</sup> The fabric was primed with a cool, off-white ground layer by the commercial manufacturer. The paint layer was generally smoothly and thinly applied, notably in the sky, although there is impasto in the clouds and in the whites of the snow in the buildings and foreground. The paint layer is heavily abraded, especially in the sky. Losses in the sky have been inpainted in the upper right area of the canvas. The painting is in good condition. The varnish has not discolored.

**Provenance:** (sale, Sotheby's, New York, 21 April 1977, no. 19); Mr. and Mrs. George J. Arden, New York, until 1988;<sup>2</sup> (Berry-Hill Galleries, Inc., New York); sold November 1988 to Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, Upperville, Virginia.

**Exhibited:** *Nineteenth Century American Paintings from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. George J. Arden*, Morris R. Williams Center for the Arts, Lafayette College, Easton, Pennsylvania, 1983, fig. 7, as *New Haven Winter*.

*Winter in the Country* is a fine example of the artist's mature work. At this stage, Durrie had been painting landscapes for fifteen years and had grown steadily more comfortable and confident in his integration of compositional elements. Although he was never a brilliant technician, his command of atmospheric effects was considerable at this point.

In the last decade of his too-short life Durrie may have created more than five hundred paintings.<sup>3</sup> A great many of these were winter landscapes. As early as 1845 he was offering "snow pictures" for sale.<sup>4</sup> By 1854, when he placed an advertisement in two New Haven newspapers, he was advising the public that "it is needless to add that no collection of pictures is complete without one or more Winter Scenes."<sup>5</sup> American artists such as Thomas Doughty and Thomas Birch (1779–1851) had extensively explored winter landscape in the decades just prior to this, yet these subjects were not of primary interest to them. Because winter scenes were, in general, not very popular or widespread at midcentury, Durrie's particular success in this market is noteworthy in itself. While his paintings never brought him fame, fortune, or critical acclaim, they did strike a responsive chord with the buying public.

*Winter in the Country* illustrates a number of Durrie's conventions. Farmyards and inn yards were his favored subjects beginning in 1853. Almost invariably he showed them straight-on, from eye level. The farmyard compositions are often entered from the center foreground or sometimes at a slight diagonal and somewhat to the right. Often a dark mass, usually trees, anchors the left foreground.

The National Gallery's undated painting is somewhat unusual because a stone wall spreads across the foreground: the trees at the left are spindly; the dominant dark area is the shadowed horizontal stretch of wall. Another composition that shows a single figure entering the scene through the center, past a stone fence, is *Winter Scene in New England* of 1859 (YUAG). A scene with comparable buildings and activities, all similarly contained by the horizontal element of the wooden fence in the foreground, is *New England Winter Scene*, dated 1858 (private collection).<sup>6</sup> That the scale and proximity of viewer to scene is the same in all these works



George Henry Durrie, *Winter in the Country*, 1894.59.1

helped to fix the date of the National Gallery's painting.

The almost monochromatic palette of *Winter in the Country* is somewhat unusual for Durrie. Although he generally tended to use wintry shades of muted gray, blue, and purple, he also readily used accents of red (in the clothes of his figures), or rusty orange-brown (leaves clinging to the trees), or even rather buttery yellow (houses). In this work, however, he employed only the most subtle colors. The sky, which—as is typical with Durrie—fills the upper two-thirds of the painting, is composed of gray clouds reminiscent of the Dutch landscapes with which American artists were quite familiar. Only the merest thread of yellow is visible above the hills on the horizon, and it marks the time of day as late afternoon. The landscape is cold, increasingly shadowed, but not desolate. In the welcoming open door of the barn a small figure stands below the full hayloft. Another tiny figure waits beside the woodpile just outside the house. A lone traveler approaches home over the shadowed snow, with a market basket on one arm and a full sack across his shoulder. Durrie, ever mindful of the details that help to make his images comforting and familiar, included a loyal dog by the man's side.

DC

## Frank Duveneck

1848–1919

FRANK DUVENECK was born Frank Decker on 9 October 1848 in Covington, Kentucky, just across the Ohio River from Cincinnati. His parents were German immigrants; in 1849 his father died, and the following year his mother married businessman Joseph Duveneck. The artist legally adopted his stepfather's name when he married in 1886, but he had been known as Frank Duveneck since the time of his mother's remarriage. Duveneck began painting in his early teens and he was employed as an assistant to Wilhelm Lamprecht (1838–after 1901), a successful German-born decorator in Cincinnati. In 1869 the twenty-one-year-old Duveneck went to Munich, intending to continue his study of church decoration; however, he

## Notes

1. About another work with the same colormen's stencil, Mayer 1941–1942, 135–136, writes: "The portrait which bears the ribbon-on-palette design of Reynolds, Devoe and Pratt can be reasonably dated 1863–1864. The Devoe firm, which during that period advertised itself as being 'the oldest paint company in the entire world,' has operated continuously since 1754 under fourteen changes of firm name at several addresses and under this one, from 1858 to 1863, but it is doubtful whether it was an active specialist in artist's grade materials, or sold canvas prior to 1863. A palette design of the same size was used in the next period." If *Winter in the Country* dates from circa 1858, then Devoe was indeed supplying artist-grade materials before 1863.

2. Hutson 1977, 222, lists the painting as being in the collection of the Physicians Planning Service Corporation, of which George Arden was founder and chief executive officer. Mr. Arden died in 1983, and his wife inherited the collection.

3. Hutson 1977, 89.

4. Hutson 1977, 42. Durrie's earliest dated snow scene is *Sleighs Arriving at the Inn*, 1851 (private collection); see Hutson 1977, repro. 49.

5. Durrie advertisement in the *New Haven Register*, 9 May 1854, and the *New Haven Journal and Courier*, 9 and 11 May 1854, as cited in Hutson 1977, 189n. 2.

6. Hutson 1977, fig. 180.

## References

1977 Hutson: 222, fig. 105, as *Winter in the Country, Farmyard*.

soon became interested in easel painting and in 1870 enrolled in the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Munich, where he studied under Alexander Strähuber (1814–1882) and Wilhelm Diez (1839–1907). Duveneck quickly distinguished himself, winning a prize in 1872 that entitled him to the use of a studio of his own. Some of his best works, including the well-known *Whistling Boy* (1872, Cincinnati Art Museum), date from this period. They are painted in a vigorous style that reflects the influence of Wilhelm Leibl (1844–1900), the leader of a group of young German realists strongly influenced by Frenchman Gustave Courbet (1819–1877). Duveneck was also interested in the Old Masters, especially the Dutch and Flemish

painters of the seventeenth century. His early style, with generally dark colors and expressive brushwork, melded contemporary German practice with Old Master techniques.

In 1873 Duveneck returned to Cincinnati and, in the following year, held a small exhibition of portraits he had painted in Germany. His greatest early success came, however, in Boston in 1875, when an exhibition of his works created a sensation, largely owing to the vitality and spontaneity of his painting style. Although encouraged to settle in Boston and paint portraits on commission, Duveneck decided to return to Europe. He set up a studio in Munich and developed a substantial reputation among the many Americans studying in the city. Following a trip to Venice in 1877, he started his own painting school in Munich, attracting numerous artists. His pupils, including Theodore Wendel (1859–1932), John White Alexander (1856–1915), and John H. Twachtman (1853–1902), came to be known as the “Duveneck Boys.” An amusing and informative description of them and their high-spirited activities is found in William Dean Howells’ 1886 novel, *Indian Summer*. Howells had come to know the “Duveneck Boys” in Florence, where their teacher had taken them in 1879. During the next two years, Duveneck and his students remained in Italy, spending the winters in Florence and the summers in Venice. After 1880, Duveneck’s painting style changed, perhaps in response to Italian light and subject matter, and he began using lighter colors and less somber lighting effects.

In 1880 the expatriate Duveneck was elected to the Society of American Artists. Around this time he became interested in etching through his pupil Otto Bacher (1856–1909). His works in this medium are much like those of James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903), whom Duveneck met in Venice, and were even thought by some who saw them at an 1881 London exhibition to be the work of Whistler himself.

Duveneck married one of his students, Elizabeth Boott, in 1886 and the couple lived outside Florence until 1888, when Elizabeth died unexpectedly in Paris. A year later, Duveneck returned to Cincinnati and began teaching painting classes there, in Chicago, and in New York. Although Duveneck subsequently made frequent visits to Europe, from 1890 on he taught at the Art Acad-

emy of Cincinnati, to which he received a faculty appointment in 1900. During the early years of the twentieth century he won many prizes and served on numerous exhibition juries. He was elected an associate of the National Academy of Design in 1905 and made a full member the following year. In 1915 an entire room of his works received accolades at the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco, and he was awarded a Special Gold Medal of Honor. Before his death on 2 January 1919, the artist donated a large and important group of his works to the Cincinnati Art Museum, which remains the center for Duveneck studies.

FK

#### Bibliography

Heerman 1918.  
*Duveneck* 1936.  
Duveneck 1970.  
Booth 1970.  
Neuhaus 1987.  
Quick 1987.

1942.8.3 (556)

#### *Leslie Pease Barnum*

1876

Oil on canvas, 56 × 46 (22<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 18<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>)  
Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The support is a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric that has been lined. Under the thick layers of paint the ground appears to be white and very thinly applied. In the layers of paint the brushstrokes are strong and expressive and there is evidence of wet-into-wet application, especially in the beard. X-radiography reveals the portrait of a woman beneath the present portrait. Whether this earlier painting was by Duveneck is unclear, for its handling is quite different, with more finely blended brushstrokes. In several places details from the first portrait were incorporated by the artist into the subsequent painting; this is most evident in the eyebrows, which are actually exposed areas of the painting below. The painting is generally in good condition, but does have some areas of loss and abrasion. The thick and discolored varnish obscures the image significantly, especially in the darkest areas.

**Provenance:** The sitter [1846–1915]; by inheritance to his sister, Louise Barnum Robbins, Adrian, Michigan; by inheritance 1918 to the sitter’s niece, Mrs. Arthur L. Fuller, Chicago;<sup>1</sup> Richard Creifelds; sold 13 February 1919 to Thomas B. Clarke [1848–1931], New York;<sup>2</sup> his estate;<sup>3</sup> sold as part of the Clarke collection 29 January 1936, through (M. Knoedler & Co., New York), to The



Frank Duveneck, *Leslie Pease Barnum*, 1942.8.3

A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

**Exhibited:** *Exhibition of Portraits by Early American Portrait Painters*, Union League Club, New York, February 1924, no. 11. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered.

PAINTED IN MUNICH in 1876, this portrait exemplifies Duveneck's early style. The colors are dark and subdued, focusing attention on the head, which stands out dramatically from the darker and more smoothly painted background. The lively brushwork, slightly turned head, and sideways glance convey a strong sense of immediacy and presence. The style and format of the portrait and the dress of the sitter relate it to numerous works Duveneck executed during the 1870s in emulation of Old Masters Frans Hals (c. 1582/1583–1666), Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641), and Rembrandt (1606–1669).<sup>4</sup> Both Duveneck and Barnum, who served as United States vice-consul in Munich from 1875 to 1877, attended a costume ball in March of 1876, and the ensuing portrait served both as a record of Barnum's costume and of Duveneck's opportunity to display his assimilation of Old Master techniques. The artist had thoroughly studied the splendid collection of Dutch and Flemish paintings at the Alte Pinakothek in Munich, and had occasionally taken his own portraits there to see how they stood up in direct comparison.<sup>5</sup>

Leslie Pease Barnum (1846–1915), born in Potsdam, New York, studied painting in Munich, Dresden, and Berlin. After his stint as vice-consul in Munich, he went to Paris, where he gave up painting in favor of art criticism. He wrote many reviews for English and German publications and came to be highly regarded as a critic and connoisseur. He returned to the United States in 1890, settling first in California and then Michigan, where he remained from 1899 until his death in 1915.

FK

#### Notes

1. Letter of 29 May 1919 from E. N. Smith to Charles Harris, agent for Clarke (in NGA curatorial files), traces the descent from Barnum to Robbins to Fuller.

2. An annotated copy of Clarke 1928 in the NGA library specifies this work was sold to Clarke by R. Creifelds, presumably Richard Creifelds (1853–1939), an American artist whose work Clarke also collected.

3. "Auction Sales" 1931: 59.

4. See, for example, *Young Man with Ruff* (1873, Cincinnati Art Museum; Neuhaus 1987, repro. 22) and

*Man with Ruff* (c. 1875, Mr. and Mrs. David A. McCabe; Quick 1987, repro. 67).

5. Duveneck 1970, 41, 50.

#### References

- 1928 Sherman: 97.  
1928 Barker: 286.  
1929 *Antiquarian* 12 (June): repro. 41.  
1930 Sherman: 61.  
1936 *Duveneck*: 74.  
1970 Booth: xiii, 85–87, repro.

1942.8.4 (557)

### *William Gedney Bunce*

c. 1877–1878

Oil on canvas, 77.5 × 66 (30 1/2 × 26)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The support is a coarse, double-threaded, plain-weave fabric that was relined in 1946, hiding a colormen's stencil reading "Malerleinwand Fabrik/von/A. Schutzman/in/MÜNCHEN." The ground is moderately thick and off-white; above it is a thinner white layer that is possibly a second ground. The paint was applied in multiple layers, using a wet-into-wet technique, and without pronounced impasto or brushwork. There are scattered small losses of paint and ground throughout the right shoulder and to the left of the sitter's face, and fairly extensive traction crackle. The thick varnish has discolored.

**Provenance:** The sitter [1840–1916]; his neighbor, George Meyers, New York; Alfred M. Turner, New York, from c. 1894; sold 20 January 1919 to Thomas B. Clarke [1848–1931], New York; his estate; sold as part of the Clarke collection 29 January 1936, through (M. Knoedler & Co., New York), to The A.W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

**Exhibited:** *A Loan Exhibition of Paintings by Early American Portrait Painters*, Century Association, New York, 1926, no. 9. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered. *Paintings by Frank Duveneck, 1848–1919*, WMAA, 1938, no. 34. *Two Centuries of American Portraits*, University of Kentucky Art Gallery, Lexington; Paducah Art Gallery, Kentucky; J.B. Speed Museum of Art, Louisville, 1970, no cat. *An American Painter Abroad: Frank Duveneck's European Years*, Cincinnati Art Museum, 1987–1988, unnumbered.

THIS PORTRAIT of artist William Gedney Bunce was probably painted in Polling, Germany, about 1877–1878.<sup>2</sup> Its style and relatively limited range of colors are reminiscent of the portrait of Leslie Pease Barnum, but it is a more forceful and direct image, infused with the realism Duveneck had derived



Frank Duveneck, *William Gedney Bunce*, 1942.8.4

from Wilhelm Leibl and his followers. The strongly modeled face and generally assured handling are typical of Duveneck's manner in the late 1870s, perhaps his strongest period. As Michael Quick has observed, paintings such as this demonstrate the forcefulness of Duveneck's best portraits: "Bunce . . . confronts the viewer squarely, like Holbein's Henry VIII. His broad frame stretches from one side of the picture to the other, powerful, but relaxed in pose. His gaze is direct, forthright, and sincere."<sup>3</sup>

Gedney Bunce (1840–1916) had been in Europe studying art since 1867, and in Paris he had been a close friend of American sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848–1907). He later studied in Munich under Andreas Achenbach (1815–1910), but there is no direct evidence that he was ever one of Duveneck's pupils. His primary interest was in landscape and marine painting, rather than the portraiture and genre subjects that were Duveneck's specialties. Bunce went to Venice around 1880, where he executed numerous atmospheric paintings of the city and its surroundings that were, according to Sadakichi Hartmann, "noteworthy for their rich tonality of liquid yellows. . . . [They] seem to have been painted with ground-up jewels, so soft and full is the lustre of their colouring."<sup>4</sup> Contemporaries equated Bunce's works with those of his more eccentric contemporary Albert Pinkham Ryder (1847–1917), and he achieved considerable success, with several of his paintings being purchased by Queen Victoria.<sup>5</sup> Bunce died in Hartford in 1916.<sup>6</sup>

FK

## Thomas Eakins

1844 – 1916

THOMAS COWPERTHWAIT EAKINS was the eldest of Caroline Cowperthwait and Benjamin Eakins' four children. His father was a skilled calligrapher and writing master whose work and prudent investments kept the family in comfortable circumstances in their Philadelphia home. After graduating from Central High School in Philadelphia, Thomas Eakins began taking courses

## Notes

1. A letter of 20 January 1919 from Thomas B. Clarke (in NGA curatorial files) states: "This morning I bought of the artist Alfred M. Turner . . . a portrait of Gedney Bunce, by Frank Duveneck. . . . A. M. Turner said that he had owned the portrait about twenty five years, and got it from George Meyers, a designer, who had a small apartment in the 'Benedict' . . . his apartment being near or next to that of Gedney Bunce who had a studio in the same building." A letter from Turner to Clarke, dated 6 January 1919 (also in NGA curatorial files), states, "I have had in my possession for over twenty five years a portrait of Gedney Bunce."

2. According to Booth 1970, 118, "While Duveneck was in Polling he was visited by William Gedney Bunce, an American artist, who spent four months with Duveneck in Munich and nearby Polling. During this time Duveneck did 'Portrait of William Gedney Bunce' 1877." Booth gives no source for this information. The stencil on the reverse of the original canvas indicates that the canvas itself was purchased in Munich.

3. Quick 1987, 41.

4. Hartmann 1901, 1:236.

5. For an early discussion of Bunce's style and technique, and his relationship to Ryder, see William C. Brownell, "The Younger Painters of America, III," *Scribner's Monthly* 22, 1881, 321–323. Armstrong 1920, 245.

7. On Bunce's life, see Cortissoz 1932, 126–131, and *DAB* 3:263.

## References

- 1928 Sherman: 97, repro.
- 1928 Barker: 286.
- 1930 Sherman: 61, repro. opp. 60.
- 1936 *Duveneck*: 74.
- 1970 Booth: xiii, 118–120, repro.
- 1975 Walker: 555, no. 844, color repro.
- 1980 Wilmerding: 16, repro. 132.
- 1987 Quick: 41, 103, fig. 25.
- 1988 Wilmerding: 19.

at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and attended anatomy lectures there and at Jefferson Medical College. In 1866 he left for three years in Paris, where he attended the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and studied with French painters Jean-Léon Gérôme, who permanently influenced him, and Léon Bonnat and with sculptor Augustin Alexandre Dumont. Just before returning

to the United States he spent six months in Spain, where he developed a great and lasting admiration for Spanish painting—"so good, so strong, so reasonable, so free from every affectation," he wrote—and the art of Velázquez, which also would be lastingly influential.

Eakins returned to Philadelphia in 1869, where he remained for the rest of his life. He resumed his studies at Jefferson Medical College and in 1878 began teaching at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, which appointed him professor of painting and drawing in 1879. In his teaching, Eakins was steadfast in his insistence on painting from the nude model. The controversy surrounding this practice led to his dismissal, with an aroma of scandal, from his professorship in 1886.

Eakins' fame is almost entirely posthumous. He was little known and little admired in his native city—when John Singer Sargent visited Philadelphia in 1903 and was asked what artist he would like to meet, he said, "There's Eakins, for instance"; the reply was, "And who is Eakins?"—and even less known outside it.

Eakins died in his family home at 1729 Mount Vernon Street, Philadelphia, where he had lived throughout his life, at the age of seventy-one.

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#### Bibliography

Hendricks 1974.  
Goodrich 1982.  
Johns 1983.  
Homer 1992.  
Goodrich 1993.

1953.7.1 (1180)

### *The Biglin Brothers Racing*

1872

Oil on canvas, 61.2 × 91.6 (24<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 36<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney

**Technical Notes:** The support is a fine, plain-weave fabric that has been lined. A note in the NGA curatorial files states that before 1930 the initials T.E. were visible on the back of the canvas, which suggests that the present lining was added at about that date. The ground is a smooth white layer over which a slick charcoal gray tone was applied. The gray tone is visible in the water, where the artist scraped through the paint, perhaps intentionally, creating a shimmering effect. The paint is relatively

fluid, applied with considerable variation in texture, and as a rule with one area of paint brought up to but not overlapping another. Treatment of the painting from 1981 to 1983 revealed considerable abrasion in the boat and in the water, where poor adhesion between the gray layer and the water had caused paint losses, and in the sky, where a gray layer applied over the blue had been unevenly removed in an earlier restoration, perhaps in an attempt to brighten the sky.

**Provenance:** The artist; by inheritance 1916 to his wife, Susan Macdowell Eakins [Mrs. Thomas Eakins, 1851–1938], Philadelphia; sold 1933 through (E. & A. Milch, Inc., New York) to the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; consigned 18 February 1950 to (M. Knoedler & Co., New York); sold 19 April 1950 to Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney, New York.

**Exhibited:** *Memorial Exhibition of the Works of the Late Thomas Eakins*, PAFA, 1917, no. 1, as *Biglen Brothers Ready to Start Race*. *Thomas Eakins*, Babcock Art Galleries, New York, 1930–1931, no. 3, as *Ready to Start the Race (The Biglen Brothers)*. *Painting Today and Yesterday in the United States*, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1941, no. 44, as *Biglen Brothers Ready to Start*. *Thomas Eakins Centennial Exhibition*, Department of Fine Arts, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, 1945, no. 42, as *Biglen Brothers Ready to Start the Race*. *Sport in Art*, Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo, 1948, no. 10. *Eakins*, 1961–1962, no. 12. *An Exhibition Honoring the 19th Olympiad*, Phoenix Museum of Art, Arizona, 1968. *Thomas Eakins*, WMAA, 1970, no. 14. *American Maritime Painting*, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond; Mariners' Museum, Newport News, Virginia, 1976, no. 40. *The Waters of America: 19th Century American Paintings of Rivers, Streams, Lakes, and Waterfalls*, New Orleans Museum of Art, 1984, no. 46.

IN THE five or six years following his return from Europe in 1870, Eakins took his subject matter principally from his private life—his family and relatives (see *Baby at Play* [1982.76.5])—and also drew upon the public sporting life of his native Philadelphia—bird-shooting, sailing, and rowing—in which he himself was an active and proficient participant. The sporting subject he painted most often was rowing; the first important painting of Eakins' maturity was a rowing subject, his boyhood friend Max Schmitt as *The Champion Single Sculls* (1871, MMA). But the rowers he depicted most often, singly and together, were two professional oarsmen from New York, John and Bernard (Barney) Biglin.<sup>1</sup> They are the subjects of this painting, and they appear in six other oils and watercolors.<sup>2</sup>

Eakins selected the subject because of its familiarity (in the middle distance of *The Champion Single Sculls* he included himself rowing) and for two other problematical intertwined reasons that are implicit

in his explanation of why he had chosen to depict another sporting subject, baseball, at about the same time: “Ball players are very fine in their build,” he explained to his friend Earl Shinn in 1875. “They are the same stuff as bull fighters only bull fighters are older and a trifle stronger perhaps.”<sup>3</sup>

While studying in Paris at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts with Jean-Léon Gérôme, Eakins had received a rigorously thorough artistic training of a kind that few Americans had experienced, the influence of which was both profound and lasting.<sup>4</sup> That training was grounded in the study of the nude figure, and the artists painted from live models as well as casts.<sup>5</sup> For Gérôme, subjects drawn from antiquity or the Near East provided ample opportunity to depict nude figures of both sexes in his art. But for Eakins, who with very few exceptions rejected historical and exotic subjects for modern ones directly experienced, opportunities to depict the nude figure were to be rare. (For Eakins’ historical subjects see [1985.64.15] and [1985.64.16].) Adapting to the conditions of his life in America—to a very different climate of taste and tolerance and to his own artistic principles and program—proved to be a central and lasting problem: “I can conceive of few circumstances wherein [*sic*] I would have to make a woman naked,” he wrote his father from Paris, and, as he foresaw, he did find few opportunities to paint the female nude after his return to America (fig. 1).<sup>6</sup> Probably for that reason he was specially alert to those occasions in modern life and his own immediate experience in which male

nude (or partly nude) figures were to be found. Rowing was precisely such a subject.<sup>7</sup>

It was not simply that such subjects offered Eakins the opportunity to paint the nude figure upon which his training had been so intensely focused. Rowers (“a study . . . for the sculptor and the artist,” as they were described in the sporting *Aquatic Monthly* in 1874), baseball players (“very fine in their build,” as Eakins said), circus tumblers, and jumpers (who showed that “nature is just as varied and just as beautiful in our day as she was in the time of Phidias” and proved Myron and other Greek sculptors had depicted figures that actually existed), and prize fighters (whom Eakins painted in the late 1890s), all of whose bodies were formed by disciplined physical training, were the analogues and actual embodiments, resident in contemporary life and commonly available experience, of the nude figures preserved in the sculpture of classical antiquity that represented the highest and most perfect form of human beauty.<sup>8</sup>

Eakins studied in Europe from 1866 to 1870, mostly in Paris but with several months in Spain. He spoke French fluently and immersed himself in the artistic culture of France (or at least the official part of it), yet he never felt as a crucial need or essential condition of the successful conduct of artistic life—unlike other American artists in this first great age of expatriation—the need to remain in Europe or to frequent it. After his return from Europe in 1870 Eakins never went back, even to visit. That was not a matter of circumstance but an enactment of policy. At the end of his life, chatting with a reporter from the *Philadelphia Press* “on the present and future of American art, the sources of inspiration and the subjects which the American painter and art students should seek,” he described his policy: “If America is to produce great painters and if young art students wish to assume a place in the history of the art of their country, their first desire should be to remain in America, to peer deeper into the heart of American life, rather than to spend their time abroad obtaining a superficial view of the art of the Old World.”<sup>9</sup> That entailed finding subjects of a national character, American subjects clearly legible as such and with the same typological status, and stature, as European ones. This was exactly what he had in mind many years earlier, in his 1875 letter to Shinn, when he compared American baseball players to Spanish bullfighters.<sup>10</sup> And it was what he had in mind for his rowing and other of his sporting subjects. It was by just such distinctly

Fig. 1. Thomas Eakins, *William Rush Carving His Allegorical Figure of the Schuylkill*, oil on canvas, 1877, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. Thomas Eakins and Miss Mary Adeline Williams





Thomas Eakins, *The Biglin Brothers Racing*, 1853-7.1

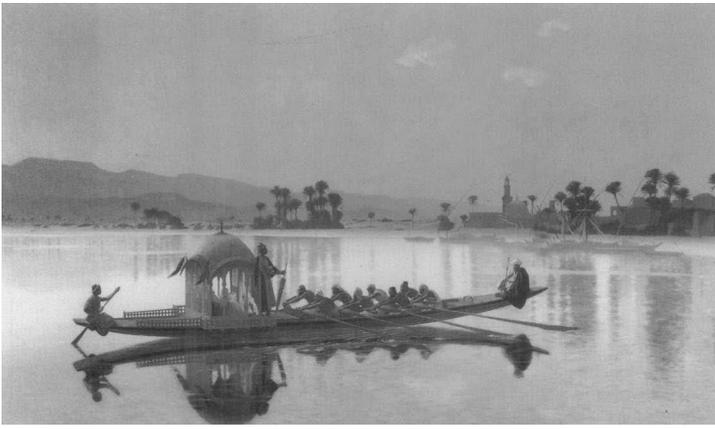


Fig. 2. Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Excursion of the Harem*, oil on canvas, 1869, Norfolk, The Chrysler Museum, Gift of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr., 71.511

American subjects—specifically, a watercolor of John Biglin in a single scull that he presented to his master Gérôme in 1873 and two oils of hunting subjects that Gérôme placed for him with the Paris art dealer Goupil—that Eakins for the first time represented himself professionally in Europe.<sup>11</sup>

Gérôme exhibited a form of rowing picture, *The Excursion of the Harem* (*Promenade du harem*) (fig. 2), at the Paris Salon of 1869, where Eakins surely must have seen it (although he made no mention of it in his letters home). This is the closest and clearest analogue in the two men's art, and it is not far-fetched to think that these pictures Eakins began to paint just a few years later were instigated by Gérôme's image—not as a form of imitation but as a deliberately Americanized version of the subject, updated, localized, and detoxified of oriental exoticism.<sup>12</sup>

After about two years of study in Paris, Eakins wrote a long, oft-quoted letter to his father that is a remarkably mature expression of his artistic understanding at the threshold of his professional life. The "big artist" does not copy nature but "steals her tools" in order to make a "canoe of his own smaller than Nature's" but with which "he can sail parallel to Nature's sailing." If an artist ever "thinks he can sail another fashion from Nature or make a better shaped boat he'll capsize or stick in the mud & nobody will buy his pictures or sail with him in his old tub."<sup>13</sup> In this strong metaphorical light, the rowing, sailing, and hunting pictures that comprise virtually all of Eakins' subject pictures at his first maturity, and virtually all of which include boats of one

sort or another, not only depict his experience and express his nationality but are also, in some not necessarily wholly conscious yet equally important way, figurations of his thought and theory, of his fundamental conception of the character and capacity of art and the model of his formulation of the relation of art to nature.

*The Biglin Brothers Racing* was probably inspired by a particular event: the first pair-oared race in America. "The long talked-of match for \$1,000 a side" took place on the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia on the afternoon of 20 May 1872. The teams were Harry Coulter and Lewis Cavitt of Pittsburgh and John and Bernard Biglin of New York. The Biglins, "long and favorably known to the boating community," won the five-mile race by twenty boat-lengths. Eakins may well have watched it, one of the "thousands of people and hundreds of vehicles of every description" that lined the banks of the river. "The surface of the river was dotted over with myriads of small boats and the handsome barges and shells of several of the clubs composing the Schuylkill navy," the *Inquirer* reported. "Two small steam pleasure yachts and the propeller *Edith*, gaily decked with bunting as they plied up and down the stream, made the scene quite an animated one." The *Edith* was accompanied by the steam yacht *Flirt* and "a large number of smaller craft, literally crammed with people," said the *Press*.<sup>14</sup> Both boats were built specially for the race, the Biglins' by the famous Judge Elliott, whose name it bore. It was thirty-five-feet long, weighed forty pounds (without oars), and was steered with a rudder. The Biglins, "both dapper fellows, about the medium height, well formed, and with a very determined cast of countenance," were closely matched. John was twenty-eight-years old and weighed about 150 pounds; Barney was twenty-five and weighed 154 pounds. Each wore "blue flannel half breeches, close fitting armless shirt, and . . . a blue silk handkerchief wound about the head."<sup>15</sup> John pulled the bow oar, and Barney the stroke. Scheduled to start between three o'clock and five o'clock in the afternoon, the race was delayed by rain and high winds until 6:37. Coulter and Cavitt took the lead at first, but the Biglins were ahead at the stake and steadily increased their lead until the finish.

*The Biglin Brothers Racing* was based on this event. Boat races were widely reported in sporting journals and annuals. The details of the painting closely parallel contemporary descriptions of the race: vehicles and cheering figures on the shore; shells, barges,

and crowded and bedecked steamboats on the river; and blue silk handkerchiefs, blue pants, and white shirts worn by the Biglin brothers. The painting also shows the Biglin brothers leading the race against one other competitor.<sup>16</sup> The only disparity is that the sky seems a good deal lighter and clearer and the sun a good deal higher than either would be at half past six in the evening in May following an intermittently rainy afternoon.

This is not to say that Eakins was concerned above all with providing an exhaustive factual record. Sailing “parallel” to nature did not involve an apish copying of its appearance, as he put it contemptuously, but stealing nature’s tools.<sup>17</sup> One way was by studying with painstaking thoroughness, through large and sometimes elaborate perspective drawings, the details of each object and the structure (the spatial anatomy) of the pictorial space in which he planned to place them. Eakins studied his rowing pictures in this way with particular care, and a number of his perspective drawings—one of them for *The Biglin Brothers Racing*—survive.<sup>18</sup> Even so, Eakins remained dissatisfied by a lack of depth he achieved in the Biglin paintings. “I did not care to exhibit the Biglen [*sic*] ones,” he wrote to Shinn. “They are clumsy & although pretty well drawn are wanting in distance & some other qualities.”<sup>19</sup>

The dating of *The Biglin Brothers Racing* has until recently been problematic; Lloyd Goodrich, for example, dated it c. 1873 in 1933, but in 1982, without explaining his change of mind, he dated it c. 1874. It is, however, clearly the painting, showing the Biglins “ready for the word ‘go’, with Barney’s cunning eye over his left shoulder,” that hung with two other of Eakins’ rowing pictures in the New York offices of the periodical *Turf, Field and Farm* in 1872.<sup>20</sup>

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## Notes

1. Eakins consistently misspelled their name as Biglen, and it appears in that form in most early literature.

2. *The Pair-Oared Shell* (1872, PMA); *The Biglin Brothers Turning the Stake* (1873, Cleveland Museum of Art); *John Biglin in a Single Scull* (1873, watercolor, collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, Upperville, Virginia); *John Biglin in a Single Scull* (1874, YUAG); and *John Biglin in a Single Scull* (probably 1874, watercolor, MMA); and an unlocated watercolor of John Biglin in a single scull (1873).

3. Letter of 30 January [1875] from Eakins to Earl Shinn, Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania. Several years earlier Shinn described

Eakins’ visit with friend Harry Moore’s family in Paris: “Restricts his conversation pretty much to stories of the Schuylkill boating club” (letter of 3 January 1967 from Earl Shinn as quoted in Goodrich 1982, 1:31).

4. A few years after returning to Philadelphia, Eakins, seeking advice and approval and expressing the homage of a faithful pupil, sent Gérôme two large watercolors of John Biglin in a single scull, both painted in 1873. Gérôme criticized the first (now lost), which depicted Biglin in the middle of his stroke, as too static in effect. Taking Gérôme’s criticism to heart, Eakins painted the second version (collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, Upperville, Virginia), which has Biglin at the end of the stroke, as Gérôme advised—and went on to depict the Biglin brothers similarly in the National Gallery painting. For Gérôme’s response to Eakins’ gifts, see Goodrich 1982, 1:113–116. For the Mellon watercolor, see *American Paintings* 1990, 80–81, and Homer 1992, 64–65. On Eakins and Gérôme, see Ackerman 1969, 235–256.

5. For Eakins’ description of his classes, see Foster and Leibold 1989, 55.

6. Letter of 9 May 1868 from Eakins to Benjamin Eakins as quoted in Goodrich 1982, 1:28. The two opportunities were historical subjects, not contemporary ones: *William Rush Carving His Allegorical Figure of the Schuylkill River*, which he painted in two versions (1877, PMA; 1908, The Brooklyn Museum), and *Arcadia* (1883, MMA).

7. “Eakins liked to watch the races, which provided one of the few opportunities in that day to see the at-least-partly unclad human body in action.” Goodrich 1982, 1:81. The most complete discussion of Eakins’ rowing paintings is Johns 1983, chap. 2.

8. *Aquatic Monthly*, as quoted in Johns 1983, 28n.17; Eakins to Shinn, 9 May 1868, as quoted in Goodrich 1982, 1:31; and Eakins, as quoted in William C. Brownell, “The Art Schools of Philadelphia,” *Scribner’s Illustrated Monthly Magazine* 18, September 1879, 742. To prepare for the race the Biglin brothers trained for four weeks, rowing fifteen miles a day and walking the same amount. “Their rowing . . . has been much admired for the grace and ease manifested in every motion” (“Aquatic,” *Philadelphia Press*, 21 May 1872). The illustration by Philip H. Hahs of the Antique Class at PAFA, where Eakins studied and taught, shows some of the many casts of classical sculpture in the presence of which students worked (William C. Brownell, “The Art Schools of Philadelphia,” *Scribner’s Illustrated Monthly Magazine* 18, September 1879, 737).

9. Eakins as quoted in Goodrich 1982, 2:268–269.

10. A bull and bullfighter, depicted as graffiti on a wall, provide the most distinct national seasoning in Eakins’ first ambitious pictorial composition, *Street Scene in Seville* (1870, private collection).

11. Perhaps it was their insistent American-ness that caused Gérôme to wonder if they were saleable (“*commerciale*”); see Goodrich 1982, 1:116.

12. Ackerman 1969, 240, fig. 7, proposes a different source in Gérôme’s *Prisoner* (1863), at a photograph of which Eakins “looked carefully.” The “obvious debt” of Eakins’ rowing pictures to *Excursion of the Harem* was noted by Harrison 1991, 124; Weinberg 1991, 9, pls. 5 and 6,

has compared it to Eakins' *Biglin Brothers Turning the Stake*.

13. Letter of 6 March 1868 from Eakins to Benjamin Eakins, Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection, PAFA, as quoted in Foster and Leibold 1989, 206.

14. "The Aquatic Struggle, New York vs. Pittsburgh—An Interesting Five-Mile Pair-Oared Race—New York Carries Off the Prize," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 21 May 1872; "Aquatic," *Philadelphia Press*, 21 May 1872.

15. "Aquatic," *Philadelphia Press*, 21 May 1872; "Boating, The Great Pair-Oared Race on the Schuylkill," *New York Times*, 21 May 1872; "The Aquatic Struggle, New York vs. Pittsburgh—An Interesting Five-Mile Pair-Oared Race—New York Carries Off the Prize," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 21 May 1872. Martin Berger, a close student of Eakins' boating pictures, very kindly shared his knowledge of the subject with me. When the Biglins rowed in the shell *America* at Saratoga Springs in 1871, John was listed as age 27, weight 153 pounds, and Bernard as age 30, 151 pounds (*Annual Illustrated Catalogue and Oarsman's Manual for 1871*, Troy, New York, 1871, 316). The *New York Times*' account of the Philadelphia race gives their weights as 161 and 155 pounds, respectively, and specifies that they wore "blue flannel drawers and white rowing shirts" ("Boating, The Great Pair-Oared Race on the Schuylkill," *New York Times*, 21 May 1872).

16. For many years the painting was titled *The Biglin Brothers Ready to Start the Race*. But the race is clearly underway: The oars are about to reenter the water; the steamboats in the distance plow through the river as they follow the race; and a horse canters in its direction on the shore. What can also be said with certainty is that the painting does not depict the end of the race, at which point the Biglins were many lengths ahead of Coulter and Cavitt.

17. Eakins, as quoted in Foster and Leibold 1989, 206.

18. See Rosenzweig 1977, 50, 52. For other perspective drawings, see Hendricks 1974, 73; Goodrich 1982, 1:99, 100; and Homer 1992, 66, 138, 139. Because the objects in *Biglin Brothers Racing* are seen at eye level nearly parallel to both the picture plane and the distant shore, the perspective problems it posed were relatively few and simple compared to other rowing pictures. Christina Currie, Paul Mellon Fellow in Paintings Conservation at the Cleveland Museum of Art, has noticed prick marks around the figures in the NGA painting that resemble those seen more clearly and extensively in *The Biglin Brothers Turning the Stake* and *The Pair-Oared Shell*. These marks suggest that those figures were transferred directly from drawings or cartoons, of which, perhaps because they were necessarily damaged in the process, none survive.

19. Letter dated Good Friday 1875 from Eakins, Earl Shinn Papers, AAA.

20. The painting is described in *Turf, Field and Farm* 15 (25 October 1872), 266. See Helen A. Cooper, "Rowing in the Art and Life of Thomas Eakins," in *Thomas Eakins: The Rowing Pictures*, YUAG and Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1996.

## References

- 1930 *Art News* 29 (20 December): repro. 68.  
1930 Goodrich: 18, no. 19.  
1933 Goodrich: no. 61, 165.  
1956 Walker: 289, color repro. 288.  
1959 Bouton: 7, 28, color repro. 29.  
1962 Cairns and Walker: 146, color repro. 147.  
1963 Walker: 289, color repro. 288.  
1966 Cairns and Walker, 2:484, color repro. 485.  
1967 Schendler: 37, repro. 38.  
1973 Williams: 224.  
1974 Hendricks: 71, 325, fig. 58.  
1977 Rosenzweig: 52 repro.  
1980 Wilmerding: 16, 144, color repro. 115.  
1981 Williams: 152, repro. 152.  
1982 Goodrich: 1:97, 117, color fig. 42.  
1982 Wilmerding: 18–19, repro. 18.  
1983 Johns: 42n.51, fig. 29.  
1992 Homer: 129, color repro. 132.  
1996 Cooper.

1982.76.5 (2871)

## *Baby at Play*

1876

Oil on canvas, 81.9 × 122.8 (32<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 48<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>)

John Hay Whitney Collection

## Inscriptions

At lower right on brick pavement: Eakins / 76

**Technical Notes:** The support is a twill fabric that is evenly coated with a moderately thick white ground. It has been lined, but the original tacking edges are preserved, and it is mounted on what appears to be the original five-member (including a vertical crossbar), mortise-and-half-miter stretcher.<sup>1</sup> The paint layers range from very thin to very thick, applied by brush and, in places, palette knife. Orange-red marks on the vertical edges presumably had to do with the placement of the original design or transfer from a sketch. The painting is generally in very good condition, although the paint is somewhat abraded overall. X-radiography reveals vertical bands of damage at the top of the painting that may be original to it and were perhaps repainted by the artist. In 1932, 1957, and 1985 discolored varnish was removed and the painting was restored.

**Provenance:** Mrs. William J. Crowell, the artist's sister, Avondale, Pennsylvania; her son, Dr. James W. Crowell, Claremont, California; (M. Knoedler & Co., New York); sold May 1954 to Mr. and Mrs. John Hay Whitney, New York.

**Exhibited:** *American Painting*, M. H. de Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco, 1935, no. 100. *Thomas Eakins: A Retrospective Exhibition of His Paintings*, Baltimore Museum of Art, 1936–1937, no. 1, as *Child Playing*.

*Exhibition of Paintings by Thomas Eakins*, Kleemann Galleries, New York, 1939, no. 17. *A Loan Exhibition of the Works of Thomas Eakins*, M. Knoedler & Co., New York, 1944, no. 12. *Thomas Eakins*, Wilmington Society of Fine Arts, Delaware, 1944, no. 12. *Romantic America*, Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts, Ohio, 1948, no. 11. *19th and 20th Century European and American Art*, Des Moines Art Center, Iowa, 1948, no. 34. *Homer, Eakins, Ryder, Inness, and Their French Contemporaries*, Fort Worth Art Association, 1949, no. 21. *Pictures Collected by Yale Alumni*, YUAG, 1956, no. 67. *The John Hay Whitney Collection*, Tate Gallery, London, 1961, no. 26. *Eakins*, 1961–1962, no. 22. *Thomas Eakins: Artist of Philadelphia*, PMA; MFA, 1982, no. 7. *The John Hay Whitney Collection*, NGA, 1983, no. 69. *A Proud Heritage: Two Centuries of American Art*, Terra Museum of American Art, Chicago, 1987, not in cat. *Thomas Eakins (1844–1916) and the Heart of American Life*, National Portrait Gallery, London, 1993–1994, no. 14.

*Baby at Play* is a life-size portrait and perhaps an example of what Eakins called “genre portraits” (“*portraits de genre*”)—ones of people in normal settings or typical activities.<sup>2</sup> It depicts the artist’s two-year-old niece Ella Crowell, the first of his sister Frances and his boyhood friend William J. Crowell’s ten children, playing on the brick pavement of the backyard of the Eakins family house at 1729 Mount Vernon Street, Philadelphia, where the Crowells lived in the years immediately following their marriage in 1872 (fig. 1).

*Baby at Play* is one of a series of individual and group portraits of the female members of his family circle and the Crowells’—his sisters Frances, Margaret, and Caroline, his fiancée Kathrin Crowell (whom he did not marry; she was the sister of his brother-in-law William Crowell), and her sister Elizabeth—that Eakins painted in the five or six years immediately following his return from Europe in 1870. It is also a type of subject for which he professed a particular attraction. It stood first among those which, with a joyously expressed enthusiasm for visual experience and an almost Emersonian affection for the familiar and near-at-hand, Eakins named in a passage in an 1868 letter to his father: “I love sunlight & children & beautiful women & men their heads & hands and most everything I see & someday I expect to paint them as I see them.”<sup>3</sup>

This portrait is without question the result of direct observation, of what he saw on a sunny summer day in the backyard of his family home. The baby’s hulking intensity, her almost exaggerated monumentality of form, however much they propose themselves in their apparent exaggeration as inven-



Fig. 1. Thomas Eakins, Margaret E. Eakins, Ella Crowell, and Frances E. Crowell (in yard, Mt. Vernon St.), ca. 1880, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Joan and Martin E. Messinger, 1985.1027.21



Fig. 2. photograph of baby playing, *Washington Post* (22 July 1993)

tions of art, also can, as numerous photographs of young children confirm (for example, fig. 2), be considered a faithful record both of the physical and mental activity peculiar to this stage of life. And its monumentality is a function of the perspective from which the figure is viewed.

In certain conventions of pose, the painting belongs to a populous artistic tradition of children at play.<sup>4</sup> Yet instead of the carefree innocence and childish pleasure that the subject typically expresses, Eakins' playing child has an air of solemn seriousness and a sense of precociously adult responsibility. This encourages explanation and, with irresistible seductiveness, solicits interpretation.

It has become a commonplace to speak of the psychological penetration of Eakins' portraiture. Most apparent in his portraits of older people whose faces have been molded from without and shaped from within by the accumulated experiences of their outer and inner lives, Eakins' psychological acuity may also be apparent in this portrait of his two-year-old niece. Not only in her almost hermetic interiority, but, in her expression of all-consuming thought and feeling, is there an acutely perceived premonition, in the abnormal intensity of her behavior, of the instability and derangement that, about twenty years later, drove Ella Crowell to take her own life. Her condition, an inwardly consuming

Fig. 3. Circle of Eakins, *Ella Crowell*, gelatin silver print, c. 1897, Philadelphia, Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection, Purchased with the partial support of the Pew Memorial Trust



and outwardly deforming emotional distress, is heart-rendingly reflected in a later, almost Diane Arbus-like photograph of her (fig. 3).<sup>5</sup>

Jules Prown has provided the most concentrated discussion of the painting and posits that it is essentially "about learning—the acquisition of experience to know one's limits and the application of intelligence to control the physical world."<sup>6</sup> But perhaps the painting's quite evident stress on learning has to do with something more. Eakins painted it just at the time that educational reformers in Europe, especially the founder of the kindergarten in Germany, Friedrich Froebel (1782–1852), and Switzerland's Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746–1827), were exerting a considerable influence on American educational thought and practice. Indeed, one measure of their influence—their belief in the importance of the educative experiences of infancy and the essential value of the concrete experiences of play—is that Eakins' painting, more than any other that comes readily to mind, is virtually the emblem of the ideals, practices, and effects of educational reform. This may not have been unwitting. Eakins knew of English social philosopher Herbert Spencer; he mentioned him in an 1868 letter to his father.<sup>7</sup> And given Eakins' seriously disciplined application to the teaching of art, he may well have read Spencer's *Education: Intellectual, Moral, and Physical*. (Spencer was well known and widely influential in America, and an American edition of *Education* was published in New York in 1866.) If so, he would have encountered references to Pestalozzi and the pedagogical principle of "object-lessons," and, applicable as they are to visual education, found them pertinent. Of new educational practices, Spencer himself wrote, "the most important is the systematic culture of the powers of observation. After long ages of blindness men are at last seeing that the spontaneous activity of the observing faculties in children has a meaning and a use. What was once thought mere purposeless action, or play, or mischief, as the case might be, is now recognized as the process of acquiring a knowledge upon which all after-knowledge is based. Hence the . . . system of *object-lessons*."<sup>8</sup>

Another factor to consider is that Eakins painted *Baby at Play* in the turbulent intellectual wake of Darwinian evolution, not just that of *The Origin of the Species* but also of the more recent and, if possible, more deeply disturbing *Descent of Man* (1871). What made the *Descent of Man* so upsetting was its argument that humanity was descended from



Thomas Eakins, *Baby at Play*, 1982.76.5

lower forms of life. It quickly became a preoccupation of popularizers and more serious thinkers (whether by ridicule or by reasoned argument) to rescue mankind from this attachment to lower forms of life and salvage its dominance as a species. Among these was Spencer, who argued that the intellectual development of the human species, which distinguished it singularly from other species, succeeded its physical evolution by the process of natural selection.

John Fiske (1842–1901), one of the most articulate popularizers of evolution in America (and a friend and follower of Spencer), argued that development began in human infancy. Fiske's most original contribution to the discussion was "The Meaning of Infancy," the ideas for which he first developed at about the time Eakins painted *Baby at Play*.<sup>9</sup> Fiske wrote:

It is babyhood that has made man what he is. The simple unaided operation of natural selection could never have resulted in the origination of the human race. Natural selection might have gone on forever improving the breed of the highest animal in many ways, but it could never *unaided* have started the process of civilization or have given to man those peculiar attributes in virtue of which it has been well said that the difference between him and the highest of apes immeasurably transcends in value the difference between an ape and a blade of grass. In order to bring about that wonderful event, the Creation of Man, natural selection had to call in the aid of other agencies, and the chief of these agencies was the gradual lengthening of babyhood.<sup>10</sup>

The awesome responsibility for the "wonderful event" that human infancy bears in these terms is not merely reflected in Eakins' playing baby, but, as if controlled by instinct or consciousness, is enacted by the solemnity of her behavior and the monumentality of her form in a way that makes her the late nineteenth century, post-Darwinian equivalent of such earlier creation images as Michelangelo's on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel or William Blake's frontispiece to *Europe, God Creating the Universe* ("Ancient of Days").

According to Lloyd Goodrich, Eakins, following his usual practice, painted two oil sketches for *Baby at Play* on either side of a cardboard panel. The whereabouts of the sketches are unknown.<sup>11</sup>

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#### Notes

1. On the reverse, a paper label, written in ink and graphite (probably by Charles Bregler), reads: "canvas rebacked, & varnished with Mastic Jan. 1932." Similar

labels are affixed to the portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Husson [1957.2.1 and 1957.2.2].

2. Draft of a letter from Eakins to Jean-Léon Gérôme, probably spring 1874, in Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection, PAFA, as quoted in Foster and Leibold 1989, 63.

3. Letter of 29 October 1868 from Eakins to Benjamin Eakins in Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection, PAFA, as quoted in Foster and Leibold 1989, 207.

4. Parry 1986, 21–41, discusses some of that tradition.

5. Moynihan 1971, 51, has referred to the painting's "Balthus-like strangeness." For reasons that were never clarified, Ella's parents implicated Eakins in her suicide, and they were forever after estranged from him. A sensitive and subtle account of this tragic episode is in Foster and Leibold 1989, 105–122.

6. Prown 1985, 125.

7. Winslow Homer's series of school paintings of the early 1870s, roughly contemporary with *Baby at Play*, reflect other aspects of educational reform, only in a less compactly emblematic way; see Cikovsky 1986, 47–69. Foster and Leibold 1989, 206. The first discussion of Spencer and Eakins is Elizabeth LaMotte Milroy, "Thomas Eakins' Artistic Training, 1860–1870," Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1986, 229–232.

8. Herbert Spencer, *Education: Intellectual, Moral, and Physical*, New York, 1866, 108, 141. Spencer may also have influenced an essential aspect of Eakins' teaching method and artistic practice, the painted color sketch from nature (see 1985.64.15 and 1985.64.16). "What is it that the child first tries to represent?" Spencer wrote. "Things that are large, things that are attractive in colour, things round which its pleasurable associations most cluster—human beings from whom it has received so many emotions, cows and dogs which interest by the many phenomena they present, houses that are hourly visible and strike by their size and contrast of parts. And which of all the processes of representation gives it most delight? Colouring. Paper and pencil are good in default of something better; but a box of paints and a brush—these are the treasures."

9. John Fiske, *Excursions of an Evolutionist*, Boston, 1884, 306, describes "The Meaning of Infancy" as "a very brief statement, in simple language, of the main points of the theory of man's origin first suggested in my lectures at Harvard University in 1871."

10. John Fiske, *Excursions of an Evolutionist*, Boston, 1884, 307.

11. Goodrich 1933, 169, said they were owned by Mrs. Eakins.

#### References

- 1930 Goodrich: 18, repro. as *Baby at Play on the Floor*.  
 1933 Goodrich: 169.  
 1939 Barker: repro. 10.  
 1944 Ormsbee: repro. 6.  
 1946 McHenry: 100.  
 1959 Porter: repro. 24.  
 1961 Whitney: no. 26.  
 1967 Schendler: 70, repro. 71.

- 1971 Moynihan: 51–52, repro. 50.  
 1974 Hendricks: 111, pl. 20.  
 1982 Goodrich: 1: 79, color repro. 78.  
 1982 Sewell: 10, repro. 11.  
 1983 Rewald: no. 69.  
 1985 Prown: 121–127, repro. 125.  
 1986 Parry: 21–41, repro. 21.  
 1987 Fried: 22, 77, repro. 26.  
 1988 Wilmerding: 130, color repro. 131.  
 1988 Wilmerding, “Young Masters”: 89–90, repro.  
 90.  
 1991 Wilmerding: 338, n. 50.  
 1992 Homer: 91, 93, color repro. 92.  
 1993 Wilmerding et al.: 25, 64n.1, 82–83, repros. 24  
 (detail), 82.

1985.64.15

*Study for “Negro Boy Dancing”:*  
*The Boy*

probably 1877

Oil on canvas, 53.3 × 23.2 (21 × 9 1/8)

Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

**Technical Notes:** The painting is on a plain-weave fabric that has been lined and covered with a white ground. X-radiography shows tack holes, indicating that after lining the painting was restretched onto a larger stretcher so that the painted edges could be made visible. The lower layers of paint were dry and were worked into the ground; upper layers consist of fluid paint worked wet-in-to-wet. The sketch was reworked by varnishing the lower layers and applying paint upon the varnish. Quadrant lines were incised into all the layers before the paint was completely dry, slightly breaking the paint. The painting is in good condition. Paint losses show where the painting was folded around the smaller stretcher. The abrasion at the top right appears to have been created by the artist. The varnish has not discolored.

**Provenance:** Arthur B. Frost; his son, John Frost; (Joseph Bryant, New York), before 1945; (Harry Shaw Newman, New York), 1945; M. Michelotti; consigned 24 January 1946 to (M. Knoedler & Co., New York); purchased 18 February 1946 by (M. Knoedler & Co., New York); sold 15 January 1956 to (Babcock Galleries, New York); Joseph Katz, Baltimore, by 1958; his estate, by 1961;<sup>1</sup> his son, Leslie Katz, Brooklyn, New York, by 1963;<sup>2</sup> consigned 13 January 1964 to (M. Knoedler & Co., New York); sold 2 January 1965 to Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, Upperville, Virginia.

**Exhibited:** *A Short Survey of American Painting*, M. Knoedler & Co., New York, 1951, unnumbered list. *Eakins*, 1961–1962, no. 32. *The Portrayal of the Negro in American Painting*, Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, Maine, 1964, no. 53. *American Art from Alumni*

*Collections*, YUAG, 1968, no. 98. *Thomas Eakins Rediscovered*, PAFA, 1991–1992, no cat.

1985.64.16

*Study for “Negro Boy Dancing”:*  
*The Banjo Player*

probably 1877

Oil on canvas mounted on paperboard, 49.5 × 37.9 (19 1/2 × 14 15/16)

Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

**Technical Notes:** The fabric support has been mounted to a five-ply wood pulp paperboard, but remnants of paper tape along the perimeter suggest that it was at one time on a stretcher. The white ground was covered with beige paint at the left and reddish brown on the right, upon which the figure and background were fluidly painted using a wet-into-wet technique. A grid was scored into the dry paint with a palette knife, leaving jagged edges in the more thickly painted passages. The painting is in good condition. The varnish has not discolored.

**Provenance:** George Frank Stephens [1859–1935], the artist’s brother-in-law;<sup>3</sup> Roger Stephens, the artist’s nephew, by 20 December 1944;<sup>4</sup> (E. & A. Milch, Inc., New York); (M. Knoedler & Co., New York), 1960; sold 10 January 1961 to Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, Upperville, Virginia.

**Exhibited:** *Eakins*, 1961–1962, no. 30. *American Art from Alumni Collections*, YUAG, 1968, no. 97. *Thomas Eakins Rediscovered*, PAFA, 1991–1992, no cat.

THESE OIL SKETCHES are directly related to two figures in Eakins’ large 1878 watercolor, *Negro Boy Dancing* (fig. 1), which, under the title *Study of Negroes*, was exhibited in the eleventh annual exhibition of the American Water Color Society the year it was painted. The exhibition opened early in the year—the “private view” for artists and art critics” was held on 1 February 1878—so it is very possible that Eakins made these studies the year before.<sup>5</sup>

In his teaching, Eakins advocated painting in oil directly from the model, a method of which he spoke at length to William C. Brownell at about the time he made these sketches: “I think [a student] should learn to draw in color.”

I don’t at all share the old fear that the beauties of color will intoxicate the pupil, and cause him to neglect the form. . . . The first things to attend to in painting the model are the movement and the general color. The student should learn to block up his figure rapidly, and then



Fig. 1. Thomas Eakins, *Negro Boy Dancing*, watercolor, 1878, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 1925.97.1

give to any part of it the highest finish without injuring its unity. To these ends, I haven't the slightest hesitation in calling the brush and an immediate use of it, the best possible means.<sup>6</sup>

Eakins followed his own advice. He used rapidly painted oil sketches to block in the form and capture the movement of figures studied from life, and throughout his career he made preparatory oil sketches for many paintings, portraits and subject pictures alike.<sup>7</sup> They always closely correspond to the paintings, or to those parts of them, for which they were made. Many, these included, were squared for transfer to another format.

Lloyd Goodrich, overturning the usual and conventional hierarchy of mediums, believed that these two oil sketches were studies for the watercolor *Negro Boy Dancing*.<sup>8</sup> In this case no other finished work in a medium other than watercolor is known, but there are other cases, dating from the same period, in which Eakins painted finished watercolors and finished oils that are closely related in subject, size, and date.<sup>9</sup> It may well be, therefore, that the water-

color was not always, or even usually, the final version of the subject, but a step—however complete it may have been in its own right and, as in this instance, suitable for exhibition—toward a version in oil. Bolstering this notion is a comment Eakins wrote about another of his watercolors, *Ball Players Practicing* (Museum of the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence), which he exhibited in 1875, “I think I will try [to] make a base ball picture some day in oil.”<sup>10</sup>

Goodrich also speculated that the two sketches for *Negro Boy Dancing* were once part of the same canvas, and that it was very likely Eakins himself who cut them apart.<sup>11</sup> This led Goodrich to wonder if that canvas also included the central figure of the older man in the watercolor. Was it, in other words, originally a sketch for the composition arranged largely as it is known in the watercolor, like the slightly smaller version of *William Rush Carving His Allegorical Figure of the Schuylkill River* (YUAG) that Eakins made in 1876, the year before the finished painting of 1877 (see p. 158, fig. 1)? Or was it two



Thomas Eakins, *Study for "Negro Boy Dancing": The Banjo Player*, 1985.64.16

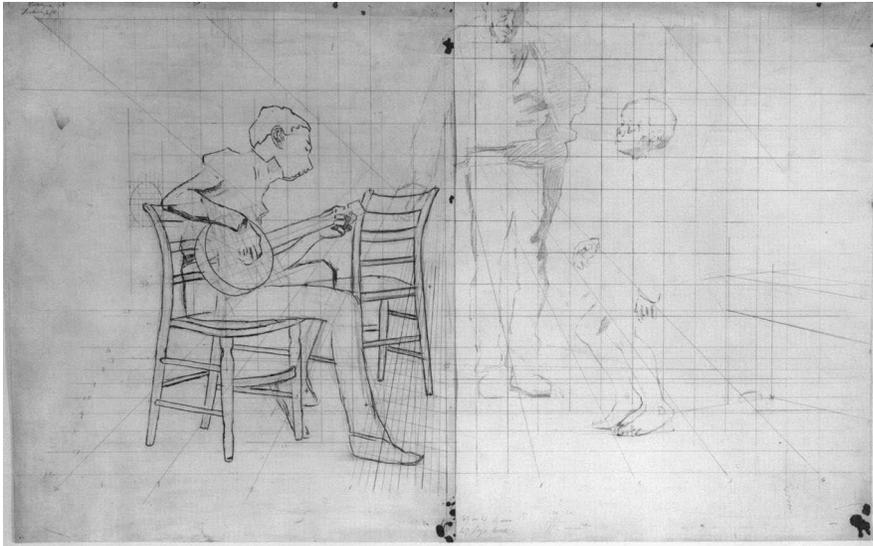


Fig. 2. Study for “*Negro Boy Dancing*,” c. 1878, Charles Bregler’s Thomas Eakins Collection, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts

separate figures placed more randomly on the same canvas and later reconfigured in the watercolor? Or did Eakins originally think of a compositional group containing just two figures rather than three?

These questions have no clear answer. A quick sketch of a variant pose for the dancing boy appears in the upper left corner of the sketch of the banjo player, and it is difficult to imagine that it would have been placed there if the sketches did not at the time occupy a single canvas. This sketch has been truncated, clearly indicating that the canvas was cut down, perhaps when the two larger figures were separated. And examination with stereomicroscopy, raking light, x-radiography, and x-ray fluorescence strongly suggest that the two canvases were once one: The thread count and the paint in the two canvases seem to be the same; and areas of impasto and strokes of paint appear to run from one canvas to the other.<sup>12</sup>

Yet, it is hard to explain why, if the third figure existed originally, it would have been removed only to appear again in the watercolor. If the two sketches in their conjoined state represented a single compositional idea and not simply individual studies of pose and action, then that composition was different from the later watercolor version in which they reappear. It had fewer figures, and one of them, the dancing boy, is significantly larger than the other, in contrast to the watercolor in which

they are the same scale and occupy the same spatial plane.

There is a perspective drawing for *Negro Boy Dancing* that introduces another possibility (fig. 2). The drawing consists of two foolscap sheets that, although horizontal grid lines continue across one sheet to another, were originally separate and were created consecutively, not simultaneously. The sheet containing the banjo player was the first one made. For that reason, and because that sheet is by far the more carefully and completely finished of the two, it is possible that Eakins entertained the ideal of a painting that used the figure of the banjo player alone, on the pattern of such banjo subjects as Thomas Hovenden’s *Dem Was Good Ole Times* (1882, Chrysler Museum, Norfolk) and Henry Ossawa Tanner’s *Banjo Lesson* (1893, Hampton University Museum, Virginia). Only later, drawn more lightly in pencil on a separate sheet, were the two other figures added to form the composition as it would appear in the watercolor and on the same scale.

In the upper left corner of the watercolor Eakins included a painted replica of the February 1864 Mathew Brady studio photograph of Abraham Lincoln and his son Tad, one of the most popular and widely distributed images of Lincoln.<sup>13</sup> What Eakins intended by its inclusion remains unknown. Perhaps this sympathetic image of the relationship of father and son was the counterpart of the older man and dancing boy in the watercolor. Or perhaps



Thomas Eakins, *Study for "Negro Boy Dancing": The Boy*, 1985.64.15

it was a surrogate reminder of emancipation, the happy result of which the watercolor may celebrate.<sup>14</sup> But there is another possibility. At just the time he painted *Negro Boy Dancing*, Eakins was also painting a series of historical subjects: *William Rush Carving His Allegorical Figure of the Schuylkill* (1877, see p. 158, fig. 1), set in the early nineteenth century, and historicizing costume pieces that included the watercolors *Seventy Years Ago* (1877, Art Museum, Princeton University), *Young Girl Meditating* or *Fifty Years Ago* (1877, MMA), and the oil *Courtship* (c. 1878, The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco). From this point of view, the function of the Brady photograph, by locating the subject in the mid-1860s, is to make *Negro Boy Dancing* another historical subject, the companion in this respect of the other watercolor he sent to the American Water Color Society exhibition in 1878 with the explicitly historical title *Fifty Years Ago*. Moreover, it may not have been the only Civil War subject that Eakins considered at this time: About 1875 he made two sketches for a painting, never carried out, of the surrender of Robert E. Lee.<sup>15</sup>

NC

#### Notes

1. *Eakins* 1961, no. 32, lent by the Estate of Joseph Katz.
2. Leslie Katz showed a photograph of the painting to Lloyd Goodrich on 12 December 1963.
3. The names of Mr. and Mrs. Charles B. Eddy (Plainfield, New Jersey) have appeared at this point in the provenance, and Charles Eddy (Westfield, New Jersey) is given as the owner in Goodrich 1930, 172, no. 125, appearing between the first owner, Eakins' brother-in-law George Frank Stephens, and the second, Eakins' nephew Roger Stephens. But it makes no sense to have the painting's descent in the Stephens family interrupted, particularly as Roger Stephens (letter of 20 December 1944 from Roger Stephens to the Metropolitan Museum of Art [MMA archives]) reported that he inherited it from a relative. Neither of the Eddys was related to the Stephenses; thus it seems tolerably clear that some confusion has crept into the provenance.
4. Goodrich's manuscript catalogue (PMA) also records the letter of 20 December 1944 from Roger Stephens to the Metropolitan Museum of Art (MMA archives): "I have an oil painting by my uncle, the late Thomas Eakins, which has recently come to me through the death of another relative. The size is about 18 x 20, the subject: a young Negro sitting on a stool, playing a banjo."
5. "Water Color Exhibition," *New York Herald*, 2 February 1878.
6. William C. Brownell, "The Art Schools of Philadelphia," *Scribner's Monthly Magazine* 18, September 1879, 740-741. See *Baby at Play* (1982.76.5) for a possible

source for Eakins' belief in the value of sketching in oil.

7. Many are in the collection of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, SI; see Rosenzweig 1977, passim. For comparative examples, see Homer 1992, 114-115, 130, 204, 210, 230, 242-243. For another NGA example, see *The Chaperone* (1991.34.1).

8. See Goodrich 1982, 1:108, 110, and Hoopes 1971, 44.

9. For example, the watercolor *Starting Out After Rail* (1874, Wichita Art Museum) and the oil *Starting Out After Rail* (1874, MFA); and the watercolor *Drifting* (1875, private collection) and the oil *Becalmed on the Delaware* (1874, PMA). Related too, though less closely, are the watercolor *The Zither Player* (1876, AIC) and the oil *Professionals at Rehearsal* (c. 1883, PMA). See Hoopes 1971, 28 and 29, 34 and 35, and 38 and 39. From these examples, no clear pattern of precedence emerges. In one case the watercolor and oil were painted in the same year; in another, the oil preceded the watercolor by a year; and in another the watercolor preceded the oil by several years.

10. Letter of 30 June [1875] from Eakins to Earl Shinn, Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania.

11. Manuscript catalogue notes dated 15 December 1963, for *Negro Boy Dancing (Study)*, PMA.

12. Memorandum dated 8 July 1993 from Ann Hoenigswald of the Painting Conservation Department, National Gallery of Art (in NGA curatorial files).

13. Horan 1955, 55.

14. Although it was purely coincidental, while Eakins' watercolor was on exhibition in New York, Francis B. Carpenter's painting of President Lincoln reading the Emancipation Proclamation to the Cabinet was presented to Congress; see "Carpenter's Picture," *New York Herald*, 13 February 1878.

15. These sketches are in the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, SI; and Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection, PAFA; see Rosenzweig 1977, 55; and Homer 1992, 101. Other facets of Eakins' historicism at about this period are oil sketches for *Hiawatha* (c. 1874, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, SI) and *Columbus in Prison* (c. 1876, Kennedy Galleries, New York). In 1876 and 1877 Winslow Homer also painted his most perceptive and sensitive paintings of black subjects.

#### References

- 1930 Goodrich: no. 67 (1985.64.15).  
 1933 Goodrich: 172, no. 125.  
 1964 Kaplan: repro. no. 53 (1985.64.15).  
 1966 Kaplan: repro. 116 (1985.64.15).  
 1971 Hoopes: 44, repro. 46, 48.  
 1982 Goodrich: 1: repro. 110, 111.  
 1988 Wilmerding: repro. 130.  
 1989 Honour: 189.

1957.2.1 (1473)

## Louis Husson

1899

Oil on canvas, 61.0 × 50.9 (24 × 20 1/16)  
Gift of Katharine Husson Horstick

### Inscriptions

At upper right: To his friend / Louis Husson / Thomas Eakins / 1899.

On reverse: To Katy Husson from her friend Thomas Eakins.

**Technical Notes:** The support is a 1 × 2 twill weave fabric that is unlined and appears to be attached to its original four-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher.<sup>1</sup> Over the white ground, which covers all but the right tacking margin, the paint was thinly and fluidly applied. Some of the uppermost glazes in the coat are abraded. There is scattered inpainting in the tie, beard, forehead, and jacket. In 1957 an additional layer of varnish was applied. The varnish has become slightly discolored.

**Provenance:** Louis Husson, Philadelphia, from 1899. His daughter, Katharine Husson Horstick [Mrs. Simon M. Horstick, d. 1956], Hatboro, Pennsylvania, by 1917.

**Exhibited:** Carnegie Institute Annual, Pittsburgh, 1911, no. 74. *Memorial Exhibition of the Works of the Late Thomas Eakins*, PAFA, 1917, no. 104, as *Portrait: Louis Husson*.

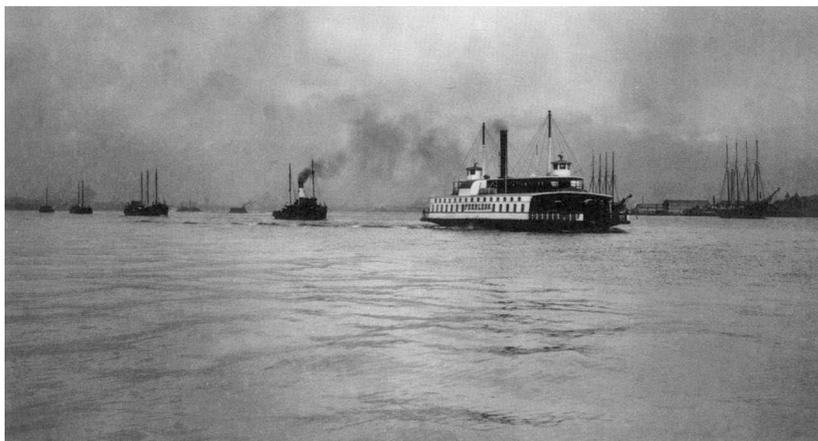
IN HER 1899 DIARY, Eakins' wife Susan noted on 25 February: "Down to Louis [Husson's] studio to see the portrait he [Eakins] is painting of Mr. Husson." On 24 March 1899 she commented: "Mr. [William Merritt] Chase's portrait is fine, so is Mr. Louis Husson['s]."<sup>2</sup> On a label he later affixed to the cardboard backing of the painting, Charles Bregler described Husson as "Pioneer photographer and photoengraver of French birth[,] he settled in Philadelphia, 1874 and became one of Eakins['] closest friends."<sup>3</sup> This seems in general to have been

true. That Husson was one of his pallbearers suggests his closeness to Eakins, and he is listed in Philadelphia directories from 1886 to 1908 as an engraver, a photoengraver, a photographer, and in one year, 1903, as an artist. Of his work, little is known. The Library of Congress has several of his photographs of ships and shipping on the Delaware and Schuylkill rivers, made at the turn of the century (fig. 1). Their resemblance to similar subjects by Alfred Stieglitz and his circle, though somewhat distant, may align Husson with the progressive photography that Stieglitz represented—as his claim to being an artist may affiliate him, however briefly, with Stieglitz's campaign on behalf of the artistic dignity and significance of photography.<sup>4</sup> He seems to have played no public part in the advanced photographic circles in Philadelphia, however; his name does not appear among the exhibitors in the Philadelphia Photographic Salons held yearly from 1898 to 1901.<sup>5</sup>

In the 1900 census, Husson's date of birth is given as 1844 (making him Eakins' exact contemporary). The census also provides other data about Husson. He had immigrated to the United States from France in 1871; he could read, write, and speak English, and he had become a naturalized citizen; he had been married to Annie C. Lochrey for twenty-three years, and they lived in a household that also included their adopted daughter Katherine, age twenty-five, his widowed eighty-three-year-old mother-in-law Annie C. Lochrey, his brother-in-law Andrew Lochrey (who gave his occupation as photographer), his sister-in-law Mary Lochrey, and Lissie Corcoran, their Irish servant.

A letter of 17 February 1918 from Louis Husson to Susan Macdowell Eakins, written from Kansas where he was teaching French for the army, gives some other details of his life. He became a third-degree Mason in the Lodge of Renovation at Amiens in 1866, where one may assume that he was born,

Fig. 1. Louis Husson, *Coal Barges in Tow on the Delaware River*, 28 October 1901, Washington, Library of Congress





Thomas Eakins, *Louis Husson*, 1957.2.1



Thomas Eakins, *Annie C. Lochrey Husson (Mrs. Louis Husson)*, 1957.2.2

and he was a veteran of the French army who fought in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. (The defeat of the French may explain his emigration the following year). The closing of this letter, "Dear Madame Suzanne / I kiss the tips of your fingers," indicates how thoroughly French Husson remained despite nearly fifty-years' residence in America.<sup>6</sup> Husson died in 1923.

NC

#### Notes

1. A paper label affixed to the cardboard backing reads: "cleaned and revarnished with Mastic by Charles Bregler Phila. Pa June 1938" (in NGA curatorial files).
2. Dairy, Papers of Susan Macdowell Eakins, Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection, PAFA, in Foster and Leibold 1989, fig. 45. Eakins' portrait of William Merritt Chase is owned by the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, SI.
3. Bregler label (in NGA curatorial files).
4. The work distributed by Gebbie & Husson Photogravure Co., Philadelphia, with which Husson was associated in 1892, consisted of more conventional portraits of actors and actresses in famous roles.
5. Homer 1984.
6. Letter of 17 February 1918 from Husson to Susan Macdowell Eakins, Papers of Susan Macdowell Eakins, Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection, PAFA.

#### References

- 1930 Goodrich: 27, no 189.  
 1933 Goodrich: 190.  
 1967 Schendler: repro. 256.  
 1974 Hendricks: 170, repro. 171.  
 1980 Wilmerding: 116, repro.  
 1982 Goodrich: 2:215, repro. 58.  
 1989 *Manoogian*: repro. 126.

1957.2.2 (1474)

### *Annie C. Lochrey Husson* (*Mrs. Louis Husson*)

c. 1905  
 Oil on canvas, 61.1 × 50.9 (24 1/16 × 20 1/16)  
 Gift of Katharine Husson Horstick

#### Inscriptions

At upper right: T. E.

On reverse: TO KITTY HUSSON / FROM HER FRIEND / THOMAS EAKINS

**Technical Notes:** Painted on a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric that was commercially prepared with a thin, white ground before the fabric was stretched, the painting is unlined and secured to its original four-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher, which has a damaged pa-

per label identifying the colormen: "F. WEBER & CO. / Succe[ssor to JANE]N[TZKY &] WEBER / 1125 CHESTNUT [STREET,] PHILADELPHIA. / BRANCH HOU[ses:] / [ST. LOUIS, MO., 709 L]ocust St. / [BALTIMORE, MD., 5]N. [Charles] St. / ——" The white ground is visible in places, perhaps because of abrasion from a past varnish removal. There is discolored inpainting in the face and background, and the varnish is uneven and discolored.<sup>1</sup>

**Provenance:** Katharine Husson Horstick [Mrs. Simon M. Horstick, d. 1956], Hatboro, Pennsylvania, c. 1905, at least by 1930.

ANNIE C. LOCHREY, born, according to the 1900 census, in Pennsylvania in 1850, married Louis Husson in 1877. She died in 1928, surviving her husband by five years. Nothing else is known about her.

Her portrait has unjustly suffered disparagement and neglect. It has been exhibited less frequently than her husband's, and reproduced less frequently. Gordon Hendricks believes the two paintings are "a classic example" of Eakins' bias: Louis Husson "was painted with much sympathy"; Annie Lochrey Husson "appears to be a tight-lipped, narrow, small-souled woman."<sup>2</sup> I disagree. Annie Husson's portrait is the more probing and revealing one; her face displays a wider and more subtly complex play of emotion and expression.

NC

#### Notes

1. A paper label affixed to the cardboard backing reads: "cleaned and revarnished with Mastic by C[hables]. Bregler, Phila. Pa. June 1938." The NGA conservation report notes the 1957 varnish.
2. Hendricks 1974, 170.

#### References

- 1930 Goodrich: 27, no. 188.  
 1933 Goodrich: 202, no. 430.  
 1967 Schendler: repro. 279.  
 1974 Hendricks: 170, repro. 171.  
 1980 Wilmerding: 116, repro.  
 1989 *Manoogian*: repro. 126.

1976.27.1 (2693)

### *Harriet Husson Carville* (*Mrs. James G. Carville*)

1904  
 Oil on canvas, 51.0 × 40.7 (20 1/16 × 16)  
 Gift of Elizabeth O. Carville



Thomas Eakins, *Harriet Husson Carville (Mrs. James G. Carville)*, 1976.27.1

### Inscriptions

At upper left: T.E.

On reverse: TO HIS FRIEND / HARRIET CARVILLE / THOMAS  
EAKINS / 1904

**Technical Notes:** The support is a plain-weave, medium-weight, commercially-prepared fabric. It is unlined and attached to its original four-member mortise-and-tenon stretcher. A paper label on the stretcher from F. Weber and Co. gives the address of the company and identifies the stretcher as size X. The paint was fluidly applied over the white ground. The varnish has become only slightly discolored.

**Provenance:** Harriet Husson Carville [Mrs. James G. Carville], Philadelphia, to at least 1933;<sup>1</sup> her daughter, Elizabeth O. Carville, Tacoma, Washington.

HARRIET MARIE HUSSON was the niece of Louis Husson and the wife of James G. Carville, whose portrait Eakins also painted.<sup>2</sup> Nothing else is known about her.

Beginning in earnest in the 1890s, Eakins began painting what Lloyd Goodrich called “head portraits.”<sup>3</sup> Bust portraits of the sitters’ heads and shoulders, they were usually, like the portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Husson, 24 by 20 inches in size. By Goodrich’s count, Eakins painted about ten in the 1870s, about twelve in the 1880s, about forty in the 1890s, and from 1910 to 1912 about eighty-five. The sitters, like the Hussons, were usually friends, acquaintances, and relatives Eakins asked to pose (and as with the Husson portraits, they are often inscribed “To my friend”).

Compared to the greater range of Eakins’ other and mostly earlier work, Goodrich found these late portraits to be repetitive and formulaic, lacking in creative inventiveness. They were “a kind of routine exercise” done “as if to keep his hand in, like a musician practicing scales.” Goodrich was “sad to see such powers expended on such limited material.”<sup>4</sup>

Yet viewed collectively, they represent Eakins’ greatest effort. In their similarity of form, their subjects, and their size, and in the obsessional intensity that Eakins devoted to them, they have the character of a coherent project. Eakins may have identified the nature of that project when, toward the end of his life, he advised American art students to “study their own country and portray its life and types.”<sup>5</sup> His “head portraits” were his way of studying American life by collecting and depicting, with almost scientific rigor and thoroughness, its characteristic types.<sup>6</sup>

NG

### Notes

1. She is given as the owner in Goodrich 1933, 198, no. 307.
2. Goodrich 1930, 30, no. 262.
3. Goodrich 1982, 2: 215, 220.
4. Goodrich 1982, 2: 215, 220.
5. Goodrich 1982, 2: 269.
6. For a somewhat fuller discussion of this point, see Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr., entry on Thomas Eakins’ *Art Student*, in *Manoogian* 1989, 126–130.

### References

- 1930 Goodrich: 30, 261.  
1933 Goodrich: 198, no. 397.  
1980 Wilmerding: 116, repro.

1946.16.1 (889)

### *Archbishop Diomed Falconio*

1905

Oil on canvas, 183.2 × 137.7 (72 1/8 × 54 3/16)

Gift of Stephen C. Clark

**Technical Notes:** The painting is on a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric that was lined sometime between 1930 and 1946. There is cusping only along the right edge, but the painting appears to be its original size. The lining fabric is inscribed “HANC EFFIGIEM ILLMI AC REVM DIOMEDI FALCONIO ARCHLARISSENSIS ET DELEGATI APOSTOLICI IN STATIBUS FOEDERATIS AMERICAЕ SEPTEMTRIONALIS PINXIT THOMAS EAKINS WASHINGTONII MDCCCXV / EAKINS,” which presumably was copied from the back of the original fabric. The paint ranges in consistency from low impasto to fluid glaze. A dark brown transparent imprimatura, although whether overall or only in selected areas is unclear, was applied over a white ground of medium thickness. Opaque lighter tones were scumbled over the dark underlayer. A glossy, probably pigmented layer that seems original surrounds the face and extends down to the collar. The painting was treated in 1981; discolored varnish was removed and the painting was restored.

**Provenance:** The artist; by inheritance 1916 to his wife, Susan Macdowell Eakins [Mrs. Thomas Eakins, 1851–1938], Philadelphia, until at least 1922/1923; purchased 1928 by Reginald Marsh, New York;<sup>1</sup> sold 30 March 1943 through (William Macbeth, New York) to Stephen C. Clark [1882–1960], New York.<sup>2</sup>

**Exhibited:** *Loan Exhibition of the Works of Thomas Eakins*, MMA, 1917, no. 51. *Memorial Exhibition of the Work of the Late Thomas Eakins*, PAFA, 1917, no. 138. *Sixth Loan Exhibition: Homer, Ryder, Eakins*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1930, no. 113. *Thomas Eakins Centennial Exhibition*, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, 1945, no. 106. *Thomas Eakins*, 1961–1962, no. 91. *Portraits by Thomas Eakins*, St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, Overbrook, Pennsylvania,

1970, no cat. *Thomas Eakins Retrospective Exhibition*, WMAA, 1970, no. 95. *Thomas Eakins (1844–1916) and the Heart of American Life*, National Portrait Gallery, London, 1993–1994, no. 48.

**BEGINNING** at about the turn of the century Eakins painted fourteen portraits, often ambitious full-length ones such as this, of Roman Catholic clergymen. Why the avowedly irreligious Eakins elected to paint them has never been clearly established, although some biographers believe that he liked the company of these learned and cosmopolitan churchmen and found their accomplishments admirable.<sup>3</sup>

Most of the ecclesiastical portraits were not commissioned.<sup>4</sup> Several were presented to their sitters and are now owned by Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary, in Overbrook, Pennsylvania, with which many of the sitters were associated (and which Eakins often visited).<sup>5</sup> This was not true of the Falconio portrait. Eakins did not initiate it, nor did he have any special admiration for the sitter.

In March 1905 Eakins wrote that as soon as the work in progress was finished, “I shall go down to Washington to paint Falconio the Apostolic Delegate for the Catholic University of America.”<sup>6</sup> His language can only indicate that Falconio’s portrait was commissioned by the university, or at very least that he undertook to paint it with the expectation that the university would acquire it. Indeed, three years earlier Eakins painted a similarly conceived and similarly ambitious portrait of the previous apostolic delegate, Sebastiano Cardinal Martinelli (fig. 1), for the university.<sup>7</sup>

Eakins’ language in a series of letters to his wife, written from Washington where he was at work on Falconio’s portrait, also indicates a less than perfect regard for his subject.<sup>8</sup> On 8 May 1905, he wrote: “I had an engagement with the Archbishop at 10.<sup>9</sup> I waited for him to come in from the next room and he waited for me to knock at his door and I did not see him until dinner time. He posed at 1 o’clock for 50 minutes most of that time asleep. You bet I will knock tomorrow at 10 o’clock.” A week later: “I had the good man for 56 minutes today and I fairly flew over my work. He was somewhat critical today before commencing. He told me his time was very valuable and I told him so was mine. He said it was very hot. I told him I felt it. That was all but it had a good effect, and he came in two or three times and noticed how hard I was working up to supper time.” The following day the artist reported: “The

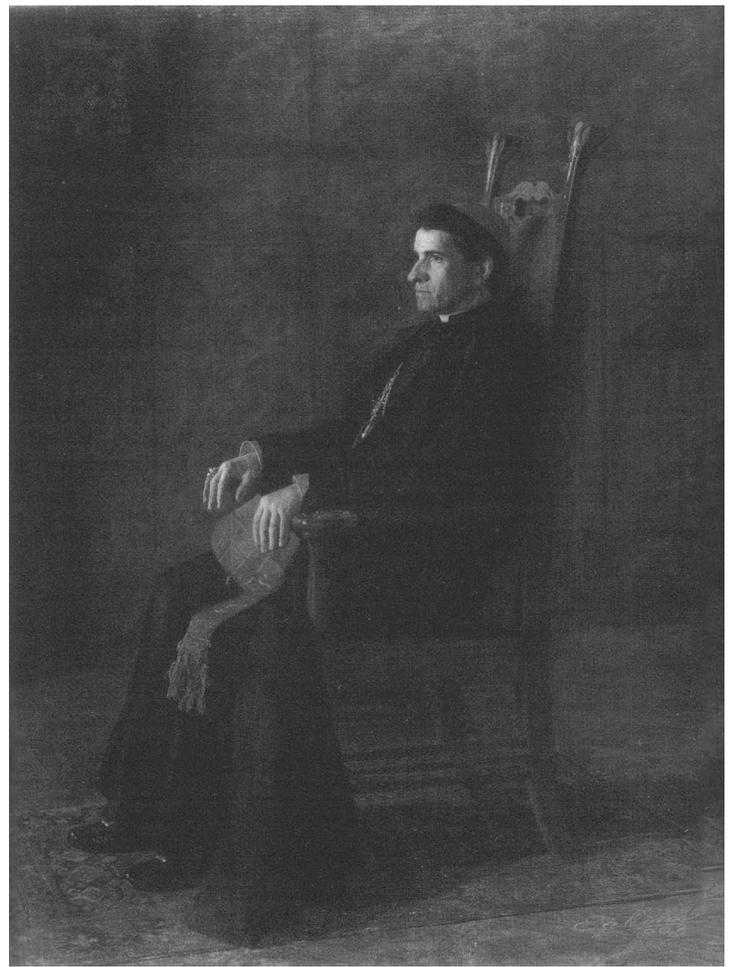


Fig. 1. Thomas Eakins, *Portrait of Sebastiano Cardinal Martinelli*, oil on canvas mounted on panel, 1902, Los Angeles, Armand Hammer Collection, UCLA at the Armand Hammer Museum of Art and Cultural Center

good man gave me a long sitting to day. An hour and a half. I got the whole head and neck except the eyes. I guess I will finish in 2 or 3 days.” And on the next, in the last letter pertaining to the painting, he wrote: “When I got done to day’s work the old man asked me if I had finished so I told him yes. Then he wanted to know if I could do more to it, if he gave me more time. I said yes. He said he would not mind sitting twice more and then he had to go away. I will see him tomorrow only.”

Falconio’s portrait was never finished; that can be seen in the painting itself, but it can be deduced almost as easily from Eakins’ last letter. Henry McBride believed that Falconio “refused to continue the poses when he saw the sort of effigy that was growing between the painter’s brushes.”<sup>10</sup> But from Eakins’ facetious references to Falconio as “the good man” and “the old man”—born in 1842, he was in his early sixties and only two years older than the artist himself—and from their strained, clipped



Thomas Eakins, *Archbishop Diomedea Falconio*, 1946.16.1

conversations, this was clearly a project for which neither participant had any particular relish, and which, judging from what Eakins reported in his last letter, Falconio was more willing to continue than Eakins. Goodrich thought Falconio's face—the most labored and fully finished part of the painting and an excellently characterized likeness (fig. 2)—“has an expression of meditation and reverie.”<sup>11</sup> Yet it is just as possible to read in it an unpleasant self-importance and a sternness bordering on sourness that may well have put Eakins off, as his letters suggest that he was, not to mention a worldly toughness and shrewdness.

Eakins left no other major painting as partially finished as this one. McBride admired the painting the more for its lack of finish; Goodrich thought this a virtue, too, and wished “Eakins more often left well enough alone.”<sup>12</sup> It is not clear how Eakins regarded it. In certain respects he treated it as a completed picture. He never destroyed it, never repainted it, inscribed it elaborately on its back (in Latin), and in 1907, in reply to a letter from Professor John Pickard of the University of Missouri, requesting information about him and a list of his “most representative paintings” for a course he was preparing on the history of American painting, Eakins included the Falconio portrait.<sup>13</sup> But Eakins never exhibited it during his lifetime, and it is seen leaning unframed against the wall in a photograph of Eakins' studio made about 1910.<sup>14</sup>

Angelus Raphael Januarius Falconio (1842–1917) was born in Precostanzo, Italy. Upon entering the Franciscan Order, at the age of eighteen, he received the name Diomedes. He left Italy for America in 1865 and became a naturalized citizen in 1871. He was ordained in 1866, and two years later, at twenty-six, became president of Saint Bonaventure College. He subsequently held many important positions in the church, becoming bishop of Lacedonia in 1892, archbishop of Acerenza and Matera in 1895, the first apostolic delegate to Canada, and titular archbishop of Larissa in 1899, and three years later, the third apostolic delegate to the United States. He served in that position until 1911, when he was created cardinal.

As apostolic delegate in Canada it was said that “he remained a poor Franciscan friar,” who eschewed the “gray silken garments that had been prepared for him.”<sup>15</sup> Falconio seems to have made an exception when dressing for his portrait; Eakins often asked people to wear what they themselves ordinarily did not choose to don. NC



Fig. 2. photograph of Diomedes Falconio, *The Catholic World* 76 (February 1903)

#### Notes

1. In a letter of 4 August 1947 to James W. Lane (in NGA curatorial files), Reginald Marsh recollected buying the painting from Mrs. Eakins in Philadelphia in October 1928.

2. Macbeth Gallery obtained the painting from Marsh on 25 March 1943 and sold it five days later to Clark; letter of 2 July 1947 from Robert B. McIntyre to James W. Lane (in NGA curatorial files).

3. On Eakins' religious position and Catholic portraits, see Goodrich 1933, 105–106; McHenry 1946, 114; Schendler 1967, 197–208; Hendricks 1974, 252–255; and Goodrich 1982, 2:186–198.

4. Goodrich 1982, 2:188, believes none of the portraits of clergy was commissioned.

5. See, for example, letter of 28 June 1908, from Eakins to the Reverend Herman Heuser, collection of Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary, Overbrook, Pennsylvania. For similar presentations to sitters, see the Melville and Louis Husson portraits (1991.33.1 and 1957.2.1).

6. Letter of 13 March 1905 from Eakins to William Sartain, Sartain Papers, AAA.

7. The university frequently let Eakins exhibit the painting (see “Brilliant Display of High-Class Art,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer* [18 January 1903]), always indicating its ownership whenever it did so. Catholic University sold the painting in 1970 to Armand Hammer.

8. All are written from the Saint James Hotel, Washington, D.C. (Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection, PAFA). Like Martinelli's portrait before it, Falconio's was painted at the residence of the apostolic delegate, perhaps even in the same paneled room.

9. For some reason, despite Eakins' inscription on its back, whenever the painting was exhibited and cited, until it was formally changed by the National Gallery in 1978, Falconio's title was given as monsignor.

10. "Thomas Eakins II," *New York Sun*, 11 November 1917, as cited in McBride 1975, 138–139.

11. Goodrich 1982, 2:188, 191.

12. Goodrich 1982, 2:191.

13. Beginning in the 1870s, eighteen of Eakins' paintings, including five of his Catholic portraits, were given Latin inscriptions on the works themselves, like the Falconio portrait, or on their frames. He knew Latin, but in 1908 he solicited the help of Herman Heuser of Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary in rendering an inscription into Latin; letter of 28 June 1908 from Eakins to Heuser, Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary, Overbrook, Pennsylvania. Letter of 20 June 1907 from John Pickard of Columbia, Missouri, to Thomas Eakins (PMA). Eakins' list included *The Gross Clinic*, *The Agnew Clinic*, *The Crucifixion*, *The Concert Singer*, and five ecclesiastical portraits.

14. Goodrich 1982, 2:269, no. 175.

15. *Falconio* 1968, p. 18.

## References

- 1917 *Eakins*: repro. n.p.  
1930 Goodrich: 31, no. 283.  
1933 Goodrich: 201, repro. 66.  
1942 McKinney: 15.  
1959 Porter: repro. 73.  
1961 *Eakins*: 124, repro. 91.  
1967 Schendler: 208, repro. 104.  
1974 Hendricks: 255, repro. 275.  
1975 McBride: 138–139.  
1979 Gerdts: 154–155, repro. 155.  
1982 Goodrich: 2:188, 191, repro. 237.  
1983 Johns: 150, repro. 109.  
1992 Homer: 226–227, color repro. 226.  
1993 Wilmerding et al.: 34, 171, 172–175, 177, repro. 172, 175.

1991.33.1

## *Rear Admiral George W. Melville*

1905

Oil on canvas, 101.6 × 68.5 (40 × 26<sup>15/16</sup>)

Gift (Partial and Promised) of Mr. and Mrs. H. John Heinz III, in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art.

## Inscriptions

At lower right: EAKINS

**Technical Notes:** The support is a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric that has been lined. A note in the

NGA curatorial files states that before 1930 the initials T.E. were visible on the back of the canvas, which suggests that the present lining was added at about that date. The ground is white. The paint was applied with a uniformly fluid texture; because much of it was applied wet-into-wet, there is no complicated layer structure. Three cracks are visible, the longest in the top left corner. A horizontal line of old damage is apparent in the bottom left corner as is scattered inpainting. Small cracks and spots of abrasion occur throughout the more thinly applied areas, in addition to scattered small losses. A small fill above the sitter's right shoulder has been inpainted with mismatched paint, and inpainting is also visible in the hair just above that shoulder. A thinly painted area to the left of the sitter's forehead has been strengthened with a reddish brown glaze, and damage in the third button from the top on the left side of the sitter's jacket has been inpainted. The varnish has become moderately discolored.

**Provenance:** Susan Macdowell Eakins [Mrs. Thomas Eakins, 1851–1938], Philadelphia; Millicent Rogers [d. 1953], New York; her son, Count Peter A. Salm, New York;<sup>1</sup> sold 29 April 1983 through (Lothar Dohna, New York) to Mr. and Mrs. H. John Heinz III, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

**Exhibited:** Carnegie Institute Annual, Pittsburgh, 1905, no. 67. *Annual Exhibition of Oil Paintings*, American Art Society of Philadelphia, Haseltine Art Galleries, Philadelphia, 1907, no. 1. PAFA Annual, 1912, no. 201. *Exhibition of Painting by Thomas Eakins*, Kleemann Galleries, New York, 1939, no. 11. *A Loan Exhibition of the Works of Thomas Eakins*, M. Knoedler & Co., New York, 1944, no. 76. *NGA 1991, 274–275. Thomas Eakins (1844–1916) and the Heart of American Life*, National Portrait Gallery, London, 1993–1994, no. 45.

IF, as it has been argued, it was Eakins' artistic purpose to depict persons of achievement who exemplified the "heroism of modern life," few of the men and women who posed for him exemplified it as well as Admiral Melville.<sup>2</sup> Described as "frank and straight forward[,] . . . intolerant always of sham and pretence, . . . [and] rigidly honest and incorruptible," Melville possessed virtues very similar to those commonly attributed to Eakins himself.<sup>3</sup> Although he did not know Melville personally, perhaps that is why Eakins sought him out.<sup>4</sup> And perhaps that is why he painted two versions of the sitter, the first in 1904 (fig. 1), and the second in 1905.

On 25 September 1903 a Dr. George C. Stout wrote Col. Thomas A. Prince of the U.S. Marine Corps: "Do you know Melville well enough to give a letter of recommendation to him to a friend of mine who is, I think, the best portrait painter in America, and who wishes to paint the Admiral



Thomas Eakins, *Rear Admiral George W. Melville*, 1991.33.1

without cost. He has painted two of our most famous paintings of surgical clinics in Philadelphia, has also painted [Rear Admiral Charles D.] Sigbee and a number of other notables. I shall be very glad to help him get at Melville if I can."<sup>5</sup> Negotiations proceeded quickly; on 3 January 1904 Eakins wrote, "I am about to paint another Admiral late this winter or in early spring."<sup>6</sup>

On the reverse of the Philadelphia version, in letters much as they might be engraved on the base of a sculpted monument, Eakins listed Melville's honors, achievements, and vital statistics:

REAR ADMIRAL  
 GEORGE WALLACE MELVILLE U.S.N.  
 BORN NEW YORK CITY JANUARY 10 1841  
 ENTERED U.S. NAVY JULY 29, 1861  
 1881 CHIEF ENGINEER  
 1887 ENGINEER IN CHIEF  
 1898 REAR ADMIRAL  
 1904 RETIRED  
 MEMBER OF THE HALL RELIEF EXPEDITION 1873  
 CHIEF ENGINEER JEANNETTE EXPEDITION 1879-82  
 CHIEF ENGINEER GREELEY RELIEF EXPEDITION 1883  
 DEGREES  
 L.L.D.(PA) D.E.(STEVENS) M.A.  
 (GEORGETOWN) M.E. (COLUMBIA)

Although it reverses the order of their occurrence, Eakins' inscription gives the principal points of Melville's career: heroic participation in several of the important episodes of polar exploration that so greatly occupied the energy and imagination of the nineteenth century, and crucial contribution as Chief of the Navy's Bureau of Steam Engineering, to the modern American steam-powered "New Navy."<sup>7</sup>

Of all Melville's exploits, the most heroic was the ill-fated Jeannette expedition. A bark-rigged steamship captained by Lieutenant George Washington De Long, the expedition's leader, the *Jeanette* left San Francisco, California, in June 1879 seeking to reach the North Pole by way of the Bering Strait, based on the untested theory that a thermal current comparable to the Gulf Stream, the Black Current of Japan, would provide an unimpeded waterway northward. One year later, his ship firmly in the grip of arctic ice from which it would never be released, De Long wrote in his journal, "I pronounce a thermometric gateway to the North Pole a delusion and a snare."<sup>8</sup> For two years the *Jeanette* was held by drifting ice, until in June 1881, at a position 400 miles north of the

Siberian coast to which the ice had carried her, she sank. Three of the ship's boats attempted to reach the mainland. One sank, and the other two were separated. The party under the command of Engineer Melville succeeded in finding a native village and survived. Lieutenant De Long and most of his party, lost in the maze of the Lena Delta, perished. After two attempts, Melville found their remains in March 1882. In recognition of his efforts, he received the Russian order of St. Stanislaus from the Czar—which he wears in this portrait—and a gold medal from the Congress of the United States.<sup>9</sup> Melville told of his experiences in his book *In the Lena Delta* (published in 1885).

Fig. 1. Thomas Eakins, *Portrait of Rear Admiral George W. Melville*, oil on canvas, 1904, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Given by Mrs. Thomas Eakins and Miss Mary Adeline Williams





Fig. 2. photograph of Rear Admiral George W. Melville, *Journal of the Society of Naval Engineers* 24 (May 1912)

About six-feet tall, powerfully built, and gruff in manner, Melville was an impressive and somewhat domineering presence. Eakins' first portrait of him (fig. 1) was a conventional three-quarter length three-quarter view in full dress uniform that captured Melville's appearance (compare fig. 2, which is so closely related to the painting as to almost be its source) and his station. His second, greatly simplified in dress and pose, the figure rigidly frontal and filling the picture space like a Byzantine Pantokrator, his head nimbed by a mane of white hair, his scarred hand a compact register of his trials and fortitude, is an iconic distillation of Melville's character—his great physical strength, his forceful character, his keen intelligence, and, above all, his indomitable will.<sup>10</sup>

NC

#### Notes

1. Mrs. Rogers died in 1953. In her will there is no mention of the painting among the effects bequeathed by her to her son, Peter Salm.

2. See Johns 1983. Homer 1992 endorses this view of Eakins' enterprise.

3. Cathcart 1912, 508.

4. When Melville retired from the Navy in 1903, Philadelphia and New York newspapers published numerous articles about him.

5. Letter of 25 September 1903 from Dr. George C. Stout to Col. T. A. Prince (PMA). Sigsbee was captain of the battleship *Maine* when she was blown up in Havana harbor in 1898 and was commandant of the League Island Navy Yard in Philadelphia in 1903–1904. Eakins painted his bust-length portrait (private collection), in 1903. The "famous paintings of surgical clinics" are *The Gross Clinic* of 1875 (Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University, Philadelphia) and *The Agnew Clinic* of 1889 (University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, Philadelphia).

6. Letter of 3 January 1904 from Eakins to F.W. Stokes (PMA).

7. See Thurston 1903, 183–186.

8. De Long as quoted in Guttridge 1988, 147.

9. A destroyer tender that served in both world wars and a scientific research vessel launched in 1968, both of which were named after Melville, honored his achievements in warship design and construction in his capacity as chief engineer.

10. Frostbitten and calloused by his years of arctic exploration, his left hand also bears the scar of a severe axe wound suffered during the Civil War when the *Wachusett*, on which he was serving, rammed and boarded the Confederate cruiser *Florida*; Cathcart 1912, 483.

#### References

- 1907 American Art Society: repro. 1.
- 1930 Goodrich: 30, no. 273.
- 1944 *Eakins*: repro. 76.
- 1946 McHenry: 117–119.
- 1974 Hendricks: 255–256, repro. 256.
- 1982 Goodrich 2:208–211, repro. 209.
- 1991 *NGA*: 274, color repro. 275.
- 1993 Wilmerding et al.: 166–167, repro. 167.

1991.34.1

### *The Chaperone*

c. 1908

Oil on canvas, 46.3 × 36.2 (18 1/4 × 14 1/4)

Gift of John Wilmerding, in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art

**Technical Notes:** The support is a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric that, although lined, retains the original tacking margins. A white ground layer was thinly, but uniformly applied. Over this white layer is a brown layer, which was left exposed in several areas of the finished image. Examination with ultraviolet light reveals a grid pattern of the type frequently used by the artist in transferring his sketches to finished paintings.

The paint was applied with unblended strokes in fairly transparent layers. Minor compositional changes around the head and bandanna are visible in normal light. Several areas of rubbing that seem unrelated to the present image suggest the artist had begun another work on this same support and then scraped it out. There are only scattered small losses, scratches, and abrasions in the paint surface, but its texture was apparently flattened during a past lining. The varnish has not discolored.

**Provenance:** Susan Macdowell Eakins [Mrs. Thomas Eakins, 1851–1938], Philadelphia; her estate; (Babcock Galleries, New York); (Garelick Gallery, Detroit); Marshall M. Miller, Huntington Woods, Michigan; Peter Brady, Washington, D.C., by 1977;<sup>1</sup> (sale, Christie, Manson & Woods, New York, 24 April 1981, no. 92); (Hirschl & Adler Galleries, New York); sold 1982 to John Wilmerding, Washington, D.C.

**Exhibited:** NGA 1991, 276.

IN 1877 Thomas Eakins painted a canvas called *William Rush Carving His Allegorical Figure of the Schuylkill* (see p. 158, fig. 2), showing the early (and, by Eakins' day, long forgotten) Philadelphia ship-carver and sculptor William Rush (1756–1853) working from a nude female model in sculpting a life-size allegorical figure.<sup>2</sup> The only other figure present in the painting is an elderly woman knitting in a Chippendale style chair. Eakins was known for his depictions of Philadelphia friends and associates engaged in various activities, such as *The Biglin*

*Brothers Racing* [1953.7.1], and only rarely took interest in subjects from the past. And for this historical subject Eakins altered the facts to serve his own ends: There is no evidence that Rush had worked from a nude model.

Eakins believed that study from the nude was essential, and he vigorously stressed this belief in his teaching at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. The painting of Rush thus may have been specifically intended by him to suggest that working from the nude had a venerable tradition in Philadelphia. By including the elderly woman chaperone, Eakins legitimized the activity of posing nude, making it clear that this was a virtuous young woman who came from a good family, not a tramp or a prostitute.<sup>3</sup> Even so, for many Philadelphians the story of such a person posing nude carried an unmistakable aroma of scandal.<sup>4</sup>

Eleven years later, in 1886, Eakins was forced to resign his position at the Pennsylvania Academy, primarily because his unrelenting emphasis on working from the nude had become controversial in staid Philadelphia. Rumors circulated that Eakins had indulged in improper, or even immoral behavior. The dismissal affected him deeply and he increasingly withdrew from Philadelphia art circles to pursue his art independently. By the early 1900s he was already becoming forgotten.<sup>5</sup>

In 1908 Eakins returned to the subject of William Rush in several paintings. The most com-

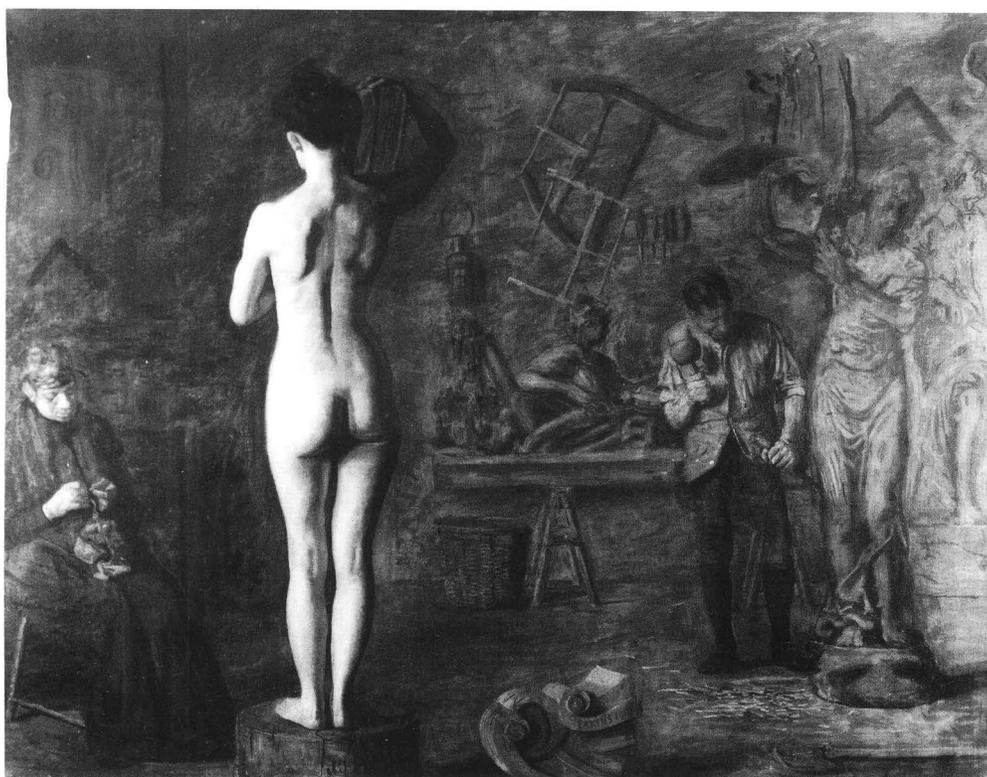


Fig. 1. Thomas Eakins, *William Rush Carving His Allegorical Figure of the Schuylkill River*, oil on canvas, 1908, The Brooklyn Museum, Dick S. Ramsay Fund, 39.461



Thomas Eakins, *The Chaperone*, 1991.34.1

plete version (fig. 1), for which the present work is a study, retains the principal elements from the 1877 oil, but with significant changes. Rush is slightly stockier, less well dressed, and looks more like an artisan than an artist. The chaperone is no longer a finely dressed elderly white woman in an elegant chair, but a black woman wearing a bandana and sitting in a plain chair.

Eakins presumably made the National Gallery sketch for this figure from life, but we do not know the sitter's identity.<sup>6</sup> Eakins gave her a quiet dignity that is markedly different from the less sympathetic images of African-Americans found in all too many works by his contemporaries.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps Eakins chose to include this woman in his reconsideration of the Rush theme simply because of some personal affection.

Her inclusion, regardless of the immediate reasons behind it, undeniably gives the painting a different nuance. In the 1877 version the chaperone was believed by friends and reviewers to be a close relative of the young woman posing, perhaps even her mother.<sup>8</sup> Her presence, then, was in part protective, ensuring that the sculptor remained honorable and did not in any way take advantage of his model. Although the black woman in the 1908 canvas still serves that purpose, her race makes it clear that she and the model are unrelated. Indeed, these women exist in two completely different worlds within the picture, functioning as virtual opposites: one white, the other black; one brightly lit, the other in shadow; one nude, the other clothed; one standing stiffly, the other seated comfortably; and one straight and still, the other bowed over her work. That the chaperone is so fundamentally different and set apart from the model might suggest that the emotional equilibrium of the 1877 painting, in which the figures seemed to exist as three independent entities, has been slightly tipped toward the relationship between the two whites. Interestingly, in other paintings of Rush that Eakins probably began around this same time (for example, *William Rush and His Model*, c. 1908, Honolulu Academy of Arts), the chaperone disappears and the sculptor (who resembles Eakins himself) actually makes physical contact with the nude model, although merely by offering her his hand as she steps down from the platform.<sup>9</sup> And this contact, though seemingly proper and innocent, introduces the possibility of physical intimacy between the two, raising questions about other levels of meaning in the combined paintings of this subject. Might one see

Eakins' alteration of the chaperone as having resulted from his desire to bring artist and model into some new and more personal relationship? By first replacing the relative with the black woman, and then by removing the chaperone altogether, Eakins took away the chief impediment to such intimacy between the two. Or did he? The artist's gentlemanly demeanor in *William Rush and His Model* seems to indicate that the ultimate barrier between such intimacy lies in the artist himself. The artist always must hold his artistic enterprise above the pursuit of personal pleasures. No close family member or trusted family servant was needed to stand guard; the artist would serve as his own chaperone. Such an interpretation accords more properly with what we know of Eakins' use of the nude in teaching and makes the late Rush pictures pointed reassertions of his innocence of wrong-doing in the Pennsylvania Academy scandal of years earlier.

But perhaps there was another reason Eakins changed the race of the chaperone. Throughout his career he had painted black individuals pursuing various activities, as in *Will Schuster and Blackman Going Shooting* (1876, YUAG), and although he was not entirely immune to prejudice, his images of blacks tended on the whole to be positive. Late in life, when he was increasingly disillusioned, it may be that Eakins came to identify both with William Rush and with others who had been the victims of society's prejudices. This could explain why in the 1908 painting the two most closely allied figures are Rush and the chaperone, each working with their hands, each intently creating something from raw materials. And each labors in the shadows, unlike the model, who stands inactive in brilliant light. It is as if they exist on the sidelines of a society that largely ignores them and only rarely honors them or their creations. In 1906 Eakins wrote: "The life of an artist is precarious. I have known very great artists to live their whole lives in poverty and distress because the people had not the taste and good sense to buy their work. Again I have seen the fashionable folk give commissions of thousands to men whose work is worthless."<sup>10</sup> Successful artists might dress like gentlemen, work in fancy studios, and reap society's rewards, but others who were more deserving might (like Eakins) suffer only contempt and neglect. For Eakins to draw a parallel between the unappreciated artist and the lot of African-Americans did not minimize their struggle, rather, it served to highlight the injustice and capriciousness of society generally.

In the thirty years between his first painting of Rush and his return to the theme, so much had changed for Eakins and his art that he clearly could not treat the subject of an artist at work in quite the same way again. He had seen himself discredited as a teacher and forgotten by his native city. The energy and vitality that characterized the 1877 *William Rush Carving his Allegorical Figure of the Schuylkill River*, and that seemed to affirm the legitimacy of making art, are gone in the 1908 version, as if they had ebbed from Eakins himself. Perhaps that was why the image had to be recast, why new studies such as this had to be made, and why the identities of two of the three figures had to be transformed. If the story he wished to tell was still fundamentally one about himself, his art, and his beliefs, that story in 1908 had for him a very different conclusion.

FK

## Notes

1. Rosenzweig 1977, 297.
2. This painting has been much discussed in the literature on Eakins; see Johns 1983, 82–114.

3. Eakins often complained that students could not learn to portray beautiful forms if they were only exposed to “coarse and flabby types” who came from brothels. He even asked the Pennsylvania Academy to advertise for respectable female models who could be “accompanied by their mothers or other female relatives”; see Foster and Leibold 1989, 343. Eakins also believed that any student enrolled in a life class should be willing to pose nude if asked. See also Johns 1983, 99.

4. Johns 1983, 102–103.

5. Goodrich 1982, 2:222.

6. Johns 1983, 113, says she was a servant in the Eakins household, without further speculation as to why he included her.

7. For a discussion of Eakins’ images of blacks, see McElroy 1990, xix, 84–87.

8. Johns 1983, 99.

9. The figure’s resemblance to Eakins has been pointed out by many scholars, notably Goodrich 1982, 2:247, and Johns 1983, 109–110, and has been the subject of much speculation.

10. Eakins as quoted in Goodrich 1933, 133–134.

## References

- 1933 Goodrich: no. 450, 203.  
 1991 *NGA*: 276, color repro. 277.  
 1992 Homer: 242, fig. 231.

# Francis William Edmonds

1806 – 1863

ONE OF THE FEW mid-nineteenth-century painters to pursue a dual career in art and business, Francis Edmonds managed to become an influential figure in the intersecting spheres of banking, politics, and culture in New York City. Edmonds was born into a large family in Hudson, New York, where he received a Quaker education and early artistic encouragement from William Dunlap, an associate of his father and occasional guest in the house. Dunlap and another itinerant painter introduced the boy to outdoor sketching, but when an anticipated apprenticeship with an engraver proved to be too costly, it was decided that he would follow his uncle into the banking business.

In 1823 Edmonds became a clerk at the Tradesmen’s Bank of New York City; however, the opening of the schools of the National Academy of Design in 1826 prompted him to renew his artistic endeavors. He registered at the Academy as a stu-

dent of the antique for a three-year period beginning in 1827, and his first finished oil painting, *Hudibras Capturing the Fiddler* (location unknown), was accepted in the Academy’s annual exhibition of 1829; it secured him membership as an associate. Once again, though, his artistic career was interrupted by the demands of the banking trade. Appointed cashier of the Hudson River Bank, Edmonds left New York City for Hudson, where he married Martha Norman. He returned to New York City in 1832 with a new position at the Leather Manufacturers’ Bank, but another few years passed before he again found time for his painting.

Eventually seeking instruction from William Page, he began to work up new compositions for submission to the National Academy and in 1836 exhibited once again at an Academy annual—but under an assumed name, supposedly because he feared the condescension of his business col-

leagues, who would have frowned upon artistic pursuits. Soon his activity within the New York art world increased considerably, and he assumed leadership roles in the National Academy, the Apollo Association (later, the American Art Union), the Sketch Club, the New-York Gallery of the Fine Arts, the Century Club, and the Artists' Fund Society. With the exception of 1841, when he was traveling throughout Europe following the death of his wife and his own nervous breakdown, he customarily produced several genre paintings annually while continuing his career as a banker. His works were usually humorous, based on a literary theme, and executed in a manner derived from seventeenth-century Dutch or contemporary English sources.

Artists' organizations prized Edmonds' involvement because of his business acumen and extensive network of contacts with individuals capable of providing significant financial patronage. In addition to his work in banking, he served as a director of several railroad and insurance corporations. An active member of the Democratic party, he was appointed New York City chamberlain, a position of political patronage that entrusted him with considerable control of municipal funds. A year after this appointment, however, Edmonds was publicly accused of embezzlement, and although he was never legally charged with criminal activities, the accusation prompted him to resign his financial positions in 1855. Thereafter, he devoted much of the remainder of his life to developing a bank-note engraving company, improving his country estate in Bronxville, New York, and raising his large family (he had married Dorothea Lord after returning from Europe). His genre painting shifted in later years toward rural themes, a likely reflection of his increasing remove from day-to-day affairs in New York City.

JD

#### Bibliography

- Mann 1975.  
Mann 1977.  
Edmonds 1981: 5–10.  
Clark 1988.

1978.6.4 (2718)

### *The Bashful Cousin*

c. 1841–1842

Oil on canvas, 63.2 × 76.0 (24 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 29 <sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)

Gift of Frederick Sturges, Jr.

**Technical Notes:** The fabric support is tightly woven and irregular. Stenciled on the reverse is “J T V C P (R) / Artist colourman / 8 / Stran[d?].”<sup>1</sup> The painting has been lined twice, the last time in 1978. The ground layer is white and thinly brushed. There is a fair amount of underdrawing, probably in pencil. Subsequent layers of warm background pigments were applied with swirling, vigorous strokes; the foreground figures and details were constructed with fairly loose brushwork and rich, fluid paint. The painting is in good condition. Discolored varnish was removed in 1978, and minor losses were inpainted.

**Provenance:** Purchased c. 1841–1842 from the artist by Jonathan Sturges [1802–1874], New York, and Fairfield, Connecticut; his son, Frederick Sturges [d. 1917], New York, and Fairfield, Connecticut; his son, Frederick Sturges, Jr. [1876–1977], New York, and Fairfield, Connecticut.<sup>2</sup>

**Exhibited:** NAD Annual, 1842, no. 214. *Exhibition of the New-York Gallery of the Fine Arts*, New York, 1844–1845, no. 52. *Francis W. Edmonds: American Master in the Dutch Tradition*, Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth; NYHS, 1988, pl. 5.

*The Bashful Cousin* is probably the first work Edmonds completed after returning from his European trip in 1841. Its purchaser was his good friend, Jonathan Sturges, an important New York art patron during the decades preceding the Civil War. Sturges had been the younger partner of the merchant Luman Reed, a generous picture-buyer whose early death was greatly lamented in New York art circles. Stepping in to fill the gap, Sturges acquired a large collection of American canvases and invested considerable sums in artists' organizations, sometimes serving as a financial adviser or trustee. He and Edmonds shared a dual interest in art and commerce, and the two were often the driving managerial forces behind such projects as the New-York Gallery of the Fine Arts and the building fund of the National Academy of Design.<sup>3</sup>

Edmonds and Sturges also shared a love for genre painting. Sturges eventually owned three works by William Sidney Mount and several by Edmonds. Correspondence between Sturges and Mount suggests that the patron preferred interior to

exterior scenes, and groups to single figures. As interiors with legible narratives were Edmonds' specialty (Mount painted more outdoor views), one can surmise that Sturges, who enjoyed speculating on the outcome of the "stories" that structured the genre paintings in his collection, was well pleased with *The Bashful Cousin*. Indeed he purchased another picture from the artist the following year, *Stealing Milk* (location unknown).<sup>4</sup>

The story of *The Bashful Cousin* was succinctly described in 1845 by artist Charles Lanman as "a bashful young fellow . . . taking leave of his friends, who urge him to sit down to tea, which is now ready." Lanman had been the model for Edmonds' male protagonist. As he remembered decades later,

[Edmonds] took me into his studio, and exhibited to me his picture of the 'Bashful Cousin,' which was all finished, excepting the head of the leading figure; and then telling me that he knew all about my innate bashfulness, asked me to help him in his work. I accordingly stepped out upon the floor to the proper distance, looked as sheepish and frightened as possible, and in a very short time the deed was done; and thus was it that the late Jonathan Sturges became the owner of my portrait, as a mimic, without knowing that he possessed such a treasure.<sup>5</sup>

When *The Bashful Cousin* was shown at the National Academy of Design in 1842, critics interpreted the narrative in terms similar to Lanman's. In the *New York Herald*, it was noted that, "Mr. Edmond's [*sic*] pictures tell their own stories without effort or constraint. The familiarity of his fair cousin has not only made the young man more shy, but his dog has caught the infection." While a few periodicals paid more attention to *Italian Mendicants* (location unknown), Edmonds' other canvas in the exhibition, the *Herald* wholeheartedly praised *The Bashful Cousin* as "an exquisitely painted picture."<sup>6</sup> Such enthusiasm may have induced Sturges to lend the picture two years later to the first exhibition of the New-York Gallery of the Fine Arts, an exhibition Edmonds personally installed.<sup>7</sup>

The *Herald's* attention to Edmonds' brushwork was entirely justified, for as H. Nichols B. Clark has observed, *The Bashful Cousin* was something of a technical watershed, coming on the heels of the artist's exposure to the great picture collections of Europe. In addition to a more pronounced reliance on seventeenth-century Dutch compositional models, it displays the artist's increased freedom and fluency with paint and a more sophisticated managing of light and effects of transparency.<sup>8</sup> If the

manner of execution was new, the subject matter of *The Bashful Cousin* was nevertheless quite familiar. With the theme of courtship, Edmonds was returning to a concept that had already brought him a good deal of success just prior to his European trip.

The pioneer in painted depictions of courtship had been Mount, whose *Sportsman's Last Visit* (1835, Museums at Stony Brook, New York) and *Winding Up* (1836, Nelson-Atkins Museum, Kansas City) established parameters for the theme and demonstrated its critical popularity. Mount's scenes took place in humble country interiors, the first pitting two male suitors against one another, the second focusing on the interaction of a single pair of would-be lovers. In 1839 and 1840 Edmonds followed with two paintings of his own, *Sparking* and *The City and Country Beaux* (both Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts). Emulating Mount's *Winding Up*, Edmonds placed a young couple next to a cottage hearth in *Sparking* and then used *City and Country Beaux* to continue the exploration of male rivalry in Mount's *The Sportsman's Last Visit*, pushing the satirical contrast of the urban and rural types to even greater extremes. As Sarah Burns has demonstrated, the popular currency of this subject matter had much to do with its prevalence in contemporary theatrical and literary production.<sup>9</sup>

Both of Edmonds' courtship paintings received enthusiastic reviews when they were shown at the National Academy in 1840, so it is unsurprising that upon his return from Europe he again essayed the theme when faced with the task of preparing an exhibition picture for the 1842 annual. Leaving behind the broad comedy and simplistic oppositions of *The City and Country Beaux* and adding a measure of complexity to the untroubled communion of the *Sparking* pair, he achieved a more nuanced and uncertain scene of social intercourse between the sexes.

Most unusual is the assertiveness of the young woman in *The Bashful Cousin*, whose attempt to stay the man's departure and whose centralized gesture toward the waiting table structure both the painting's narrative and its pictorial space. It is the pivotal act of the drama, apparently provoking some comment from the maternal figure, who, with her distracted husband, functions as a matrimonially linked foil to the not-yet-united younger couple. Although stereotypically seductive with her sinuous hold on his arm; bowing, pirouetting posture; up-turned, imploring gaze; and batting eyelashes (in-



Fig. 1. Francis William Edmonds, sketch for *The Bashful Cousin*, c. 1841–1842, private collection

dividualized and accented by fine strokes of black paint), the daughter is aggressive in a manner almost entirely absent from previous American genre painting. Not until several years later, with Augustus Brower's *Mrs. McCormick's General Store* and Mount's *Eel Spearing at Setauket* (1844 and 1845, both New York State Historical Association, Coopers-town), were female protagonists so prominently placed and actively engaged as keys to the paintings' organization.<sup>10</sup>

Edmonds gives many cues that this particular domestic space is one dominated and controlled by women. At its center are three female figures, two gesturing with some emphasis and one, the black servant, relegated to a rear chamber, beyond the arched doorway. Uncharacteristically marginalized are the two men, pushed laterally toward the edges of the composition. While the older gentleman sips tea from a saucer and turns passively away from the central action, the young "cousin," also turning his back on the women, attempts an exit through the open door, his hat—held outstretched and ready to be placed on his head—suggesting his intended direction.<sup>11</sup> His gravitation toward the "freedom" of the outdoors is matched by nature itself; a green branch of foliage appears to respond to his extended arm, sneaking coaxingly around the corner of the jamb to cast a shadow across the door panel and indicate a route of escape.

The mother and daughter point to a space which

is conspicuously empty: the chair at the end of the table that presumably awaits its male occupant. Light from the window (its directional vector reinforced by the parallel diagonal lines of the bottom edge of the hanging shawl, the girl's arm, and the downward sweep of her apron) also spotlights this central void, drawing the viewer's attention through the reflections on the prominent teapot and the warm glow pooling on the wall above. That the seat opposite is intended for the daughter is indicated by her striped shawl draped over its back. Significantly, both chairs are turned away from the table to face one another in a suggestion of hoped-for intimacy.

Technical analysis reveals a certain consciousness in the gendering of this space. Infrared reflectography shows, for example, that the shawl-covered chair was added as an afterthought, to clarify the desired seating arrangement as well as the implied outcome of the story. Similarly, the bonnet and shawl hanging above the "male" chair have been painted over a masculine hat (the father's?), which, although clearly visible on examination with infrared, is read by the naked eye only as a vague pentimento.<sup>12</sup> The light-colored man's hat hanging on the wall of the compositional sketch for *The Bashful Cousin* (fig. 1), however, gives an idea of Edmonds' original conception.<sup>13</sup> The change is more than cosmetic; in effect the new bonnet and spreading shawl "claim" the room as feminine space, covering and subverting the painted-out hat, along with its masculine implications. In the shadows above, a suspended rifle can barely be discerned. Hanging out of reach and impotently upside down, it similarly offers no contest to the more prominent articles below it.

Edmonds often turned to literature as a source for his compositions, and Clark has proposed that *The Bashful Cousin* derives from James Kirke Paulding's extremely popular novel, *The Dutchman's Fireside* (1831).<sup>14</sup> Indeed there is much within Paulding's book that accords with the complexities of Edmonds' canvas. The story takes place in the Hudson River Valley (Edmonds' home region) during the eighteenth century, when Dutch-speaking descendants of early colonists remained a distinct community. The protagonists are Sybrandt Westbrook (described in a chapter title as "a bashful young gentleman") and his distant "cousin," Catalina Vancour, the niece of his adoptive uncle. Other Paulding characters who would correspond to Edmonds' figures are the young woman's par-



Francis William Edmonds, *The Bashful Cousin*, 1978.6.4

ents, the Vancours, and the family cook, the slave "Aunt Nauntje." Young Westbrook, socially awkward and reserved, is secretly in love with his Vancour cousin but, according to the novel, is "too bashful to be much in her company."<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, after much misunderstanding and several contrived plot twists, Westbrook ultimately overcomes his bashfulness, saves his cousin's life on more than one occasion, and ends by proposing marriage.

Recent interpretations of *The Dutchman's Fireside* suggest internal narrative strategies that bear comparison to the structuring of Edmonds' canvas. Paulding's novel is unusual among American "frontier" tales because it is more concerned with a "spatial and moral 'middle ground'" than the extremes of civilization and savagism.<sup>16</sup> Sybrandt Westbrook (of urbane, British birth, but socialized in the rustic Dutch culture) moves among several worlds during the course of the novel. His important wilderness initiation—through perilous frontier service in the French and Indian War—functions not as an "escape" from Hudson River society in the manner of James Fenimore Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales*, but rather as a preparation for assuming his final role *within* that rural society. Westbrook is no more at home in the virgin forest than he is in cosmopolitan New York City, yet he must experience both extremes (particularly the former) as a kind of proving ground in order to take his place comfortably at the center of the Vancour domestic orbit. Like Edmonds' figure, he is initially "divided and unformed," unsure of his relationship to others.<sup>17</sup> Outdoor activity—the lure of the branch of natural foliage in Edmonds' doorway—will be the cure of his awkward bashfulness in the presence of females. Only then will he be able to fill the central "void" so conspicuous in the Vancour household.

That Edmonds might have turned to Paulding's novel as a source is unsurprising. Its popularity had earlier led other artists, including Charles Loring Elliott and Robert W. Weir, to attempt paintings from the book.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, there are several possible connections between Paulding and Edmonds. The painter (as well as his patron, Sturges) was a member of the Sketch Club, a cultural and social group at which Paulding is known to have been a guest. (The writer was actually friendly with many painters and had formed his own art collection.)<sup>19</sup>

Perhaps more interesting, however, are the political ties of Edmonds and Paulding. Both were active partisans within the New York Democratic party.

Edmonds was named to significant posts of political patronage (see Biography) and was connected to the Albany party machine through his brother John, who had close ties with Martin Van Buren. Paulding, in turn, served for years as President Van Buren's naval secretary and was one of the most powerful voices for the party's controversial policy of opposing abolition of slavery in order to ensure continued support in the South. In *The Dutchman's Fireside*, he uses the character of Aunt Nauntje to promote his view of slavery's beneficence. In a protracted attack on abolitionists, he describes the relationship of master and slave as "one of the most endearing and respectable of all those which subsist between man and man." Slaves were happiest, he asserts, when kept ignorant of "miscalculating philanthropy" so as to spend their lives as passive, "faithful retainers," quietly remaining at the "kitchen fireside" ready to serve their masters—an ancillary position similar to that of Edmonds' black servant, not yet emerging from the obscurity of a back room.<sup>20</sup>

Party politics also seem related to *The Bashful Cousin* in ways having little to do with Paulding or his novel. The trait of bashfulness was a topic of some literary interest during the 1830s. An essay entitled "Miseries of Bashfulness," for example, appeared in the *Southern Literary Messenger* in 1836. It was a first-person account by one "Marlow" of his painful inability to be socially conversant with women, resulting in his desiring, like Edmonds' figure, to escape alone to "a lodge in some vast wilderness."<sup>21</sup> A different treatment of the theme had appeared a year earlier, in the *New-York Mirror*, when Mordecai M. Noah published his essay, "A Bashful Man."<sup>22</sup> Noah recounts an interview with a pitifully shy and silly man who, because of his bashfulness and "ill-breeding," finds himself unable to marry. Significantly, Noah (a loyal journalist and functionary of New York City's Tammany organization) casts his observations in political analogies. When the bashful man initially bursts into his office, Noah is engaged in "thinking of a whig candidate for president, who would not run the risk of being knocked on the head by our friends the moment his name was announced." Essentially conflating Whig timidity with his intruder's unmanly bashfulness, Noah holds up his young son as an example for his visitor: "That little one who struts about in a paper cocked-hat and wooden sword, with which, ever and anon, he pokes at my ribs, while deeply engaged in considering how the

nation is to be saved . . . ; he is a Jackson man; all children, sir, are Jackson men; he goes for a soldier if there be wars." Thus Noah ascribes the undesirable qualities of reticence and fear of women to the Whig party, and he invokes Democrat and war hero, Andrew Jackson (within the meaningful context of the family) as a model of aggressive courage.<sup>23</sup>

Still, in the Democrat Noah's description of the comically blustering "Jackson man," there is a detectable degree of self-parody as well. The mocking in Edmonds' picture is also rather gentle. The question arises, then, as to whether *The Bashful Cousin* might contain less pointed references to events in the life of its maker. During the time that Edmonds was presumably working on the painting, in fact, he gave up his own involuntary "bachelorhood" (the result of his first wife's death) and in November 1841 married Dorothea Lord. In the end, Edmonds, refreshed from his European trip, may have seen *The Bashful Cousin* as a timely opportunity for a jest at his own expense.

JD

## Notes

1. The stencil mark, incompletely recorded in the NGA conservation files, is concealed by the 1978 lining.
2. Letter of 18 January 1966 from Frederick Sturges, Jr. (in NGA curatorial files), provides information on the descent of the painting within the Sturges family.
3. Information on Sturges and the arts can be found in, among other sources, "Our Private Collections, No. II," *The Crayon* 3, February 1856, 57–58; Cummings 1865; Cady 1894; and Dickson 1973.
4. The Sturges-Mount correspondence, in which the patron at least once suggested a specific literary source for "some capital scenes," is published in Frankenstein 1975, 97–100. In a letter to John F. Kensett of 10 February 1841, Edmonds expressed an interest similar to Sturges', writing, "You know I am partial to interiors" (as quoted in Mann 1977, 61).
5. Lanman 1845, 241; Charles Lanman, "Noted Amateur Painters. Artistic Recollections by Charles Lanman," *Art Union* 1, August/September 1884, 158–159. The latter reference was kindly added to the NGA curatorial files in 1980 by Maybelle Mann and was quoted in Clark 1988, 70.
6. "National Academy—Cutting Criticisms," *New York Herald*, 16 June 1842. Edmonds is known to have preferred *The Bashful Cousin* to *Italian Mendicants*; see Edmonds 1981, 10.
7. See Mann 1979, 78. Sturges was president of the New-York Gallery of the Fine Arts, Edmonds its vice-president.
8. Clark 1988, 68–70.
9. On the theme of courtship and its exploration in these paintings, see Burns 1986, 51–75; Edwards 1986, 21–22, 78–87; and Conrads 1990, 51–57. The chapter,

"The American Cousin," Taylor 1976, 37–94, examines the "cousin" type in American theater and art and suggests connections to Edmonds' similarly titled picture.

10. Johns 1991, chap. 5, discusses this dearth of active women. Although she does not consider *The Bashful Cousin*, she notes (235n. 6) that Edmonds was the sole antebellum male artist to include women in his compositions with some regularity. *City and Country Beaux*, for example, prominently features a standing, gesturing woman similar to the figure in *The Bashful Cousin* (although her act of introducing the two male suitors is a good deal more demure than that of her counterpart in the National Gallery's painting). In a much later courtship work, *Time to Go* (1857, private collection), Edmonds reverted to the shy, passive female type, withdrawn into a corner. Here the narrative is the reverse of *The Bashful Cousin*: A persistent suitor, his hat forgotten on the floor beside him, overstays his welcome, as the perturbed glare of his sweetheart's father clearly indicates.

11. Clark 1988, 68, speculates that Edmonds "touched upon changing domestic manners" by contrasting the husband's old-fashioned saucer-sipping with his wife's more refined use of a teacup and further notes that the father's attention to his newspaper indicates "a concern with outside affairs" that would take him, in mind if not in body, beyond his domestic confine. Edmonds' emphasis on tea-drinking may also have been an effort to please his patron Sturges, New York's leading merchant of tea and coffee.

12. Other changes visible through infrared reflectography and x-radiography are the late addition of the sympathetically bashful dog, the shortening of the daughter's dress, and a shift in the young man's right leg, placing him closer to the open door.

13. The oil sketch is probably not the only preliminary study for *The Bashful Cousin*. An Edmonds sketchbook in the MMA contains figure drawings which, although not identical to the two women in the painting, are possibly early trials for their rhetorical poses. See letter of 31 December 1991 from Kevin Avery (in NGA curatorial files).

14. Clark has discussed the possible connections to *The Dutchman's Fireside* in several publications, including Clark 1988, 67–68. The novel was Paulding's most successful work of fiction, going through six editions within a year of publication. For a time in the 1830s, it is thought to have been the most popular book in the United States; it was translated into Danish, Dutch, French, German, and Swedish during that decade. See Reynolds 1984, 13, 125.

15. Paulding 1837, 1:24. The connection to *The Dutchman's Fireside* is compelling; however, no scene in the novel corresponds precisely to Edmonds' picture.

16. The phrase and interpretation are from Person 1981, 42. See also Reynolds 1984, 121–128.

17. Person 1981, 43, 46, 49.

18. See Callow 1967, 190; and "The Lessons of Art: Charles L. Elliott, the American Portrait Painter," *Knickerbocker* 36, July 1850, 85.

19. Clark 1988, 23; Callow 1967, 87.

20. Paulding 1837, 1:72–73. *The Bashful Cousin* inaugurates Edmonds' interest in African-American figures. They appear with increasing frequency during the 1850s,

notably in his *Devotion* (1857, private collection), which shows a black female servant blowing on a spoonful of soup to cool it before feeding it to her aged master, a perfect pictorial counterpart to Paulding's argument. On the "Aunt Nauntje" figure, see also Morgan 1995, 90–91.

21. "Miseries of Bashfulness," *Southern Literary Messenger* 2, July 1836, 465–466. "Marlow" also writes: "Of all the evils which harass the human family, none is perhaps more tormenting or more difficult to be removed, than bashfulness—a feeling sufficient in itself to blast the most promising hopes, and render useless the most brilliant abilities." This fictional narrator is undoubtedly named for the similarly bashful protagonist, also called Marlow, in Oliver Goldsmith's widely popular drama *She Stoops to Conquer*. See letter of 18 September 1993 from Marc Simpson (in NGA curatorial files).

22. M.M. Noah, "A Bashful Man," *New York Mirror* 12, 7 March 1835, 282–283.

23. Unmasculine behavior on the part of the Whigs was a standard humorous device in American political prints published at the time of the presidential election of 1840. Edward Clay's lithograph, *This Is the House that Jack Built*, for example, shows Whig Senator John C. Calhoun as a forlorn milkmaid in a dress, and "Boneyshanks" *Clar de Kitchen* depicts Whig presidential candidate William Henry Harrison attired as a scullery maid and chasing Democratic politicians from his kitchen. See Reilly 1991, 172, 176.

#### References

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1845 Lanman: 240–241.

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1949 Larkin: 220.

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1980 Wilmerding: 70, no. 16, color repro. 71.

1981 Edmonds: 10.

1981 Williams: 81–82, repro. 83.

1982 Clark, "Genre": 218–223, 228–229, 238, fig.

25.

1982 Clark, "Fresh Look": 78, 80, 82, 85–86, fig.

13.

1988 Clark: pl. 5.

1988 Wilmerding: 80, no. 17, color repro. 81.

1989 Burns: 278.

1995 Morgan: 90–91, color repro.

## Jacob Eichholtz

1776 – 1842

JACOB EICHHOLTZ was born on 2 November 1776 in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and spent much of his life there.<sup>1</sup> His first drawing lessons were rudimentary, obtained as a youth from a sign painter. After apprenticing with a copper- and tinsmith, he was hired as a journeyman in 1801 and subsequently established his own tinsmithing business, at which he worked until 1812. In 1815 he sold his enterprise and devoted himself to painting.

Eichholtz's portraits in profile date from as early as 1805. In 1808 he met Thomas Sully, who was in Lancaster working on a portrait commission, and offered Sully the use of his "painting room."

Chance about this time threw a painter into the town of my residence. This in a moment decided my fate as to the arts. Previous to the arrival of this painter, I had made some rude efforts with tolerable success, having nothing more than a bootjack for a palette, and anything in the shape of a brush, for at that time brushes were not to be had, not even in Philadelphia. At length I was fortunate enough to get a few half-worn brushes from Mr. Sully, being on the eve of his departure for England. This was a great feast to me, and enabled me to go on until others were to be had.<sup>2</sup>

In these early years, as Eichholtz later recalled, "Part of the day I wrought as coppersmith, the other part as painter." His 1809 to 1817 ledger, which records his tinsmithing trade and other

business, is interspersed with entries for portraits.<sup>3</sup>

Eichholtz painted profile portraits throughout his career, but employed this format far less frequently after 1810. The early profile figures are simple and only somewhat painterly. In contrast, the portraits that constitute the majority of his oeuvre (1810–1842) are more mature in style and are more sensitive and thoughtful renderings. Full-faced, these images are much richer in modeling and color. They recall Sully's style, especially in their linear edges, the soft, luminous, porcelain-like quality of the skin, and the clear, sparkling eyes; however, the likenesses are less romantic than Sully's and are grounded in an unpretentious realism.<sup>4</sup>

In 1811 Eichholtz visited the celebrated Gilbert Stuart in Boston, and began to exhibit with the Society of Artists at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.<sup>5</sup> During the next several years he spent weeks at a time in Baltimore completing portrait commissions and found work in Pittsburgh and in Delaware.<sup>6</sup> By 1821 he was in Philadelphia, where he lived for ten years before returning to Lancaster in 1832. He continued to exhibit at the Pennsylvania Academy until his death in 1842. Although best known for his portraiture, he also painted landscape and history subjects as well.

An essentially self-taught painter, Eichholtz showed marked progression in his technical skills throughout the 1810s and 1820s.<sup>7</sup> Befitting both his own inclinations and the preferences of the times, his mature portraits are attractive and truthful, but perhaps slightly idealized, images of his subjects, rather than psychologically insightful likenesses. His most ambitious compositions, but not necessarily his most satisfying ones, are those of the 1830s in which he employed elaborate backgrounds and accoutrements.

DEBORAH RINDGE / DC

#### Notes

1. Eichholtz was married twice, first to Catharine Michael Hatz, a widow with two children and with whom he had four more children, and then to Catharine Trissler, with whom he had nine children. Beal 1969, xix and xxv, lists conflicting dates for the first marriage: 25 January 1795 and 17 April 1803. His second marriage was in 1818.

2. Dunlap 1834, 2:385.

3. Eichholtz ledger, HSP, as cited by Beal 1969, xi. Beal is the foremost authority on Eichholtz and

her findings form the basis for this biographical essay.

4. E. P. Richardson ascribes the straightforward quality of Eichholtz's work to the characteristic simplicity of the Pennsylvania German culture from which the artist sprang. Beal 1969, xxiii.

5. Rutledge 1955.

6. Dunlap 1834, 1:330.

7. Milley 1960, 9, notes a passage by Joshua Reynolds that Eichholtz recorded in his daybook and that may reflect his attitude toward his training: "Under the influence of sloth, or some mistaken notion, is that disposition which always wants to lean on other men. Such students are always talking of the prodigious progress they should make, if they could but have the advantages of being taught by some particular eminent master. To him they would wish to transfer that care which they ought to take themselves. Such are to be told that after the rudiments are past, very little of our art can be taught by others."

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Russel. "Eichhold [*sic*] the Painter." *Port Folio* 5 (April 1811): 340–342.

*Lancaster* 1912: 117–120.

Hensel 1913: 48–75.

Hostetter 1925: 107–111.

Milley 1960.

Beal 1969.

Lasansky 1982: 25, 28–29, 32–35, 42, 76.

1953.5.11 (1207)

#### *Mr. Kline*

c. 1808

Oil on wood panel, 22.7 × 17.6 (8<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 6<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)

Gift of Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch

**Technical Notes:** A light brown-beige ground was thinly brushed on a vertically grained yellow poplar panel (0.5 cm thick) with rough cut, rather than smooth finished, edges. A portrait is roughly blocked out on the reverse of the panel. The paint was applied in thin layers extending to all edges but the bottom, where it stops roughly 1 cm short. The highlights of the shirt are done with a slightly more painterly technique. The jacket and details of the hair were painted wet-into-wet, blending slightly with underlying paint that had not completely dried. The gray background has faded slightly where it was not protected by the frame, leaving a lighter oval around the figure. There are a few scattered areas of inpainting. The painting was most recently treated in 1948, when discolored varnish was removed from the front and a wax coating was applied to the reverse of the panel. The varnish has become slightly discolored.

**Provenance:** Purchased 1948 by Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch, New York, and Cambridge, Maryland.<sup>1</sup>



Jacob Eichholtz, *Mr. Kline*, 1953-5.11

**Exhibited:** *American Primitive Paintings from the Collection of Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch*, NGA, 1954, pl. 51.

THIS half-length profile of a young man facing left is identified only as Mr. Kline, a name common in nineteenth-century Pennsylvania.<sup>2</sup> Nothing further is known about this sitter.<sup>3</sup> His attire, which confirms the date of circa 1808, consists of a fashionable coat with high rolled collar, a waistcoat with high collar, a pleated stock, a high shirt collar with the right point turned out more than the left, and a knotted cravat. His serious countenance and erect bearing are not mitigated by the tousled hair, which has been brushed forward in curling strands onto his face. He affects the modish “*coup de vent*” (literally, windblown) hairstyle popular among men in this period.

The thin, loose application of paint, typical of Eichholtz’s profile portraits, is particularly noticeable in the flowing cravat and wisps of hair.<sup>4</sup>

DEBORAH RINDGE

#### Notes

1. Recorded in their files as found in Pennsylvania (in NGA curatorial files).

2. The panel is inscribed on the reverse: “my great Grandfather Kline / Grandmother.”

3. According to Hensel 1913, 35, Eichholtz painted a Mrs. Michael Kline, date unknown.

4. For a discussion of the history of profile portraits in America, see the entry for *Profile Portrait of a Woman* [1953.5.83] by an unknown artist in Chotner 1992.

#### References

1960 Milley: 303.

1969 Beal: 129, no. 432.

1953.5.12 (1208)

*Jacob[?] Leman*

c. 1808

Oil on wood panel, 22.9 × 17.5 (9 × 6<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>)

Gift of Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch

#### Inscriptions

On reverse: Adelia Leman / 1808

On reverse, at upper right corner: (5)

**Technical Notes:** The support is a vertically grained yellow poplar panel (0.5 cm thick) with smoothly cut edges, over which a thin, beige-brown fluid ground was applied. The paint is in thin, opaque layers extending to

the bottom and right edges; at the top and left the paint stops before the edge, exposing the ground in a border approximately 5 cm wide. The technique was primarily wet-into-wet, smoothly blended, with low impasto in the background and slight impasto in the highlights of the buttons and the collar. The figure was painted within an oval. The slight abrasion overall has been inpainted in a few small rubbed areas and scattered losses. The painting was most recently treated in 1948, when discolored varnish was removed from the front and a wax coating was applied to the reverse of the panel. The varnish has become slightly discolored.

**Provenance:** Leman family, Lancaster, Pennsylvania; by descent to Adelia Leman [1857–1947], Lancaster, grandniece of the artist.<sup>1</sup> Acquired, likely purchased from Adelia Leman’s estate, in 1948 by Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch, New York, and Cambridge, Maryland.

**Exhibited:** *Jacob Eichholtz 1776–1842, American Artist*, Philadelphia Art Alliance, 1943, no. 24, as *George Leman*.

THE ARTIST’S GRANDNIECE identified the sitter of this half-length portrait as George Leman (1800–1830), but a date of circa 1808, based on costume and hairstyle, makes this impossible. The coat, which is distinguished by a high rolled collar, “W” notched lapel, and metal buttons, is worn with a striped gray waistcoat, black stock, and cravat, and a white turned-out collar. The disheveled hairstyle, with hair brushed forward onto the forehead and accompanied by long, rather frail sideburns, was enormously popular among men at this time.

The sitter is probably George Leman’s father, Jacob, a farmer and brewer who married Catharine Eichholtz, the artist’s sister, in 1792; the Lemans became the artist’s neighbors.<sup>2</sup> Beal has noted that this sitter bears a strong resemblance to Jacob Leman in another portrait by Eichholtz, dated circa 1805.<sup>3</sup>

Portraits by Eichholtz of three of Jacob and Catharine Leman’s twelve children are in the National Gallery’s collection as well: profiles of Joseph Leman [1953.5.13], and Miss Leman [1953.5.14], and a later, full-face portrait of Henry Eichholtz Leman [1954.1.5].

DEBORAH RINDGE

#### Notes

1. Helen W. Henderson’s opening comments in the brochure accompanying the 1943 exhibition *Jacob Eichholtz, 1776–1842, American Artist* at the Philadelphia Art Alliance, report: “A peculiarly touching incident was a visit to the outskirts of Lancaster to see the collection of a grandniece of the painter’s. She sat in her bower sur-



Jacob Eichholtz, *Jacob (?) Leman*, 1953.5.12

rounded by these souvenirs of a rich past. A particularly charming phase of the artist's work is a series of small oval portraits on wood. Many of them are family portraits and we were fortunate in procuring four from her collection."

2. Beal 1969, 135. A genealogy of the Leman family is in the NGA curatorial files.

3. This portrait, in a private collection, is discussed in Beal 1969, 133, no. 449, repro. 276.

#### References

- 1960 Milley: 30, as George Leman.  
1969 Beal: 135, no. 458, repro. 283.

1953.5.13 (1209)

### *Joseph Leman*

c. 1808

Oil on wood panel, 22.9 × 17.2 (9 × 6¾)  
Gift of Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch

#### Inscriptions

On reverse, possibly in another hand: Joseph Leman / 5th Year / Adelia Leman / 1880

**Technical Notes:** The support is a vertically grained yellow poplar panel (0.3 cm thick), over which a slightly off-white ground was applied in sweeping vertical strokes. The oval occupied by the portrait is marked by a thin line of deep reddish brown paint. Inside the oval, the background paint appears to have been laid in first, leaving space for the boy and the bird in reserve. The technique is wet-into-wet. Only the white of the collar and the buttons retains texture. The face is badly abraded. Inpainting has compensated for the thinness of paint in the face and is lightly scattered elsewhere. The painting was last treated in 1948, when discolored varnish was removed from the front and a wax coating was applied to the reverse of the panel. The varnish has not discolored.

**Provenance:** same as 1953.5.12.

**Exhibited:** *Loan Exhibition of Historical and Contemporary Portraits Illustrating the Evolution of Portraiture in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania . . .*, Woolworth Building, Lancaster, 1912, no. 156b. *Jacob Eichholtz, 1776–1842, American Artist*, Philadelphia Art Alliance, 1943, no. 22.

JOSEPH LEMAN (1805–1832), a nephew of the artist and one of twelve children born to the artist's sister Catharine and her husband Jacob, wears a skeleton suit, popular attire for male children in the first decade of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> His portrait is striking in two respects. First, the bird that he holds in his left hand, while a fairly common attribute of childhood in portraits, is somewhat un-

usual for a profile portrait.<sup>2</sup> Objects are rarely present in these simplified portraits, but there are examples in which an adult holds a book or pen, and a child holds a book, a bird, or a piece of fruit. Second, backgrounds in profile portraits are usually monochromatic and flat, but the background here is green in the lower half, blue in the upper half, suggesting a landscape. Eichholtz also painted another blond Leman boy, of slighter physique and in similar costume; the background of that picture is also vaguely suggestive of a landscape.<sup>3</sup>

DEBORAH RINDGE

#### Notes

1. Costume identified by Shelly Foote, Museum Specialist, Division of Costume, NMAH (letter of 21 October 1988 in NGA curatorial files).

2. The black and white bird with a red head does not appear to correspond to any common species of the eastern United States. It may be imaginary or a pet imported from an exotic locale.

3. *Boy of the Leman Family*, before 1810 (private collection); see Beal 1969, 134, repro. 283.

#### References

- 1913 Hensel: 69.  
1960 Milley: 307.  
1969 Beal: 134, repro 281.

1953.5.14 (1210)

### *Miss Leman*

c. 1808

Oil on wood panel, 21 × 17 (8¼ × 6⅞)  
Gift of Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch

#### Inscriptions

At lower left, possibly in another hand: upper line illegible; lower line "Sept 22 18[11?]"

At lower right, possibly in another hand: "JE Scrip"

**Technical Notes:** The support is a vertically grained yellow poplar panel (0.5 cm thick) over which the ground, a thin layer of light brown paint with a small admixture of black, was applied in vertical strokes. The freely brushed background paint extends to the edges of the panel only at the upper left corner and forms a rough oval elsewhere, leaving space in reserve for the figure. The figure was worked with fluid, thin paint, blended wet-into-wet, but the white ruffle is slightly more pastose. Numerous dents in the surface, including one at the bridge of the sitter's nose, have been filled and inpainted. The painting was most recently treated in 1948, when discolored varnish was removed, and a wax coating was applied to the reverse of the panel. The varnish has not discolored.



Jacob Eichholtz, *Joseph Leman*, 1953-5.13



Jacob Eichholtz, *Miss Leman*, 1953.5.14

**Provenance:** same as 1953.5.12.

**Exhibited:** *Loan Exhibition of Historical and Contemporary Portraits Illustrating the Evolution of Portraiture in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania . . .*, Woolworth Building, Lancaster, 1912, no. 156c, as *Margaret Adelia Leman*. *Jacob Eichholtz, 1776–1842, American Artist*, Philadelphia Art Alliance, 1943, no. 23, as *Margaret Adelia Leman*. *American Primitive Paintings from the Collection of Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch*, NGA, 1954, pl. 50, as *Margaret Adelia Leman*.

FOR MUCH of this century, the sitter in this portrait of an adolescent girl, adorned with a gold necklace and large gold hoop earring, has been identified as Margaret Adelia Leman (1817–1842). The costume and hairstyle, however, support a date of circa 1808, suggesting that the sitter is instead one of her older sisters. The high-waisted dress with a low ruffled neck was fashionable in the first decade of the nineteenth century, as was hair pulled back in a twisted braid and fixed with a tortoiseshell comb.

The twelve children born to the artist's sister Catharine Eichholtz Leman and her husband, Jacob, included eight daughters. This is most likely the oldest child to have survived infancy, Catharine (1796–1857), who was fourteen in 1808.<sup>2</sup>

Jacob Eichholtz painted numerous portraits of members of the Leman family at different ages. One of these is thought to depict Catharine Leman when she was much older.<sup>3</sup> Three other members of the Leman family are represented in the Gallery collection: *Mr. Leman* [1953.5.12], who is likely this girl's father, and her younger brothers, *Joseph Leman* [1953.5.13], and *Henry Eichholtz Leman* [1954.1.5].

DEBORAH RINDGE

#### Notes

1. This partially legible date, written in graphite, does not appear to be in the artist's hand. Because it was added after-the-fact and because the painting conforms to Eichholtz's profile portraits that are dated circa 1808, the circa 1808 is preferred.

2. This identification was proposed by Beal 1969, 135. The next oldest surviving Leman daughter is Maria (1798–1871), who was ten years old in 1808.

3. *Catharine Leman* (c. 1830, National Trust for Historical Preservation, Washington), discussed in Beal 1969, 132, repro. 339.

#### References

- 1913 Hensel: 69, as *Margaret Adelia Leman*.  
1960 Milley: 308, as *Margaret Adelia Leman*.  
1969 Beal: 135, repro. 283.

1959.6.1 (1534)

## *The Ragan Sisters*

1818

Oil on canvas, 151.2 × 108.0 (59 1/2 × 42 1/2)  
Gift of Mrs. Cooper R. Drewry

**Technical Notes:** The support is a fine, plain-weave fabric that was lined in 1946 and relined in 1960. An off-white ground was applied thinly, but with a certain amount of activity in the brushstrokes. Paint was also applied relatively thinly, with edges abutting rather than overlapping; however, there is low impasto in the whites and evidence of brushstroking. Infrared reflectography reveals rather complete drawing defining the hands, the ribbons on the hats, and the edges of the dresses and indicated changes in the lengths of the sleeves. Photographs taken prior to the 1946 and 1960 treatments reveal extensive paint loss and flaking of the paint layer. Many of the losses have been inpainted, and the inpainting has reinterpreted the folds in the curtain and the clouds in the sky.

**Provenance:** Mary Ragan's daughter, Mary (Mollie) Ragan Macgill [Mrs. Henry Rosenberg, 1839–1917], Galveston, Texas; bequeathed to her nephew, Dr. Cooper R. Drewry, Catonsville, Maryland; upon his death to his wife, Mrs. Cooper R. Drewry, Baltimore.

**Exhibited:** *Behold the Child*, Baltimore Museum of Art, 1950, unnumbered. *American Painters of the South*, CGA, 1960, no. 48. *Faces of America* [inaugural exhibition], El Paso Museum of Art, Texas, 1960–1961, no cat. *Two Centuries of American Portraits*, University of Kentucky Art Gallery, Lexington; Paducah Art Gallery, Kentucky; J.B. Speed Museum of Art, Louisville, 1970, no cat. *Sesquicentennial Exhibition*, Cummer Gallery of Art, Jacksonville, Florida, 1972, no. 6.

THIS WORK stands out as one of Eichholtz's most ambitious and successful portraits. Not known primarily as a painter of children, the artist in this instance has, nevertheless, produced a pleasingly graceful and sympathetic image. The restraint that characterizes Eichholtz's work is here used to convey sisterly affection without saccharinity.

Mary (with bonnet on her arm) and Elizabeth Barbara Ragan were the daughters of a successful Hagerstown, Maryland, merchant, Richard Ragan and his wife (and cousin) Elizabeth Ragan.<sup>1</sup> The older of the two subjects, Mary, was born on 12 June 1807; her younger sister on 1 February 1809. Judging from their apparent ages in the portrait and the simple, neoclassical-style gowns, the depiction dates from around 1818. This date, as well as the attribution to Eichholtz, are confirmed by an



Jacob Eichholtz, *The Ragan Sisters*, 1959.6.1

entry in their father's account book.<sup>2</sup> Although one record indicates the painting was made in Hagerstown, no documentary evidence places Eichholtz there.<sup>3</sup> By 1817 Eichholtz had painted other portraits in Maryland.<sup>4</sup> It is also possible that the portrait was executed in Baltimore. The subjects' father undoubtedly would have traveled to that port city often on business, and by 1820 Eichholtz was also working there.<sup>5</sup>

An intriguing element in the painting that may also suggest a Baltimore connection is the section of building behind the sisters. Although not clearly identifiable, the pointed arches of its niches recall the entablature of the facade of Saint Mary's Chapel, Baltimore. Designed by Maximillian Godefroy and built at Saint Mary's College in 1806, the church's exterior is an intriguing combination of classical and Gothic forms.

Fig. 1. Jacob Eichholtz,  
*Catherine Schlatter Ragan and Richard Ragan*,  
oil on canvas, c. 1818, Collection of  
Mr. and Mrs. Jervis S. Janney



Eichholtz painted a companion portrait of the Ragan sisters' siblings, *Catharine Schlatter Ragan and Richard Ragan* (fig. 1).<sup>6</sup> In it Catharine, about eight years old, is dressed identically to her sisters in a long-sleeved white gown, and the background also has a red curtain draped across the right corner; however, with a more intricate composition, busy floor pattern, whip-wielding boy, and leaping dog the painting lacks the classical repose of its pendant. Both portraits are likely to have hung in the elegant Ragan family home, which was built in the center of Hagerstown in 1812. Its "entrance hall on Potomac Street [was] decorated with scenes depicting Grecian games on the one side and Roman chariot races on the other side, each the full length of the hall. . . . Each room, of which there were fourteen, excepting the servants, contained an open fireplace, most of them constructed and decorated with exquisite marble mantels."<sup>7</sup>

Having no signature or inscription, *The Ragan Sisters* came to the National Gallery in 1959 without a firm attribution. It was assigned to Eichholtz on the basis of an 1895 photograph, which identified the portrait as "by Eichholz [*sic*]," and the assessment of several authorities including Rebecca Beal and J. Hall Pleasants of the Maryland Historical Society. The subjects' heart-shaped faces, bow mouths, and peculiarly elongated, but flattened noses are distinctive details also found in the artist's portrait of his daughter Catharine Maria Eichholtz, c. 1815.<sup>8</sup>

The painting descended in the family of Mary Ragan, who married Charles Macgill (1806–1881) of Baltimore County in 1829. Together they had eleven children, including Mary Ragan Macgill, at whose Galveston, Texas, home the elder sitter died in 1897. Elizabeth Barbara Ragan married a merchant, William Nurse Riddle, in Hagerstown in 1847. They had no children. She died at Martinsburg, West Virginia, in 1856.<sup>9</sup>

DC

#### Notes

1. Portraits exist of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Ragan that may be by Eichholtz. Beal termed them "[less] firmly characteristic of the work of Eichholtz . . . [than] the portraits of Ragan children attributed to him"; however, the late Dr. J. Hall Pleasants found them "typical" (Beal 1969, no. 690, 199).

2. The 3 July 1818 entry, opp. 26, Richard Ragan Account Book (Manuscript Division, Maryland Historical Society) reads: "Check for A B on nea— to ja— [or pay?] Eichholtz [*sic*] [\$\$\$]120.00." Eichholtz charged \$30.00 per portrait at this time and he appears to have

painted two double portraits for Ragan that included all four of the merchant's offspring. I am indebted to Franklin Kelly for calling my attention to the existence of Ragan's ledger.

3. Notes on the back of an 1895 photograph of the portrait read "from an oil painting by Eichholz [*sic*] . . . done in Hagerstown, Maryland in 1820" (transcription in NGA curatorial files).

4. "Notes on the Life of Jacob Eichholtz" from 25 August 1817 in Beal 1969, xxvi.

5. An indication of Ragan's business in Baltimore is his 1815 commission of a dozen elegant, painted, Sheraton-style sidechairs from the shop of well-known Baltimore cabinet-makers John and Hugh Finlay. (Examples of these chairs survive in the collection of the Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore.) Dunlap reports in 1820: "At Baltimore, on my homeward journey, I found three portrait painters. Rembrandt Peale, who was living there, and had a museum and gallery—Sully and Eichholtz [*sic*] visitors. The latter painting good hard likenesses at thirty dollars the head, had most of the business" (Dunlap 1834, 1:330).

6. Beal 1969, no. 689, 198–199, dated this portrait 1820 but did not include the reasons in her entry.

7. News clipping dated Tuesday, 26 June 1979 (in NGA curatorial files), quoting Lloyd K. Hoffman. This information kindly provided by Elizabeth Graff, Curator, Washington County (Maryland) Historical Society, 14 May 1993.

8. Beal 1969, no. 193, 302.

9. Beal 1969, 199.

#### References

- 1960 Milley: no. 53, 379.  
1969 Beal: no. 692, 199–200.  
1988 Wilmerding: 74, color repro 75.

1947.9.1 (903)

### *Ann Old Coleman* (*Mrs. Robert Coleman*)

c. 1820

Oil on canvas, 92.0 × 71.7 (36 1/4 × 28 1/4)

Gift of William C. Freeman

**Technical Notes:** Both paintings were executed on a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric support. They were removed from their stretchers and marouflaged to hardwood panels during treatment in 1935, which resulted in a disfiguring emphasis of the fabric weave in both paintings. Cusping exists along the left and right cut fabric edges. Paint was applied in a fairly free and fluid manner over a thin, white ground layer, using both wet-into-wet and wet-over-dry techniques. Although mostly opaque layers were employed, there is appreciable glazing in Robert Coleman's coat and in the red color of the background in Ann Coleman's portrait. Robert's face appears reasonably finished, in contrast to his very sketchy

hands. The backgrounds of both pictures appear to have been painted after the completion of the figures. The red paint of the chair is visible through some of the thinner areas in Robert's left arm, suggesting that there were minor compositional changes in the outline of the figure. The paint appears to be in good condition although it is slightly thin in certain areas. In Robert's portrait there is slight abrasion (and consequent inpainting) in certain areas of the background. In Ann's portrait, some of the folds in the drapery have been slightly strengthened by later inpainting. The varnish has become slightly discolored on both paintings.

**Provenance:** same as 1947.9.2

**Exhibited:** same as 1947.9.2

1947.9.2 (904)

### *Robert Coleman*

c. 1820

Oil on canvas, 91.7 × 71.0 (36 1/8 × 27 15/16)

Gift of William C. Freeman

**Provenance:** Thomas Bird Coleman [1794–1836], son of the sitter, Cornwall, Pennsylvania; his daughter, Margaret Coleman Freeman [1820–1894], Cornwall, Pennsylvania; her daughter, Margaret Freeman Buckingham [1857–1946], Washington, D.C.; her nephew, William C. Freeman, Cornwall, Pennsylvania.

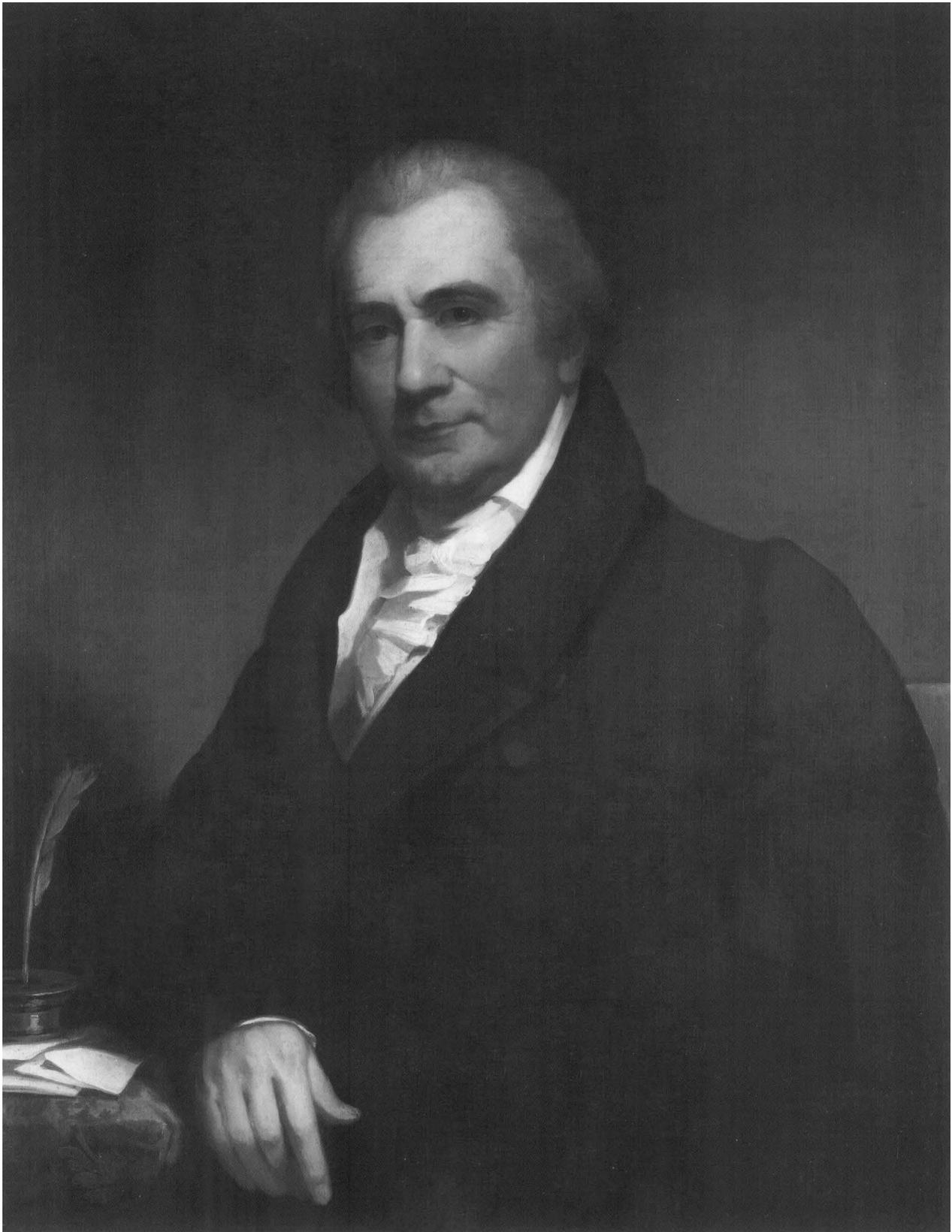
**Exhibited:** Maier Museum of Art, Randolph-Macon Women's College, Lynchburg, Virginia, 1952–1953, no cat. NMAH, on long-term loan, 1964–1987 (*Robert Coleman* only).

BY THE TIME Robert Coleman sat to Jacob Eichholtz he was one of America's wealthiest men and one of Pennsylvania's most influential citizens. Eichholtz's conservatism as a portraitist resulted in an image of a sturdy, self-possessed individual, but hardly suggests the grandeur of spirit and material possessions that a man of such financial and social success might ordinarily be expected to display. The artist's approach, in fact, evinces a certain pragmatism of which Coleman himself would have approved.

Born on 4 November 1748 in County Donegal, Ireland, Robert Coleman immigrated to this country in 1764.<sup>1</sup> A letter of introduction enabled him to find work as a clerk in one of the Biddle family's stores and subsequently he was recommended for the position of court clerk at Reading, a job he held for two years. His next role, as bookkeeper at



Jacob Eichholtz, *Ann Old Coleman (Mrs. Robert Coleman)*, 1947.9.1



Jacob Eichholtz, *Robert Coleman*, 1947.9.2

Hopewell Forge in Lancaster County, provided him an introduction to the iron business. After six months he went on to Quitapahilla Forge, where he again distinguished himself, and where he married his employer's daughter, Ann Caroline Old, in 1773. By a combination of astute judgments and good luck he went on to operate and acquire interests in several Pennsylvania iron forges, and quickly became the sole owner of Elizabeth Furnace at Lancaster. For a number of years the Revolutionary War assured a steady demand for all the cannon and shot his foundry could produce.

Coleman served briefly in the revolution as a second lieutenant but was most valued in the war effort as master of his iron works. His other military involvement was as captain of the Lancaster Troop of the Light Horse which traveled to western Pennsylvania in 1795 to assist in the suppression of the Whiskey Rebellion. Coleman's political experience included one year in the Pennsylvania legislature in 1783, participation in the 1787 convention in which Pennsylvania ratified the United States constitution, and acting as a representative to the Pennsylvania Constitutional Convention in 1790. A staunch Federalist, he used his influence at every opportunity and appears to have been at least partly responsible for the election of John Adams to the presidency in 1796.<sup>2</sup>

In 1791 Coleman was commissioned associate judge of the Lancaster Courts, a position he held for the next twenty years. After 1809, when he moved into the borough of Lancaster and his sons assumed some of the management of his iron interests, he became active in the community and served as a bank director and a trustee of Franklin College (he had been made a trustee of Dickinson College in 1802). At his death on 14 August 1825 the *Lancaster Journal* eulogized, "Thus has departed from us, full of age and honor, a man who stood first among those who must rank as the most valuable members of society, and the most revered examples to mankind."<sup>3</sup>

The National Gallery's paintings of Robert Coleman and Ann Old Coleman are one of at least two sets of portraits Eichholtz painted of these sitters.<sup>4</sup> It was not uncommon for Eichholtz to paint multiple versions of portraits, presumably in most cases, to satisfy the sitter's many heirs: There are at least two identical depictions of Judge Walter Franklin; and perhaps as many as ten replicas of General John Steele, six of which have been identified.<sup>5</sup> Located in the collection of Edward C.

Delafield, Riverdale, New York, the other set of Coleman paintings differ in size from each other and from the National Gallery pair.<sup>6</sup> They appear to be slightly looser and fresher in handling, but it is not possible to determine which set was made first.

The circa 1820 date for the portraits is based upon elements of costume and the sitters' apparent ages.<sup>7</sup> Eichholtz probably had known the Colemans for some time before he executed their likenesses. Both he and two of their sons were enrolled in the first class (1787) at Franklin College. Evidence in the Eichholtz ledgers indicates that in 1809 he sold Coleman some copper wares and on 9 June 1812 there is the entry "Robert Coleman, to 1 gilt frame."<sup>8</sup>

Eichholtz also painted portraits of numerous Coleman children: daughter Sarah, sons Edward, George, Peter, James, and James' wife Harriet Dawson Coleman.<sup>9</sup> The family continued to be one of the most important in Pennsylvania: Thomas Sully's ambitious portrait of three granddaughters, *The Coleman Sisters*, 1844 [1947.9.3], is also in the National Gallery's collection.

Ann Caroline Old, the daughter of important Pennsylvania ironmaster James Old and Margaret Davies Old, was born 21 May 1756 and, when she was seventeen, married Robert Coleman on 4 October 1773. She and Robert had fourteen children.<sup>10</sup> At the time her portrait was painted, she was in her mid-sixties. In the National Gallery's portrait Ann Old Coleman's face is somewhat rounder and softer than in the Delafield version. Her mouth is given more definition and her eyes are wider and more rounded, both of which give her a slightly more youthful appearance. Even so, the subject is depicted as quite venerable. She also appears modest and kindly, with her hands folded in a quiet, almost pious gesture. All these virtues would have been usefully applied in her role as matriarch of a large family. When she died on 11 October 1844 she was eighty-eight-years old.

DC

#### Notes

1. Biographical information on the sitter comes from Beal 1969, 39, no. 127, and from Klein 1961, 141-166. Klein's article is a fascinating account of the personalities involved in the boom years of Pennsylvania's iron industry.

2. Klein 1961, 156.

3. As quoted in Klein 1961, 162.

4. A letter dated 29 August 1962 from Beal (in NGA curatorial files) makes reference to a third set of Coleman portraits, owned by a Mrs. William Phillips of Washing-

ton, D.C., and North Beverly, Massachusetts. Beal did not include these in her 1969 book.

5. As listed in Beal 1969, the replicas of Franklin are nos. 279 and 280, and those of Steele are nos. 793–798.

6. The Delafield portraits are nos. 127 and 129 in Beal 1969. Robert Coleman is also represented in duplicate portraits of another pose and slightly earlier date (c. 1812); see Beal 1969, nos. 124 and 125.

7. Beal dates the portraits a few years earlier, c. 1815.

8. The 1809 transaction is mentioned in a letter of 7 May 1953 from Beal (in NGA curatorial files); the 1812 entry is quoted in Beal 1969, 38.

9. Hensel 1913, 9, notes that, according to Eichholtz's records, "Sarah's picture" was delivered to Robert Coleman in 1820. The other Coleman children's portraits are listed in Beal 1969, nos. 119–123. For unspecified members of the family depicted by Eichholtz in his early profile style, see Beal 1969, nos. 131–134.

10. Beal 1969, 37, indicates that seven Coleman children survived infancy. Klein 1961, 158n. 1, says that in 1809 (at which point Ann Coleman was fifty-three) the couple had five sons and five daughters.

## References

- 1960 Milley: 358–359.  
1969 Beal: 39, nos. 127, 128.

1947.17.110 (1018)

## *Julianna Hazlehurst*

c. 1820

Oil on canvas, 75.3 × 62.9 (29<sup>5/8</sup> × 24<sup>3/4</sup>)  
Andrew W. Mellon Collection

## Inscriptions

False monogram at base of column: TS<sup>1</sup>

**Technical Notes:** A white ground of medium thickness was applied over the fairly rough, medium-weight, plain-weave fabric support. The painting has been lined. The paint was somewhat thinly applied but varies considerably, appearing very fluid in some areas and lean and particulate in others. The modeling of the sitter's hands, blended wet-into-wet, left a smooth surface, while brushwork is more visible in other areas of flesh such as the chest. The paint is in poor condition in much of the background and in the lowest areas of the sitter's dress, where it appears worn and there are scattered losses. These areas have been heavily inpainted. There are two inpainted lines of damage along the sleeve, another through the sitter's right temple and mouth, and many smaller inpainted damages scattered throughout the painting. The varnish is thick and has become considerably discolored.

**Provenance:** Thomas B. Clarke [1848–1931], New York;<sup>2</sup> his estate; sold as part of the Clarke collection 29 January 1936, through (M. Knoedler & Co, New York), to The A.W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

**Exhibited:** *A Loan Exhibition of Paintings by Early American Portrait Painters*, Century Association, New York, 1928, no. 19, as by Thomas Sully. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered, as by Thomas Sully.

JULIANNA HAZLEHURST, the daughter of Samuel Hazlehurst and his wife Elizabeth Baynton Markoe of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, was born on 2 August 1802. She married the Reverend Caleb J. Good, an Episcopal minister from Hartford, Connecticut, and later resided in West Chester, Pennsylvania. Mrs. Good died 8 March 1876.<sup>3</sup>

Once attributed to Thomas Sully, this portrait was subsequently reassigned to Eichholtz by several authorities including Rebecca Beal.<sup>4</sup> Eichholtz knew Sully, admired his work, and may have been attempting to emulate it when he depicted this sitter with an elongated neck, delicate mouth, and large eyes. While the painting does not display the remarkable affinity for feminine subjects so apparent in Sully's accomplished, elegant images, the awkwardness of the figure in *Julianna Hazlehurst* is typical of Eichholtz's portraits of women about 1820.<sup>5</sup> The subject's large head, triangular shoulders, and strangely shaped and positioned chest are similar to those portraits of *Sarah Barry Dale* (1822, private collection) and *Nancy Ann Wilmer* (c. 1825, private collection).<sup>6</sup> The paisley shawl, which is painted more loosely than the figure, is also characteristic, both in its inclusion and painterly technique, of Eichholtz's depictions of women in the 1820s.<sup>7</sup>

DC

## Notes

1. The inscription, in red paint, showed evidence in a technical examination of being a later addition. It also does not follow the typical form of a Thomas Sully signature that, apparently, it was meant to suggest.

2. The provenance of this object is unclear. A circa 1954 note (in NGA curatorial files) includes it in a list of Clarke collection objects that came through the dealer Augustus de Forest and that bore false signatures in red paint; however, other Clarke collection records do not list this work as a de Forest painting. Further file notes indicate that it was "said to be from the collection of Mary Hazlehurst [*sic*], Westtown, Pennsylvania, a niece of the sitter," but again no evidence exists. There are also letters dated 9 and 27 April 1925 (in NGA curatorial files) from Mary B. Hazlehurst Mason of Westtown concerning her aunt (the sitter) to Charles X. Harris (Clarke's agent), but their content concerns genealogy rather than purchase arrangements.

3. Beal 1969, 104.

4. See NGA curatorial files for a summary of nine opinions concerning the portrait. All these experts agreed that the painting appeared to be by Eichholtz rather than Sully.



Jacob Eichholtz, *Julianna Hazlehurst*, 1947.17.110

5. Milley 1960, 37, suggests that this is most apparent in Eichholtz's work of between 1810–1827.

6. Beal 1969, no. 148, repro. 320, and no. 872, repro 327.

7. In a lecture at the National Gallery on 16 September 1990 (notes in NGA curatorial files), Nathalie Rothstein, Curator Emeritus, Textile Furnishings and Dress, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, discussed this shawl. Its border pattern, adapted from Indian motifs, replaces a European type.

#### References

1969 Beal: no. 337, 105.

1947.17.3 (911)

### *William Clark Frazer*

c. 1830

Oil on canvas, 76.2 × 63.5 (30 × 25)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

#### Inscriptions

On reverse, in another hand: William Clarke [*sic*] Frazier [*sic*] / Counsellor at Law / painted in the year 1835. / AE.T. 57 Years 4 mo & 29 days /- Eichholtz -/ Ex—<sup>1</sup>

**Technical Notes:** The support is a fine, plain-weave fabric that has been lined. Cusping appears on all four cut edges. The warm white ground layer is artist-applied and appears to consist of two layers, a smooth thin coat applied overall, followed by a thicker, coarser layer brushed in the central area of the support, in an unusual pattern. Paint was applied simply, with little layering, and with reserves left for all design elements. The face was painted with thin, opaque layers of fluid paint blended wet-into-wet and with glazes. The slight halo along the contours is the exposed ground layer. The painting has a small loss in the bottom center. Numerous small areas of the face and white shirtfront have been inpainted. The painting was last treated in 1959, when it was lined, discolored varnish was removed, and it was restored. The painting appears to have several layers of varnish, all of which are semi-matte and have not discolored.

**Provenance:** The sitter [1776–1838]; probably his son, Reah Frazer [1804–1856]; the sitter's granddaughter, Susan Carpenter Frazer [d. 1930], Lancaster, Pennsylvania, by 1912; sold March 1923 to Thomas B. Clarke [1848–1931], New York; his estate; sold as part of the Clarke collection 29 January 1936, through (M. Knoedler & Co., New York), to The A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

**Exhibited:** *Loan Exhibition of Historical and Contemporary Portraits Illustrating the Evolution of Portraiture in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania . . .*, Woolworth Building, Lancaster, 1912, no. 88. *Exhibition of Portraits by Early American Portrait*

*Painters*, Union League Club, New York, February 1924, no. 2. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered. *Jacob Eichholtz*, Historical Society of York County, York, Pennsylvania, 1959, no. 39.

IN THIS QUIET PORTRAIT with subdued black and gray tones, the subject's head is bathed in a dramatic Rembrandtesque light while the edges of the composition fall into darkness. Frazer's intelligent, kindly, light brown eyes anchor the image. Eichholtz has used a light touch to model the sitter's fleshy cheeks and brow skillfully and to suggest the texture of his hair and his velvet-collared coat. A pendant portrait by Eichholtz of Frazer's wife Susan and a copy of Frazer's portrait (probably by Arthur Armstrong, 1798–1851) are both in the collection of the Lancaster County Historical Society.

Given that the sitter was born in 1776, a date of c. 1830 for Eichholtz's portrait seems approximately correct. Frazer was born in Rich Neck, Kent County, Delaware. He married Susan Carpenter in 1803 and lived in New Castle, Delaware, until 1813 when the couple moved to Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Together they had five children, including Mary Clark Frazer (Mrs. James Patriot Wilson, Jr.), whose portrait (North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh) was painted by Eichholtz in 1833, and Reah Frazer (b. 1804), the location of whose portrait is unknown.<sup>2</sup>

William Frazer attended Princeton, studied law in Lancaster, and was admitted to the bar in 1801. In 1836 President Jackson appointed him one of the Supreme Court Judges for the Territory of Wisconsin.<sup>3</sup>

DC

#### Notes

1. The inscription is now hidden by the lining. It is not considered contemporary to the painting.

2. Beal 1969, 250, no. 873; Hostetter 1925, incorrectly dates Reah Frazer's portrait to 1822.

3. Biographical information on Frazer comes from Beal 1969, 89.

#### References

1913 Hensel: 10.  
1925 Hostetter: 291, no. 81.  
1969 Beal: 89, no. 288.



Jacob Eichholtz, *William Clark Frazer*, 1947.17.3



Jacob Eichholtz, *Phoebe Cassidy Freeman*, 1947.17.45

1947.17.45 (953)

*Phoebe Cassidy Freeman*  
(Mrs. Clarkson Freeman)

c. 1830

Oil on canvas, 68.9 × 56.6 (27 1/8 × 22 5/16)  
Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The support is a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric that has been lined. The ground consists of a reddish pink layer beneath a light gray layer. Paint was applied in thin, opaque layers with little texture. Minor areas of inpainting are apparent in the bottom left and top right corners of the painting. The entire background appears to have been overpainted, as can be seen in the area surrounding the sitter's hair, where the brown has been applied over the original paint layer. The painting was relined in 1959 at which time discolored varnish was removed from the face and décolletage. The varnish has become slightly discolored.

**Provenance:** Probably Robert Lindsay Eichholtz [1833–1912], Lancaster; his stepdaughter, Susan L. Ziegler; sold December 1920 to Thomas B. Clarke [1848–1931], New York; his estate; sold as part of the Clarke collection 29 January 1936, through (M. Knoedler & Co., New York), to The A.W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

**Exhibited:** *Exhibition of Paintings by Early American Portrait Painters*, Union League Club, New York, November 1921, no. 11. *A Loan Exhibition of Paintings by Early American Portrait Painters*, Century Association, New York, 1928, no. 10. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered. *Jacob Eichholtz*, Historical Society of York County, York, Pennsylvania, 1959 (organized by Pennsylvania State Museum, Harrisburg), no. 36. *Jacob Eichholtz, 1776–1842, Pennsylvania Painter, A Retrospective Exhibition*, PAFA, 1969, no. 19, pl. 6.

PHOEBE CASSIDY, the youngest of John and Sally Freeman Cassidy's eight children, was born in 1812. The year of her marriage to her cousin Dr. Clarkson Freeman, is unknown, but by 1833 the couple had at least one child. When she died in 1850 Phoebe Freeman was buried in the Trinity Lutheran Church Yard, Lancaster; later she was reinterred in the Cassidy plot at Woodward Hill Cemetery, Lancaster. Some time after her death her husband and at least one son, Alexander C. Freeman, left Lancaster, "never to return."<sup>1</sup>

Eichholtz appears to have painted the elder Dr. Clarkson Freeman, a Lancaster doctor and Phoebe's father-in-law, in 1821 and her grandfather Abraham Freeman in 1820.<sup>2</sup> While it is likely that Phoebe's circa 1830 portrait was made in Lancaster, it might have been painted in Philadelphia,

where Clarkson Freeman studied medicine and where his marriage to Phoebe may have taken place.<sup>3</sup> In 1831 Eichholtz, who had been working and exhibiting in Philadelphia since 1821, purchased a home at 46 South Lime Street in Lancaster, and the likeness of Phoebe Freeman was in that residence when it was purchased by Thomas B. Clarke. How or why the painting came to be in the possession of the Eichholtz family rather than with the Cassidys or Freemans remains a mystery.

*Phoebe Cassidy Freeman* is one of Eichholtz's most relaxed and confident efforts. The absence of distracting background detail and of intricate costume elements directs attention to the sitter's softly lighted and delicately modeled face. With her even features, slight smile, bright eyes, alert expression, and gracefully coiffed hair, she is an attractive, palpably real subject—what Beal calls a fine example of the artist's "simple classic style."<sup>4</sup>

DC

**Notes**

1. Clarke collection notes (in NGA curatorial files).
2. Clarkson Freeman's portrait (location unknown), is listed in Beal 1969, no. 292, 90, as from Hostetter 1925; Abraham Freeman's portrait (Historical and Philosophical Society of Cincinnati), is in Beal 1969, no. 290.
3. Clarke collection notes (in NGA curatorial files) indicate there is no record of the Freemans' marriage at the Trinity Lutheran Church and state "they were probably married either in Philadelphia while he was a student, or in New Jersey."
4. Beal 1958. Beal, memorandum of 1960 visit (placed in NGA curatorial files 2 April 1961), also notes that the brown shadows used in this work are of the same type as those in Eichholtz's portrait of Henry Eichholtz Leman [1954.1.5].

**References**

- 1928 Sherman, "Portraits": 126.  
1932 Sherman: 106.  
1958 Beal.  
1960 Milley: no. 83, 292.  
1969 Beal: no. 292, 91.

1954.1.5 (1189)

*Henry Eichholtz Leman*

c. 1835

Oil on canvas, 76.5 × 64.2 (30 1/8 × 25 1/4)  
Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The plain-weave, medium-weight fabric support has been lined. Over the smoothly and evenly applied white ground the paint was layered, and



Jacob Eichholtz, *Henry Eichholtz Leman*, 1954.1.5

the lower layers remain slightly visible beneath the upper layers at several points. The paint apparently was applied wet-into-wet, rather quickly. There are scattered scratches and areas of abrasion, but the hair and the shadows of the face have been inpainted. The painting was most recently treated in 1948, when it was relined, discolored varnish was removed, and the painting was restored. The varnish has become moderately discolored, its haziness masking the subtle variations in the black coat.

**Provenance:** By descent in the family to Adelia Leman [1857–1947], Lancaster, daughter of the subject; sold 20 March 1917 to Thomas B. Clarke [1848–1931], New York; his estate; sold as part of the Clarke collection 29 January 1936, through (M. Knoedler & Co., New York), to The A.W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

**Exhibited:** *Loan Exhibition of Historical and Contemporary Portraits Illustrating the Evolution of Portraiture in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania . . .*, Woolworth Building, Lancaster, 1912, no. 156. *Exhibition of Portraits by Early American Artists*, Union League Club, New York, March 1922, no. 7. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered. *Jacob Eichholtz*, Historical Society of York County, York, Pennsylvania, 1959, no. 38.

EICHHOLTZ'S PORTRAIT of his nephew Henry Eichholtz Leman is an accomplished example of his mature work.<sup>1</sup> By the 1830s the artist painted with considerable self-assurance and technical skill. The portrait is graced by what is, for Eichholtz, an unusually spacious area surrounding the figure. Gradations of paint layers ranging from green over brown-red at the bottom of the canvas to brown-red at the top add visual interest to the background. The subject, shown in an easy, unidealized manner as intelligent and youthful, has a pleasant demeanor and perhaps even a faint smile. What the image does not reflect is the sitter's determination and growing business acumen.

Born on 8 March 1812, the tenth child of Eichholtz's sister Catharine and her husband Jacob Leman, Henry Leman became a successful firearms manufacturer.<sup>2</sup> At the age of sixteen he began a three-year apprenticeship with a noted Lancaster gunsmith, Melchior Fordney. This he followed by three years as a journeyman with the George Tryon rifle factory in Philadelphia. In 1834 he returned to Lancaster where he established his own factory. His first large order was for a merchant with trade in the southwest. In a short time Leman rifles achieved a national reputation for outstanding quality. From 1837 until the 1860s Leman had successive contracts to supply 1,000 rifles annually to

the government. He declined to supply 250,000 new rifles during the Civil War because of the expense of the new machinery it would have required, but his company converted thousands of old flintlock guns for the conflict.<sup>3</sup> The factory continued in operation until his death.

Sixteen years after Eichholtz painted this portrait, Leman married Anna Dubois. They had six children. He died 12 May 1887.

DC

#### Notes

1. Milley 1960, 137–138, calls this stage in the artist's career the "Period of Technical Proficiency." He names works from this time that are characterized by "fine lines and sharp edges," and exacting draftsmanship and suggests these have an affinity to portraits by Eichholtz's contemporary, Henry Inman.

2. Other Eichholtz paintings depicting Leman family members in profile are the c. 1808 *Jacob(?) Leman* [1953.5.12], *Joseph Leman* [1953.5.13], and *Miss Leman* [1953.5.14].

3. This information about Leman comes from Beal 1969, 132, and Diffenderfer 1904, 67–78.

#### References

- 1913 Hensel: 35, as *Henry E. Leman*.  
1960 Milley: 11, 137–138.  
1969 Beal: 132, no. 448.

1947.17.4 (912)

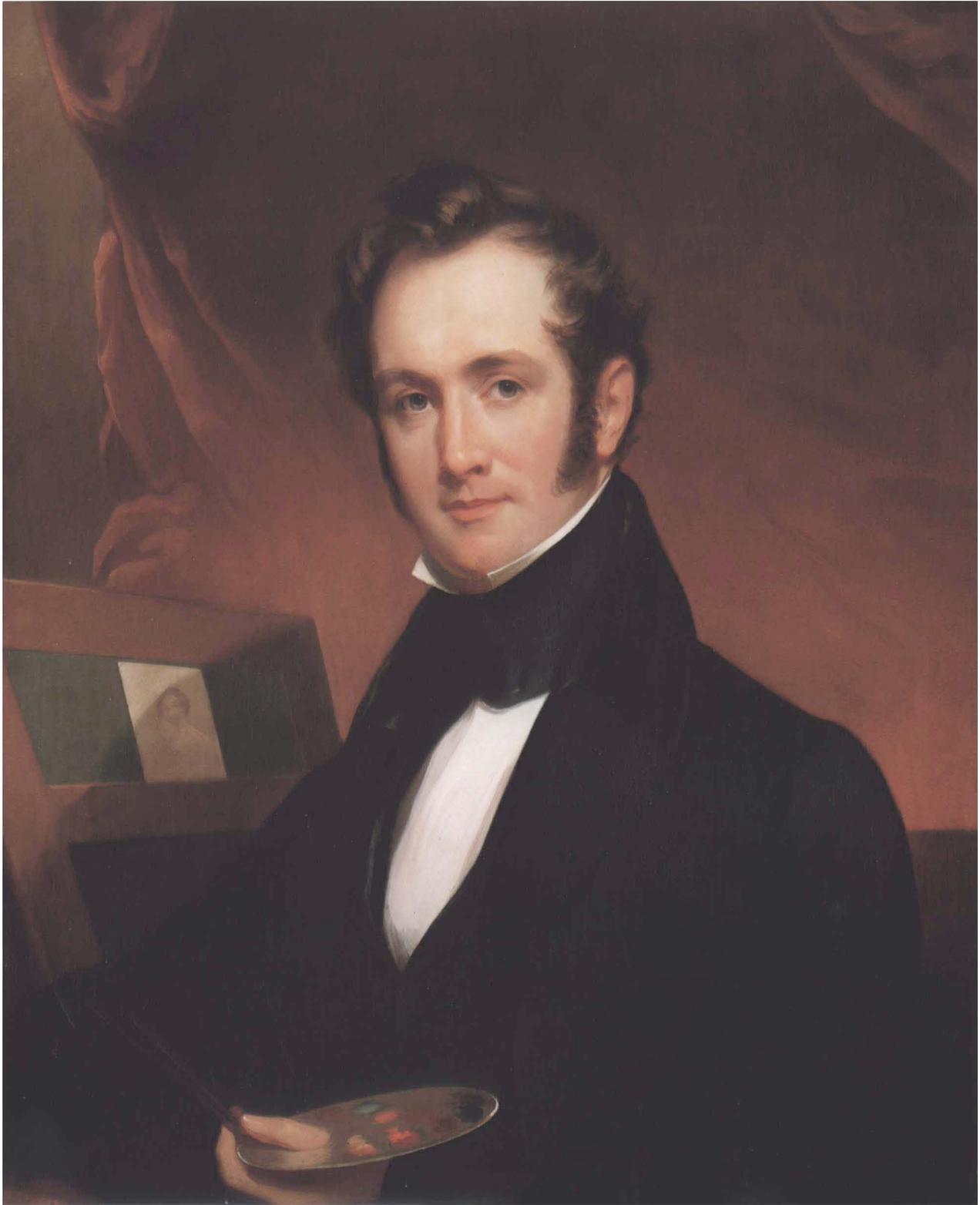
*James P. Smith*

c. 1835  
Oil on canvas, 75.5 × 63.5 (29<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 25)  
Andrew W. Mellon Collection

#### Inscriptions

On reverse, in another hand: Painted by / Jacob Eichholtz / 1835<sup>1</sup>

**Technical Notes:** The support is a plain-weave, medium-weight fabric. The painting has been lined, but cusping along all cut edges suggests that the image has not been reduced. There is a creamy white ground. X-radiography reveals a thick, dense layer of ground in a roughly oval shape, covering a large portion of the center. The paint layer is of medium thickness and applied evenly across the surface of the painting; however, the black paint of the sitter's coat overlaps that defining the hair and face. The thicker paint of the face is somewhat abraded. During treatment in 1959, discolored varnish was removed and the painting was lined and restored. The varnish has become moderately discolored.



Jacob Eichholtz, *James P. Smith*, 1947.17.4

**Provenance:** The sitter [c. 1808–1888]; (his estate sale, Stan V. Henckels, Philadelphia, 14 December 1920, no. 91); Thomas B. Clarke [1848–1931], New York; his estate; sold as part of the Clarke collection 29 January 1936, through (M.Knoedler & Co., New York), to The A.W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

**Exhibited:** *Exhibition of Paintings by Early American Portrait Painters*, Union League Club, New York, December 1921, no. 9. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered. *Jacob Eichholtz*, Historical Society of York County, York, Pennsylvania, 1959, no. 37. NMAA, on long-term loan, 1973–1990. *Tokens of Affection: The Portrait Miniature in America*, MMA; NMAA; AIC, 1990–1991, no cat.

JAMES PASSMORE Smith was born in Philadelphia around 1803.<sup>2</sup> By 1824 he was established as a painter of miniatures, having perhaps received instruction from his friend Thomas Sully. He counted among his close associates painters John Neagle (1796–1865) and Jacob Eichholtz.

Between 1824 and 1850 Smith exhibited seven works at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and, although most of his portraits appear to have been copies after other artists, he was a well-respected miniaturist.<sup>3</sup> After 1850 when failing eyesight caused him to give up miniature painting, he continued to teach drawing in ink. He and his wife Mary A. Adams had five children. Smith died of injuries in 1888.

## Charles Loring Elliott

1812 – 1868

CHARLES LORING ELLIOTT, the son of an architect and building contractor, was born in Scipio, New York. After brief stints as a store clerk in nearby Syracuse and as an employee of his father, Elliott succeeded in convincing his family to allow him to go to New York City in 1829 to become a painter. For a short time he worked under the tutelage of John Trumbull (1756–1843), but when this arrangement proved unsatisfactory, he spent six months in the studio of John Quidor (1801–1881). At the conclusion of this period of study, he left the city and for the next ten years worked as an itinerant portrait artist in central and western New York State, particularly the town of Skaneateles, and

Eichholtz's portrait of his friend is a sympathetic, if not dashing, image of an artist amidst the tools of his trade. Palette (resting on a somewhat poorly realized hand—the only awkward note in this technically proficient work), fine brushes, and a miniature-in-progress on the easel, establish Smith's identity; however, he does not appear to be actively at work. Smith engages the viewer with a gaze from his penetrating blue eyes, a good example of Eichholtz's characteristically strong delineation of this feature.

DC

### Notes

1. The writing is now obscured by the lining.
2. Clarke collection research (in NGA curatorial files), gives Smith's birth date as 1804; Johnson 1990, 203, lists it as 1803; Beal 1969, 223–224, dates it c. 1803.
3. "Smith's skillfully executed miniatures give an effect of spontaneity and achieve strong characterization. The flesh is rendered by delicate stippling. The background is often a bold sky-and-cloud design" (Johnson 1990, 203).

### References

- 1960 Milley: 326, with incorrect provenance.  
1969 Beal: 223–224, no. 779.  
1990 Johnson: 203.

experimented with genre and landscape painting.

Elliott returned to New York City in 1839. Following his election as an associate member of the National Academy of Design in 1845, he became a frequent and copious exhibitor of portraits in the Academy's annuals. (The only sour note in his genial relationship with members of the Academy came in 1860, when he was accused of cutting, while in an intoxicated state, one of his pictures from its frame as it hung in the yearly exhibition. A subsequent apology from Elliott seems to have smoothed any ruffled feathers.)

Although he engaged in occasional travel in the Northeast, his later career was almost exclusively

centered in New York City; the death of his friend Henry Inman in 1846 made him the undisputed favored portraitist of that metropolis. Throughout the next several decades, his vigorous and highly colored likenesses (more often of men than women) remained consistently popular. In general, his work was based on a meticulous observation of individual physical characteristics and a firm belief in an unfailing naturalism. Indeed, he is known to have worked directly from daguerreotypes later in his career.

As was normal for an artist of his stature, Elliott was a member of both the Sketch Club and the Century Association in New York; however, he chose to live across the river in Hoboken, New Jersey. Shortly before his death, he moved to Albany for largely unexplained reasons. When he died there (possibly of brain cancer) several months later, his body was returned to New York, where his artist-friends organized an impressive funeral cortege, a ceremonial lying-in-state at the National Academy, and a memorial exhibition of some three dozen of his portraits to honor his achievements. At least one writer suggested an Elliott monument in Central Park, but this seems never to have progressed beyond the initial proposal.

JD

#### Bibliography

- "The Lessons of Art: Charles L. Elliott, the American Portrait-Painter." *Knickerbocker* 36 (July 1850): 84–86. Tuckerman, *Book*, 1867: 300–305.  
 Thorpe 1868.  
 Bolton 1942: 59–96.  
 Schmidt 1955.  
 Harding 1989: 42.

1947.17.6 (914)

### *William Sidney Mount*

c. 1850  
 Oil on canvas, 77.2 × 64 (30<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 25<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)  
 Andrew W. Mellon Collection

#### Inscriptions

At center right: C.L. Elliott.

**Technical Notes:** The fine-weight, plain-weave fabric support is unlined and attached to its original four-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher. On the reverse of the fabric is the manufacturer's stencil, "GEO. [or<sup>E</sup>] ROWNEY

& C<sup>O</sup> / MANUFACTURERS / 51, RATHBONE PLACE / LONDON.," and the supplier's stencil, "25-30 / S.N. DODGE'S / ARTIST & PAINTER'S / SUPPLY STORE / 189 Chatham [or] / 61 Oliver St. / N YORK." The grayish-white ground is visible through the thin, widely spaced brushstrokes of the background and garments but not the thicker and more smoothly blended areas of flesh. A small tear on the lapel of the sitter's jacket has been patched on the reverse. In 1956–1957 discolored varnish was removed and the painting was restored. A strip-lining was added in 1995 to reinforce the tacking margins. The background is abraded slightly, and there is slight, selective inpainting there and at the edges. The varnish is thin and has not discolored.

**Provenance:** The artist, Hoboken, New Jersey, and Albany, New York; his estate; (sale, George A. Leavitt, New York, 7 December 1876, no. 46);<sup>1</sup> David Johnson [d. 1908], New York; his widow, Marie Louise Johnson, Walden, New York; John W. Reid, Walden;<sup>2</sup> purchased 26 or 28 March 1917 by Thomas B. Clarke [1848–1931], New York;<sup>3</sup> his estate; sold as part of the Clarke collection 29 January 1936, through (M. Knoedler & Co., New York), to The A.W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

**Exhibited:** NAD Annual, 1850, no. 114. *Exhibition of Portraits by Early American Artists*, Union League Club, New York, March 1922, no. 22. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered. *The Face of American History*, Columbia Museum of Art, South Carolina, 1950, no. 5. *American Portraits from the National Gallery of Art*, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, 1951, no. 23. *Opening Exhibition of the George Thomas Hunter Gallery of Art*, Chattanooga Art Association, Tennessee, 1952, unnumbered. [opening exhibition] Mint Museum, Charlotte, North Carolina, 1952, no cat. *Famous Americans*, Washington County Museum of Fine Arts, Hagerstown, Maryland, 1955, no cat. *Painter of Rural America: William Sidney Mount, 1807–1868*, NGA; City Art Museum of St. Louis; WMAA; M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco, 1968–1989, repro. on title page. *Two Centuries of American Portraits*, University of Kentucky Art Gallery, Lexington; Paducah Art Gallery, Kentucky; J.B. Speed Art Museum, Louisville, Kentucky, 1970, no cat.

A BODY of puzzling and conflicting data surrounds this portrait of genre painter William Sidney Mount (1807–1868), one of at least two that Elliott executed of his good friend. In addition to the National Gallery's picture, there is a similarly sized portrait of Mount by Elliott, now at Stony Brook, New York, that descended within the sitter's family (fig. 1).<sup>4</sup> The Stony Brook version was copied twice, once by David Johnson (1850, PAFA), who also apparently purchased the National Gallery's painting from Elliott's estate in 1876, and once by Mount himself (1851, Museums at Stony Brook, New York). A possible copy of still another Elliott

likeness of Mount by Francis B. Carpenter (1851, NYHS) and a lithograph by Charles Crehan issued by Goupil & Co. in 1850 raise the possibility of a third portrait by Elliott (location unknown).<sup>5</sup>

Elliott and Mount seem to have enjoyed a remarkably close friendship. “Elliott has a soul, there is nothing small about him,” Mount wrote to Charles Lanman in 1850.<sup>6</sup> Although Elliott was the younger of the two, Mount admired him as the more accomplished painter. Thus, he undoubtedly looked forward to his friend’s visit to Stony Brook in 1848 as an opportunity to learn from the celebrated portraitist. In this he was not disappointed. In an autobiographical sketch, Mount explained, “[Elliott] had promised—sometime previous—that if I would sport a pair of mustaches, he would make me a present of my portrait. The hair and canvass was ready, and Elliott painted one of his best portraits.”<sup>7</sup>

Fig. 1. Charles Loring Elliott, *Portrait of William Sidney Mount*, oil on canvas, 1848, The Museums at Stony Brook, Gift of the Estate of Ruth S. Kidder; Mrs. Mary Rackliffe, Miss Edith Douglass, Mr. Andrew E. Douglass in memory of Mrs. Moses Douglass and Mrs. Scott (Ruth S.) Kidder, 1956



Mount studied and recorded Elliott’s procedure, writing at length in his journal on 28 October:

Charles Elliott Esq. finished the head of my portrait this day. The picture is to be completed in N.Y. He took three sittings, from three to four hours each time. . . . The first sitting he made a careful drawing with charcoal—then commenced with his colors (as they were laid on the palette, White, Naples yellow, yellow ochre, Vermillion, madder lake, Ultra-marine blue, Prussian blue, Stony Brook Umber, and Ivory Black; in finishing, he added Vandyke Brown and asphaltum) giving a general effect of the head in a broad manner. The second sitting he strengthened the effect and corrected the drawing where it was out. The third sitting was merely toning—by glazing, scumbling, and touching in with pure colours the reflections etc with the brush or rubbing in the colors with his thumb or fingers. In glazing the background, he scumbled or broke down the colors with the end of a large brush.<sup>8</sup>

Neither the Stony Brook nor the National Gallery’s portrait is dated, and both have elements that correspond to this elaborate description. The vibrant colors of the National Gallery’s portrait, for example, seem closer to Mount’s account of Elliott’s palette; the more somber likeness at Stony Brook shows evidence of the artist’s manipulation of background paint with both the point of the brush and his bare hand.

The two portraits of Mount were apparently both shown at the National Academy of Design, one in 1849 (as *Portrait of an Artist*, no. 156, no owner given) and the other in 1850 (as *Portrait of an Artist*, no. 114, with the owner listed as William S. Mount). The painting shown in 1849 was warmly received. “[T]he glorious head of Mount, by ELLIOTT, will take the lead of all the other portraits in the exhibition,” wrote the reviewer for the *International Art-Union Journal*. In *The Albion*, it was called “The best portrait, and probably the best in the collection. One that would command attention in any gallery.”<sup>9</sup> The likeness exhibited in 1850 went unmentioned in the press. (These could not have been the same painting, as the National Academy did not allow the reexhibition of works which had previously been shown in New York.)

For two reasons, it is likely that the portrait now at Stony Brook was the well-received work and that the National Gallery’s painting, with its elaborated composition and more refined presentation of the sitter, was shown the following year. First, at least three reviews of 1849 refer to Elliott’s “head” of Mount. Although both paintings are roughly 30 by 25 inches, the Stony Brook likeness can be more



Charles Loring Elliott, *William Sidney Mount*, 1947.17.6

fittingly described as a “head”; the National Gallery’s picture is scaled, rather, to the traditional half-length format. Second, the Mount-family provenance of the Stony Brook portrait would seem to establish it as Elliott’s “present” to the sitter. This initial likeness logically would have been the first one exhibited, especially as the 1849 Academy show also included Mount’s portrait of Elliott (no. 259, with the owner listed as C.L. Elliott), which Mount had painted in exchange.

A bit of circumstantial evidence appears to back up these conclusions. On the reverse of the top bar of the stretcher of the National Gallery’s painting is “114,” half written, half incised into the wood. This corresponds to the catalogue number of the work shown at the academy in 1850. Also attached to the stretcher is a clipping from the catalogue of Elliott’s estate sale, held in 1876. These clues would seem to identify the National Gallery’s picture as 1) shown at the Academy in 1850 and 2) sold at auction in 1876. A problem arises, however, in that the Academy’s catalogue of 1850 listed painting no. 114 as owned by Mount, while the one in the estate sale obviously belonged to Elliott. It is possible that Mount originally owned both portraits, one of which (the National Gallery’s picture) he later returned to the portraitist. A more likely explanation is that the Academy’s catalogue is incorrect. Perhaps there the owner’s credit line was switched with another Elliott work exhibited in the 1850 show; his no. 37 was also entitled *Portrait of an Artist*, but this time the painting was listed as belonging to C. L. Elliott. No data has yet emerged to clarify these issues.<sup>10</sup>

The equivocal documentary evidence does not in any way lessen the strength of Elliott’s dashing image of his friend. Confident, commanding, and filled with the rich colors and vibrant textures for which Elliott was celebrated, the portrait captures Mount seemingly turning from his work (and also from the viewer) as if engaged in a moment’s studio conversation. The bold cranberry vest and blue cravat are deeply saturated, intensifying the hues they pick up from the nearby easel. These plush textures are set off by the opalescent tie pin and by the radiant oval of the face, seen from below and framed by his glossy hair. A gray-blue translucency above the chin hints at a slight beard growth on his otherwise smooth and blushing cheeks.

The composition is calculated to allow the figure to move forward markedly from its sketchy background. Mount’s presence seems powerful and immediate, yet informal, with a casually reclining

posture. One senses the genuine rapport that existed at the time between artist and sitter. It is not known whether Mount and Elliott remained as close in later years, but when Mount heard of his friend’s death in 1868, he wrote: “How sad I feel that he has been taken away so early; but he has left works which will be an honor to his name and country.”<sup>11</sup> Three months later, Mount had died as well.

JD

## Notes

1. A tattered label on the stretcher seems to be a clipping from the catalogue of this sale, showing the entry for no. 46, “Portrait of Wm. Mount.”

2. An undated prospectus, signed by Charles X. Harris (in NGA curatorial files), conveys provenance information that Harris obtained from an interview with Marie Johnson.

3. The name J.W. Reid and the purchase date of 28 March are recorded in an annotated copy of *Clarke* 1928 in the NGA library, but Harris’ prospectus gives this purchase date as 26 March.

4. This was likely the portrait of Mount by Elliott listed in Mount’s estate inventory; see Cowdrey and Williams 1944, 9.

5. Bolton 1942, 80, cites an entry from Carpenter’s diary (20 September 1851) mentioning his copying of an Elliott portrait of Mount. Carpenter also exhibited a portrait of Mount at the National Academy in 1852 (no. 60).

6. Quoted in Frankenstein 1975, 116. The National Gallery also possesses a portrait of Elliott painted by Mount [1947.17.9]. Although it was once believed that Mount’s brother, Shepard Alonzo, had married Elliott’s sister, this story has now been proved false; see Johnson 1988, n. 75.

7. As quoted in Frankenstein 1975, 30.

8. As quoted in Frankenstein 1975, 186–187.

9. “The Academy Exhibition,” *International Art-Union Journal* 4, May 1849, 57–58; and “National Academy of Design,” *The Albion* 8, 14 April 1849, 177. Other favorable mentions of the portrait are found in “National Academy of Design,” *Knickerbocker* 33, May 1849, 470; and “The Exhibition of the Academy,” *New York Evening Post*, 2 May 1849.

10. There is no way of knowing when the inscribed number and the catalogue clipping were added to the stretcher. It is conceivable that both were added at a later date to reflect the wishful thinking of an owner or dealer. The Harris prospectus (in NGA curatorial files), for example, makes specific mention of both the exhibition of 1850 and the sale of 1876, citing the catalogue numbers.

11. Diary entry of 30 August 1868, as quoted in Frankenstein 1975, 450.

## References

- 1942 Bolton: 92, no. 86.  
 1944 Richardson: 33, no. 129, repro.  
 1952 Rutledge and Lane: 118–119.  
 1975 Frankenstein: 15, color pl. 3.  
 1986 Zellman: 1:152 color repro.

1942.10.1 (595)

## Captain Warren Delano

c. 1852

Oil on canvas, 91.9 × 72.1 (36<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 28<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>)

Gift of Frederic A. Delano

### Inscriptions

At center left: C.L.E.

**Technical Notes:** The support is a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric. It has been lined, but cusping is present along all four edges. Stenciled on the reverse of the original canvas is “WILLIAMS & STEVENS / 353 / BROADWAY / NEW-YORK.”<sup>1</sup> The ground layer is thick, smooth, and white. Flesh tones are blended with a minimum of impasto, while the garments are painted thickly and opaquely. In the olive background, an appearance of a slight, swirling texture was created by a thin layer of glazing laid down over more thickly applied paint. Small losses and areas of inpainting occur in the sitter’s hair, at his hairline, and on his coat. A tiny cut or puncture is evident in the upper left part of the background. The evenly applied varnish is heavy and has discolored.

**Provenance:** Frederick A. Delano [d. 1857], son of the sitter, New York;<sup>2</sup> by descent in the Delano family, Fairhaven, Massachusetts, to the grandson of the sitter, Frederic A. Delano, Washington, D.C.<sup>3</sup>

**Exhibited:** NAD Annual, 1852, no. 449, as *Portrait of a Gentleman*.

DURING the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Delanos were a well-known seafaring family based in the region of New Bedford, Massachusetts; their ancestors included Phillipe de Lannoy, who arrived in Plymouth Colony in 1621. Warren Delano (1779–1866) was the tenth of Ephraim and Elizabeth Delano’s eleven children. A sea captain like his father, he commanded whaling and merchant vessels, one of which was confiscated by the British during the War of 1812. In 1808 Delano married Deborah Church in Fairhaven; following her death, he married Eliza Adams Parker in 1828. He had nine children.<sup>4</sup>

The assumption that the National Gallery’s portrait was painted in 1852—the year it was exhibited at the National Academy of Design—needs explanation, given Delano’s age of seventy-three at the time.<sup>5</sup> Although the sitter of the portrait has obviously entered his mature years, his features are not those of a septuagenarian. A possible explanation lies in Elliott’s practice of executing portraits from daguerreotypes. Indeed, as the present canvas

appears to have been painted for the son of the sitter, who lived at some distance from his elderly father in eastern Massachusetts, it becomes quite plausible that the artist was provided with a daguerrean likeness. Inasmuch as the daguerreotype had been invented in 1839, this could account for an age difference as great as a dozen years. Moreover, the oval format, rigid stare, and propped hand (to prevent it from moving and causing a blurred exposure) are typical features of daguerreotype portraits.

In the portrait, the oval boundary only serves to accentuate the portrait’s salient characteristic: a massive, outward swelling of the sitter’s rotund physiology. The energized tautness and elasticity of Delano’s skin extends from his sausagelike fingers to his emphatically sculpted face. Even his garments participate in this expansive push forward. The black coat pulls at its buttons, seemingly unable to contain the bulk within; long, slashing brushstrokes accentuate the rounded, hilly contours of his belly. Above, the crisp shirt and cravat provide a slight release as they escape from the tight confines of the outer attire. Every part of his body, including his heavy eyelids, seems to settle toward the bottom of the frame with authoritative weight and compelling immediacy.

This is the firm, vigorous portrayal for which Elliott was celebrated, especially in the latter decades of his career, when his looser, romantic brushwork, in the style of Henry Inman, gave way to a more direct and forceful method. Part of the striking effect here, as his critics frequently noted, stems from the intense use of color, particularly in Delano’s startlingly ruddy cheeks. Elliott’s contemporary, artist Shepard Alonzo Mount, observed, “Portrait-painters . . . consider all flesh to be of their own color. Now I will not say anything of . . . myself—but look at Elliott. He has a red face, and he contrives to give that glow to all his pictures.”<sup>6</sup>

When the portrait of Delano appeared at the National Academy, it was hailed as a watershed for the immensely popular Elliott, “one even of *his* finest,” wrote the critic of *The Albion*. The *Home Journal* called the painting, along with another of the artist’s efforts, “perfect marvels in a line of art to which his accomplished taste and pencil have given dignity second only to historical painting.” The *Knickerbocker* went even further, linking the style of the work to the character of the sitter, and providing a sympathetic assessment of Elliott’s achievement in portraiture:



Charles Loring Elliott, *Captain Warren Delano*, 1942.10.1

We do not recollect to have seen any thing at any time better, in its way, than [the portrait of Delano], so excellent is it in drawing and modelling, and truthful in the character of the subject. It has the air of a man at ease with the world, and independent in his relations to it—self-possessed, and determined to give you no opportunity of reading him. It is in the rendering of this phase of character that Elliott's great excellence lies: he gives you the man of the world just as he is known by every body, and as he is seen under all ordinary circumstances. You cannot doubt that he has an inner and hidden being, but you may look in vain for any indication of what it is.<sup>7</sup>

JD

## Notes

1. The original stencil mark, now concealed, was copied on to the reverse of the new lining fabric.
2. Frederick A. Delano, the owner of the portrait when it was exhibited at the National Academy of Design in 1852, is listed in the New York City directory for 1851–1852 as a merchant living with his brother Warren Delano, Jr., at 39 Lafayette Place.
3. Letter of 18 March 1948 from Frederic A. Delano (in NGA curatorial files) gives provenance information.
4. Meager biographical information on Delano can be found in Delano 1899, 500, 504–505; and a letter of 5 May 1942 from Frederic A. Delano (in NGA curatorial files). Franklin Delano Roosevelt was Warren Delano's great-grandson.
5. The Williams & Stevens stencil mark on the re-

verse of the canvas gives an address of 353 Broadway. As this firm is known to have moved to that address only in 1847, the terminus a quo for the painting is, in any case, only a few years before the exhibition date of 1852; see Katlan 1987, 265.

6. Quoted in Johnson 1988, 45. See also "Exhibition of the National Academy: Second Article," *The Crayon* 3, May 1856, 148, where the author observes, "Elliott's heads have for many years stood as the ideals of a certain class of portraiture, in which the object seems to be, so far as technique is concerned, to aim at the greatest possible excess both in color and effect, in which everything is forcible, and brilliant and startling."

7. "Fine Arts. The National Academy of Design," *The Albion* 2, 24 April/8 May 1852, 226; "Fine Arts," *Home Journal* 7, 8 May 1852, 2 (where the writer speaks of the exhibited portrait as "a gentleman with a cane in his hand," adding confirmation to its identification as the National Gallery's painting); and "Exhibition of the National Academy of Design," *Knickerbocker* 39, June 1852, 564.

## References

- 1852 "Fine Arts." *Home Journal* 7 (8 May): 2.  
 1852 "Fine Arts: The National Academy of Design." *The Albion* 2 (24 April/8 May): 226.  
 1852 "Exhibition of the National Academy of Design." *Knickerbocker* 39 (June): 564.  
 1867 Tuckerman, *Book*: 302.  
 1942 Richardson: 349–351, repro. 350.  
 1944 Richardson: 15, 33, no. 130, repro.  
 1955 Schmidt: 39, 43, fig. 19.

## Frederick Carl Frieseke

1874 – 1939

AT THE HEIGHT of his career in the 1910s and early 1920s, Frederick Carl Frieseke was perhaps the most popular of all living American artists. He received numerous awards and medals and saw his work purchased by private collectors and major museums. Decades after the initial introduction of impressionism by Monet and his contemporaries, Frieseke adopted this style for his work and eschewed the newer artistic movements of the early twentieth century. Nevertheless, his paintings were acclaimed in both the United States and in Europe. In 1904 he won a silver medal at the St. Louis Universal Exposition and a gold medal at Munich. He was elected a member of the Société National des Beaux-Arts in 1908 and of the Na-

tional Academy of Design in 1912. Seventeen of his canvases were featured at the Venice Biennale in 1909. He won the Grand Prize at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in 1915. He was commissioned to execute several murals, including one for the New York store owned by one of his most loyal patrons, John Wanamaker. Yet in the decades following Frieseke's death in 1939, artistic tastes changed considerably, and his work was nearly forgotten until it received renewed attention as interest in American impressionism grew in the 1960s.

Frieseke spent almost all of his career as an expatriate, with ties to the United States maintained through his New York dealer William Macbeth

and by occasional visits to America. Born on 7 April 1874 in Owosso, Michigan, Frieseke left for France in 1898 after studying for a short while at the Art Institute of Chicago and the Art Students League in New York. Following the pattern of innumerable young Americans, he enrolled at the Académie Julian where he studied with Benjamin Constant (1845–1902) and Jean-Paul Laurens (1838–1921), and he appears to have had at least brief contact with and to have been influenced by James McNeill Whistler, who had recently opened his Académie Carmen in Paris. By 1900 Frieseke was spending summers in the town of Giverny, made famous by the residence of Claude Monet and subsequently by other artists, among them many Americans. In 1906, the year after his marriage to Sarah O'Bryan, he leased a house once occupied by American impressionist Theodore Robinson. Although the property was adjacent to Monet's, Frieseke had only limited contact with the French master.<sup>1</sup> Frieseke's Giverny house and garden, as settings for a series of female models, provided nearly all his subject matter for the next thirty years.<sup>2</sup> After the war, the artist and his family purchased a second house and spent summers in Normandy.

Frieseke's career falls roughly into three periods. In the first, figures most clearly show his academic training and draftsmanship. Many of these early works also show a concern for subtle tonal relationships and soft, lightly accented backgrounds that are reminiscent of Whistler. These evolve into the most common images of the next period, characterized by loosely applied blotches of bright color. The vast majority of these depict subjects in the garden, standing among the flowers, taking tea, or just basking in the sun, but others include models in colorful, light-filled interiors. In the third period, the figures very often are indoors, their forms are given greater solidity, and the brushwork is less broken.

Of all Frieseke's works, the purely impressionist paintings of his mature career are perhaps his most successful. The appeal of these paintings is the result of several factors, including the extraordinary vibrancy of the artist's palette, the veracity of his observations of the play of light and shadow on the figures, and his choice of environments of leisure and contentment—settings that reflect none of the harsher realities of World

War I in particular and the twentieth century in general.

DC

#### Notes

1. Of all the impressionists, it was apparently Pierre-Auguste Renoir that Frieseke found most influential.

2. In 1930 Frieseke made a series of watercolors of Florida scenes remembered from his childhood and painted some Swiss landscapes. See chronology in Kilmer and Summerford 1982.

#### Bibliography

MacChesney 1912: 13–15.

Weller 1968: 160–165.

Domit 1974.

Kilmer and Summerford 1982.

Gerds 1984.

Chambers 1990.

1963.10.147 (1811)

### *The Basket of Flowers*

c. 1913/1917

Oil on canvas, 81.4 × 81.5 (32<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 32<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>)

Chester Dale Collection

#### Inscriptions

At lower left: F.C. Frieseke

**Technical Notes:** The unlined support is a fine, plain-weave fabric attached by tacks to its original five-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher. There is no ground layer. In the background the diluted paint, almost like a stain, created a lush, soft surface. (Some light blue paint penetrated the fibers and stained the reverse.) Around the figure and chair, portions of raw fabric were left exposed, allowing glimpses of it to highlight various elements. In the figure, chair, and basket of flowers, the paint is of a much thicker, pastelike consistency, with crisp ridges and bold impasto. In some outlines, the paint is drawn across the surface in long strokes, giving a dry, scumbled appearance. Because the image is painted directly onto the support, much of the binding medium has been absorbed into the fabric, causing some loss of adhesion and leaving the paint layer fragile; minor losses have occurred along the edge of the basket and in the woman's hair. The painting appears to have never been varnished, therefore maintaining its intended soft, matte appearance.

**Provenance:** Alex M. Hudnut, New York, until 1931; (sale, American Art Association, 12 November 1931, no. 16); Chester Dale [1883–1962], New York.

**Exhibited:** *Renoir and his Tradition*, Museum of French Art, New York, 1931, no. 30. *Paintings by American Artists*,



Frederick Carl Frieseke, *The Basket of Flowers*, 1963.10.147

Union League Club, New York, 1932, no. 1. *An Exhibition of American Paintings from the Chester Dale Collection*, Union League Club, New York, 1937, no. 48.

*The Basket of Flowers* employs one of Frieseke's favorite subjects—a woman seated in a colorful interior, busying herself at some small task. Although Frieseke might have preferred to paint nudes in sunlight, his indoor scenes, with their slight genre flavor, were more popular with his American audience.<sup>1</sup> Particularly after his success at the Panama-Pacific Exposition in 1915, he turned out a large number of decorative, saleable pictures, of which this painting is an example.<sup>2</sup>

Frieseke's attention to surface patterns is apparent throughout his career, but is especially strong in his works of 1915–1920.<sup>3</sup> The circles and spots on the wallpaper behind the head of the model in the National Gallery's painting almost vibrate with vitality. The sitter herself is compressed into a shallow space in which the rounded contour of the chair back and the lively pattern of stripes on her jacket are emphasized.<sup>4</sup>

The model in this work is Marcelle, one of Frieseke's favorites.<sup>5</sup> She appears in many of his works, including *Unraveling Silk* (c. 1915, Terra Museum of American Art, Chicago) which is remarkably similar in feeling and composition. In both works, the model is shown seated, three-quarter length, before a patterned wall. Her head is turned downward and her hands held gracefully above a basket of flowers (in the National Gallery painting), and skeins of thread (in the Terra Museum painting).<sup>6</sup>

DC

## Notes

1. Domit 1974, 10.

2. Nicholas Kilmer, the artist's grandson, in a conversation with Deborah Chotner at NGA, 23 April 1982 (notes in NGA curatorial files).

3. In 1912 Clara MacChesney observed of Frieseke: "He uses many accessories in his interiors, much furniture, chintzes of flowered design, striped stuffs for curtains or chair covers, and to such an extent that one rather wishes, sometimes, for the balance of a plain, flat wall or floor" (MacChesney 1912, 13).

4. A photograph in the Juley Archives (no. J0024493, *Woman Holding Flower Basket*), NMAA, indicates that a close-up version of the National Gallery's painting exists or existed. It is more roughly painted and depicts the model less gracefully posed against a smaller portion of the circle-covered wall.

5. A larger view of Marcelle, posed in much the same way as in *The Basket of Flowers* and wearing a simi-

lar strand of beads, is *Torn Lingerie* (1915, St. Louis Art Museum). She may be the model referred to in a letter of 11 November 1915 in which William Macbeth, Frieseke's dealer, writes to him: "I am sorry that you did not realize long ago that the using of one model alone was not a good plan. It has been very frequently spoken of, and criticized for its lack of variety" (William Macbeth papers, AAA, microfilm NMc 46, fr. 214).

6. The same oval basket that appears in the National Gallery and Terra Museum paintings can be seen on the floor, filled with mending, in *Paix* (1917, CGA).

1969.5.1 (2357)

## Memories

1915

Oil on canvas, 131.5 × 130.3 (51 3/4 × 51 5/16)  
Gift of Frances Frieseke Kilmer

## Inscriptions

At lower right: F.C. Frieseke. 1915

**Technical Notes:** The closely woven, plain-weave fabric support is particularly white and is probably cotton or possibly linen. It is unlined, has wide tacking margins intact, a selvage on the right side, and appears to be on its original six-member mortise-and-tenon stretcher. A white, thinly applied ground has been brushed on freely, leaving scattered, small areas of bare fabric over which paint was thinly applied, except for passages in the face and hands which were built up to form a more opaque covering. The painting's textured, matte appearance was created with paint of a very dry consistency being dragged across the surface. In other areas, the paint was "scrubbed in." A wet-into-wet technique using wavy brushstrokes of varying width was also used. White impasto highlights are found in the flower arrangement, the clock, and the jewels. The blue shadows on the knitting needles are short strokes applied wet-into-wet. A palette knife was probably used to scratch fine lines through the upper paint layer to "lighten" the green shadow in the sitter's left cuff, the stripes in the wallpaper to the left of the sitter's head, and some lines in the shadowed part of the wall. The painting is in good condition with small areas of paint loss, mostly along the edges. The painting does not have a varnish coating.

**Provenance:** Consigned by the artist to (Macbeth Galleries, New York), c. 1917; sold 1917 to The Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio; by exchange 1937 to (Macbeth Galleries, New York); estate of Frederick Frieseke, 1939–1965; Frances Frieseke Kilmer, the artist's daughter, Vienna, Virginia.

**Exhibited:** *Sixth Exhibition, Oil Painting by Contemporary American Artists*, CGA, 1916–1917, no. 368. *PAFA Annual*, 1917, no. 290. *15th Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary American Oil Paintings*, CGA, 1937, no. 319. *American Painting from 1860 until Today*, Cleveland Museum of Art, 1937,



Frederick Carl Frieseke, *Memories*, 1969.5.1

no. 62. *Retrospective Exhibition of Paintings by Frederick Carl Frieseke, N.A.*, Grand Central Art Galleries, New York, 1939, no. 12. *Survey of American Painting*, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, 1940, no. 227. Providence Art Club, n.d.<sup>1</sup> *Frederick Frieseke 1874–1939*, Hirschl & Adler Galleries, New York, 1966, no. 21. *French Impressionists Influence American Artists*, Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida, 1971, no. 38. *Frederick Frieseke 1874–1939*, Telfair Academy of Arts & Sciences, Savannah; Hirschl & Adler Galleries, New York; North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh; Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, Florida; Columbia Museum of Art, South Carolina, 1974–1975, no. 24 (not shown in New York).

*Memories*, a work from Frieseke's mature impressionist period, is an ambitious example of his oft-repeated theme of a woman seated indoors, pursuing a quiet activity. With the surroundings in this and other paintings, the artist consistently describes a genteel, comfortable lifestyle with elaborate accoutrements that reinforce the sense of material well-being. The indication of melancholy suggested by the sitter's drooping posture in this work is an attempt at psychological expression more typical of the artist's late career. The somberness of the image may reflect the fact that it was created in wartime, away from Frieseke's country retreat. The subject was most likely painted in his Paris apartment, where Frieseke remained during the war, because, as he wrote to his New York dealer in 1914, "I couldn't stand leaving Paris after the years I lived there."<sup>2</sup> By 1915, the same year *Memories* was painted, the artist was working in a hospital.

Jeanne Savoy, the model in *Memories*, is shown deep in thought, her head bowed and turned away from the knitting she holds loosely in one hand.<sup>3</sup> In her voluminous dress, she fills two-thirds of the canvas with her brooding, almost monumental presence. The simple, rounded, and oval contours of her back, shoulders, and skirt are curiously balanced by

the jumble of sharp, pointed, and straight forms of the table and objects atop it.

In *Memories*, Frieseke once again employs the dry, open brushwork and cool palette that he favored. In this instance, various shades of blue and purple are enlivened by the liberal use of pink, resulting in intense but harmonious coloration. The artist considered himself a realist, but he admittedly pursued a non-naturalistic approach to the chromatic aspects of his work: "One should think always of the impression and heighten the color."<sup>4</sup>

Another version of the subject seen in *Memories*, titled *The Pink Room* (29 by 36 inches, collection of Mr. and Mrs. Ogden Phipps, Jr., Glen Head, New York, in 1966), is smaller in size, but places the sitter within a more generous spacial context and at greater distance from the viewer.<sup>5</sup> Although the position of the model is much the same in both works, her additional bulk and proximity in the National Gallery painting gives it the greater sense of immediacy.

DC

#### Notes

1. No specific dates on this are provided in the donor's files (copy in NGA curatorial files).

2. Frances Frieseke Kilmer (Mrs. Kenton Kilmer) talked of the apartment in a conversation of 13 April 1982 (notes in NGA curatorial files); Frieseke as quoted in Weller 1968, 161.

3. The model was identified by the artist's grandson, Nicholas Kilmer, in a conversation with the Deborah Chotner on 23 April 1982 (notes in NGA curatorial files).

4. MacChesney 1912, 14.

5. It was not uncommon for Frieseke to do more than one version of a painting. Often, for instance, his wife would not part with a picture for which their daughter Frances had posed, and the artist would be required to produce a second painting to sell. Interviews with Frances Kilmer, 13 April 1982, and Nicholas Kilmer, 23 April 1892 (notes in NGA curatorial files).

## James Frothingham

1786 – 1864

THE SON of a carriage maker, James Frothingham was born near Boston, in Charlestown, Massachusetts. As a youth he worked in his father's shop, where he was taught to paint the finished coaches. He also experimented in sketching and is

said to have received some instruction from Fabius Whiting, a younger artist based in Lancaster, Massachusetts. Frothingham began his training by painting portraits of family members; by about age twenty he had abandoned the car-

riage-making trade for full-time portrait work. During this early stage of his career he visited Gilbert Stuart, who had a profound influence on his later development. Although unimpressed by Frothingham's first efforts, Stuart eventually revised his opinion and encouraged the younger artist with periodic criticism of his portraits. Frothingham became one of several artists to adopt Stuart's light-toned, freely brushed manner, and he often executed copies of his mentor's likenesses.

After working for more than a decade in Boston and Salem, Frothingham moved with his wife and three children to New York City in 1826. Soon he began exhibiting at the Boston Athenaeum (despite his recent move) and the National Academy of Design. The latter institution elected him an associate member in 1828 and a full academician in 1831. (He served as its corresponding secretary in 1844.) Frothingham was particularly active during the 1830s, but his production fell off at about age sixty. He spent the last two decades of his life in Brooklyn, where he died. His daughter Sarah became a painter of miniatures.

JD

#### Bibliography

Dunlap 1834: 2:212–217.  
Tuckerman, *Book*, 1867: 61–62.

1947.17.50 (958)

#### *Ebenezer Newhall*

c. 1810  
Oil on canvas, 66.0 × 50.9 (26 × 20 1/16)  
Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The coarse, medium-weight, plain-weave fabric is unlined, and the four-member, butt-end and lap-joined stretcher is original to the painting. A freely brushed, whitish ground lies beneath paint layers of various thicknesses. The brushwork, while broad in the coat, tightens somewhat in the area of the face. There are minor paint losses throughout, and they (as well as the craquelure in the face) have been inpainted. The olive-colored background is somewhat abraded. The varnish has discolored.

**Provenance:** (The Art Shop, Boston);<sup>1</sup> sold 16 June 1924 to Thomas B. Clarke [1848–1931], New York; his estate; sold as part of the Clarke collection 29 January 1936, through (M. Knoedler & Co., New York), to The

A.W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

**Exhibited:** *A Loan Exhibition of Paintings by Early American Portrait Painters*, Century Association, New York, 1926, no. 17. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered. Boyhood Home of Robert E. Lee, Alexandria, on long-term loan, 1968–1986.

EBENEZER NEWHALL, a Congregational minister, was born in Ipswich, New Hampshire, in 1789. He graduated from Harvard College in 1818 and Andover Theological Seminary in 1821. Immediately upon finishing his education, he embarked on itinerant missionary work in Maine and in 1822 and 1823 assumed the acting pastorates of churches in Palmer and Holden, Massachusetts, respectively. His first permanent appointment was in Oxford, Massachusetts, where he moved in 1823, marrying Sarah B. Clark the following year; however, there seems to have been dissatisfaction with his undemonstrative preaching, zealous advocacy of temperance, and intolerance of more liberal universalist theology. He was dismissed by the congregation in 1832. Thereafter he served for varying lengths of time in churches in Massachusetts, New York, and New Hampshire. In 1862 he retired to Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he died in 1878.<sup>2</sup>

The portrait of Newhall appears to be a very early example of Frothingham's work, executed prior to his assimilation of Gilbert Stuart's style. The costume, with its M-notched coat lapel and pleated muslin frill and stock, was common in the period 1805 to 1815. A clearly visible pentimento indicates that the stock has been painted over a bow-tied cravat, a type of neckwear also current during this period. Technical examination suggests that the change was made at an early date and is consistent with the execution of the rest of the canvas. The portrait would thus seem to have been painted when the sitter was about twenty years of age, prior to his matriculation at Harvard.

In general, Frothingham's early work has not been well documented, and dating has proved problematic and contradictory. Stuart reportedly commented in 1810: "There is no man in Boston, but myself, can paint so good a head [as Frothingham]." Nearly twenty-five years later, however, Dunlap remembered "nothing in [Frothingham's] rooms at that time that would justify [Stuart's] high eulogium."<sup>3</sup> Certainly the portrait of Newhall exhibits little of the sophistication of Frothingham's



James Frothingham, *Ebenezer Newhall*, 1947.17.50

later production, yet it does share characteristics with other portraits thought to be early examples of his work: an overall flatness, an emphasis of the faceted, bony nose and unarticulated transition from the forehead, the sitter's slightly raised left eyebrow, and an overly large, awkwardly placed ear.<sup>4</sup>

JD

#### Notes

1. The words "Art Shop Boston" and the date of the purchase by Clarke are recorded in an annotated copy of

Clarke 1928 in the NGA library. According to Boston city directories, in 1924 the Art Shop was primarily engaged in photographic developing and printing.

2. Sources for Newhall's biography include Daniels 1892, 66–67, 627; and Carter 1906, 556.

3. Dunlap 1834, 2:216.

4. See, for example, *Lady with a Lace Collar*, c. 1808 (attributed to Frothingham and illustrated as no. 763 in the Sotheby's New York catalogue of 16 November 1978); *Samuel Barber Clark*, c. 1810 (Cleveland Museum of Art); and the more sophisticated *Isaac Wood*, c. 1820 (MFA).

#### References

1952 Rutledge and Lane: 120.

## George Fuller

1822 – 1884

GEORGE FULLER is an unusual transitional figure who, while beginning his career amid the first generation of self-consciously professional, indigenously trained artists, ultimately became associated with a younger group of European-educated painters intent on supplanting their more conservative predecessors. Born on his father's farm in Deerfield, Massachusetts, Fuller probably received artistic encouragement from his aunt, uncle, and half-brother, all of whom were painters. Initially, however, he worked for a short time as a clerk in Boston and spent some years (1837–1839) on a railroad surveying expedition in Illinois and Ohio. Returning home, he attended Deerfield Academy for three terms before moving to Boston in 1840 to launch his career as an artist.

After short and unfruitful experimentation with the daguerreotype process, Fuller became an itinerant portrait painter, traveling in upstate New York with his half-brother Augustus. In 1842 he spent several months studying in Albany with sculptor Henry Kirke Brown, a friend whom he had met on the surveying trip. When Brown left for Italy, Fuller returned to Massachusetts, joining the Boston Artists' Association in 1843. For the next five years he executed portrait commissions, dividing his time between Boston and western Massachusetts. He then moved to New York City, where he registered in the antique school of the

National Academy of Design in 1848. He became an associate member of the Academy in 1853.

His years in New York and Brooklyn (to which he moved by 1852) were interrupted by occasional summer trips to Deerfield and three excursions to southern states, where he sought portrait work and made a series of genre sketches, with particular attention to the slave population. At the time, his circle of New York friends included adherents of the American Pre-Raphaelite movement, but aside from a characteristic carefulness of execution, his work does not seem to have been greatly influenced by Ruskinian precepts.

Fuller's hitherto undistinguished career came to a halt when his father died in 1859. The artist decided to move to Deerfield to manage the family farm, but he first took a six-month tour of Europe in 1860. Upon his return, he married Agnes Gordon Higginson and settled down to raise cranberries and tobacco. He intended his farming career to be short but ended by remaining at Deerfield for fifteen years, painting little and exhibiting only infrequently. Then in 1875 the price of tobacco fell, and he was forced to declare bankruptcy.

Fuller's "second" artistic career began the next year, when he exhibited a group of paintings in Boston in an effort to recoup his financial losses. Many of the works were sold, and by the time of

his second one-person show in 1877 he was hailed as a visionary wonder, emerging from years of rural anonymity to become a force in a new school of poetic, ruminant painting. Fuller's canvases were thickly worked, tonal, and abstractive. They took as their subjects idealized female figures (particularly young girls), bleak rural landscapes, and vaguely historical puritan themes.

Fuller's surprising success was not limited to Boston. Beginning in 1878 he sent pictures to New York annually. While his reception at the National Academy was unenthusiastic, the younger members of the Society of American Artists greeted him as one of their own, and he was soon elected to their membership.

Eventually he was able to buy back the Deerfield property from a relative, although he never returned to active farming. He continued to spend his summers there but took to passing his winters in Boston, or nearby on the coast. He died at his winter home in Brookline, Massachusetts, at the age of sixty-two.

JD

#### Bibliography

Millet 1886.  
Robb 1959.  
Burns 1979.  
Burns 1981: 11–37.

1953.9.2 (1183)

### *Agnes Gordon Cochran Higginson* (*Mrs. Stephen Higginson*)

1876

Oil on canvas, 68.3 × 56 (26<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 22<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)  
Gift of Mrs. Augustus Vincent Tack

**Technical Notes:** The painting is on a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric support that has been lined. Cusping is present along all four of the cut edges. The red, coarsely textured ground is thick and uneven. Subsequent paint, of a stiff consistency, was applied with a complex layering technique. Underlying colors (particularly in the hair) were exposed by scratching into the still-wet paint with a pointed object—probably the end of a brush handle. The paint layers are wrinkled throughout, and a broad crackle pattern has developed. The unevenly applied varnish has yellowed.

**Provenance:** The artist, Deerfield, Massachusetts; his estate until 1911;<sup>1</sup> his wife, Agnes Gordon Higginson

Fuller [1838–1924], Deerfield, Massachusetts; her son, Arthur Negus Fuller [d. 1945], Deerfield, Massachusetts; his sister, Agnes Gordon Fuller Tack [Mrs. Augustus Vincent Tack], Deerfield, Massachusetts.<sup>2</sup>

**Exhibited:** *Memorial Exhibition of the Works of George Fuller*, MFA, 1884, no. 128 [?].<sup>3</sup>

FULLER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW, Agnes Gordon Cochran Higginson, was a frequent guest at his Deerfield farm, particularly after the death of her husband, Stephen, in 1870.<sup>4</sup> Born in Boston in 1810, she married in 1831 and ultimately raised ten children. She and her husband took their young family to Michigan briefly in the 1830s, but they soon returned to Boston, where the socially prominent Higginson family was known for its seventeenth-century colonial ancestry. (Indeed various Higginson relatives accounted for a good deal of Fuller's later patronage, and they probably provided him with a number of connections to other wealthy clients.)<sup>5</sup> Like her son-in-law, Agnes Higginson was an artist, although never a professional. She painted throughout her life and followed Fuller's exhibitions and career closely. Toward the end of her life she lived with her daughter Annie in Magnolia, Massachusetts. She died in 1888.<sup>6</sup>

Most of Fuller's early career had been devoted to portraiture, and even after his rediscovery in 1876, a great deal of his time was spent executing portrait commissions, despite his (and his critics') preference for ideal compositions. Although completed at the beginning of his mature period, *Agnes Gordon Cochran Higginson* clearly demonstrates that by 1876 he had already arrived at his peculiar method and style.

The areas of flesh and hair in the portrait are complex and labored, with a seemingly arbitrary surface texture of multidirectional, claylike touches of paint. Fuller selectively abraded this entire area, exposing tiny areas of darker red ground and leaving the impression of a low-toned, underlying haze of color. Elsewhere in the portrait, he allowed earlier layers of paint to show, as in the dark hair suggested beneath the translucent cap and the midnight blue dress appearing through the thin areas of the white bodice, approximating the shadows of folds in the lighter fabric. These effects appear to be intentional, and nineteenth-century accounts of Fuller's technique—which usually stress his lifelong struggle with expressing himself in the (for him) recalcitrant oil medium—confirm his repeated and deliberate rubbing and abrading of the evolving



George Fuller, *Agnes Gordon Cochran Higginson (Mrs. Stephen Higginson)*, 1953.9.2

painted surface. William Dean Howells, for example, reported that Fuller customarily let the entire canvas dry, scraped it down to a previous layer, and then began anew. Frank D. Millet observed, “[Fuller] was never satisfied with an accidental suggestion of color, and rarely stopped short of a complete rendering of the quality he sought.”<sup>7</sup> In the National Gallery’s portrait, his worked surface results not only in an intricate, worn facture, but also in an overall softening of the features of the sitter and the suggestion of a slight, quivering mobility of flesh in keeping with her relatively advanced age.

JD

#### Notes

1. “List of Pictures and Sketches in Deerfield Studio,” February 1905 (Fuller Papers, Memorial Libraries, Deerfield, Massachusetts [AAA microfilm, 609, fr. 590]) includes a “Portrait of Grandmother Higginson.”

2. Letter of 24 January 1992 from Jeffrey Goodhue Legler, great-great-grandson of the artist (in NGA curatorial files) provides provenance information.

3. It is likely that no. 128, listed in the catalogue as *Portrait of a Lady* and belonging to the Estate of George Fuller, refers to this portrait. It is also possible that the painting had an earlier showing at Doll and Richards, a Boston commercial gallery. On 14 March 1876, Fuller wrote to his wife, “Yesterday & today I have been part of the time busy . . . retouching yr. mother’s picture which I shall send to Doll’s tomorrow” (Fuller Papers, AAA microfilm 606, fr. 1666).

4. Legler (24 January 1992) states that Fuller executed a posthumous companion portrait of Stephen Higginson (location unknown) at the same time as this picture.

5. Robb 1959, 43.

6. Letter of 27 August 1963 from Elizabeth B. Fuller, granddaughter of the artist (in NGA curatorial files), provides some biographical information. See also Higginson 1910, 33; and Fuller 1929, 306–315.

7. W. D. Howells, “Sketch of George Fuller’s Life,” in Millet 1886, 47; F. D. Millet, “George Fuller,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* 69, September 1884, 519.

#### References

1961 Homer and Robb: 294.

1948.1.1 (1022)

### *Agnes Gordon Higginson Fuller* (*Mrs. George Fuller*)

c. 1877

Oil on canvas, 69.0 × 56.0 (27<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 22<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)

Given in memory of the sitter’s granddaughter, Agnes Gordon Hilton

**Technical Notes:** The support is a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric. Stenciled on the reverse is “William Schaus / 303 / Broadway / New York.”<sup>1</sup> The cream-colored ground is of medium thickness. Paint was applied with considerable variety: thick and intermingled in the face, thinner and discontinuous in the dress, shawl, and collar. In the face, an extensive network of expressive lines has been drawn with the end of a brush, or similar tool, while the paint was still wet. Although repaired, two small tears, each about 1 cm long, are visible above the sitter’s head and in her bodice. The paint is badly abraded, particularly in the lower half of the picture. Craquelure and wrinkling of the paint has occurred throughout, sometimes resulting in seepage of a white underlayer to the surface. The painting was last treated in 1948, when discolored varnish was removed and the painting was relined. Very small areas of inpainting are evident throughout. The varnish is thick, hazy, and has yellowed.

**Provenance:** The artist, Deerfield, Massachusetts; his estate until 1911; the sitter [1838–1924], Deerfield, Massachusetts.<sup>2</sup> her daughter, Agnes Gordon Fuller Tack [Mrs. Augustus Vincent Tack], Deerfield, Massachusetts.

**Exhibited:** *Memorial Exhibition of the Works of George Fuller*, MFA, 1884, no. 134.<sup>3</sup> *Exhibition of Paintings by George Fuller, A.N.A.*, Vose Galleries, Boston, 1917, no. 17.<sup>4</sup> *Centennial Exhibition of the Works of George Fuller*, MMA, 1923, no. 2, as *Portrait of Mrs. A. G. Fuller*.

BORN in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 1838, Agnes Gordon Higginson was the fourth of the ten children of Stephen and Agnes Higginson [see 1953.9.2]. She was raised in the Boston area, where she attended and later taught in a school conducted by Louis Agassiz. In 1861 she married George Fuller and moved to his farm in Deerfield, where they eventually had five children. When her husband resumed painting professionally in the 1870s, she and her children took to spending their winters in Boston and summers in Deerfield, a schedule she repeated for most of the rest of her life. She outlived her husband by four decades and in these later years traveled to Europe and Maine in addition to spending time with her children in Deerfield. She died in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1924.<sup>5</sup> Years later painter Marsden Hartley described her as “exceedingly beautiful, . . . one of the famous Higginson belles who was said to have a natural talent for painting.”<sup>6</sup>

During much of 1877, the year that Fuller probably painted this portrait of his wife, the two were apart, with the artist working in his Boston studio and she staying behind in Deerfield. Fuller missed his wife and children terribly during these separa-



George Fuller, *Agnes Gordon Higginson Fuller (Mrs. George Fuller)*, 1948.1.1

tions, and their surviving correspondence of the period is filled with expressions of great love and affection.<sup>7</sup> The portrait was likely painted during the summer months, which Fuller spent with his family in Deerfield. After his October departure for Boston, his letters occasionally refer to the portrait (on which, as was his practice, he may have continued to work even without the presence of the sitter). On 20 November 1877 he wrote to her that an elderly relative had stopped in at the studio: "He admired your portrait, so he must retain all his faculties—not but a man with half of them must admire it." Several days later, however, he reported that her younger brother Robert was "not enthusiastic" about the likeness, questioning its "sad expression."<sup>8</sup>

Throughout his late career, the question of expression usually arose whenever critics discussed Fuller's portraits. While conceding that the images were not always accurate transcriptions of physiognomy, Fuller's supporters maintained the portraits had qualities that ran much deeper than surface appearance. "Fuller doubtless often failed with his portraits to satisfy the requirements of ordinary portraiture, because he could not be content with the superficial imitation of flesh, feature, or textures," wrote Frank Millet. "What he attempted and usually succeeded in doing was to represent his sitters under the best aspect which his observation and imagination suggested." Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer also observed, "They are 'like' their models, in so far as I have seen; but it is a spiritualized, poetized, idealized likeness."<sup>9</sup> What seemed to matter most were the un-portraitlike characteristics—his filmy, nebulous handling and dim, shrouded lighting.

In this portrait of his wife, Fuller's seemingly extemporaneous methods contribute a great deal to the effect of vague insubstantiality. Her banded, silvery shawl shimmers from the looseness of stroke, its gray-green field glazed over a sporadic light blue underlayer with fluid black paint added on top for definition. At the collar a few discontinuous white strokes are laid down on top of the flesh of her neck—a quick approximation of a translucent, lacy frill. The artist so severely abraded portions of the bust and shoulders that the tops of the light-colored canvas threads are visible; the subsequent paint additions overlapping these bare areas suggest that the abrasion was simply part of Fuller's long process of creating a lustrous, changing tonality.

Perhaps most remarkable is the way the com-

plex, fervid brushwork of the face and hair is resolved by the viewer's eye into a softly luminous, enveloping veil, deftly balanced in value. Throughout the areas of flesh, differently toned strokes cross and cover one another; Fuller's brush moved and blended the wet paint, forming textured furrows much as a drypoint needle creates its burr. Paint collecting at the edges of these strokes was then incised with the hard point of the brush handle in an intense, scribbling, back-and-forth motion. Lines were thus blurred, and flat patches of matte color—particularly in the hair—given texture, melting easily into neighboring roughened zones. At the hairline, a transition in values was effected by wiping away residual flesh-colored paint to expose a moderately toned underlayer, once again using the brush handle to scratch away any lingering border between light skin and dark coiffure and leaving an impression of delicate frizziness at the temples. The result is a curiously dichotomous image: calm and settled in pose, steadfast and unmoving in gaze; yet lively and tangled in surface, vibrating and dissolving in atmosphere. Fuller's contemporaries, however, reveled in such contradictions. Indeed they were the qualities most often cited as evidence of his uniqueness in late nineteenth-century American painting.

JD

#### Notes

1. The stencil mark (recorded in NGA curatorial files) is now concealed by the 1948 lining. The stenciled address, "303 Broadway," was apparently used by Schaus only for the years 1854–1855, suggesting that the canvas was purchased by the artist during his early residence in New York and used two decades later; see Kattlan 1987, 220. Although Fuller was known for reusing canvases upon which he had previously painted, infrared reflectography and x-radiography indicate no previous composition beneath the visible paint layers, other than the hint of an earlier oval or arched format.

2. Letter of 24 January 1992 from Jeffrey Goodhue Legler, great-great-grandson of the artist (in NGA curatorial files), provides provenance information and states that the sitter's will directed that the portrait be given to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Instead, it seems to have passed to her daughter.

3. A label from the Boston exhibition, originally on the painting's reverse, gives the title as *Portrait*. This probably corresponds to no. 134, listed in the catalogue in the section of works executed 1877–1879, as "Portrait" and belonging to the estate of George Fuller. A photograph of the installation of the exhibition (Fuller Papers [AAA microfilm 610, fr. 1280]) confirms that this portrait was included.

4. No. 17, *Portrait of Mrs. George Fuller*, could have

been one of Fuller's earlier portraits of his wife (both c. 1860, Memorial Hall Museum, Deerfield, Massachusetts); however, it is more likely that the NGA portrait, a work in the artist's mature style, would have been the one shown.

5. The best source on Agnes Fuller's life is Fuller 1929, 306–315.

6. Hartley 1982, 245–246. There is no documentary evidence to support Hartley's assertion that Agnes Fuller was a painter.

7. See the Fuller Papers, AAA microfilm, 606–608.

8. George Fuller to Agnes Fuller, 20 and 23 November 1877, Fuller Papers, AAA microfilm 607, frs. 163 and 164.

9. F. D. Millet, "George Fuller," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 69, September 1884, 521–522; M. G. van Rensselaer, "George Fuller," in *Memorial Exhibition of the Works of George Fuller* (Boston) 1884, 20.

## References

- 1959 Robb: 32, 64–65, 75, pl. 12.  
1961 Homer and Robb: 294.

1953.9.1 (1182)

## Violet

1882

Oil on canvas, 68.5 × 55.8 (26 <sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 21 <sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)  
Gift of Mrs. Augustus Vincent Tack

## Inscriptions

At upper right: Violet / Sept. / 1882

**Technical Notes:** The support is a relatively fine, plain-weave fabric mounted on the original four-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher (possibly constructed by the artist himself). The painting remains unlined and the tacking margins are intact. The white ground, smooth and even, has been covered in some areas by a second, red ground. Subsequent brushwork is rich, fluid, and complex. In the dress, for example, a thin wash of dark paint was wiped over the dried lighter layer below, and the sitter's right sleeve was intentionally abraded to reveal underlying blue-green paint. The face is more thickly painted; its surface was textured by scratching the wet paint with the point of a brush handle. There are very wide drying cracks, particularly in the area of the head. The thick varnish is uneven and has discolored.

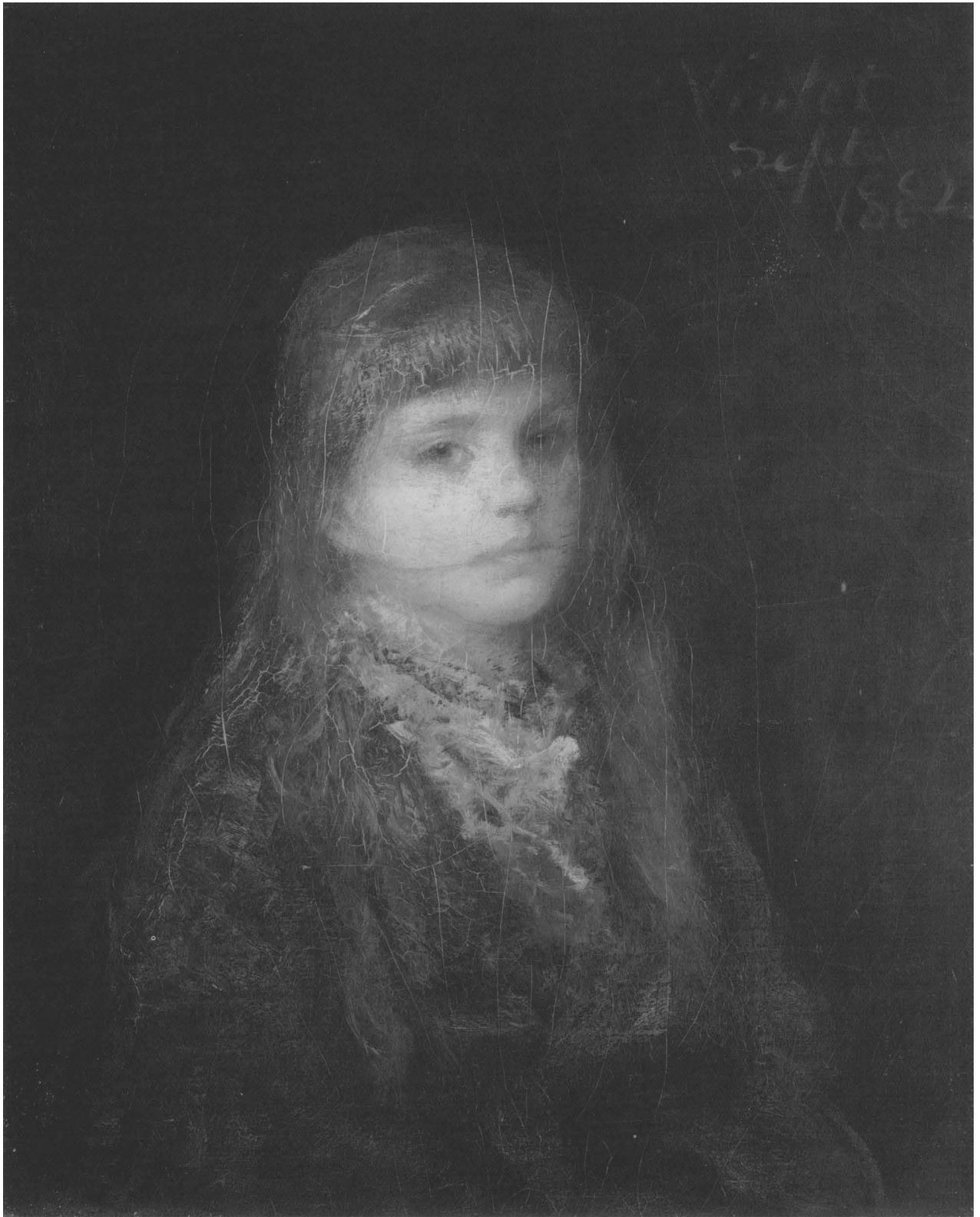
**Provenance:** The artist, Deerfield, Massachusetts; his estate until 1911; his daughter, Agnes Gordon Fuller Tack [Mrs. Augustus Vincent Tack], Deerfield, Massachusetts.<sup>1</sup>

**Exhibited:** *Memorial Exhibition of the Works of George Fuller*, MFA, 1884, probably no. 161.<sup>2</sup> *Works by George Fuller*, Reichard & Co., New York, 1887, no. 6.<sup>3</sup> *Centennial Exhibition of the Works of George Fuller*, MMA, 1923, no. 20, as *Portrait* "The Artist's Daughter."

AGNES GORDON FULLER, known by family members as Violet, was the only daughter of George Fuller. Born in 1873, she was a particular favorite of her parents, who worried constantly about her delicate health. A student of painting, she took classes in New York City during the late 1890s. She gave up her own work, however, when she married artist Augustus Vincent Tack in 1900. The Tacks lived variously in Deerfield, New York City, Washington, and Conway, Massachusetts. Agnes Tack also traveled widely, often spending summers at mountain spas for reasons of health. She died in 1959, predeceased by her husband and two children.<sup>4</sup>

Even before he reentered the art world, Fuller had often turned to his children as subjects. Violet's was one of the last of these portraits, executed as part of a series (completed in 1883) of likenesses of all the artist's offspring. In its conception and execution, the portrait is typical of his mature manner. Paint describing the dress and hair, for example, seems viscous and disorganized, with a good deal of expressive impasto. These areas are restricted to a middle range of tones and set within a vaporous envelope of atmosphere; Fuller felt such treatment kept the figure from appearing visually assertive and overly foregrounded. Only in the face do lighter tonalities emerge from shadow. Here the most prominent portions of her physiognomy are built up, touch by touch, with successive paint layers of higher and higher value.

Above all else, Fuller was celebrated by his critics as a poetic painter of idealized, youthful female figures. "In his studies of girlhood Fuller has fixed the expressions as lovely of innocence and happiness as ever have been put on canvas," wrote Frank Millet.<sup>5</sup> *Violet* and other similar portraits, though less programatically evocative than his ambiguous single figures with fictional titles such as *Winifred Dysart* (1881, Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts) and *Priscilla Fauntleroy* (1881, Lyman Allyn Museum, New London, Connecticut), were seen by commentators as occupying the same imaginative realm: "His portraits of children and young girls are hardly to be praised less than his ideal works. The purity, freshness, and grace of maidenhood, and the winning beauty of children had a special attraction for his brush."<sup>6</sup> These ethereal figures, while part of the general late nineteenth-century appreciation of girls and young women as elevated symbols of purity and innocence, have an undeniably sensuous aspect. In this regard, Sarah



George Fuller, *Violet*, 1953-9.1

Burns has likened them to the equally equivocal heroines of Nathaniel Hawthorne.<sup>7</sup>

JD

#### Notes

1. Letter of 24 January 1992 from Jeffrey Goodhue Legler, great-great-grandson of the artist (in NGA curatorial files), provides provenance information.

2. *Violet* is almost certainly no. 161 in the catalogue, identified as *Portrait of a Girl*, 1882, belonging to the estate of George Fuller. A photograph of the installation of the exhibition (Fuller papers, AAA microfilm 610, fr. 1280) shows the portrait of Violet hanging directly above the portrait of her mother [1948.1.1].

3. No. 6 in the catalogue is listed as *Ideal Head*; however, an annotated copy in the Fuller papers (AAA microfilm 610, fr. 1382) has "(Violet)" written in the margin following the entry.

4. For biographical information on Agnes Tack, see *Augustus Tack* 1968 and Green 1972.

5. F. D. Millet, "An Estimate of Fuller's Genius," in Millet 1886, 59.

6. "George Fuller," *Artist* 5, August 1884, 258.

7. Burns 1983, 123–145. The comparison to Hawthorne was also made during the nineteenth century.

#### References

1961 Homer and Robb: 294.

## Chester Harding

1792 – 1866

CHESTER HARDING was born in Conway, Massachusetts, the fourth of twelve children whose father, an unsuccessful inventor, experienced some difficulty in providing for his numerous offspring. Harding thus spent several years in the household of an aunt, and at age twelve he was hired out to help with the support of his family. When he was fourteen, his parents decided to move to the relatively unsettled area of Monroe County, New York. There he explored a variety of trades—including drum-making, cabinetry, and tavern-keeping—without much success.

Shortly after his marriage to Caroline Woodruff in 1815, mounting debts forced Harding to leave New York State. His young family then joined him in Pittsburgh, where he was painting houses. Around 1818 an itinerant artist named Nelson introduced him to portraiture. Largely self-taught, Harding achieved some success before moving to Kentucky, where a brother was already engaged in the portrait trade. There he felt the influence of Matthew Jouett, a slightly older artist working in the manner of Gilbert Stuart. Over the next few years Harding painted portraits in Kentucky, Ohio, Missouri, and the District of Columbia, and spent two months during the winter of 1819–1820 studying at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Business was good, and, in particular, he received early

fame for a likeness of the ninety-year-old Daniel Boone, which several printmakers proceeded to engrave. In 1823 Harding spent six months in Boston, where he received an astounding reception and more commissions than he could carry out. He later admitted that his success was owed largely to his reputation as an untaught "primitive" from the frontier, a mythic status upon which he capitalized for several years to come.

After his success in Boston, Harding moved his family to Northampton, Massachusetts, and soon left for London. There he met artists Charles Robert Leslie and Thomas Lawrence and temporarily adapted his own tight, finished style to the looser brushwork then in fashion in Britain. He met with extremely good fortune in England, Scotland, and Ireland. Taken by his plain mannerisms and humble origins, aristocrats with a democratic bent—and even members of the royal family—commissioned their likenesses from him. Pleased with his popularity, Harding made the decision to settle in Glasgow and sent for his family; however, soon after they arrived, a general financial panic destroyed his business, forcing him to abandon his plans and return to the United States in 1826.

For the remaining forty years of his life, Harding's career was centered in Boston, although beginning in 1830, he made his home in Springfield,

Massachusetts. He became an important and visible force in the Boston art world—largely through his ownership of a studio building that was the site of many important exhibitions—and spent much of each year on the road, executing portraits in New York, Louisiana, Kentucky, and points between. In all, he is thought to have painted more than 1,000 portraits. After the death of his wife in 1845, he made a second, nine-month visit to Europe. Thereafter he painted less, although he never gave up his brushes entirely. His interests later gravitated toward landscape architecture and fishing. He died in Boston.

JD

### Bibliography

Dunlap 1834: 2: 289–295.

Harding 1929.

Lipton 1985.

1947.17.54 (962)

### *Self-Portrait*

c. 1825

Oil on canvas, 76.3 × 63.6 (30 1/16 × 25 1/16)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The original support, a plain-weave fabric with irregular threads, has been lined. Slight cusping is present along all four cut edges. An off-white ground covers the surface and subsequent reddish-brown underpaint is visible in the background. Further paint layers were thinly applied and are somewhat transparent in appearance. The surface has suffered considerable abrasion; the areas of the hair and ears, as well as the outline of the jacket to the left, have been heavily overpainted. Further abrasion is located on the right side of the face and the eyebrows. Losses are found at the outer edges of the painting. The varnish has discolored slightly.

**Provenance:** Anne Harding Arnd, granddaughter of the artist, Chicago; sold 27 June 1924 through (Art House, New York) to Thomas B. Clarke [1848–1931], New York;<sup>1</sup> his estate; sold as part of the Clarke collection 29 January 1936, through (M. Knoedler & Co., New York), to The A.W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

**Exhibited:** *A Loan Exhibition of Paintings by Early American Portrait Painters*, Century Association, New York, 1926, no. 14. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered. NPG, on long-term loan since 1967.

THIS SELF-PORTRAIT, one of at least twelve known to have been executed by Harding, has posed problems for scholars. Although the painting descended within the artist's family (as is the case with several other Harding self-portraits), the large amount of heavy overpainting prompted some experts to question the authorship of the picture when it resurfaced in the twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> There is now general agreement, however, that the painting is by Harding, although significantly altered by an unknown hand. The date of c. 1825 for the work has been arrived at through consideration of the artist's age and family tradition that the portrait was executed in England.<sup>3</sup>

Harding's many self-portraits document an appearance that was repeatedly remarked upon by his contemporaries. Indeed, his "almost gigantic physique"<sup>4</sup> and "the massiveness and vigor of his body"<sup>5</sup> became part and parcel of the frontier legend surrounding the painter. As one friend described him,

His features were very large and strongly marked, but handsome, and his face, grave in repose, beamed with a very pleasant smile when animated. . . . In height he measured six feet three inches in his stockings, but his frame was so finely proportioned that its dimensions were noticed only when he stood beside a man of average size. His hands and feet were so large that he was obliged to import his gloves and to have his boots made on lasts prepared for him. The width between his eyes was such that an ordinary pair of spectacles would but half cover them.<sup>6</sup>

Harding's vigorous, but pleasant countenance does loom large in this self-portrait, and the hint of a suppressed smile also accords well with his friend's description. A believer in phrenology, Harding reportedly viewed his oversized head as a sign of his artistic proclivities.<sup>7</sup> His own likeness was also instrumental in his development as a painter, for his introduction to portraiture was occasioned around 1818 by his commission of an itinerant artist to execute portraits of himself and his wife, which he studied assiduously.<sup>8</sup> One way, then, of accounting for Harding's repeated return to self-representation might be to see it as a periodic taking of stock, a measuring of his artistic progress which harkened back to his professional origins. Such an explanation for the long succession of self-portraits would agree with reports of Harding's personal demeanor, for despite his humorous titling of his autobiography as an "Egotistography," the artist was noted for his self-deprecating candor.<sup>9</sup> JD



Chester Harding, *Self-Portrait*, 1947.17.54

## Notes

1. Several letters from Arnd to A.T. Bay, of Art House, discussing the sale are preserved in NGA curatorial files. Arnd's name and the date of purchase by Clarke are recorded in an annotated copy of *Clarke* 1928 in the NGA library. See also letter of 26 May 1992 from Leah Lipton (in NGA curatorial files) for provenance information.

2. See Rutledge and Lane 1952, 121; and the NGA curatorial files. For a general discussion of Harding's self-portraits, see Lipton 1985, 120–122.

3. See letter of 26 June 1924 from Ann Harding Arnd (in NGA curatorial files). Leah Lipton (letter of 26 May 1992 in NGA curatorial files) speculates that c. 1828 might be a more accurate date. See also Lipton 1985, 122.

4. Benjamin 1880, 49.

5. Tuckerman, *Book*, 1867, 64.

6. Osmond Tiffany, "Chester Harding, The Self-Made Artist," *Lippincott's Magazine* 13, January 1874, 73. In addition to such verbal evocations, Harding's appearance was known through the public exhibition of his self-portraits, some of which were seen at the Boston Art Association (1844), the National Academy of Design, New York (1848, 1859), and the Mississippi Valley Sanitary Fair, St. Louis (1864).

7. Lipton 1985, 121.

8. Dunlap 1834, 2:290.

9. Harding's *Egotistography* (1866), was incorporated into Harding 1929.

## References

- 1929 Harding: repro. opp. 136.  
1952 Rutledge and Lane: 121.  
1981 Mackay-Smith: repro. 387.  
1985 Lipton: 122, repro. 155.  
1991 Rubin: color repro. 64.

1956.15.1 (1470)

### *Charles Carroll of Carrollton*

c. 1828

Oil on canvas, 90.2 × 70.2 (35½ × 27⅝)

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Dallas Thayer

**Technical Notes:** The painting was executed on a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric that has been lined. Cusping on all four cut edges suggests that the image has not been reduced. The off-white ground is thick and, although seemingly smooth, has a distinctively brushy appearance under x-radiography. Subsequent paint, generally thick, was broadly and rapidly applied. The exceptions are the shadowed areas of the face and hair, which are more thinly executed. It appears that the face, coat, and background were painted directly on the ground, while the hand, book, and chair back were added over the coat and background color. In 1957 the painting was relined and discolored varnish was removed. Two small losses to the right of the sitter's head

have been inpainted, as well as smaller losses in the sitter's right cheek and in the background. His right shoulder has been reinforced. The varnish has discolored.

**Provenance:** Mrs. Benjamin Rush Toland, Philadelphia;<sup>1</sup> sold to (Ehrich Galleries, New York). (McClees Gallery, Philadelphia), by 1928;<sup>2</sup> sold to Alexander Dallas Thayer, Gwynedd Valley, Pennsylvania.

**Exhibited:** *American Painters of the South*, CGA, 1960, no. 84. *A Nineteenth-Century Gallery of Distinguished Americans*, NPG, 1969, p. 23. *Two Centuries of American Portraits*, University of Kentucky Art Gallery, Lexington; Paducah Art Gallery, Kentucky; J.B. Speed Art Museum, Louisville, Kentucky, 1970, no cat. "Anywhere So Long as There Be Freedom," *Charles Carroll of Carrollton, His Family & His Maryland*, Baltimore Museum of Art, 1975, no. 39. *Portraits USA: 1776–1976*, Museum of Art, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, 1976, p. 40. *A Truthful Likeness: Chester Harding and His Portraits*, NPG; J.B. Speed Art Museum, Louisville, Kentucky, 1985, no. 20.

ONE OF FOUR Maryland signers of the Declaration of Independence, Charles Carroll of Carrollton—so named to distinguish him from the other Charles Carrolls in his family—was known less for his relatively minor role in national politics than for his Catholicism (unusual for a man of his public stature during the Federal era), his considerable wealth, and his great age. Near the end of his long life, he was the only living signer of the Declaration of 1776, a distinction that made him a subject of particular interest to Chester Harding.

Carroll (1737–1832) was born in Annapolis, the only child of the reputed wealthiest man in the colonies. His education took place largely in Catholic institutions—in Maryland, Flanders, and France—following which he pursued the study of law for five years in London. In 1765 he returned to Maryland and was given a large plantation by his father. He remained outside of politics (as was then required of Catholics) for eight years, but in 1773 a local tax issue drew him into a highly publicized newspaper debate. This, along with increased Protestant tolerance, launched his modest political career, which included election to the First Continental Congress, the Maryland legislature, and (briefly) the U. S. Congress. A conservative Federalist preoccupied with retaining power for the landed gentry, Carroll withdrew from politics in 1800, when the political balance shifted to the Jeffersonian Democrats. Thereafter, he spent his time managing his fortune and living among his family members and slaves, either at his country estate,

Doughoregan Manor, or at his daughter's home in Baltimore.<sup>3</sup>

With the twin deaths of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson on 4 July 1826, Carroll became, at age eighty-eight, the last surviving signer of the Declaration of Independence. His persona, and even his frail physical body, soon took on a kind of symbolic existence. Almost like a religious relic, he was honored with parades, placed on official viewing platforms, and offered gifts and speeches. Indeed, within several months of Harding's trip to Baltimore in early 1828, Carroll was granted the franking privilege by Congress and was chosen to lay the cornerstone of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (he was a member of its board of directors). Harding no doubt expected a considerable demand for images of this aged gentleman, who served, in a way no one else could, as a tangible link to revolutionary events that had already been accorded mythic status.

In a letter dated several months before Harding's arrival, Carroll wearily observed, "At my age it is very irksom to set for my picture & I have resisted the iterated importunities of my children to have one."<sup>4</sup> Perhaps his relatives proved more persistent, for a sitting with Harding (not necessarily the one declined in the letter) did take place, and Carroll obtained one of the resulting oil versions, which he presented to his granddaughter. As he wrote to another granddaughter on 10 June 1828, "A Mr. Harding has lately drawn my portrait, a most striking likeness of me in the ninety-first year of my life, the countenance with little meaning, the eyes dim and dull."<sup>5</sup>

There were, however, several other versions of Harding's portrait of Carroll. One, for example, belonging to the "Hon. S. Van Rensselaer [either Stephen or Solomon]," was exhibited at the National Academy of Design in May 1829. A Carroll portrait by Harding also appeared at the Boston Athenaeum that spring, and six months later the artist was luring customers to his studio in Richmond, Virginia, with what was likely another version of the Carroll likeness.<sup>6</sup> No evidence links the National Gallery's version with any of these portraits. It does seem, however, that the present likeness was the one chosen by Harding for reproduction as an engraving by Philadelphia printmaker James B. Longacre, remaining in the latter's possession from late 1829 until at least 1832.

The enthusiastic reception that the Carroll portrait initially received in Baltimore had encouraged

Harding to think about a print. His painting, which hung in a temporary studio, was noticed favorably by several newspapers, one of which opined, "The lovers of the Fine Arts will be much gratified by a portrait of our venerable townsman, Charles Carroll of Carrollton [*sic*] by that distinguished artist, Mr. Harding. It is, perhaps, the best likeness of Mr. Carroll, and is, at all events, excellent."<sup>7</sup>

Longacre, however, was not Harding's initial choice as an engraver. In late May 1828 he had written to Asher B. Durand in New York: "I have just painted a portrait of the venerable Charles Carroll of Carrollton, and many of his friends have suggested the idea of having it engraved. The object of this note is to ascertain on what terms you would undertake to do it if you thought it worth undertaking at all. I propose to have it engraved in line, with plate 7 × 9 inches, with a hand. The portrait is Kit-Cat."<sup>8</sup>

Harding's description of the portrait to be engraved would seem to correspond to the National Gallery's picture, which includes a hand and is executed in the kit-cat format, 36 by 28 inches. For reasons unknown, however, Durand's engraving did not follow the guidelines set down in Harding's proposal; it depicts only a bust, with no hands, and the plate was roughly 4½ by 3½ inches, half what Harding had desired. By 1829 Harding was in contact with his second engraver, Longacre, and late that year had sent him an oil version of the Carroll portrait.<sup>10</sup> This time the print (fig. 1) conformed to Harding's requirement that a hand be included; however, in size it exceeded his original specifications, with a plate of more vertical dimensions, 11¾ by 7⅝ inches. Of all the known versions and copies of the Harding portrait of Carroll, no painting is closer to the Longacre engraving than the National Gallery's picture. It has thus been assumed by most scholars that the present portrait was the one sent to Philadelphia for reproduction.<sup>11</sup>

The documents surrounding the Harding/Longacre enterprise offer insight into Harding's expectations for his image of Carroll. Their existing correspondence suggests that the two men entered into a partnership in 1829, with both parties assuming some responsibility for soliciting subscriptions for the print. The subscription book indicates that they achieved only moderate success in this endeavor—the majority of the nearly 170 purchasers came from Baltimore and Philadelphia. Although their politics could not have been more different than those of the subject of the print, the names of President

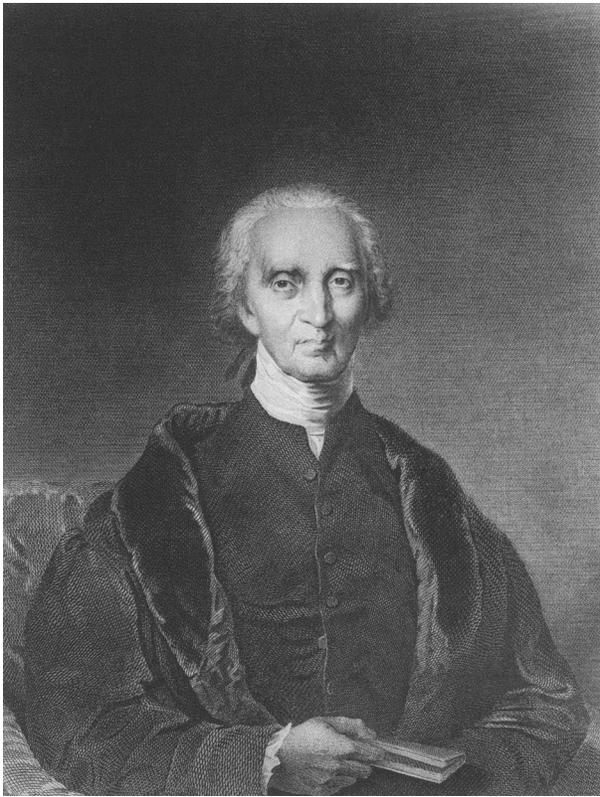


Fig. 1. print after Harding's *Charles Carroll of Carrollton* (photo in NGA curatorial files)

Andrew Jackson and Vice President Martin van Buren were at the top of the list. The sitter ordered seven copies.<sup>12</sup>

A proof of the engraving was ready for Harding to view by January 1831. He thought it "very satisfactory on the whole" but saw one particular fault: "a want of the appearance of age." He explained: "There seems too much smoothness and plumpness. But as this is so favourable an error, perhaps it will be the more acceptable to the public, as it gives a degree of vigor that all would wish the original to have."<sup>13</sup> Typically, Harding was willing to sacrifice strict adherence to his painted image if the result would be greater sales, and Carroll's features in the engraving do seem less haggard, sunken, and flaccid than those in the National Gallery's portrait.

The print, however, did not find a wide market. On 19 January 1831, Harding wrote asking for the return of the painting, instructing, "[Y]ou will please put [it] into a tin case, rolled up with the painted side out where it is warm." There is no clear record in the later correspondence of the return of the portrait, but it is obvious that Harding's request

spurred an increasingly acrimonious dispute about ownership of the painting and apportionment of the disappointingly meager profits from the sale of the engraving. Heated letters flowed back and forth for almost two years as the partners tried to find a mutually agreeable way to sever their financial relationship. By the end, Harding probably felt similarly to Longacre, who wrote on 26 December 1832, "The whole amount I have received would not be an adequate inducement to undergo the trouble, solicitude, and vexation I have had, independent of the labour I have expended on the engraving."<sup>14</sup>

Despite the complex history of the two engravings and the many oil versions (not all authentic) of Harding's painting of Carroll, the National Gallery's picture can be appreciated as perhaps the freshest and most immediate likeness. It is also thought to be the closest to the original life sketch, which in all likelihood did not depict a hand.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, the overly large and meaty fingers of the National Gallery's version appear loose and unfinished, as though they were simply blocked in on top of the already painted coat for the benefit of the engraver. The arm is likewise inconclusively attached to the torso. Together with the amorphous hand and book, it looms rather unexpectedly in the foreground, serving as a firm horizontal base for the more delicate, wispy, and apparently feeble body above.

In the National Gallery's portrait, Carroll's head seems thin and small, somewhat poignantly engulfed by the expansively empty background. Most expressive is the description of skin around the eyes, soft and quivering, yet clearly attached to the deep, bony sockets in which his hazy pupils rest. The remaining surfaces of his face are also carefully but freely painted, with slight, unblended touches of blue, mauve, and yellow worked into the lines of the skin. The general color scheme of the portrait is otherwise quite restrained, ranging only from Carroll's brown attire to the warm red of the armchair to the overall sallow coloring of his flesh. The thickly brushed white stock provides the only blazing highlight, its narrow lines and downward central point echoing the drawn cheeks and pinched mouth and chin above. This narrow plunge continues in the torso, which seems almost shoulderless, with the sitter's heavy coat sliding off at the sides.

All these features, including the trademark clothing, were characteristics for which Carroll was well known. John Latrobe wrote of Carroll at about the time of Harding's portrait: "His hair was scant



Chester Harding, *Charles Carroll of Carrollton*, 1956.15.1

and white and silky, and his eyes especially were suggestive of great age. His complexion, however was healthy. . . . His dress was the knee breeches of the old school, when I first recollect him, his waistcoat as long as we see in oldtime pictures, and I never saw him except in a loose roquelaure, something between a dressing gown and a frock coat." Henry Gilpin described this last article as "a large wrapper or cloak, silk in summer & cloth in colder weather, which he tucks up & holds around him as he walks, so as to look quite funny."<sup>16</sup> The effect of Harding's portrait is similar to these descriptions: The general conception of the body is reedy and birdlike; the individual characterization is one of dignity and respect. Carroll sits proudly erect in accordance with the wishes, as Harding understood them, of his patriotic public.

JD

### Notes

1. Letter of 4 January 1962 from L. E. Magargal, secretary to Alexander Thayer (in NGA curatorial files), provides provenance information and states that the painting was also owned at an unknown date by "Mr. R.H.R. Toland of Philadelphia."

2. Typescript letter dated 3 December 1928 from Albert Rosenthal (in NGA curatorial files) provides provenance information regarding the Ehrich and McClees galleries.

3. Scholars await the definitive biography of Carroll and the publication of his voluminous papers; however, see Rowland 1898; and "Anywhere" 1975. In the latter volume, Ann C. Van Devanter's discussion (pp. 172-179) of the several Harding paintings and engravings of Carroll is the most extensive and probing. See also Lipton 1985, 81-82.

4. Letter of 5 November 1827 from Carroll, as quoted in "Anywhere" 1975, 145. Throughout his long life, Carroll is known to have sat for at least thirteen portrait painters.

5. Carroll to Marianne Wellesley, 10 June 1828, in Field 1902, 206-207 (incorrectly dated 10 January 1828).

6. Lipton 1985, 29. For Harding at Richmond, see the discussion of *John Randolph* [1940.1.7]. Although nineteenth and early twentieth-century references suggest a rather extensive group of Carroll portraits by Harding, the only other authenticated version is in the collection of the Architect of the Capitol, Washington.

7. *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, 31 May 1828, as quoted by Van Devanter in "Anywhere" 1975, 172.

8. Harding to Durand, 30 May 1828, Charles Henry Hart Autograph Collection, AAA microfilm D5, fr. 124.

9. Van Devanter speculates that Durand worked from the only version available in New York, the Van Rensselaer portrait (location unknown), which may have been handless and which also may have been the original life portrait; see "Anywhere" 1975, 174. The date of the Durand engraving is unknown.

10. Harding to Longacre, 1 and 24 December 1829 (Longacre Correspondence [typescript, NPG]), implies Longacre's possession of the portrait. Ironically, Longacre used the Durand engraving, not his own, when he and James Herring compiled the *National Portrait Gallery of Distinguished Americans* (New York, 1834). Earlier, Longacre had engraved a portrait of Carroll by Robert Field; see "Anywhere" 1975, 145. The sitter was known to approve of this print and may have been influential in Harding's selection of the engraver.

11. See "Anywhere" 1975, 178; Lipton 1985, 82; and notes of William P. Campbell (in NGA curatorial files). The unique similarities of the engraving and the National Gallery's picture include the outline of the coat, the visible portion of the chair arm, the unbuttoned top and fifth buttons, the rendering of the hair, and the generally soft facial features.

12. The subscription book for the Longacre engraving is in the National Portrait Gallery, Washington. Depending on the type of paper, the frame, and the location of the purchaser, prices varied from \$2.50 to \$5.00 per print.

13. Harding to Longacre, 9 January 1831 (Longacre Correspondence [typescript, NPG]).

14. Harding to Longacre, 19 January 1831, and Longacre to Harding, 26 December 1832 (Longacre Correspondence [typescript, NPG]). In his letter of 9 January 1831, Harding implied that he retained no copy of the Carroll portrait, which may explain his desire to retrieve the version which had been with Longacre. In June 1835 a Harding portrait of Charles Carroll was offered for sale at the American Gallery of Fine Arts, Boston, perhaps evidence that by then the portrait had been returned to Harding. Longacre also made later attempts to rid himself of the Carroll engravings. A letter of 31 July 1839, from William Humphreys of London, reported that the prints of Carroll and of Bushrod Washington (a Longacre engraving after another Harding portrait done at the same time as the Carroll) were "not well suited to a foreign market" (Longacre Correspondence).

15. See "Anywhere" 1975, 176; and Dickson 1976, 40, where the author speculates that the National Gallery picture is "the original."

16. Quoted in "Anywhere" 1975, 180, 78. This long coat, the large lapels of which are visible in the National Gallery's picture, is seen in its entirety in Thomas Sully's nearly contemporary portrait of Carroll (1827, Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art, Tulsa, Oklahoma).

### References

- 1834 Dunlap: 2: 289.  
 1969 Stewart: 23, repro.  
 1975 "Anywhere": 176, no. 39.  
 1976 Dickson: 40-41.  
 1981 Williams: 88, repro. 106.  
 1985 Lipton: no. 20, 81-82.

1940.1.7 (493)

## John Randolph

1829

Oil on canvas, 76.2 × 63.5 (30 × 25)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The support is a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric. The painting has been lined, but cusping is present along all four cut edges. The off-white ground is smooth and thick. Subsequent brushwork was rapid and thick, except in the shadows of the flesh and hair, where the application was thinner. Small inpainted losses are scattered across the entire surface, especially in a network of dots on the facial area and a broader patch on the sitter's right sleeve. The varnish has discolored.

**Provenance:** The sitter [1773–1833], Roanoke, Virginia; presented to William Leigh, Halifax, Virginia; his son, J.R. Leigh, Halifax, Virginia; his son, William Leigh, Danville, Virginia; his son, John Randolph Leigh, Danville, Virginia, by 1928;<sup>1</sup> consigned by January 1937 to (M. Knoedler & Co., New York); sold 21 January 1937 to The A.W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

**Exhibited:** *Makers of History in Washington, 1800–1950*, NGA, 1950, no. 16. Randolph-Macon Woman's College, Lynchburg, Virginia, 1952–1953, no cat.

BY THE TIME John Randolph (1773–1833) sat for this likeness, he had become one of the most celebrated and keenly followed orators of the Federal period. Born into the Tidewater Virginia plantation elite, Randolph went on to pursue a lifelong political career that was intimately associated with the interests of the landowning classes of his state. While serving in both the U. S. House of Representatives and Senate, he consistently advocated their conservative values, vehemently defending the doctrine of states' rights. He was extraordinarily well-read, having studied at the institutions which later became Princeton and Columbia universities, and his powers of rhetoric and elocution were legendary.

Randolph's precise, yet lengthy and circuitous speaking style was made more remarkable by his unusually high-pitched voice, about which nearly every listener commented. His manner and tone were piercing, sarcastic, and scornful, and his strong opinions, violent temper, and often bizarre behavior made him many enemies and by the end of his life, left him with few friends. Over the course of his career, the excitable Randolph found himself in a number of duels (none fatal) with political ene-

mies; he was also known for his unprovoked caning of a fellow congressional representative in 1811 and for the violent beatings he administered to slaves on his Roanoke plantation. Nevertheless, even as his influence waned in Congress, he remained well respected within his limited political circle, so much so that he was offered the post of Minister to Russia by Andrew Jackson in 1830. He spent only a few weeks in St. Petersburg, however, before succumbing to ill health, inebriation, and insanity. His last years were difficult, and he died in Philadelphia while waiting to sail for England, where he was convinced his health would fare better.<sup>2</sup>

The opportunity for Harding to paint Randolph came in late 1829, when the artist traveled to Richmond, where an important convention to discuss changes in the Virginia constitution was to take place. The immediate significance of the meeting was only regional, but the gathering itself was of great national interest because of the large number of political luminaries in attendance, including several U.S. presidents and revolutionary heroes. Randolph had been elected a delegate (he represented a faction arguing against extension of the vote to non-landowning men), and such was his reputation for eloquence and idiosyncratic behavior that crowds flocked to the meeting hall whenever it was rumored that he would speak.

Randolph's notoriety made him a perfect subject for Harding, who, although he ardently disagreed with his sitter's politics and had little good to say about the state of Virginia, believed that a portrait of the man would command wide interest. (In fact, the convention proved to be a gold mine for the artist, who, shortly after leaving Richmond, bragged in a letter to a friend in Northampton that he had painted eighteen portraits there.)<sup>3</sup> Knowing of Randolph's unpleasant reputation, and possibly aware of his dislike of sitting for portraits, Harding approached his first encounter with "considerable trepidation." He reported in the same letter, however: "[M]y fears were groundless. I was most graciously received, and was assured that it would give him great pleasure to sit to me. . . . I do assure you that I have never seen a more perfect gentleman in all respects, or a more entertaining or instructive companion than he was."<sup>4</sup>

Harding also related one of his sitter's self-deprecating jokes: "At the close of the second sitting, [Randolph] said, 'If you have no objection to showing your sketch, I would like to see it. I know if it is like, it will be very ugly. Ah! it is *very* like.'"<sup>5</sup> Ran-



Chester Harding, *John Randolph*, 1940.1.7

dolph must have been impressed by Harding's work, for the artist later claimed to have executed three or four different portraits of the man during his stay in Richmond. In all, there were probably five versions of the likeness, one of which the artist kept, and several of which Randolph purchased as gifts for friends.<sup>6</sup> The National Gallery's picture was given by the sitter to William Leigh, a good friend and fellow delegate at the convention and, eventually, the executor of Randolph's will.<sup>7</sup>

Randolph's physical appearance was no less notable than his speaking style, as repeated contemporary testimony attests. From youth until old age, he remained thin, pale, and ghostly, with delicate, boyish features, piercing dark eyes, and an unusually low hairline. His long limbs were apparently excessively fragile, and he was known for drawing his voluminous clothing tightly around his neck, leaving only his small head visible. According to Randolph's biographer William Bruce, Harding captured the sitter's "young-old face" (an earlier biographer had called it "withered and beardless"), and it was this success that probably encouraged the artist to vary his many portraits of Randolph so little.<sup>8</sup>

Aside from slight changes in costume, the only major difference between the several Harding portraits is the appearance, in some, of Randolph's left hand draped over the chair back.<sup>9</sup> The brushwork of the National Gallery's portrait seems quick and confident, with the major elements laid down directly on the ground layer, without any overlap or adjustment of the edges of forms. It is as if the artist was working with previously blocked-in reserved areas which only needed to be quickly filled with paint. The absence of on-canvas experimentation and alteration suggests that the painting is one of the several copies; however, Randolph's posture is anything but stiff and formulaic—he reclines in relaxed emulation of the curving volute of his chair, with only his firmly set mouth and large, liquid brown eyes hinting at his celebrated, forceful personality.

JD

#### Notes

1. Provenance information conveyed by John Randolph Leigh, 1927 and 1928, is recorded in FARL.

2. The standard biography is Bruce 1922.

3. Harding to Samuel F. Lyman, 25 February 1830, as quoted in Harding 1929, 149. Artists George Catlin, R. M. Sully, and James W. Ford also went to Richmond; Catlin executed a large group portrait of the delegates

(1829–1830, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond).

4. Quoted in Harding 1929, 150.

5. Harding 1929, 150.

6. See Lipton 1985, 28–29, 85–86, for discussions of Harding's Richmond sojourn and the group of related Randolph portraits. Other Harding portraits of Randolph are in CGA, YUAG, and two private collections.

7. The several conflicting versions of Randolph's will led to protracted litigation. The primary issue that his heirs questioned was a clause in which he gave freedom to his slaves at his death, a provision about which he was most insistent near the end of his life. Leigh gave up a bequest from Randolph in order to remain financially disinterested and fought in court to have the manumission provision upheld. After years of legal battles, Leigh was victorious, and the clause was implemented. See Bruce 1922, 2:49–55.

8. Bruce 1922, 2:95; and Bouldin 1878, 10.

9. The hand-over-the-chairback pose is quite similar to an earlier Gilbert Stuart portrait of Randolph (1804/1805, NGA).

#### References

- 1922 Bruce: 2:68.  
 1929 Harding: 150.  
 1944 Richardson: 34, no. 57 repro.  
 1966 *Corcoran*: 1:55.  
 1985 Lipton: 86, 177 repro.

1944.1.1 (764)

### *Amos Lawrence*

c. 1845

Oil on canvas, 215 × 136 (84 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 53 <sup>9</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)

Given in memory of the Rt. Rev. William Lawrence by his children

**Technical Notes:** The support is a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric that has been lined. The smooth and off-white ground layer is almost completely covered by subsequent paint applied in fluid to pastelike consistencies. Low impasto is found in the red, green, and yellow highlighted portions of the robe and rug (the latter area somewhat flattened during a past lining process), and a rich, dark glaze has been used in the black and dark red shadows. The varnish has become somewhat yellowed.

**Provenance:** The sitter [1786–1852], Boston; his wife, Nancy Lawrence [d. 1866], Boston;<sup>1</sup> her son, William R. Lawrence [d. 1885], Brookline, Massachusetts.<sup>2</sup> his son, Francis W. Lawrence [d. 1903], Brookline, Massachusetts; his wife, Lucilla T. Lawrence [d. 1922], Brookline, Massachusetts.<sup>3</sup> her brother-in-law, Robert M. Lawrence, Boston; his cousin, William Lawrence [d. 1941], Boston, by 1923;<sup>4</sup> his children.

**Exhibited:** Probably Boston Athenaeum Annual, 1845, no. 24. Boston Athenaeum Annual, 1861, no. 354. Boston

Athenaeum Annual, 1862, no. 45. *A Truthful Likeness: Chester Harding and His Portraits*, NPG; J.B. Speed Art Museum, Louisville, Kentucky, 1985, no. 38.

HARDING'S full-length portrait of Amos Lawrence, considered by many—including the artist—to be his masterpiece, is simultaneously grand in format and intimate in tone, in keeping with the persona of the sitter, who, although one of the most important merchants and manufacturers in New England, spent most of his adult life as a retiring invalid.

Born in Groton, Massachusetts, to a Revolutionary War veteran, Amos Lawrence (1786–1852) grew up on his father's farm. As a young teenager, he manifested an interest in the dry goods trade, working first as a clerk in Dunstable and in Groton, and eventually opening his own Boston store in 1807. With his brother Abbott he came to dominate the local dry-goods trade, and by 1828 the two had significant investments in the burgeoning textile mills at Lowell, Massachusetts. Of fragile health throughout his life, Lawrence became permanently indisposed in 1831, when he was seized with a violent stomach illness. Thereafter he retired from business, nursing his broken constitution, placing himself on a severely restricted diet, and concentrating on his philanthropic projects, for which he won renown. Lawrence is credited with giving away more than a half-million dollars. Although his donations were widespread, he was particularly generous to temperance and antitobacco movements, the Bunker Hill Monument project in Boston, Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, and Williams College.<sup>5</sup>

Chester Harding was also a beneficiary of the Lawrence family's largess, having executed more than a dozen portraits of various relatives. "The most liberal patronage I have enjoyed has been, perhaps, from the Lawrences," he wrote. "I have painted all of them, and many of their children."<sup>6</sup> Abbott Lawrence, in fact, is credited with the suggestion that Harding purchase the Boston studio building he operated during the latter part of his career; he also provided financial backing for the artist's successful venture into real estate.<sup>7</sup> The degree of friendly intimacy between Harding and the family is nowhere better demonstrated than in one of his letters to Abbott's wife, Katherine Bigelow Lawrence, in which he makes specific mention of the National Gallery's picture, guaranteeing that

both he and the painting will be present for an upcoming wedding: "Can you find room for an additional guest at the bridal feast tonight? And if so will it be agreeable to you to have one who, tho silent, will be *eloquent*? To quiet your fears, I will in plain prose say that I should like to have the large portrait of Uncle Amos hung up in your dining room for the occasion if you desire it. . . . I will put it up any time you will name."<sup>8</sup>

It is not surprising that Harding would have been happy to be represented at the Lawrence family gathering by his portrait of Amos, for he once called it "the best thing I have ever done in my whole artistic career."<sup>9</sup> There are actually three versions of the portrait: a comparatively small, but relatively finished compositional sketch (MFA), the National Gallery's picture, and a nearly exact, large-scaled copy (Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts).<sup>10</sup> The first two descended through the Lawrence family, while the third was painted expressly for Williams College at the behest of its president—and close friend of Lawrence—Mark Hopkins. Scholars generally have concluded that the National Gallery's picture is the initial finished version, with the Williams College portrait having been executed soon after. Evidence would suggest that the former work was finished by late 1845, the latter possibly in early 1846.<sup>11</sup>

Harding's portrait of Lawrence is visually arresting in its pervasive patterning and rich coloration—causing one observer to describe it as a figure overpowered by the assertive setting.<sup>12</sup> The opulent display of fabrics—the plaid vest, starched white stock, heavy velvet scull cap and table covering, delicate *mille-fleurs* slippers, boldly flowered carpet, *ton-sur-ton* patterning of the green upholstery and red drapery, and above all, the riotous paisley morning gown with its thick cord—can also be seen as an extension of the sitter, a catalogue, perhaps, of the possibilities of the midcentury textile production and importation on which his fortune was based.

Lawrence's vaguely Turkish attire was very much in vogue at the time the portrait was painted. The tartan plaids were also newly popular in the United States, a result of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert's first trip to Scotland in late 1842. Such timely and informal pictorial elements contrast sharply with the traditional, formulaic column and swag in the background. Two competing auras—one of sheltered, domestic comfort, another



Chester Harding, *Amos Lawrence*, 1944.1.1

of public, baroque splendor—appear to vie for dominance.

Certainly the intimate, seated full-length portrait was not unknown in grand-manner painting, but examples are far less numerous than the more standard and commanding upright pose.<sup>13</sup> The circumstances of Lawrence's illness, however, likely required a choice of the more relaxed posture. In a sensitive and subtle passage, Harding alludes to his sitter's immobility (indeed, nearly every portion of Lawrence's body seems to require support) by including the small castor at the bottom of the leg of his invalid's chair. In the shadows, but nonetheless visible, the wooden leg tapers to a fine point and a tiny wheel, providing a delicate formal suggestion of the tenuous physical state of its occupant above.<sup>14</sup>

JD

### Notes

1. Amos Lawrence will, 21 February 1846, Suffolk County, Massachusetts (photocopy in NGA curatorial files).

2. Nancy Lawrence will, 4 November 1861, Suffolk County, Massachusetts (photocopy in NGA curatorial files). She leaves "the bust, portrait, and miniature of their beloved father" as well as all her remaining portraits to her sons William R. and Amos A. Lawrence. By 1856, however, William Lawrence wrote of the portrait as being in his "possession" (Lawrence 1856, viii).

3. Francis W. Lawrence will, 14 January 1903, Probate Records, Norfolk County, Massachusetts (photocopy in NGA curatorial files). Lucilla T. Lawrence will, 24 May 1920, Probate Records, Norfolk County, Massachusetts (photocopy in NGA curatorial files), bequeaths "all" her "pictures" to Susan Hand, "of New York"; however, available evidence suggests that following the death of Lucilla Lawrence the portrait remained within the Lawrence family.

4. Provenance information is provided by a card (signed and dated "W[illiam]. L[awrence]. March 1923"), formerly attached to the frame of the painting, now in NGA curatorial files.

5. See Lawrence 1856 for further biographical information.

6. Harding 1929, 189.

7. Both Abbott and Amos Lawrence are also known to have made gifts of \$100 to the Boston Artists' Association, an organization with which Harding was closely identified; see Lipton 1983, 57n. 24.

8. Undated letter from Harding as quoted in Lipton 1985, 111–112.

9. Harding 1929, 189.

10. Joseph Andrews used the NGA version as the model for his engraving of the portrait; see Lawrence 1856, viii.

11. The chronology and relationship of the two finished versions are discussed in Faison 1979, n. p.; Lipton 1985, 109; and notes of William P. Campbell in NGA curatorial files. Although grand in scale, the intimate dress and posture of the sitter suggest that a domestic setting was originally conceived for the portrait, rather than the more formal placement in Lawrence Hall, the Williams College library. This is perhaps evidence that Harding was already working on the Lawrence portrait when Williams College requested a likeness of its benefactor. Lawrence would have simply ordered a second version from the artist at that time.

12. Williams 1981, 88.

13. A classic example of the informal seated pose, with column and open landscape beyond, is Titian's portrait of Charles V (1548, Alte Pinakothek, Munich). A closer precedent (chronologically and geographically) is John Singleton Copley's series (c. 1767–1770) of colonial merchants seated in their offices in costly dressing gowns and turbans. These include Nicholas and Thomas Boylston, Thomas Hubbard (all Harvard University, Cambridge), and Joseph Sherburne (MMA). Like these sitters, Lawrence is shown with his arm resting on an open book or ledger, implying that even in his retirement, he maintained a sense of duty and responsibility.

14. See Lipton 1985, 109. The invalid's chair, because of its associations with Amos, was preserved as a familial legacy by the sitter's descendants. See letter of 13 September 1974 from Frederic C. Lawrence (in NGA curatorial files).

### References

- 1856 Lawrence: viii.  
1929 Harding: 189, repro. opp. 190.  
1943 Walker and James: 8, pl. 40.  
1944 Richardson: 34, no. 58, repro.  
1950 Flexner: 114, repro.  
1952 *Harding*: n.p.  
1960 Mendelowitz: 282, repro. 281.  
1969 *MFA*: 1:131.  
1969 Gowans: 205, repro.  
1979 Faison: n.p.  
1980 Wilmerding: 66, no. 14, color repro. 67.  
1981 Gerdts, "Natural Aristocrats": 30.  
1981 Williams: 88, color repro. 94.  
1985 Lipton: 108–109, no. 38.  
1988 Wilmerding: 76, no. 15, color repro. 77.  
1991 *Detroit Institute of Arts*: 1:115.  
1994 Craven: 234, repro.

# William Michael Harnett

1848 – 1892

BORN IN CLONAKILTY, Ireland, William Harnett was brought to Philadelphia as an infant by his immigrant parents, a shoemaker and a seamstress. After several years of Catholic schooling, he began to contribute to his family's support by selling newspapers and working as an errand boy. During his teenage years, Harnett trained as an engraver; by 1866 he was enrolled in the antique class of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. He continued his lengthy artistic education in New York, where he moved in 1869. While working in a silver-engraving shop he attended classes at the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art and, for four years, at the National Academy of Design. He also sought instruction from portraitist Thomas Jensen, but his time with that painter appears to have been brief.

By 1875 Harnett had begun to execute oil paintings, and he exhibited several fruit still lifes that year at the National Academy and the Brooklyn Art Association. A year later he was back in Philadelphia exhibiting (and, once again, studying at the Pennsylvania Academy). Harnett's style of precise still-life painting changed very little throughout his career; thus his earliest compositions are a blueprint for the works he would produce over the next fifteen years. Generally, he composed small groups of darkly toned objects (often materials associated with writing, reading, banking, drinking, or smoking) on shallow tabletops, paying particular attention to the intense description of surface texture. His later arrangements were more elaborate; in these he typically included time-worn objects from his collection of artistic bric-a-brac. Harnett's effects of *trompe l'oeil* verisimilitude were particularly striking when he adopted an alternate compositional format: a shallow, vertical plane—usually a wooden door—from which letters, horseshoes, books, musical instruments, or wild game were suspended.

A sale of his paintings in 1880 provided the artist with funds to go abroad. After a brief stay in London and six months of employment for a private patron in Frankfurt, Harnett settled in Munich for about three years, frequently sending canvases back to the United States for exhibition and

sale. He was active in the Munich Kunstverein, although his application to study at the Munich Royal Academy was rejected. The European sojourn ended with a residence in Paris before his return to New York in 1886.

Harnett's late years were marked by great commercial success and increasingly debilitating bouts of illness. His uncanny naturalism found wide appeal among newspaper writers and general viewers, and his larger works began to bring prices of several thousand dollars. Although relegated to the margins of the professional artistic community (he was never elected to the National Academy), his influence was far reaching among late nineteenth-century still-life painters. Yet rheumatism and kidney disease often kept him from his easel for periods of several months. Harnett sought relief from his condition—in Hot Springs, Arkansas, in late 1887 and in Wiesbaden, Germany, in 1889—and checked into New York City hospitals on at least four occasions. He died in New York Hospital in 1892.

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## Bibliography

Frankenstein, *Harnett*, 1969.  
Bolger, Simpson, and Wilmerding 1992.

1993.15.1

## *The Old Violin*

1886

Oil on canvas, 96.5 × 60.0 (38 × 23<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>)

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Mellon Scaife in honor of Paul Mellon

## Inscriptions

At lower left, as envelope address: W. M. Harnett / 28 East 14th St / New York / Chargé

**Technical Notes:** The support is a finely woven, plain-weave fabric that was lined in 1979. Over a warm, off-white ground, paint was generally applied thinly and in discrete areas that rarely overlap. Significant exceptions are the several foreshortened areas, seen from above, of the side panels of the violin's body; these small perspectival additions were applied over pre-existing painted

forms that are still visible in strong light. (Some painted musical notation was covered, for example, by these additions.) Occasional underdrawing (probably in pencil) is evident with infrared reflectography; it reveals that the tuning pegs of the violin were originally drawn loosely and somewhat lower. Highlights were applied with impasto, in contrast to the otherwise predominately smooth surface. Three small paint losses in the lower left quadrant have been inpainted. Several cracks have been filled with glazing. A fine crackle pattern covers most of the background. The varnish has not discolored.

**Provenance:** Purchased 1886 at Cincinnati Industrial Exhibition by Frank Tuchfarber, Cincinnati;<sup>1</sup> mortgaged and forfeited 1912 to Atlas National Bank, Cincinnati;<sup>2</sup> sold to William M. Haas, Cincinnati; offered in lieu of a loan payment c. 1934–1937 to Charles Finn Williams [d. 1952], Cincinnati;<sup>3</sup> his wife, Elizabeth R. Williams, Cincinnati; transferred c. 1955–1957 to her son, William J. Williams, Cincinnati; sold 1990 to (James Maroney, New York).

**Exhibited:** Cincinnati Industrial Exposition, 1886, unnumbered.<sup>4</sup> Minneapolis Industrial Exposition, 1887, no. 102.<sup>5</sup> Tennessee Centennial Exposition, Nashville, 1897, no. 650. *Exhibition of Paintings from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Finn Williams*, Cincinnati Art Museum, 1937, no. 11. *Nature-Vivre*, Downtown Gallery, New York, 1939, no. 9. *Masterpieces from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Charles F. Williams*, Cincinnati Art Museum, 1939, unnumbered. *Survey of American Painting*, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, 1939–1940, no. 130. *Illusion and Trompe l’Oeil*, California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, 1949, unnumbered. *The One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary Exhibition*, PAFA, 1955, no. 68. *Four Centuries of American Art*, Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 1963–1964, unnumbered. *The Reminiscent Object: Paintings by William Michael Harnett, John Frederick Peto and John Haberle*, La Jolla Museum of Art; Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1965, no. 17. *Highlights—150 Years of American Art*, Tangeman Center, University of Cincinnati, 1969. *Look Again*, Taft Museum, Cincinnati, 1976, unnumbered. *The Democratic Art: An Exhibition on the History of Chromolithography in America*, Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, 1979–1980, no. 73a. *William Michael Harnett*, MMA; Amon Carter Museum; The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; NGA, 1992–1993, pl. 37.

IN HIS pioneering book on Harnett and other late nineteenth-century American still-life painters, Alfred Frankenstein wrote what amounted to a small, separate essay on *The Old Violin*, explaining, “*The Old Violin* is part of American folklore as well as a chapter by itself in the history of American art.”<sup>6</sup> Frankenstein debunked much of the mythology that has grown up around the picture, but as he recognized, the very existence of the fables and tales surrounding the work confirms the important place it occupies in American cultural history.

Probably the most famous painting by Harnett during his lifetime and—thanks to the celebrated chromolithograph produced in 1887—his best known image after his death, *The Old Violin* inspired a host of copies, forgeries, and alternate versions by such painters as Harry H. Baker, Jefferson David Chalfant (fig. 1), Richard La Barre Goodwin, John F. Peto (fig. 2), and Julian R. Seavey.<sup>7</sup> In all respects it may be considered a crucial painting in his career, establishing his reputation, disseminating his style, setting a standard of viewer response, and provoking heated debate about the meaning and intrinsic value of his highly veristic art.

Certainly the arresting formal means of the painting—the miraculous rendition of surfaces and the taut, consummately balanced composition—make it easy to understand the unusual renown attained by *The Old Violin* in the century since its creation. When originally exhibited in Cincinnati and

Fig. 1. Jefferson David Chalfant, *The Old Violin*, oil on canvas, 1888, Wilmington, Delaware Art Museum, Louisa du Pont Copeland Memorial Fund, 40–6





Fig. 2. John Frederick Peto, *The Old Violin*, oil on canvas, c. 1890, Washington, National Gallery of Art, Gift of the Avalon Foundation, 1974.<sup>19</sup>

Minneapolis, crowds of enthusiasts thronged the galleries to catch a glimpse of the celebrated picture. “A painting has been added to the Art Gallery, which has created a furore,” announced one Cincinnati newspaper. Another deemed it “the most remarkable picture that has ever been shown in an exposition gallery.” *The Old Violin*, readers were told, would not be easy to miss: “Visitors need no guide-post; they will find it by following the crowd.” A year later, similar numbers poured into the Fine Arts exhibition at Minneapolis: “It was almost impossible to get within gunshot of the old violin in the art gallery at any time yesterday afternoon,” reported one journalist. Even the visiting President Grover Cleveland and his wife “tarried some time” before the painting.<sup>8</sup>

This public response, while effusive, was a localized phenomenon. It remained for Frank Tuchfarber, the initial purchaser of the painting, to give *The Old Violin* a national profile. This he did through the publication of a remarkable and pop-

ular chromolithograph after the painting, said to have required seventeen separate color plates. The lithographer was Gus Ilg, who signed his name somewhat surreptitiously in the final line of text of the newspaper clipping (a detail, along with several mistakes in musical notation, that later enabled Frankenstein to identify a number of copies based on the lithograph rather than the original painting). Tuchfarber was the head of a company that specialized in printing on enameled metal and glass, and indeed, the best versions of the *Old Violin* chromo are those on glass, rather than on paper. Tuchfarber was also interested in music; he helped found the organization that became the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and was known to have experimented with violin varnishes in an effort to recapture the effects of eighteenth-century instruments. These concerns suggest a distinctly personal motivation in his acquisition of the painting and may explain why it remained in his collection for several decades, long after the publication of the chromolithograph.<sup>9</sup>

The Tuchfarber print spawned a number of legends relating to the image, including several with predictably tragic denouements for poverty-stricken musicians and ill-fated lovers. The most lasting story—first published in 1895 and initially given credence because of its source in the person of George Hulings, a patron and friend of the artist—is of interest because it involves the purported circumstances of the painting’s commission and first exhibition. In a newspaper interview, Hulings maintained that he had given Harnett the order for a painting of a “fiddle,” a work executed by the artist in his New York studio shortly before he entered the hospital with an attack of rheumatism. The painting was never delivered, and upon hearing of the successful exhibition of *The Old Violin* in Cincinnati, Hulings confronted the artist. Harnett is reported to have explained that the work was taken from his studio while he lay in his hospital bed and then exhibited and sold in Cincinnati without his permission. Later, according to Hulings’ account, the artist brought suit in Cincinnati against the commissioners of the industrial exposition and received a judgement of \$500.

There is little reason to doubt Hulings’ version of the commission of *The Old Violin*, however the “theft” of the painting by overzealous exposition commissioners is more difficult to accept. Frankenstein found no evidence of any Cincinnati court action and subsequently theorized that Harnett, short

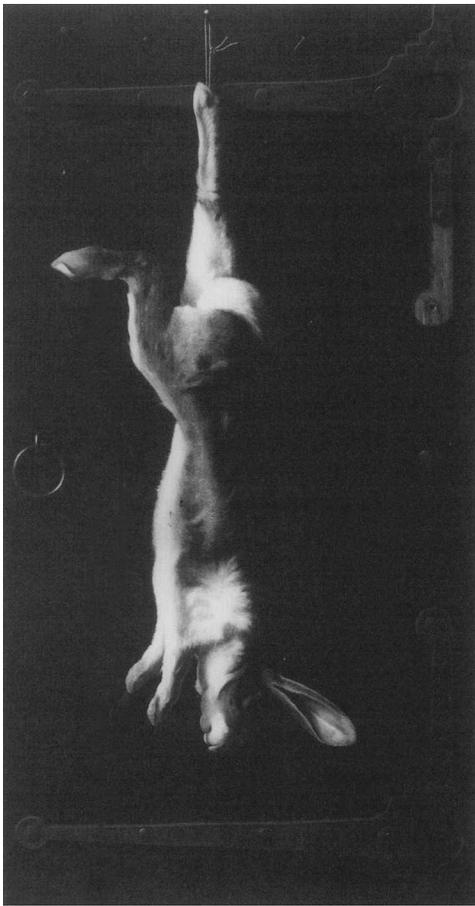


Fig. 3. William Michael Harnett, *Trophy of the Hunt*, oil on canvas, 1885, Pittsburgh, The Carnegie Museum of Art

of cash, had willingly sent the picture to Cincinnati, fabricating the rest of the story to placate the disgruntled Hulings.<sup>10</sup> Two years later Harnett painted the similarly astounding *Mr. Hulings' Rack Picture* (1888, Jo Ann and Julian Ganz, Jr.) for the same patron, a fence-mending effort, perhaps, but also a choice of subject and format that underscores the immense popularity and success of the flat, trompe-l'oeil paintings that characterized the last few years of his life.

Frankenstein catalogues nine Harnett paintings for the year 1886, and fully five of them adopt the familiar format of a single object iconically suspended against a weathered plank background.<sup>11</sup> This group is immediately preceded by his similar *Trophy of the Hunt* (fig. 3), painted before returning from Paris, and followed by *For Sunday's Dinner* (1888, AIC) and *The Faithful Colt* (1890, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford), where the featured items,

each commanding its own shallow slice of space, are a plucked chicken and a handgun, respectively. In the later 1880s, then, Harnett began to move closer and closer to the picture plane, thereby prompting his blinking, disbelieving viewers to do the same. Both Roxana Robinson and William H. Gerdts have aptly described these late works as “radical” for their stark, abstractive, and seemingly unidealized simplicity, with Gerdts noting that this type of seductive composition was largely responsible for the artist's popular fame.<sup>12</sup>

*The Old Violin*, however, consists of much more than just its eponymous subject. An inventory of its constituent parts reveals each object to be a crucial component of the carefully calibrated composition and a potential actor with a role to play in one of several narratives that can be constructed within and without the painting.

From a nail and a knotted loop of thin twine at the top edge of the door, the violin is suspended slightly off-center, immediately attracting the viewer's eye. To one side hangs the bow, balanced at left to some extent by the vertical join of the two wide planks, the only such interruption of the background surface. Peppering the top portion of the door are several other nail holes and nails (some rusty, some not), a palimpsest suggestive of a continuing history of use and of other objects, now absent, that have also hung here over the years.

The violin, considerably mellowed and stained, with its fresh deposit of powdered rosin indicating recent music-making, is unlike the instrument depicted in Harnett's related series, *Still Life—Violin and Music* (fig. 4), *The Old Cupboard Door* (1889, City Art Galleries, Sheffield, England), and *Old Models* (1892, MFA). The latter violin, with its characteristic rounded blotch to the left of the tailpiece, more glaring orangish tonality, and different bodily proportions (wider at the waist, less flared below), appears to be an instrument of much more recent vintage.<sup>13</sup> In contrast, Carol Oja has tentatively identified the violin in the National Gallery's painting as the most important musical instrument in Harnett's extensive collection: a “cremona” fashioned by the celebrated Guarneri del Gesù in 1724. It is listed as no. 55 1/2 in the catalogue of the artist's estate sale: “A remarkable sweet-toned instrument, procured by Mr. Harnett at a great cost from a celebrated collection in Paris.”<sup>14</sup>

Behind the violin, curling at the corners to cradle the instrument, several sheets of music hang unaccountably. Torn and stained, the pages bear the

same evidence of use as their companion, the violin. Two airs are precisely notated on the diagonal musical staves: “Vi ravviso, o luoghi ameni” (Oh remembrance of scenes long vanished), from Bellini’s immensely popular opera *La Sonnambula*, and “Hélas Quelle Douleur” (Alas, what sorrow) by nineteenth-century songwriter and arranger Edmond Servel.<sup>15</sup> Both tunes, especially the latter, also make appearances in other Harnett compositions (see *My Gems* [1957.5.1]). Their publication as simple melodies is part of the later nineteenth-century popularization of art songs and bel canto operas for a newly musically literate, or at least musically interested, middle class. While frowned upon by cultural patricians, such transcriptions were considered particularly appropriate for amateur violin instruction and home musicales.<sup>16</sup> Within *The Old Violin*, however, the importance of these musical sheets is underscored by their startling luminosity.<sup>17</sup> Especially from a slight distance, the blazing white page seems to absorb light from the rest of the painting, glowing as if to stress the continued life of these hackneyed tunes.

Similarly bright in value is the beguiling newspaper clipping, pasted near the violin’s lower corner. As was customary in his renditions of these scraps, Harnett leaves one corner of the newsprint folded over, provoking in the viewer the irresistible urge to peel it off the door. Nineteenth-century accounts attest to spectators’ attempts at “the removal of the newspaper scrap with their fingernails.” A skeptical reporter wrote, “While the iron hinges, the ring and staple and the rest are marvelous, the newspaper clipping is simply a miracle. The writer being one of those doubting Thomases who are by no means disposed to believe their own eyes, was permitted to allay his conscientious scruples by feeling of it, and is prepared to kiss the book, and s’help me, it is painted.”<sup>18</sup>

The clipping teases in other ways as well. Over the years, viewers have refused to believe that the tiny lines of type are not composed of actual words and sentences. Often the short paragraph is invested with the authority of possession of the “secret” of the painting; if only spectators squint hard enough—so goes this hopeful line of reasoning—they might make out the text that surely would “explain” the painting.<sup>19</sup> *The Old Violin* certainly encourages such speculation. Within the “internally consistent system of reality” generated by Harnett’s painting,<sup>20</sup> the cutout scrap presents itself as noteworthy and potentially meaningful: After all,

someone once thought it important enough to clip and paste to the door, an obvious act of conscious display. With such a limited cast of compositional elements in the painting, moreover, the viewer cannot help but infer a connection between the single clipping and the single violin—it is even positioned as an explanatory caption would be.

One Cincinnati writer went a good deal further, maintaining that the text actually contained “a complimentary allusion to the work,” a striking assertion that demands a break in the “unity” of the illusion, with the painting now supposedly stepping outside of its own creation to comment upon itself.<sup>21</sup> In this, too, the artist can be seen as luring the viewer into such a belief, for the first letter of the first word of the paragraph is clearly a capital “H,” suggesting a discussion of the work of “Harnett.” No other letters or words are rendered here. Despite the efforts of his audience to will the newspaper into legibility, Harnett has approximated the remaining

Fig. 4. William Michael Harnett, *Still Life - Violin and Music (Music and Good Luck)*, oil on canvas, 1888, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Catharine Lorillard Wolfe Fund, Catharine Lorillard Wolfe Collection



lines of type in his usual indecipherable manner: First, narrow blocks of thinned black paint were laid over the white ground to simulate words. While they were still wet, a minute pointed instrument was randomly drawn through the paint, thus displacing the darker medium to expose the lighter underlayer and create a meaningless crisscross of marks and loops.

On their own, the violin, music, and clipping make a pleasing and balanced formal arrangement, but it is the hardware of the door that completes the tensile organization of parts. At left the rounded door pull quietly punctuates what would be an otherwise distractingly untenanted region, its circular perfection and gentle highlights contrasting with the more rudely treated hinges at right. Extensively mottled by rust, this pair of laterally reaching shapes bears evidence not only of age, but also of extremes of use and climate—even violence. The loss of an upper rivet is not wholly surprising, but what force or forces could have possibly caused the alarming fracture and removal of part of the lower hinge, leaving behind a scarred, unpainted section of wood?<sup>22</sup> Are they the same vicissitudes as those occasioning the lamentable “Hélas Quelle Douleur”? Whatever the source, such excessive physical wear offers a hint of the lo-

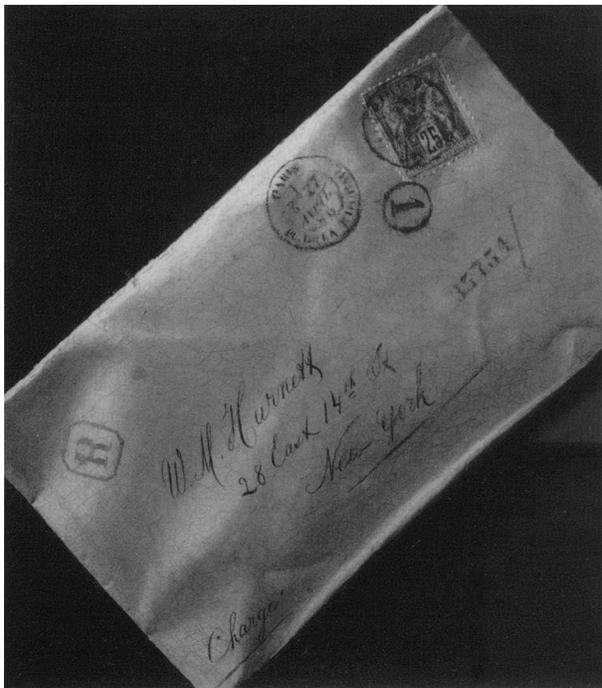
cation of the door: perhaps a barn, or a similar outbuilding exposed to the elements.

The hinges are also of note because they constitute an important change in the composition from the artist’s original thumbnail sketch. Harnett executed a small drawing, only about 2 by 3 inches, that shows nearly all the objects of the still life in their final disposition.<sup>23</sup> The exception is the pair of hinges, which were originally drawn in a straight configuration extending from side to side without interruption, rather than with the double kink that now gives them their pincerlike shape. This unexpected meander in such a rigid material greatly enlivens the painting, injecting a displacing dynamism that is far more active than, for example, the static grid of his *Trophy of the Hunt* painted the previous year (fig. 3). In essence, the hinges reframe the composition, shifting the entire background field of the painting slightly to the left. The asymmetrical placement of the violin now makes perfect design sense, as the instrument also seems subject to this overall leftward “push,” accommodating the shift by establishing a new “center” for the picture.

One final element remains clearly outside this delimited area. In the lower left corner, covering the end of the hinge, a crisp, almost crackling envelope hovers in front of the other forms, its jaunty tilt echoing that of the sheet music, even as it appears to occupy a different order of space (fig. 5). This shot of cool blue is in such contrast to the dark, warm tonality of most of the rest of the painting that the letter seems to come from another world. Indeed, like the freshly delivered missives frequently included by artists in interior genre scenes, this one connects the circumscribed realm of the painted space to that of the outside world, just as it seemingly bridges the gap across the picture plane between canvas and viewer. The conceit, of course, is that the envelope is “real”; it is not a part of the painted image, but rather, has been wedged into the rabbet of the picture frame of *The Old Violin*.

Harnett’s visual ploy is simple to describe, yet the epistemological ramifications are complex indeed. In the rest of the canvas, his stunning transcriptive feats have been employed to one end: convincing the viewer that the objects seen are, in actuality, physically present. With disbelief temporarily suspended, Harnett’s audience is coaxed down a single avenue of thought, only to be met by the obstacle of the envelope, the sole element to call the illusion into question. In a jarring turnabout, the painting begins to acknowledge its frame and

Fig. 5. Detail of envelope in 1993.15.1.





William Michael Harnett, *The Old Violin*, 1993.15.1

assert itself as the creation of an outside force, the artist “W. M. Harnett,” whose name and New York address appear quite clearly on the envelope. The self-doubt that was already a part of the viewer’s experience thus becomes even more pronounced.<sup>24</sup> A new actor has been introduced, one who implicitly claims authorship, if not ownership, of what has been represented.

Rather than sign the painting in a conventional manner, then, Harnett has inserted himself as a protagonist in the drama. While the letter thus constitutes a certain disruption in the image, it also offers a possibility for understanding how the various compositional components might relate. The postmark of the letter indicates that it was sent from Paris in April 1886, a date used by Frankenstein as the terminus ad quem for the painting. Harnett had recently returned from a six-year European sojourn that included some months in Paris. According to his own account, he had wanted to test his prowess at trompe l’oeil in Europe’s artistic capital, a “higher court” of criticism than that of Munich, where he had previously resided.<sup>25</sup> His *After the Hunt* (1885, The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco) was, in fact, exhibited at the Paris Salon of 1885, a clear mark of professional maturity and success. As Roxana Robinson has suggested, *The Old Violin*, with its letter from France and its Guarneri cremona (a trophy of sorts obtained “at a great cost” from a Parisian collection) might function as “an announcement of the artist’s return” and “a celebration of his European venture.”<sup>26</sup> In this light the sheet music, with its French title, “Hélas Quelle Douleur,” and its Bellini aria concerned with nostalgic memories of favored places, would also seem to play a role in this evocation of the Gallic capital.

That Harnett should have bestowed such careful thought on his choice of still-life elements (as well as the relationships between them) is unsurprising given the extraordinary pains taken in their representation. Minute examination of the surface of *The Old Violin* opens a window into the world of patience and inventiveness occupied by Harnett the technician. Some effects are rather straightforward, such as his admixture of sand (or possibly coarsely ground pigment) in the brown paint of the rusty hinge, thus creating a pitted underlayer over which he subsequently dragged a dry brush of orange highlights. Other feats required much greater concentration. The loop of twine, for example, gives a marvelous impression of a coarse, hemplike texture. It is more than just an impression, however, for in

the five inches of twine depicted, Harnett pulled literally hundreds of “hairs” from the wet, cream-colored paint, each one created by a tiny flick of a needlelike tool.

One of his most dumbfounding achievements, the canceled stamp, was actually a process of several steps. The artist began by building up a square of light-toned paint, each individual serrated tooth of its border receiving minuscule strokes of highlight and shadow. Next came a thin layer of brown into which a blunt stylus was scraped to shape the stamp’s emblem of crossed flags. He then took up a finer, pointed instrument to execute the nearly microscopic engraving lines running throughout the image. Changing to a darker black paint, he added the cancellation mark, finally ending by smudging the entire configuration with his still-visible fingerprint.

Such concentrated labor seems to infuse *The Old Violin* with a store of potential energy. There is within the image a certain pregnancy of moment; the violin appears waiting, expectant, almost staring. This feeling of ever-present stasis is almost too much to bear, yet there is also a welcome dissipation of energy across the canvas in the myriad flyaway details: the curling ends of the violin strings, the knot of twine, the splinters of wood, and the filament-size shreds of cut newsprint. Unlike the somewhat showy and overburdened composition of his masterful *Still Life—Violin and Music* (fig. 4), *The Old Violin* impresses less for its dexterous facility of patterned shadows and angled objects than for its compelling mix of intensity and quietude. With limits placed on the number of objects, there is an increased consciousness of arrangement; the painting becomes more than simply a catalogue of individual textures.

The strong sense of expectancy is largely generated by the trio of centrally placed objects: violin, bow, and music. As a group, their logical interconnectedness is immediately apparent. All is ready here for a musical performance—including, presumably, a waiting audience gathered around the painting.<sup>27</sup> It is not surprising, then, that when no one else stepped forward at its first exhibition, an elderly Cincinnati gentleman is reported to have reached for the instrument in the image, commenting, “By jove, I would like to play on that violin.”<sup>28</sup>

*The Old Violin* seems to demand such a response; it impels action and encourages reaction. In the nineteenth century, the latter could sometimes be hostile, as with the Minneapolis clergyman who

preached a sermon against the painting's "unworthy" and prideful trickery, or the Cincinnati reporter who dubbed it "of questionable character."<sup>29</sup> The same press accounts make it clear, however, that the majority of viewers was completely taken up by the suggestiveness of the work. So much so, that as nearly every nineteenth-century newspaper article recounts, a police guard was required to ensure that crowds maintained a polite distance. The drama set in motion by Harnett over 100 years ago is an open-ended one. The same "theater" is played out today as spectators, in groups or individually, test themselves before the painting. Herein lies the distinction of Harnett's canvas. Criticized by the cultural elite of its time as low and deceitful, *The Old Violin* nevertheless managed to create for itself a tidal wave of enthusiastic response at the popular level. It is this reception that has proved the more enduring.

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## Notes

1. See "The Art Gallery," *Cincinnati Commercial Gazette*, 16 September 1886, for the information that Harnett's painting "sold as soon as it was unpacked [in Cincinnati], and at his own price." Frankenstein, *Harnett* 1969, 78, names Tuchfarber as the original purchaser and disputes the legend that arose in the early twentieth century ("Found—A Celebrated American painting," *Mansfield News Journal* [Ohio], 3 November 1934) of the painting having been previously purchased by Edward Stokes, a New York hotelier. When *The Old Violin* was owned by William Haas, however, it did hang in a lodging house, the Cincinnati Parkview Hotel.

2. The original loan agreement, with *The Old Violin* as collateral, is in NGA curatorial files.

3. Two statements by William J. Williams, 17 May 1990 and 15 March 1993, in NGA curatorial files, give provenance information.

4. *The Old Violin* was not assigned a catalogue number, as it was a last-minute addition to the exhibition by Edwin L. Mehner, an exposition commissioner ("The Art Gallery," *Cincinnati Commercial Gazette*, 16 September 1886).

5. The painting was listed in the catalogue with the sale price of \$3,300.

6. Frankenstein, *Harnett*, 1969, 74.

7. One trompe l'oeil artist, Charles Meurer, even credited his attendance at the original exhibition of the painting in 1886 as the inspiration for his career choice; Frankenstein, *Harnett*, 1969, 154.

8. Unidentified Cincinnati newspaper, excerpt reprinted in F. Tuchfarber Co. advertising brochure, Alfred Frankenstein Papers, AAA microfilm 1374, fr. 281; "A Wonderland," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 19 September 1886; "The Art Gallery," *Cincinnati Commercial Gazette*, 16 September 1886; "Another Very Great Day," *St. Paul and*

*Minneapolis Pioneer Press*, 16 September 1887; and "The Exposition Building," *St. Paul and Minneapolis Pioneer Press*, 12 October 1887.

9. The most complete account of Tuchfarber and the chromolithograph remains Frankenstein, *Harnett*, 1969, 73, 76–78. A slightly later edition of the print bears the legend, "Donaldson Art Sign Co.," of Covington, Kentucky.

10. Frankenstein, "Mr. Hulings," 1969, 8. Bolger 1990, 10, 13, terms Hulings "an unlikely spinner of yarns." The original interview was published in "Harnett: How George Hulings Lost his Fiddle," *Evening Item* (Philadelphia) (11 June 1895). One line of the interview appears to cast light on a stylistic inconsistency of the painting. Hulings remembered Harnett as dissatisfied with the three-dimensional character of the violin: "It is too flat," said he, "and doesn't stand out at all." Harnett may have tried to fix this problem by adding the foreshortened upper edges of the body of the violin, thus changing the viewer's point of view from squarely in front of the violin to slightly above it. As mentioned in the Technical Notes, these uncharacteristic additions are clearly second thoughts, covering areas of the canvas that had already been completed; indeed they form the only passage of the painting's perspective that is slightly awkward.

11. Frankenstein, *Harnett*, 1969, 177–178.

12. Robinson in Bolger, Simpson, and Wilmerding 1992, 161–162, and Gerdtz in Bolger, Simpson, and Wilmerding 1992, 88. The year 1886 also saw the landmark purchase by Theodore Stewart of Harnett's large and similarly conceived *After the Hunt* (1885, The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco) for the high price of \$4000. Beginning that year *After the Hunt* was shown in Stewart's New York saloon, significantly raising Harnett's public profile. Simpson in Bolger, Simpson, and Wilmerding 1992, 297, suggests that Harnett consciously turned toward flat, trompe l'oeil imagery at this time in order to sustain his newfound fame and his ability to command large prices.

13. Burke 1980, 56, calls the instrument depicted in *Still Life—Violin and Music* "a standard nineteenth-century violin."

14. *Harnett* 1893, 10; Oja 1977, 514. Oja (519–520) speculates that the depiction of such a valuable instrument would have increased the appeal of the painting for wealthy, genteel collectors. The contemporary criticism leveled on such violin collectors (among whose ranks we must number Harnett, though he was far from wealthy) that they immorally silenced the best instruments by enshrining them in display cases would seem to be addressed, in the painting at least, by the telltale rosin dust, indicating continued play.

15. The Bellini aria depicted, described by Frankenstein, *Harnett*, 1969, 74, as "a dreadful tune," was first identified by Simpson in Bolger, Simpson, and Wilmerding 1992, 294, where the unexplained hovering state of the music is also noted (297). *La Sonnambula*, first performed in the United States in 1835, had become a standard of the popular performer Jenny Lind. It was also said to be Queen Victoria's favorite opera. Simpson provides a thorough analysis of the music and its possibilities of meaning.

16. Hamm 1986, 589–595; Oja 1976, 55. That “Vi ravviso” is here preceded by a “No. 94” indicates that it is one of a large collection of melodies.

17. The page is also notable for the almost ludicrously heaped impasto of its leftmost corner, a buildup that seems to push well beyond perceptual verisimilitude.

18. “A Wonderland,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 19 September 1886; “The Art Gallery,” *Cincinnati Commercial Gazette*, 16 September 1886.

19. One woman possessing the *Old Violin* chromolithograph wrote to Frankenstein, “We never found anyone who could read the clipping. That might reveal all we would like to know.” Frankenstein, *Harnett*, 1969, 78.

20. I have borrowed the phrase from Paul Staiti’s stimulating essay in Bolger, Simpson, and Wilmerding 1992, 35.

21. “A Wonderland,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 19 September 1886. Coyle in Bolger, Simpson, and Wilmerding 1992, 223–231, discusses such imaginative inventions of narrative for the clippings. She also underscores the role played by newspapers, rather than the specialized art press, in promoting and celebrating Harnett’s work.

22. This exposed lighter patch, not incidentally, plays an important role in the overall ordering of values.

23. The sketch (a small photograph of which is in NGA curatorial files) makes *The Old Violin* one of Harnett’s few paintings with a known preliminary study.

24. See Staiti in Bolger, Simpson, and Wilmerding 1992, 38, for a more thorough exploration of this viewing process.

25. Interview, *New York News*, as quoted in Frankenstein, *Harnett*, 1969, 55.

26. Robinson in Bolger, Simpson, and Wilmerding 1992, 163. Frankenstein’s (*Harnett*, 1969, 69) misreading of Harnett’s Parisian calling card as 7 rue Tourtaque (an error perpetuated in the chronology of Bolger, Simpson, and Wilmerding 1992, 311, as rue Tortaque) has obscured an interesting art historical coincidence. In Paris Harnett actually lived high on the hill of Montmartre at 7 rue Tourlaque, at the time an undeveloped area of shanties, kitchen gardens, and windmills, as well as a thriving bohemian quarter for avant-garde French artists. Thus Harnett, never a member of the American artistic establishment, found himself living just around the corner from the studio and residences of such renegades as Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Vincent van Gogh. Paul Signac was also nearby. See the map in *Van Gogh* 1988, 36–37.

27. The clear delineation of the musical notes ensures the continuing possibility of a performance; the painting can, in fact, be “played.” This is presumably what Frankenstein (who was also a music critic) did when he pronounced the then-unidentified “Vi ravviso” a “dreadful tune.” The notion of “performance,” both that of the artist within the painting and that of the crowd before it, is explored in Maine 1991, 281–295, and Staiti in Bolger, Simpson, and Wilmerding 1992. See also Davis 1992.

28. Unidentified Cincinnati newspaper, excerpt reprinted in F. Tuchfarber Co. advertising brochure, Alfred Frankenstein Papers, AAA microfilm 1374, fr. 281.

29. “The Churches: Pictures at the Exposition Furnish Material for a Sermon,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, 12 Sep-

tember 1887; and unidentified newspaper article quoted in Frankenstein, *Harnett*, 1969, 76. The often derogatory attitude toward trompe l’oeil painting in nineteenth-century American culture is examined by Cikovsky in Bolger, Simpson, and Wilmerding 1992, 19–29.

## References

- 1886 “The Art Gallery.” *Cincinnati Commercial Gazette* (16 September).  
1886 “A Wonderland.” *Cincinnati Enquirer* (19 September).  
1887 “Another Very Great Day.” *St. Paul and Minneapolis Pioneer Press* (12 October).  
1887 “At the Exposition Building.” *St. Paul and Minneapolis Pioneer Press* (12 October).  
1887 “Auspiciously Opened.” *St. Paul and Minneapolis Pioneer Press* (1 September).  
1887 “The Churches: Pictures at the Exposition Furnish Material for a Sermon.” *Minneapolis Tribune* (12 September).  
1895 “Harnett: How George Hulings Lost His Fiddle.” *Evening Item* (Philadelphia) (11 June).  
1934 “Found—A Celebrated American painting.” *Mansfield News Journal* (Ohio) (3 November).  
1937 Robinson: 23.  
1939 “Loan”: 109.  
1939 “Harnett”: repro. 7.  
1946 Born: 253.  
1947 Born: 34.  
1949 Frankenstein: 50, 54, fig. 15.  
1951 Frankenstein: 63–64.  
1968 Frankenstein: 45.  
1969 Frankenstein, *Harnett*: ix, 3, 15, 34, 71, 73–78, 89, 125, 133, 146–147, 154, 159, 177, pls. 60, 62, 62a.  
1969 Frankenstein, “Mr. Hulings”: 8–9, repro.  
1969 Novak: 234.  
1970 Frankenstein: 88.  
1971 Gerdts and Burke: 142–143, 145, 158, fig. 10–9.  
1975 Mastai: 293, 295, 313, pl. 335.  
1976 Oja: 22, 23, 29, 32, 47–48, 60–65, 80, 87–89, 91, 94, repro. 105.  
1977 Oja: 514, 518–519, 523.  
1979 Gorman: 12.  
1979 Marzio: 73–76, no. 73a.  
1980 Burke: 56, 173, 275.  
1981 Barry: repro. 106.  
1981 Gerdts, *Humble Truth*: 187.  
1983 Wilmerding: 221.  
1990 Bolger: 10, 13, fig. 7.  
1990 “Fooling”: 85, repro.  
1992 Bolger, Simpson, and Wilmerding: 23, 30–32, 35, 42, 52, 66, 68, 94–95, 102, 163, 219, 297–298, pl. 37.  
1992 Davis: 22, 25.  
1992 Strazdes: 226.  
1993 Kloss: 183.  
1994 Lubin: 308.  
1994 Lucie-Smith: 44, repro.

1957.5.1 (1477)

## *My Gems*

1888

Oil on wood panel, 45.7 × 35 (18 × 13 3/4)  
Gift of the Avalon Foundation

### Inscriptions

Signed at lower left: WMHARNETT. [WMH in ligature] / 1888.

On reverse: 2/88

**Technical Notes:** The support is a commercially prepared mahogany panel (1.5 cm thick). Stenciled on the reverse is: "G.ROWNEY & CO. / PREPARED / MAHOGANY PANEL / LONDON / 52 RATHBONE PLACE." The ground appears to consist of two dense, white, extremely smooth ground layers, with a thin green layer sandwiched between. Extensive underdrawing, probably in pencil, is visible in strong light and with infrared reflectography. The forms of the still life were laid over the dark background in washes of thinned color, with subsequent layers of more opaque paint and glazes defining details and creating depth. The varnish is unevenly applied and has become slightly discolored.

**Provenance:** Probably (Gimbel Brothers, Philadelphia), by 20 January 1920; probably sold 1920 to William J. Hughes [1863–1938], Washington D.C.;<sup>1</sup> his estate; sold June 1939 to (Downtown Gallery, New York);<sup>2</sup> sold January 1942 to Richard A. Loeb, New York; sold 1956 to (Downtown Gallery, New York).<sup>3</sup>

**Exhibited:** *Harnett Centennial Exhibition*, Downtown Gallery, New York, 1948, no. 15. *In Memoria, Ailsa Mellon Bruce*, NGA, 1969, no cat. *William Michael Harnett*, MMA; Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth; The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; NGA, 1992–1993, unnumbered (exhibited only in Washington).

*My Gems* is a somewhat restrained example of the bric-a-brac, tabletop still life favored by Harnett during and after his Munich residence. In size it is relatively unusual, falling between his miniaturized works with similar subjects (such as *Still Life*, 1890, 7 1/2 by 9 1/2 inches, Helen Clay Frick Foundation, Pittsburgh) and his grandiose, life-size piles of books and curios (such as *Music*, 1886, 46 1/4 by 38 1/2 inches, Manoogian Collection, Grosse Pointe, Michigan).<sup>4</sup> Also uncommon is the view of the right side of the table; the vast majority of such compositions feature a display clustered toward the opposite end. In other respects—particularly in the choice of models—the painting is quite typical. The stoneware Delft jar, the spindly Roman lamp, and the sheet music to the song "Hélas Quelle Douleur" (set an octave higher than the same song depicted in

*The Old Violin* [1993.15.1]) are among the most frequently represented objects from his personal collection.<sup>5</sup>

The notation "2/88" on the reverse of the panel indicates that the National Gallery's picture was the second painting completed by Harnett in 1888, the most productive of his final years.<sup>6</sup> A letter written by the artist to the eventual owner of *My Gems*, William J. Hughes, explains that Harnett had spent several months in late 1887 and early 1888 in Hot Springs, Arkansas, to obtain relief from his rheumatism.<sup>7</sup> The surge of activity in 1888—he produced at least five tabletop still lifes similar to *My Gems*—may be evidence of a temporary physical vigor that followed his treatment. Harnett's reputation was at its height during this period, and his sales appear to have been consistent.<sup>8</sup>

Harnett seems to have begun *My Gems* in his usual manner, with firmly ruled lines establishing the table edge and with the other forms of the composition being tested by approximate outlines in pencil drawn directly on the panel.<sup>9</sup> Infrared reflectography indicates that initially the objects were oriented toward the top end of the panel. At some early point Harnett turned the panel 180 degrees and began anew, using paint to describe the individual items he laid in on top of the vaguely mottled background. He occasionally embellished these thin planes of color with subtle, exquisitely controlled textural manipulations, producing the astonishing effects of verisimilitude for which he is celebrated.

Harnett built up the paint three-dimensionally to form, for example, the ends of the projecting matches, the nubby imperfections in the glazes of the jar and small ink bottle, and (in a relatively extreme accumulation of impasto) the folded corners of the sheet music. Elsewhere he used a tiny, sharp instrument, possibly a needle, to comb through the white paint of the quill and form the separations of the individual barbs of the feather. Equally subtle is the slightly ridged, diagonal texture of the heavy green fabric mimicking the weave of cloth. In the several holes of the table covering, this pattern is dissipated by individual frayed threads, giving way to the smooth, glossy surface of the background visible through the openings.

While these astounding effects have always been a part of the fascination with Harnett, recent scholarship on the artist has shifted toward an exploration of his iconography and the place of his oeuvre within late nineteenth-century American

culture.<sup>10</sup> The variety of items grouped together in *My Gems*—European antiques, worn and aged books, a pipe and matches, a piccolo, sheet music, and an ink bottle with a quill pen—thus becomes important to this modern interpretive enterprise.

Music and musical instruments occupy a crucial place throughout the art of Harnett (see also *The Old Violin* [1993.15.1]). The instrument so prominently (and precariously) presented in *My Gems* is a nineteenth-century, five-key piccolo with silver hardware and an ivory head. Piccolos appear in his work much less frequently than the larger flutes Harnett is known to have enjoyed playing. Given his proficiency on the latter instrument, it is probably no coincidence that many of the musical selections depicted by the artist are scored for a solo instrument in the voice range of the flute.

The emotional range of such middle-class salon music is equally restricted; as here, it is usually sad in tone and preoccupied with death, loss, and longing. Indeed, the highly legible title of Edmond Servel's "Hélas Quelle Douleur"—shown on a torn and water-stained sheet which approaches self-consciousness in its obvious display for the viewer—might almost be seen as a caption for the painting. The other visible piece of music intensifies these doleful themes. It is the cover of a transcription of Giuseppe Verdi's opera, *Rigoletto*, a pointed and tragic tale of bitter passions, meaningless sacrifice, and murder.<sup>11</sup>

The mood does not greatly change when one moves from music to literature. Pictured are a volume of Shakespeare dated 1605 that includes the tragedies *Hamlet* and *Troilus and Cressida*, an edition of Dante's *Purgatorio* dated 1503, an indecipherable book by Tasso, and several other volumes which Harnett did not identify. (Unlike his musical notation, the information on his book spines is usually laconic and imprecise.) These volumes are piled haphazardly, and their bindings vary from leather to vellum to paper, the only constant being their conspicuous wear and seemingly casual treatment. The subject matter of the works Harnett has chosen touches upon familiar themes of transience, duplicity, yearning, and death. Their presence in *My Gems* reflects such contemporary phenomena as the popularization and proliferation of the writings of Shakespeare in the United States, the encouragement in the literary press of the formation of well-rounded domestic libraries, and a pervasive sense of regret as machine-bound books began to replace

hand-crafted editions and bookselling became more corporate, less personal.<sup>12</sup>

Scholars have variously interpreted American paintings depicting accumulations of artistic bric-a-brac, objects of learning, and instruments of cultural expression as celebrations of wealth, success, civilization, intellect, and spiritual love.<sup>13</sup> *My Gems* appears to be less optimistic and declaratory in tone. Its primary concerns are not universal, but are seemingly more personal, as indicated by the compositional stress on the sensitively described piccolo and pipe—intimate objects associated with the mouth that are normally used close to the body by a single individual. These are the only two items in the still life that are viewed in their entirety, without any overlapping, and they seem to occupy a more proximate picture space, pressing away from the array of darker objects behind.

Indeed, the group of objects as a whole is characterized by negligence, the visible effects of use, and a comparative lack of opulence. Books are carelessly left upside down, the cloth is frayed and stained, the piccolo has a long crack in its head rendering it incapable of making music, several matches are spent, the lamp is extinguished, and the pipe is overturned, its ashes threatening the highly flammable, and thus impermanent, objects with potential incineration. One senses a movement beyond nostalgia for the past toward actual disrespect for the present. In Barbara Groseclose's strong formulation, Harnett would seem to be "belittl[ing] man's accomplishments" and possibly reflecting "on the ultimate worthlessness of human endeavor."<sup>14</sup> (The sole item that seems at all ready to perform functionally is the brightly translucent quill, spiking up toward the panel's edge from an ink bottle placed decidedly to one side of the arrangement. Its possibilities for action are implied both by the brilliant slash of its form against the dark background and by the implicit comparison of the act of writing with the passivity of book-reading.)

So little is known of Harnett that it is often difficult to find any place of intersection between his life and work. Because of the inscription and letter discussed above, however, we know that *My Gems* was almost certainly the second painting executed by the artist after a lengthy stay at Hot Springs, a resort frequented by the sick and aged. Indeed, Harnett began his letter to the future owner of *My Gems* with a poignant observation: "I have been here now three weeks. It is not a pleasant



William Michael Harnett, *My Gems*, 1957.5.1

place to stay as you must get familiar with the sight of sores and deformity.”<sup>15</sup> Such a personal confession, relatively unique in our knowledge of the artist, may explain how the early months of 1888 became a period in which themes of mortality and decay, never absent for long in the work of Harnett, were further reinforced despite the apparent improvement in his health.

One final characteristic of *My Gems* may relate to Harnett’s probable disjointed emotional state after his return from Hot Springs. Almost invariably Harnett depicted late tabletop still lifes of this format against several folds of drapery or against a wall of dark mahogany paneling, often with elaborate moldings, cross bars, and door hinges. The models usually rest on solid, polished cabinets or on similarly toned tables with at least one leg visible. Here, however—and this is all but unknown in any other Munich-type still life by the artist—there are absolutely no spatial references other than the tabletop to close the composition and provide a physical context for the objects.<sup>16</sup> The background, both above and below the table’s surface, consists entirely of a dark, unmodulated, and thinly brushed sea of seemingly sponged-on reddish-brown stains that hints at, but never completely transforms itself into, wood. There is no fix on spatial depth, no discernible wall plane, and—most surprisingly—no visible table leg; even the holes in the dull green fabric fail to provide a glimpse of the support for the horizontal surface. It is as though the tabletop is adrift, unanchored amidst an environment that is utterly abstractive and dimensionless. Viewers are left with a curious floating sensation and a series of unanswered questions about both the indeterminate setting and their ambiguous relationship to the objects.

Clearly *My Gems*, although one of many similar and linked tabletop compositions in Harnett’s late years, is a painting that is quite distinctly and individually characterized and which, very possibly, offers a compelling hint of the presence of its normally “invisible” maker.

JD

#### Notes

1. Letters of 20 January and 14 February 1920 from G.E. Kelley, of Gimbel Brothers, to William J. Hughes, private collection, describe a painting, 18 × 14 inches, that is likely *My Gems*, and offer it for sale, explaining (20 January), “I bought it outright from a man who needed cash and was indeed pleased to find such an example.” Hughes’ reply has not survived; the specific date of his pur-

chase of *My Gems* is unknown. Hughes was a lawyer with the office of the solicitor general in Washington. Like Harnett, he was the son of Irish immigrants to Philadelphia. Although separated in age by fifteen years, the two men became friends and maintained a correspondence even after both moved from Pennsylvania. Prompted by his friendship with the artist, Hughes later amassed a collection of twenty-one late nineteenth-century still-life paintings. See Davis 1992.

2. The Papers of William J. Hughes, Sr., box 9, folder 18, Georgetown University Archives, Washington, contain correspondence between Edith Halpert of the Downtown Gallery and William J. Hughes, Jr., son of the collector, relating to the sale of most of the Hughes collection to Halpert. Also preserved is an estate inventory of twenty-one paintings, in which the NGA picture is listed and described as no. 3. See also Downtown Gallery Papers, AAA microfilm ND/27, frs. 100–101.

3. Edith Halpert’s letters of 13 May 1957 and 25 March 1961 (in NGA curatorial files) provide provenance information.

4. While there are other vertical tabletop still lifes that fall into this “middle” category of scale, none have dimensions that match *My Gems*. There is evidence that Harnett considered this anomaly in size while laying out the composition of the painting. Visible in strong light almost three inches from the bottom of the panel is a straight line ruled (probably in pencil) across the panel. Written upside down in Harnett’s handwriting are the instructions “cut this line,” a directive that was obviously never carried out.

5. Descriptive entries in the catalogue of Harnett’s estate sale (*Harnett* 1893) correspond loosely to many of the objects depicted in *My Gems*. The correspondences are not exact; Harnett is known to have modified aspects of his models from painting to painting.

6. Harnett’s system of record-keeping, unique to the year 1888, was first deciphered in Frankenstein, *Harnett*, 1969, 85–86. Frankenstein classified *My Gems* as “provable” in its authorship, as the painting was twice reproduced (pp. 59 and 87) in the “Blemly Scrapbook,” an important documentary source kept by a friend of the artist. See Alfred Frankenstein Papers, AAA microfilm 1374, fr. 992. The original name of the NGA painting is not known. *My Gems* was a title given the work by Edith Halpert, director of the Downtown Gallery, when she purchased it in 1939. On the final period of Harnett’s career, see Hardin in Bolger, Simpson, and Wilmerding 1992.

7. Extant Harnett correspondence is quite rare. This letter is dated 29 November 1887 and is published in Davis 1992, 17–18.

8. Frankenstein, *Harnett*, 1969, 84.

9. See Milam in Bolger, Simpson, and Wilmerding 1992, 169–175.

10. Two publications that were important in this re-orientation of scholarship are Mandeles 1986, 51–62; and Groseclose 1987, 51–59. Exploration of Harnett’s subject matter has been greatly expanded by the many essays in Bolger, Simpson, and Wilmerding 1992.

11. All of these issues have been previously developed much more extensively than can be outlined here in Oja 1977, 505–523; and Simpson in Bolger, Simpson, and

Wilmerding 1992, 189–307. Larson in Bolger, Simpson, and Wilmerding 1992, 270, advances the idea of the music's title as a caption for the work.

12. These topics are discussed by Walker in Bolger, Simpson, and Wilmerding 1992, 233–241, and Larson in Bolger, Simpson, and Wilmerding 1992, 265–275. By the 1870s, the greatest Shakespearean library in the United States had been formed by Horace Howard Furness in Harnett's home city of Philadelphia. Costly editions of Shakespeare had particular appeal for mercantile businessmen, who valued the writer's purported entrepreneurship. See Taylor 1989, 198, 215.

13. See especially Gerdtz 1971, 744–748; Maine 1991, 281–295; Robinson in Bolger, Simpson, and Wilmerding 1992, 161–167; and Larson in Bolger, Simpson, and Wilmerding 1992, 265–267.

14. Groseclose 1987, 54.

15. Harnett to Hughes, 29 November 1887, as cited in Davis 1992.

16. In this respect the closest painting to *My Gems* is Harnett's *Still Life* (1888, MMA).

## References

- 1946 Born: 253.  
1969 Frankenstein, *Harnett*: 15, 84, 86, 178–179.  
1976 Oja: 28, 41, 83, fig. C-10.  
1975 Walker: 555, no. 843, color repro.  
1977 Oja: 510, 516, 523, fig. 2.  
1980 Burke: 54–55.  
1980 Wilmerding: 110, no. 36, color repro. 111.  
1981 Williams: 174, repro. 149, 177.  
1981 Wilmerding: 104–105.  
1983 Wilmerding: 111, 115, fig. 102.  
1988 Wilmerding: 126, no. 40, color repro. 127.  
1990 Bolger: 31.  
1992 Bolger, Simpson, and Wilmerding: 187, 269, 275, 294, 297, fig. 126.  
1992 Davis: 18, 24, repro. 23.  
1993 Kloss: 183.  
1993 Studing: 75, repro. 76.

## William Stanley Haseltine

1835 – 1900

WILLIAM STANLEY HASELTINE was born in Philadelphia on 11 June 1835, the son of John Haseltine, a successful businessman, and his wife Elizabeth Shinn Haseltine, an amateur landscape painter.<sup>1</sup> After two years of study at the University of Pennsylvania, he entered Harvard University in 1852, receiving his degree two years later. He studied painting briefly in 1854 with Paul Weber (1823–1916), a German landscape and portrait painter who had settled in Philadelphia. In the spring of 1855 Haseltine made his public debut as an artist, exhibiting several paintings at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia. That summer he journeyed to Düsseldorf, where he joined the colony of young American painters studying landscape painting at the School of Fine Arts.<sup>2</sup> In 1856 Haseltine joined Worthington Whittredge (1820–1910) and a group of fellow students on an extended sketching trip up the Rhine and into Switzerland and Italy. Although in January 1857 Haseltine returned to Düsseldorf, he was back in Italy by the summer and settled in Rome in the fall. During the winter of 1857–1858 and the spring of 1858 he made numerous sketch-

ing tours in the environs of Rome and also visited the island of Capri.

In late summer or early autumn 1858 Haseltine abruptly returned to Philadelphia. By November of the following year he had moved to New York and taken a studio in the Tenth Street Studio Building, which was the center of the American landscape school in the late 1850s and early 1860s. Among the painters Haseltine joined in the building were Frederic Edwin Church, Albert Bierstadt, and Whittredge, the latter two acquaintances from his European travels. He began to establish a reputation as a landscape painter, showing his works regularly at exhibitions in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. Many works were based on sketches completed abroad, but he also used studies made on his travels to popular seaside resorts in New England. Among his favorite subjects were Maine's Mount Desert Island and the shore areas around Narragansett, Rhode Island, and Nahant, Massachusetts. These landscapes and coastal scenes (a typical example is *Indian Rock, Narragansett, Rhode Island*, 1864, The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco) were gener-

ally well received, with critics praising in particular his geological accuracy in depicting the distinctive rock formations of the New England coast. In 1860 Haseltine was elected an associate of the National Academy of Design; he was made a full academician the following year.

Personal tragedy struck in 1864 when Haseltine's wife died in childbirth. In February 1866 the artist remarried, and three months later he and his family departed for Europe. He considered settling in Paris but by 1867 had joined the large international art colony in Rome, which remained his base for much of the next thirty years. Haseltine's paintings of European views, especially his landscapes and coastal views of Italian scenery, proved extremely popular with wealthy American tourists who were traveling abroad in ever-increasing numbers in the years after the Civil War. In the autumn of 1874 Haseltine located his studio in a grand setting at the Palazzo Altieri, which he opened to visitors and potential patrons on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. This was a common practice among artists, as Rome had only a few contemporary art galleries and scant opportunities for public exhibition.

From Rome, Haseltine often traveled to other areas of Italy and Europe, including Venice, Capri, Sicily, Paris, Cannes, Belgium, Holland, and the Netherlands. During the 1880s and 1890s, he and his family often spent summers in Bavaria and the Tyrol. Sketches made during these trips frequently served as the basis for later paintings and watercolors, with his scenes of Capri and Sicily proving very popular with tourists. Haseltine also made periodic trips back to the United States, especially during the 1890s. In the summer of 1899 he and his son Herbert made a trip west, visiting Colorado, Utah, California, Oregon, Alaska, Banff, and Yellowstone Park. This was his last trip to the states; a few months after his return to Europe, he contracted pneumonia. He died on 3 February 1900.

FK

#### Notes

1. The standard source on Haseltine's life has long been Plowden 1947. The detailed chronology in Simpson, Henderson, and Mills 1992 includes a great deal of new and more accurate information about the artist's life.

2. Plowden 1947, 42, states that Haseltine studied

with Andreas Achenbach (1815–1910) at the Academy. Simpson, Henderson, and Mills 1992, 156, state that although the two men were certainly acquainted, there is no formal record of Haseltine studying with Achenbach.

#### Bibliography

Plowden 1947.

Simpson, Henderson, and Mills 1992.

1953.10.1 (1181)

#### *Marina Piccola, Capri*

c. 1858

Oil on paper, mounted on fabric, 31.7 × 48 (12 1/2 × 18 7/8)  
Gift of Helen Haseltine Plowden

**Technical Notes:** The painting is on paper, mounted to fabric with a brown paper interleaf. The fabric is attached to the original four-member mortise-and-tenon stretcher with tacks that have been hammered in halfway and then bent over (as is the case with Haseltine's *Natural Arch at Capri* [1989.13.1]). Tack holes in the corners of the paper suggest that the artist executed a preliminary sketch with the paper pinned to a drawing board or similar support. That he attached the paper to the secondary support before completing the painting is evident from the presence of original paint on the edges of the brown paper interleaf and in the corner tack holes.

The paint is moderately rich and was applied with considerable texture and impasto; many areas of glazing and scumbling are apparent. Drying cracks in the sky are covered by glazes and scumbles, almost certainly applied by the artist. Infrared reflectography reveals extensive underdrawing in a liquid medium over a white ground layer. A few modifications were made in the final composition (especially in the shapes of the rocks), but the changes were not of great significance. In 1984 discolored varnish was removed and the painting was restored. A 23-cm vertical scratch across the center of the painting, the result of vandalism, was inpainted. The varnish has not discolored.

**Provenance:** The artist; his estate, Palazzo Altieri, Rome, until c. 1930; his daughter, Helen Haseltine Plowden [Mrs. Roger Plowden], New York.

**Exhibited:** NGA, 1980, 27. *The Lure of Italy: American Artists and the Italian Experience, 1760–1914*, MFA; Cleveland Museum of Art; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1992–1993, no. 60.

THE ISLAND OF CAPRI in the Bay of Naples was one of William Stanley Haseltine's favorite subjects. Following a visit to the island in the late 1850s, Haseltine produced many paintings of the site and regularly exhibited them in America and Europe.<sup>1</sup>



William Stanley Haseltine, *Marina Piccola, Capri*, 1953.10.1

*Marina Piccola, Capri*, although undated, is considered one of the earliest.<sup>2</sup> It is sufficiently close to the larger, more highly finished oil entitled *Piccola Marina, Capri* (location unknown), which has the same general view but also includes large cliffs at the right, to suggest that the National Gallery painting served as a study for the larger work.<sup>3</sup> Evidence on the painting itself suggests that Haseltine began this as an on-the-spot sketch and then subsequently completed it in his studio.

*Piccola Marina* (or, *Marina Piccola*) is located on the south side of Capri and commands a sweeping view to the east along the shore to the famous Faraglioni, three abrupt cliffs extending into the sea. The dramatic scenery attracted many nineteenth-century artists, including Italians Giacinto Gigante (1806–1876), Gonzalo Carelli (1818–1900), and Gabriele Smargiassi (1798–1882).<sup>4</sup> Haseltine's friend Albert Bierstadt visited in June 1857 with Sanford Gifford (1823–1880), and painted *The Marina Piccola, Capri* (1859, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo), an ambitious early work depicting the view along the coast to the Faraglioni.<sup>5</sup> Haseltine, in contrast, chose a less panoramic vista and focused on a small formation known as the "Scoglio delle Sirene" (Rock of the Sirens).<sup>6</sup> This rock forms a natural arch projecting into the sea and shelters a cove used by fishermen for beaching their boats, storing equipment, and drying nets.

*Marina Piccola, Capri* is primarily an image of a picturesque spot and, as such, is typical of many works painted by mid-nineteenth-century American artists who visited Italy.<sup>7</sup> Yet, through its focus on the Scoglio delle Sirene, it also evokes, if only in passing, the spirit of classical mythology. According to legend, the Sirens, who had lured countless sailors to their deaths, were rendered harmless and turned into rocks after Ulysses' crew successfully navigated his ship through these waters. Although it is unclear whether Scoglio delle Sirene was considered the final resting place of the Sirens or the spot from which they sang, the site had long been associated with them. Haseltine was likely aware of this association, even if his painting lacks the more overt references to mythology found in many of Thomas Cole's Italian scenes.

FK

#### Notes

1. Plowden 1947 does not indicate when Haseltine first visited the island, but in a letter of 17 July 1968 (in NGA curatorial files), she indicates having seen a draw-

ing of Capri dated 1856. In Simpson, Henderson, and Mills 1992, 158, 173, 179, 182, 183, and Henderson 1992, 42, the date of the artist's first visit to Capri is given as 1858, with subsequent trips in 1865, 1868, 1870, and 1871. Henderson in a 4 August 1992 telephone conversation (memorandum in NGA curatorial files) reiterated her belief that the first Capri visit was in 1858 and that there is no known drawing of Capri inscribed 1856. Between 1859 and 1896 Haseltine exhibited paintings of Capri in more than twenty-five exhibitions, including the PAFA (1859, 1861), NAD (1861, 1871, 1896), Paris Salon (1867, 1868), Boston Athenaeum (1870), Haseltine Galleries, Philadelphia (1873, 1875, 1879), Century Association (1874, 1879), Williams & Everett Gallery, Boston (1874), industrial expositions in Chicago (1874) and Cincinnati (1875); the centennial exposition in Philadelphia (1876), and international exhibitions in Munich (1879) and Rome (1883). See the chronology in Simpson, Henderson, and Mills 1992.

2. Henderson 1992, 42, provides the date. *Marina Piccola, Capri* was once known as *Coast of Naples*, but there is no doubt that the present title is descriptively accurate.

3. Plowden 1947, pl. 26, provides a reproduction of the larger work. (The painting was once owned by the American Academy in Rome, which Haseltine helped found.) Although a signature is visible in the reproduction, a date is not, and there is no record of how Plowden arrived at the 1856 date. A larger, more expansive view of *Marina Piccola* was sold at Christie's, New York, 24 May 1995, no. 15.

4. See *Capri* 1981, nos. 6–7, 9–11, 13. See also E. Augusto Lovatti (b. 1816), *Marina Piccola, Capri in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Continental and Scandinavian Pictures and Watercolors*, Christie, Manson, and Woods, 17 May 1991, no. 213.

5. Hendricks 1973, 39–44, 96, incorrectly referred to it as *The "Marina Grande" in Capri with the Faraglioni Rocks in the Background*. *Marina Grande* is on the north side of Capri.

6. See Petracone 1913, 21, for a photograph of the site.

7. For a recent overview of American artists in Italy, see Stebbins 1992.

#### References

- 1980 Wilmerding: repro. 90.
- 1988 Wilmerding: repro. 104.
- 1991 *NGA*: 164.
- 1992 Simpson, Henderson, and Mills: repro. 42.

#### 1989.13.1

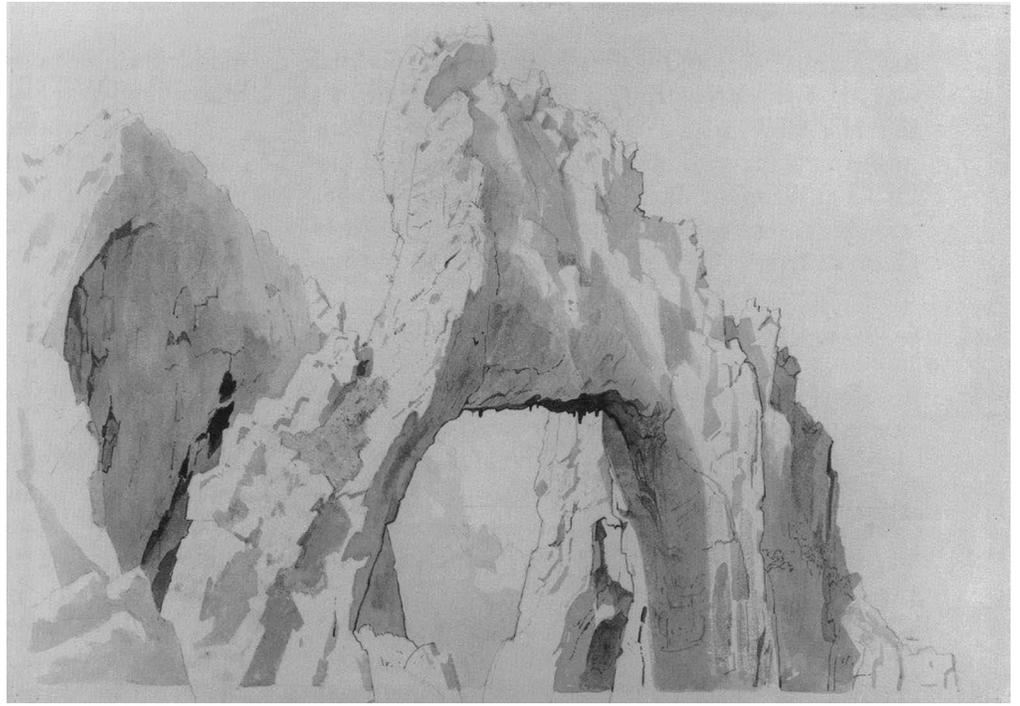
### *Natural Arch at Capri*

1871  
Oil on canvas, 86.4 × 139.7 (34 × 55)  
Gift of Guest Services, Inc., in Honor of the 50th  
Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art

#### Inscriptions

At lower left: W. S. Haseltine / Rome.1871

Fig. 1. William Stanley Haseltine, *Natural Arch, Capri*, watercolor and pencil on paper, c. 1870–1871, Athens, Georgia Museum of Art, The University of Georgia, Gift of Mrs. Helen Plowden, Courtesy of National Academy of Design, New York



**Technical Notes:** The support is a medium-weight, twill fabric that remains unlined. It is mounted on the original five-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher with tacks that were hammered in halfway and then bent over (see *Marina Piccola, Capri* [1953.10.1]). The fabric was primed before stretching with a thin, off-white ground. This ground layer is exposed in areas where the sky meets the rocks, and it plays an important role in the overall effect of the painting. The paint was applied relatively thinly, but with significant areas of texture, impasto, and active brushwork, especially in the rock formations. Losses and abrasion are minimal and the painting is generally in very good condition. In 1990 discolored varnish was removed and the painting was restored.

**Provenance:** (sale, Ader Picard Tajan, Paris, 27 April 1987, no. 145); Jody Klotz, New York; (Berry-Hill Galleries, New York) by 1987.

**Exhibited:** NGA 1991, 164–165. *Expressions of Place: The Art of William Stanley Haseltine*, The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, M. H. de Young Memorial Museum; Brandywine River Museum, Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, 1992–1993, no. 43.

*Natural Arch at Capri* was painted in Rome in 1871, more than a dozen years after Haseltine had first begun painting Caprese subjects such as *Marina Piccola, Capri* [1953.10.1].<sup>1</sup> As was evident in such early works, the artist was fascinated by coastal scenes in which unusual and dramatic rock formations stood in stark juxtaposition to the sea. That interest con-

tinued in the early and mid-1860s with his series of Narragansett and Nahant seascapes, in which the artist minimized picturesque details in favor of simplified compositions focusing on three main elements—massive rocks, expansive sea, and radiant sky.<sup>2</sup> Haseltine’s contemporaries were struck by the way these “rock-portraits” captured the essential look of the New England coast.<sup>3</sup> It was to be through similar means that Haseltine portrayed the famous coastal sites along the Bay of Naples when he returned to Italy in the late 1860s.

*Natural Arch at Capri* with the peninsula of Sorrento in the distance is based on a watercolor, ink, and pencil sketch (fig. 1) of Arco Naturale, a celebrated rock formation on the southeastern side of the island.<sup>4</sup> To the right sheer rocky crags rise abruptly from the sea; these are the Faraglioni, which would not, in point of fact, be visible from this vantage point.<sup>5</sup> At the far left, atop the most distant cliff, are the ruins of the Villa Jovis, one of twelve built on the island by Emperor Tiberius.<sup>6</sup>

The fidelity with which Haseltine transferred the effects of light and shade and the textures of rock recorded in his watercolor view of the arch to canvas attests to his abiding interest in painting with geological accuracy. Haseltine gave the image a striking sense of verisimilitude by using a rich and vibrant paint surface in the rocky areas that contrasts markedly with the more smoothly brushed ar-

neas of grass, sky, and water. Nevertheless, his goal was not a strict recording of topography: The fact that Haseltine created in *Natural Arch at Capri* a composite view of well-known rock formations and vistas from different parts of the island indicates his stronger interest in capturing the general spirit of Caprese scenery in a single balanced and harmonious composition.<sup>7</sup>

*Natural Arch at Capri* transcends its origins in particular elements of landscape scenery and achieves a powerfully dramatic effect in its own right. The juxtaposition of a close-up, detailed foreground with a far distant background creates a dynamic spatial tension that moves the viewer's eye from near to far and back again in a way that is visually startling. Haseltine deliberately minimized the presence of human elements, giving the viewer little sense of relative scale; only the minuscule sailboats plying the water and the tiny form of the Villa Jovis serve as reference points. As a result the foreground rocks seem fantastically huge, capable of dwarfing all human endeavor.

The theme of man and his creations appearing insignificant in the face of nature was common in nineteenth-century American landscape painting, with natural arches and bridges figuring prominently. Thomas Cole depicted them many times in both American and European pictures, including *The Expulsion from the Garden of Eden* (1828, MFA) and *Evening in Arcady* (1843, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford). In these, enormous rock arches dramatically outlined by chiaroscuro loom above the landscapes in a way that is suggestive of Haseltine's *Natural Arch at Capri*. Cole's use of such forms generally served to enhance his imaginary or allegorical themes (*Evening in Arcady*, for example, includes the small figures of Orpheus and Eurydice, thus establishing a mythological meaning). Haseltine, like other younger landscape painters such as Frederic Church, did not make his landscapes convey meaning quite so explicitly, leaving open a variety of possible interpretations. A viewer contemplating the Arco Naturale in reality or in one of Haseltine's paintings might muse upon nature's immutability in comparison to the rise and fall of human empires (such as that of Rome) or be reminded of "the front of a shattered Gothic cathedral" (as was the American travel writer Bayard Taylor).<sup>8</sup> It was primarily through this strategy of avoiding the old-fashioned moralizing, while still depicting dramatic, exotic, and beautiful scenes "truthfully" that artists such as Haseltine managed to keep landscape

painting viable in the decades following the United States Civil War.<sup>9</sup>

Haseltine produced many scenes of Capri, including several of the Arco Naturale, making the precise identification of individual examples exceedingly difficult.<sup>10</sup> In April 1874, while the artist was temporarily in New York, a visitor to his studio described several paintings on view, including two of Capri. One was a scene of "an old fishing hamlet at Capri"; the other, "a large picture of the famous 'Natural Arch at Capri,' with the Cape of Sorrento in the distance . . . [which] is beautifully painted, and in the texture of the foreground and of the rock, and in general details, bears the character of a study from nature."<sup>11</sup> The following month Haseltine included a painting entitled *Natural Arch at Capri* in an exhibition of his paintings at the Williams and Everett Gallery, Boston. Calling it one of Haseltine's "remarkable pictures" a reviewer for the *Boston Evening Transcript* observed: "It is hardly possible to look at these pictures and not recognize marks of original genius of a high order. It was a bold stroke to choose such a point of view as that in the 'Natural Arch' (Capri), where cowering and fantastic rocks form a standpoint from which you look down on a vast expanse of calm sea, and far across the Bay of Salerno till fancy strains its eye for the solemn peristyles of Poestum [*sic*]."<sup>12</sup>

In 1875 a *Natural Arch at Capri* was shown at the Haseltine Galleries in Philadelphia (owned by the artist's brother, Charles); in 1876 a painting of the same title was included in the art exhibition at the Philadelphia Centennial.<sup>13</sup> Paintings entitled *Natural Arch at Capri* also appeared in exhibitions at the Haseltine Galleries in 1878, and at the Thirteenth Exhibition of the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanics Association in Boston in 1879. Although it is possible or even likely that one or more of these was the National Gallery's canvas, this has not been verified.

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#### Notes

1. This entry is based on one by Nancy Anderson in *NGA* 1991, 164.

2. See, for example, the large (36 × 60-inch) *Castle Rock, Nahant* of 1865 (Julian Wencel Ryman; Simpson, Henderson, and Mills 1992, repro. 105). See also Simpson, "Landscapes," 1992.

3. See Tuckerman, *Book*, 1867, 556–557, for the use of the phrase "rock-portraits." Also see Simpson, Henderson, and Mills 1992, 14–31, for a discussion of Haseltine's New England seascapes.



William Stanley Haseltine, *Natural Arch at Capri*, 1989.13.1

4. This same vista across the bay appears in the 1858 watercolor *Capri* (NAD; see Henderson 1992, 43), which served as the basis for *Coast of Sicily* (c. 1880, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond), and in the c. 1870 *Natural Arch, Capri* (Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, Massachusetts; Simpson, Henderson, and Mills 1992, no. 42). The latter, although clearly related to the National Gallery painting, shows the arch from a slightly different and lower vantage point. For a view of the arch from the opposite side, see Jasper Cropsey's watercolor *Arched Rock, Capri* (MFA; Gardner 1966, repro. 52).

5. Henderson 1992, 42–43, 50. Henderson also notes that Haseltine eliminated a rock between the Arco Naturale and the Faraglioni, the Scoglio del Monacone.

6. Augustus Caesar landed on Capri in 19 B.C. while returning to Rome from a campaign in the East and later turned the island into a private estate. At his death in A.D. 14 Tiberius inherited the empire and Capri; attracted by its beauty, impregnability, and isolation Tiberius spent the last decade of his life (A.D. 27–37) on Capri.

7. Henderson 1992, 42–43.

8. B. Taylor, "A Week on Capri," *Atlantic Monthly* 21, June 1868, 746, as quoted in Henderson 1992, 43. Henderson also proposes a more specific religious meaning for *Natural Arch at Capri*. Noting that Haseltine was "a practicing Christian," she observes that it was during Tiberius' residence at the Villa Jovis that the Crucifixion occurred; thus the contrast between the enduring natural arch (with its evocation of ecclesiastical architecture) and the ruined villa may be a "quiet moralizing" on the supreme nature of divine creation.

9. Haseltine's images of Capri appealed to wealthy collectors eager to have one of his paintings as a souvenir of their visit to this popular tourist site. Following the practice of other artists working in Rome, Haseltine sold his paintings directly from his studio, as an established network of art dealers handling the work of contemporary artists did not then exist in Rome. Wealthy tourists visiting artists' studios often commissioned paintings that

were versions of other works they saw there. Scenes of such fashionable tourist sites as Capri, Venice, Sicily, and Amalfi were particularly popular. Among the owners of Haseltine's scenes of Capri were the Honorable A. White, United States Ambassador at Berlin; William Herriman, a prominent American collector in Rome; Charles H. Marshall, Haseltine's brother-in-law; Morris K. Jessup, whose collection was among those featured in the 1879 publication, *The Art Treasures of America*; Mr. T. A. Hamilton of New York; and General Crocker of California. See Henderson 1992, 35, 42, 49, and the chronology, in Simpson, Henderson, and Mills 1992, 153–213.

10. See the entry at *Marina Piccola, Capri* [1953.10.1], for information regarding the artist's travels to Capri and the many exhibitions in which his scenes of Capri were included. The titles currently used for Haseltine's Capri paintings are often generic—*View on the Coast of Capri*, *Italian Sea-View*, *View from the Island of Capri*, *Capri*, and *Scene at Capri*, for example—and make it difficult to match them with recorded works. At present only two paintings depicting the Natural Arch at Capri are known: the present example and the *Natural Arch, Capri* at Smith College. According to Plowden 1947, 105, 178, the American Academy in Rome once owned a painting entitled *Natural Arch at Capri*, but it is not presently in the academy collection nor are there records of it having been.

11. "Mr. Haseltine's Studio," *New York Evening Post*, 3 April 1874, as quoted in Henderson 1992, 42.

12. "Haseltine's Pictures," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 19 May 1874, as quoted in Simpson, Henderson, and Mills 1992, 189–190.

13. See Simpson, Henderson, and Mills 1992, 191–192, and 196–197, for these exhibitions.

## References

- 1992 Simpson, "Landscapes," 1992: 211, color repro. 212–213.  
1992 Simpson, Henderson, and Mills: 42–43, 118, no. 43.

## Childe Hassam

1859–1935

THE ARTIST'S ANCESTORS emigrated from England to the colonies in the seventeenth century. By the mid-nineteenth century, the family's original name, Horsham, had become Hassam. Frederick Childe Hassam, the future artist (who later dropped his first name), was born on 17 October 1859 in Dorchester, Massachusetts. In 1876 he began training with a local wood-engraver and soon thereafter became a free-lance illustrator, who in the evenings attended the life class at the Boston

Art Club. He went on to briefly study anatomy with William Rimmer (1816–1879) at the Lowell Institute, and take private lessons from German-born painter Ignaz Gaugengigl (1855–1932).

In 1883 Hassam and a friend, painter Edmund H. Garrett (1853–1929), traveled to Great Britain, Holland, Spain, and Italy, where Hassam produced a large number of watercolors that he exhibited at Williams and Everett Gallery upon his return to Boston later that year. In 1884, Hassam

married Kathleen Maude Doane and in the spring of 1886 they left for Europe. In Paris, Hassam studied figure painting with Gustave Boulanger (1824–1890) and Jules-Joseph Lefebvre (1836–1911) at the Académie Julian and exhibited his work at the Paris Salons of 1887 and 1888. When they returned to the United States in 1889 the artist and his wife settled in New York. Hassam subsequently assisted in founding the New York Watercolor Club and joined the Pastel Society of New York. He also began to exhibit with the Society of American Artists, with whom he remained until withdrawing in 1897 to found the group that would become known as The Ten.

From about 1890 until 1920 (at which point the Hassams' permanent summer home became East Hampton, Long Island) the artist spent his summers painting in locations throughout New England, such as Gloucester, Massachusetts; Cos Cob, Connecticut; and Newport, Rhode Island; however, his favorite settings were Old Lyme, Connecticut, and Appledore, on the Isle of Shoals, off the coast of New Hampshire, where he produced some of his best known images. A prolific and industrious artist, Hassam produced numerous scenes of both the city and the countryside. Many of his early street scenes of Boston, Paris, and New York, with their reflections of wet pavement or of gaslight on the snow, evidenced a wonderful talent for capturing the effects of light and atmosphere. While he recorded nearly all aspects of busy city life, he seldom focused on the seamier subjects that often attracted painters of the Ash Can School.

Hassam won numerous awards and prizes throughout his career and earned the serious attention of the American collectors George A. Hearn, John Gellatly, and Charles Freer. His work was widely exhibited at established museums throughout the country. In the 1913 Armory Show Hassam was represented by six paintings, five pastels, and one drawing. About 1915 he began to turn his efforts to printmaking, producing etchings and drypoints at first, and lithographs about two years later. A 1933 catalogue raisonné of his intaglio prints identified 376 different plates. Toward the end of his life Hassam most often exhibited graphic works. The quality of his paintings, in the meantime, became increasingly uneven.

Despite his bewilderment, toward the end of his

life, concerning some of the changes in contemporary art, Hassam maintained his faith in the future of American art. Shortly before his death in August 1935 he arranged to bequeath all the paintings remaining in his studio to the American Academy of Arts and Letters. According to his wish these were sold to establish a fund for the purchase of American works which were then presented to museums.

Of the American artists called "impressionists," Childe Hassam was among those whose work most closely followed that of their French colleagues. Although Hassam was not a novice, but already a practicing artist when he began to study in Paris, it is apparent that he soon absorbed aspects of the avant-garde styles of that time and place. (Hassam himself chose to minimize his connection to the art of France, indicating that he was influenced, if at all, by the *plein-air* prototypes of nineteenth-century English painters such as John Constable [1776–1837], J. M. W. Turner [1775–1851], and Richard Parkes Bonington [1802–1828], perhaps in recognition of his own national origins.) Hassam turned to impressionism several years after the style had been introduced to the United States, so the bright colors and broken brushwork of his new images found a ready audience. In much of his mature work Hassam used strong contours and sometimes a certain opacity of the paint layer to reinforce the two-dimensional quality of the painting's surface. Often he employed short, straight, brushstrokes to create forms of distinctive solidity and compactness, an approach very much at odds with the technique of his light and open watercolors. The majority of Hassam's paintings in oil are, like the artist himself, vigorous and good natured.

DC

#### Bibliography

- Pousette-Dart 1922.
- Eliasoph 1933.
- Adams 1938.
- Buckley 1965.
- Steadman 1972.
- Hoopes 1979.
- Fort 1988.
- Curry 1990.

1970.17.100 (2472)

## *Oyster Sloop, Cos Cob*

1902

Oil on canvas, 61.9 × 56.8 (24 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 22 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>)

Ailsa Mellon Bruce Collection

### Inscriptions

At lower left: Childe Hassam 1902

**Technical Notes:** The plain-weave fabric support has a moderately tight and somewhat coarse weave. The painting has been lined but the tacking margins remain intact. The even, gray ground layer may be a commercial preparation. Over it, the artist applied an overall, gray imprimatura layer that is used as an integral part of the composition. The paint, applied with short, evenly spaced strokes, allows touches of the gray underlayer to show through. The same brushwork gives the water a scintillating, fluid appearance. The somewhat flattened appearance of the paint layer may be the result of a past lining process. Minor paint losses are concentrated in the lower right, upper left, and lower left corners. The varnish has not discolored.

**Provenance:** Consigned by the artist 1931 to (Macbeth Galleries, New York); sold 1934 to New Britain Museum of American Art, Connecticut; sold 1952 to (Vose Galleries, Boston); sold 1952 to John Fox, Boston, and Fairfield, Connecticut; (Wildenstein & Co., New York); sold January 1966 to Ailsa Mellon Bruce [1901–1969], Long Island, New York.

**Exhibited:** Perhaps Newark Museum, New Jersey, 1931 (Newark has no record). *One Man's Taste in Contemporary Art*, Addison Gallery, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, 1932, no. 39. Columbia University, New York, March 1934. *Childe Hassam in Connecticut*, Florence Griswold Museum, Old Lyme, Connecticut, 1987–1988, no. 4.

IT WAS Childe Hassam who first used the name “Cos Cob Clapboard School” to describe the enthusiastic group of artists and friends that gathered in this picturesque Connecticut village at the turn of the century.<sup>1</sup> Cos Cob’s venerable colonial houses, well-worn boat sheds, and busy docks provided more than ample subject matter in congenial surroundings. A mere thirty-eight minutes by train to New York City (some twenty trains daily passed through Greenwich and its environs), the area was quite accessible to artists who lived and worked in the city. John Twachtman (1853–1902), who taught at the Art Students League in New York, had a house in Greenwich and began to offer summer instruction at Cos Cob in 1890.<sup>2</sup> His colleague J.

Alden Weir (1852–1919) shared these duties in 1892 and 1893. Hassam visited in 1894, but his first documented works from there date from 1896. Impressionist Theodore Robinson (1852–1896) visited the area often in the early 1890s and in the summer of 1894 boarded at the Holley House, a casual inn that was the center of activity for a colony of artists, authors, and students.<sup>3</sup>

Across from the Holley House was the view depicted in Hassam’s *Oyster Sloop, Cos Cob*: “the Palmer & Duff Shipyard in Cos Cob, which occupied a small point of land jutting between the Mianus River and Strickland Brook. . . . Oystering was still a thriving industry in Cos Cob. Many of the oyster sloops and fishing boats were made and repaired at Palmer & Duff.”<sup>4</sup>

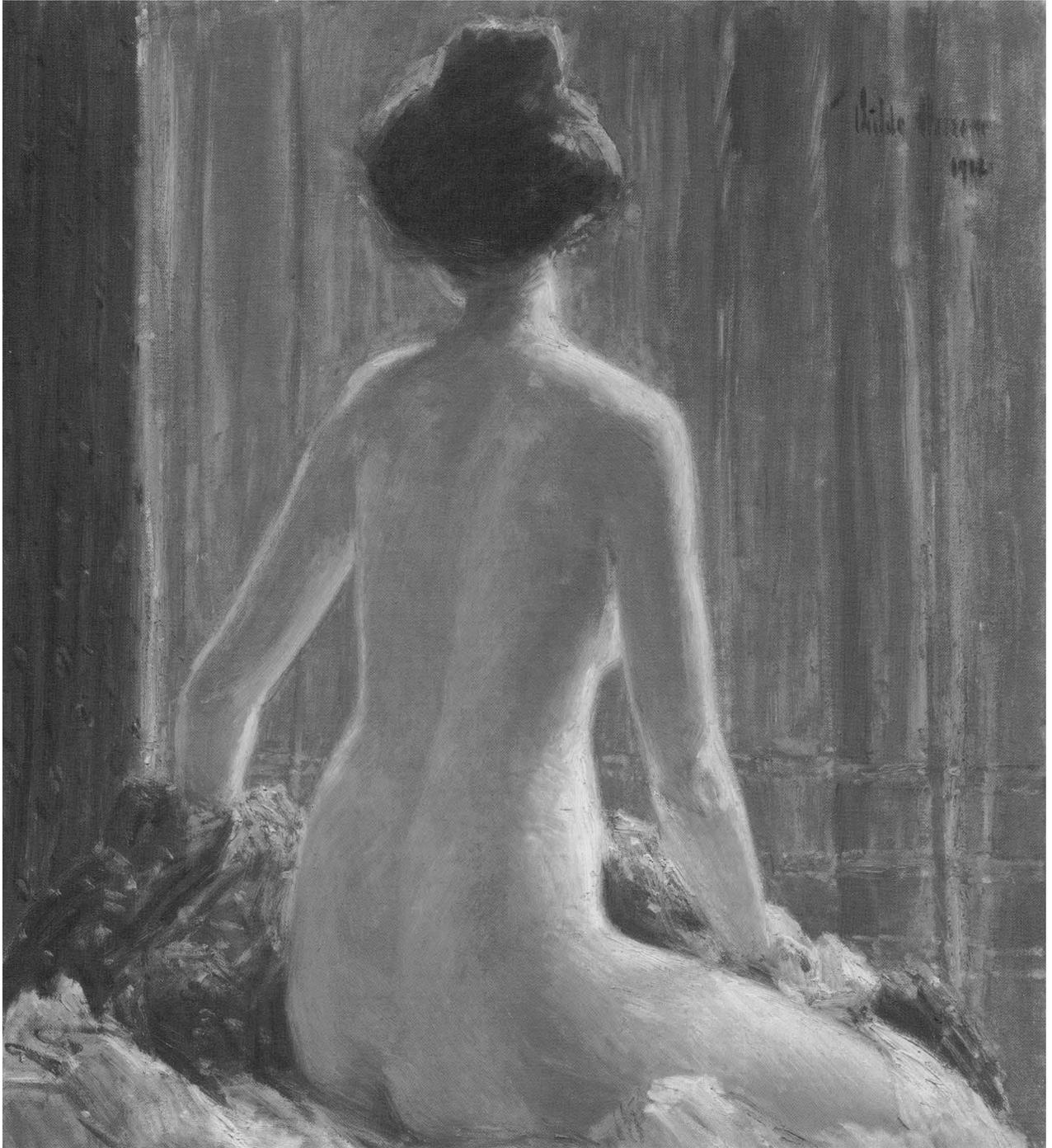
*Oyster Sloop, Cos Cob* is a typical Hassam painting in several respects. It shares the bright, shadowless atmosphere and high horizon of many of his mature works. The suggestion of space is accomplished through the use of successively narrower horizontal bands arranged bottom to top on the picture plane. Hassam’s feeling for architectural structure, which would be so strongly evident in his etchings of New England and Long Island streets and houses, is apparent in the solidly formed sheds of the boatyard. His varied brushwork suggests different forms and textures. In both *Oyster Sloop* and *The Mill Pond, Cos Cob, Connecticut* (collection of George Butler), also of 1902, he painted the water with long, thin, sharp strokes, applied so loosely that the gray ground beneath becomes part of the image.<sup>5</sup> Another version of the oyster sloop theme, similar in size (24 by 27 inches, private collection) and composition to the National Gallery’s image, is painted in an even thinner, rougher, and more cursory manner. Many of the Cos Cob images from this period were executed in pastel, a medium well-suited to a similar openness and lightness of touch.<sup>6</sup>

Hassam produced the greatest number of his Cos Cob subjects in 1902.<sup>7</sup> It not known exactly which months Hassam spent there. Several of these paintings appear to have been made in the autumn, but *Oyster Sloop, Cos Cob*, with its background of green trees and yellow-green grasses has a bright summery palette. Although a boatyard would be a setting for physical labor, Hassam found in it almost tropical qualities of light and color that lend the scene a festive air.

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Childe Hassam, *Oyster Sloop, Cas Cob*, 1917.17.100



Childe Hassam, *Nude Seated*, 1912.10.156

## Notes

1. "Cos Cob is a section of Greenwich. . . . The name Cos Cob is a corruption of Coe's cob, for the stone breakwater (cob) built by an early settler named John Coe to protect his property along the Mianus River" (Larkin 1980, 98n. 12). Larkin's essay provides an excellent history of this artists' colony.

2. "An Art School at Cos Cob," *Art Interchange* 43, September 1899, 56–57, contains a colorful description of Twachtman's classes.

3. *Steffens* 1931, 436–439.

4. Letter of 28 May 1982 from Susan Larkin (in NGA curatorial files).

5. *Connecticut* 1980, no. 115, repro. 21.

6. Burnside 1987, 9.

7. Burnside 1987, 9.

## References

1938 Adams: 85.

1981 Williams: 192.

1987 Burnside: 10–11, no. 4.

1963.10.156 (1820)

## *Nude Seated*

1912

Oil on canvas, 61.0 × 55.9 (24 × 22)

Chester Dale Collection

## Inscriptions

At upper right: Childe Hassam / 1912

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight, plain-weave fabric support is unlined and remains on its original four-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher. Over the off-white commercially prepared ground, paint was applied rapidly, wet-into-wet, and in consistencies from smooth to impasto. Most brushstrokes exhibit several unmixed colors. The paint was built up primarily with multiple opaque layers and scumbles, allowing several differently colored layers to be visible simultaneously. The painting is unvarnished and is free of damage and inpaint, except along the edges where the rabbet of the frame has abraded the paint.

**Provenance:** Our Lady of Elms [location unspecified], probably a gift of the artist; (M. Knoedler & Co., New York); sold 1926 to Edward Ward McMahon, Brooklyn, New York; (his sale, American Art Association, New York, 1929, no. 88); Chester Dale [1883–1962], New York.

**Exhibited:** *Loan Exhibition of Contemporary Paintings from the Collections of Mr. and Mrs. Chester Dale, Mr. James Rosenberg and others*, Fifty-Seventh Street Galleries, New York, 1929, no. 5. *An Exhibition of American Paintings from the Chester Dale Collection*, Union League Club, New York, 1937, no. 41. *Paintings from the Chester Dale Collection*, PMA,

1943–1951, unnumbered. *The Nude in American Painting*, The Brooklyn Museum, New York, 1961, no. 28.

AFTER 1900 Childe Hassam turned increasingly to painting female nudes. Often he placed them, rather incongruously, within his New England landscapes, sometimes giving them mythological or classical identities. *Nude Seated* comes from this period of interest in the female figure, but also partakes of another theme that Hassam began to investigate about 1910—the figure in a dramatically lit interior.

In paintings such as *Contre Jour* (1910, AIC) and *The New York Window* (1912, CGA) Hassam features a woman in a loose gown, contemplatively posed against a window. The light that filters in to illuminate the interior is Hassam's greatest concern in these and many similar works. Generalized and idealized features render the models virtually anonymous. Their inanimate presence is intended to emphasize the formal elements of composition and light, and to minimize any anecdotal qualities in the scenes recorded. Likewise *Nude Seated* shows an artist's model, with her back to us, simply posed to display to the best advantage the effects of light filtering across her skin and hair. The artist forms her flesh with green-gray shadows and salmon-colored highlights. Despite an attention to surface appearance, the painting is remarkable for its lack of sensuality—it is painted with a restraint that almost gives credence to the influence of Hassam's puritan ancestry so remarked upon by his contemporaries.

DC

## References

1961 *Nude*: no. 28.

1974 Gerdts: 146.

1981 Williams: 192.

1943.9.1 (751)

## *Allies Day, May 1917*

1917

Oil on canvas, 92.7 × 76.8 (36½ × 30¼)

Gift of Ethelyn McKinney in memory of her brother, Glenn Ford McKinney

## Inscriptions

On reverse: C. H. [in monogram] / May 17 / 1917

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight, plain-weave fabric support was lined in 1967. It is primed with a very

thin, fluid white ground that appears to have been commercially applied. Paint of rich consistency was applied in a variety of thicknesses and textures. The buildings were roughly delineated using hatches of blue gray, with spaces, such as the lower left corner, left in reserve to allow the brightly colored flags to be painted directly on the imprimatura. The flags were fairly complete before the details of the street and buildings or the sky were painted, as is evident from the continuous, zig-zagging brushstroke that spread the cerulean-hued paint in the region between the fabric and the pole of the large American flag. That there are several areas where the paint from different elements is blended wet-into-wet indicates the work was created over a fairly short period. And it was decisively executed; x-radiography reveals very few areas of overlap or change in the composition. There are minor nicks and abrasion along the top edge. In 1993, discolored varnish was removed and the painting was restored.

**Provenance:** Sold 1919 through (E. & A. Milch, Inc., New York) to Gilbert E. Rubens, New York, until 1930; (William Macbeth, New York); sold December 1930 to Glenn Ford McKinney [d. 1934], New York; acquired 1934 by his sister, Ethelyn McKinney, Greenwich, Connecticut.

**Exhibited:** Possibly NAD Annual, 1918, no. 282. *Exhibition of a Retrospective Group of Paintings Representative of the Life Work of Childe Hassam, N.A.*, Buffalo Fine Arts Academy, Albright Art Gallery, 1929, no. 109, as *St. Thomas' Avenue of the Allies, 1917. Paintings and Watercolors by Childe Hassam*, Milch Galleries, New York, 1943, no. 9. *About New York: Night and Day 1915-1965*, Gallery of Modern Art, New York, 1965, unnumbered. National Gallery Loan Exhibition, Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte, North Carolina, 1967, no. 17. *What is American in American Art*, M. Knoedler & Co., New York, 1971, no. 99. *French Impressionists Influence American Artists*, Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida, 1971, no. 63. *American Impressionist Painting*, NGA; WMAA; Cincinnati Art Museum; North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, 1973-1974, no. 35. *The American Flag in the Art of Our Country*, Allentown Art Museum, Pennsylvania, 1976, 43. *The Ten*, Art Museum of South Texas, Corpus Christi, 1977, 31. *The Flag Paintings of Childe Hassam*, NGA; LACMA; Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth; IBM Gallery of Science and Art, New York, 1988-1989, no. 8. *American Impressionism: Masterworks from Public and Private Collections in the United States*, Villa Favorita, Lugano-Castagnola, Switzerland, 1990, no. 24. *American Impressionism and Realism: The Painting of Modern Life, 1885-1915*, MMA; Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth; Denver Art Museum; LACMA, 1994-1995, no. 31.

*Allies Day, May 1917* is one of some thirty paintings, executed by Hassam from 1916 to 1919, on the theme of flag-lined city streets.<sup>1</sup> He had earlier explored the subject in Paris, in watercolors such as *14 Juillet Montmartre* (1889, Albert E. McVitty, Jr.,

Princeton, New Jersey) and *Fourteenth July, Paris, Old Quarter*, (c. 1889, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh), and in an oil painting from his second visit, *July Fourteenth, Rue Daunou* (1910, MMA).<sup>2</sup> In these works Hassam exploited the vibrant splashes of color that enriched the picturesque aspects of the urban landscape. He may also have been responding, consciously or unconsciously, to French interpretations of the subject such as Claude Monet's *Rue Montorgeuil Decked with Flags* (1878, Musée d'Orsay, Paris) or Edouard Manet's *Rue Mosnier Decorated with Flags* (The J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu).<sup>3</sup>

At home Hassam took up the flag motif with *Just Off the Avenue, Fifty-third Street, May 1916* (Mr. and Mrs. Richard J. Schwartz) and *The Fourth of July, 1916* (Berry-Hill Galleries, New York), neither of which he considered part of his flag series because, as Hassam later explained: "I painted the flag series after we went into the war. There was that Preparedness Day [13 May 1916], and I looked up the avenue and saw these wonderful flags waving, and I painted the series of flag pictures after that."<sup>4</sup> The artist expanded the theme of Allied flags decorating New York during World War I with patriotic and aesthetic fervor.<sup>5</sup> In the spring of 1917 the mayor of New York, whose city was a "center of sympathy for the Allied cause," proclaimed Fifth Avenue "the Avenue of the Allies" and suggested the display of appropriate flags.<sup>6</sup> To commemorate the transformation Hassam produced the rousing *Allies Day, May 1917*, one of the earliest of several oil paintings, watercolors, lithographs, and etchings on the theme of the Allied flags.<sup>7</sup>

As do most of Hassam's flag pictures, *Allies Day* presents a view of Fifth Avenue, in this instance at Fifty-second Street looking north to Saint Thomas Episcopal Church, the University Club, and the Gotham Hotel.<sup>8</sup> The painting is dated 17 May 1917, a month after the United States entered the conflict. The previous week General Joseph Joffre, Marshal of France, and Arthur James Balfour, the British foreign secretary, had been honored with parades down the avenue. It is their countries' flags, along with that of the United States, that are so prominently featured in *Allies Day*.

In *Allies Day* in particular, with its sparkling, sun-washed church and brilliant palette, "the color and light metaphorically suggest that the new union of Allies has divine blessings."<sup>9</sup> Hassam appears to have been gratified to have his work used as an expression of patriotism and, where possible, as a



Childe Hassam, *Allies Day, May 1917*, 1943.9.1

practical means of providing some type of war relief.<sup>10</sup> Adeline Adams described both purposes as applied to the National Gallery's painting:

The canvas called *Allies Day* is as the Marsellaise translated into the lyric poetry of painting. Prints [i.e. reproductions] in full color were made from it, to be sold for the benefit of *L'Heure Joyeuse*, a reading-room for Brussels children to take their minds from the horrors of war. The picture itself, with its resounding harmony of proud flags and sun-touched buildings had aroused such enthusiasm that in a propitious hour one of the color prints was sold at auction for \$1900. The buyer was Colonel Friedsam, who gave it to Governor Smith for the Capitol at Albany.<sup>11</sup>

After the first several works in the series Hassam began to increase the size and clarity of the banners he included, presumably to emphasize their political significance as the United States became more deeply involved with the Allied effort; however, soon the compelling, abstract qualities of these elements received forceful attention. The chronological progression of the group as a whole shows an increasing interest in surface pattern and diminishing emphasis on the three-dimensional quality of forms. This appears as early as in *Allies Day* where, as Ilene Fort observes, the flags in the middle distance "block the progression back into space" and the short, regular brushstrokes in the area of the sky "almost function as a screen prohibiting further movement backward. There is a tension between spatial recession and the pictorial plane that is not fully resolved."<sup>12</sup> This emphasis would continue to grow in such works as *The Union Jack, April Morning, 1918* (1918, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, SI) with its large British flag jumping out from the center of the image and in *Avenue of the Allies, Great Britain, 1918* (1918, MMA), which features a grouping of bright, unfurled British, New Zealand, Brazilian, French, and United States banners suspended and floating across much of the canvas.

As one of Hassam's most adventurous efforts, *Allies Day* succeeds on many levels. In part a visually arresting assemblage of abstract shapes, it is also a concrete representation of what was at the time America's city of progress, industry, and hope for the future. The painting combines, as well, symbols both national and personal. It acts both as a patriotic rallying point, and as a symbol of three countries dear to the artist's heart: Great Britain, land of his ancestors; France, nurturing home to Hassam as a young artist; and the United States, the site of his greatest successes.

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## Notes

1. It is difficult to arrive at an exact number of works in this series since old catalogues list many paintings that were exhibited under different titles at various times, and since the titles of several are very similar to each other. Twenty-five were included in the 1988 exhibition and illustrated in the accompanying catalogue.

2. *14 Juillet Monmartre* is mentioned in Burke 1980, 360. Letter of 18 March 1982 from Doreen Bolger and a letter of 9 April 1982 from Kathleen Burnside of Hirschl & Adler Galleries (both in NGA curatorial files), called attention to the other flag-subject watercolor, *Fourteenth July, Paris, Old Quarter*. Burnside 1987 also noted a small Hassam oil painting of 1889, *La Butte, Montmartre, July 14* (private collection) in which flags appear again.

3. More recent treatments include Pierre Bonnard's *Rue de Parme on Bastille Day* (1890, NGA), Albert Marquet's *Fourteenth of July at Le Havre* (1906, Georges Besson Collection, Paris), and Raoul Dufy's *Street Decorated with Flags* (1906, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris).

4. Transcript of interview with Hassam, 2 February 1927, DeWitt McLellan Lockman Papers, NYHS (AAA microfilm 403, fr.384), as quoted in Fort 1988, 8.

5. Hoopes 1979, 82, notes: "[Hassam] donated a number of his paintings to be sold for the benefit of the War relief fund. Even his landscapes of the period sometimes included references to the War." In a letter of 1 June(?) 1917 to his dealer William Macbeth, Hassam states: "Indeed I would be glad to take 'Liberty Bonds' in payment for any of my pictures," further indicating his support of the war efforts (William Macbeth papers, AAA microfilm NMc 52, fr. 798). Fort 1988, chap. 1, documents in detail the many varied and elaborate contributions to the war effort on the part of the artistic community.

6. Lowe 1969, 54.

7. The theme of flags in the United States during World War I was taken up by several of Hassam's lesser-known, slightly younger contemporaries. See for example the works of Jane Peterson (1876–1965), Gifford Beal (1864–1956), Theodore Butler (b. 1894), and Arthur C. Goodwin (1864–1929) in *American Flag* 1976.

8. Hassam included the church (built 1911–1916) in at least three paintings in the series (see Fort 1988, nos. 1, 11, 22) and one lithograph, *St. Thomas, New York* (1918).

9. Fort 1988, 46.

10. The strength, beauty, and overt symbolism of the flag paintings were well appreciated during Hassam's lifetime. Many citizens hoped to keep the series together as a matter of national pride, but their wish was never fulfilled. *Allies Day* was reproduced in color as the frontispiece of Noyes 1918. (Half the proceeds from the sale of this book were to go to the Royal Literary Fund, the other half to the "Art War Relief Fund for American artists and their families.") In addition, the painting was made into a "beautiful copyrighted color-print mounted on soft gray card," available for one dollar and fifty cents. A "limited number of prints, autographed by the artist" and framed were available at twenty dollars. Proceeds were to benefit the "Emergency Fund Art War Relief" (flier, untitled and undated, AAA microfilm N54, fr. 801).

11. Adams 1938, 71, 72.

12. Fort 1988, 96.

#### References

1918 *New York Times* (13 March): 11:3.

1918 Noyes: frontispiece.

1918 "National Academy": 290, repro. 260.

1919 The Milch Gallery. *Art Notes* (April): 9–11.

1919 The Milch Gallery. *Art Notes* (October): 5–6.

1922 Pousette-Dart: viii.

1930 "Hassam Sale": 3.

1938 Adams: 71–72.

1969 Lowe: 54, repro. 55.

1973 Andrew: 16, 18, repro. 4.

1979 Hoopes: 82.

1988 Wilmerding: 19–20, 160, 162, repro. 161.

1988 Fort: no. 8, color repro. 46.

1994 Weinberg, Bolger, and Curry: no. 31, 196, 198–199, fig. 178.

## Martin Johnson Heade

1819 – 1904

MARTIN JOHNSON HEADE (originally Heed) was born in Lumberville, in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, on 11 August 1819. He received his earliest artistic training from Edward Hicks (1780–1849) and perhaps had additional instruction from Hicks' younger cousin Thomas Hicks (1823–1890), a portrait painter. The influence of these two artists is evident in Heade's earliest works, which were most often portraits painted in a rather stiff and unsophisticated manner. Heade traveled abroad around 1838 and remained in Rome for two years.<sup>1</sup> He made his professional debut in 1841 when his *Portrait of a Little Girl* (location unknown) was accepted for exhibition at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia. Two years later his *Portrait of a Young Lady* (location unknown) was shown at New York's National Academy of Design.

Following a second trip to Europe in 1848 Heade attained a greater technical sophistication and began to exhibit more regularly. He moved frequently in the late 1840s and early 1850s, establishing a pattern of itinerancy that would persist throughout his life. Heade gradually concentrated less and less on portraiture, and by the mid-1850s was experimenting with landscape painting. In 1859 he settled in New York, where he met Frederic Edwin Church, who became one of his few close friends in the American art world. Heade was drawn to coastal areas and initially specialized in seascapes and views of salt marshes; soon he was receiving praise for his ability to capture changing effects of light, atmosphere, and meteor-

ological conditions. In the late 1850s and early 1860s he also began to experiment with still-life painting (for example *A Vase of Corn Lilies and Heliotrope*, 1863, Saint Louis Art Museum), an interest he would maintain for the rest of his career.

Heade continued to travel in the eastern United States and then, in 1863, made the first of three trips to South America. Church had already been to the tropics twice, and his large-scale paintings of dramatic South American scenes had won him widespread fame and critical approval. Although Church encouraged his friend to seek out equally spectacular scenery for his own paintings, Heade was generally interested in more intimate and less dramatic views. While in Brazil in 1863 he undertook a series of small pictures called *The Gems of Brazil* (Manoogian collection) showing brightly colored hummingbirds in landscape settings. He hoped to use these images in an elaborate illustrated book he planned to write about the tiny birds, but the project was never completed. Nevertheless, he maintained his interest in the subject and in the 1870s began to paint pictures combining hummingbirds with orchids and other flowers in natural settings. During these years he continued to paint marsh scenes, seascapes, still lifes, and the occasional tropical landscape.

In later life Heade's wanderings took him to various spots, including British Columbia and California. Never fully accepted by the New York art establishment—he was, for instance, denied membership in the Century Association and was never elected an associate of the National Acade-

my of Design—Heade eventually settled in Saint Augustine, Florida, in 1883. He was married that same year and at last enjoyed a reasonably stable domestic and professional existence. He formed the first productive relationship of his career with a patron, wealthy oil and railroad magnate Henry Morrison Flagler, who commissioned several dozen pictures over the next decade.

Heade continued to paint subjects that he had previously specialized in, such as orchids and hummingbirds, but he now also turned his attention to Florida marsh and swamp scenes and still lifes of cut magnolia leaves and flowers. Yet he and his work were largely forgotten by the time of his death on 4 September 1904. It was only with the general revival of interest in American art in the 1940s that attention was once again turned to him and his reputation restored.

FK

Fig. 1. Martin Johnson Heade, *Coast of Brazil*, oil on canvas, 1864, private collection

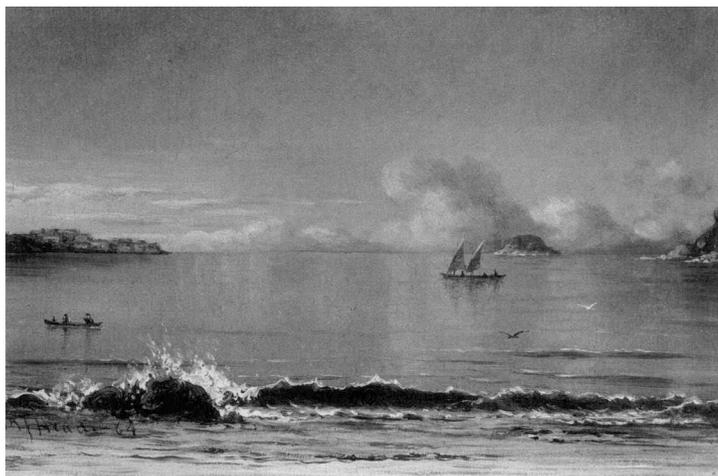
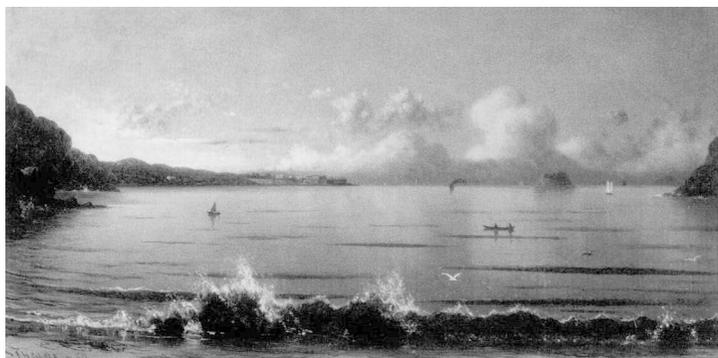


Fig. 2. Martin Johnson Heade, *Harbor in Brazil*, oil on canvas, 1865, Collection of C. Vaughan Goodman



## Notes

1. The precise date of Heade's first European trip remains uncertain. According to Stebbins 1975, 7, the trip was probably made in the early 1840s, perhaps between 1840 and 1843; however, Stebbins' biography of Heade in Stebbins, Troyen, and Fairbrother 1983, 252, cites 1838 as the date of the first trip.

## Bibliography

McIntire 1948.  
Stebbins 1969.  
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1965.2.1 (1941)

## *Rio de Janeiro Bay*

1864  
Oil on canvas, 45.5 × 91.1 (17<sup>15/16</sup> × 35<sup>7/8</sup>)  
Gift of the Avalon Foundation

## Inscriptions

At lower left: M. J. Heade / 1864

**Technical Notes:** The support is a coarse, medium-weight, plain-weave fabric with double-stranded threads in the vertical direction that has been lined. A white ground was applied thinly and evenly, and over this ground the paint layers range from fairly thin and fluid (as in the rocks of the foreground) to thickly impasted (as in the foam of the breaking waves). Brushstrokes are readily visible in some areas, such as the hills on both the left and the right, and completely blended in others, such as the surface of the sea. The sky was painted with glazes of warm colors over a pale grayish green base tone; some of its luminosity has been compromised by vertical streaking along the tops of the canvas threads. There is a tear in the bottom left quadrant and scattered small losses. In 1991 discolored varnish was removed. The varnish has become yellowed.

**Provenance:** John H. Lidgerwood [d. 1956], Morristown, New Jersey;<sup>1</sup> (his estate sale, O. Rundle Gilbert, Morristown, New Jersey, 1956); (Victor Spark and Graham Galleries, New York).

**Exhibited:** *In Memoria, Ailsa Mellon Bruce*, NGA, 1969, no cat. *The Beckoning Land*, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, 1971, no. 31. NGA 1980, 116.

HEADE first turned to painting seascapes in 1859, and over the course of the next few years he executed a number of fine North American and, later, South American marine views. Although earlier in the century marine painting had often been perceived as a separate endeavor from landscape painting, by the 1850s virtually every major American



Martin Johnson Heade, *Rio de Janeiro Bay*, 1965.2.1

landscapist had tried seascapes.<sup>2</sup> Beach scenes with breaking waves became a favorite subject of the period generally, and with Heade particularly. Of his more than thirty known marines, the majority are of this type.<sup>3</sup>

While Heade was in Brazil during his first trip to South America in 1863–1864, he executed several views of the scenic harbor at Rio de Janeiro, which he considered “wonderfully beautiful by day or night.”<sup>4</sup> These may be divided into two basic groups. In one group are the views from the Niteroi area on the eastern side of the harbor looking westward toward the setting sun.<sup>5</sup> In the other, which includes the National Gallery painting, the view is to the northeast, probably from near the Enseada de Botafago, making the body of water the Bay of Guanabarra, with the base of the famous Sugar Loaf mountain at the right.<sup>6</sup> Of the second group of three known works only *Rio de Janeiro Bay* is a large finished canvas; the other two—*Coast of Brazil* (fig. 1) and *Harbor in Brazil* (fig. 2)—are smaller oil-on-board sketches.<sup>7</sup> The *Coast of Brazil*, which is signed and dated 1864, may well have been executed on the spot and may have served as a study for the National Gallery’s painting. The slightly larger and more finished *Harbor in Brazil* was presumably, in light of its 1865 date, derived from the Gallery’s picture.<sup>8</sup>

In *Rio de Janeiro Bay*, as in other seascapes of the early 1860s such as *Seascape, Sunset* (1861, Detroit Institute of Arts), Heade endeavored to capture the essence of a fleeting moment, with the foreground wave locked into place at the instant it breaks on the shore and begins to dissipate. Indeed, in spite of the importance of other elements in the picture—the rocky cliffs surrounding the bay, the sailboats, the clouds, and the glassy surface of the water itself—the wave is the principal focus and the area in which Heade invested the most artistic energy. As Stebbins has noted, many European artists, notably Gustave Courbet (1819–1877), also painted scenes of breaking waves, but establishing any connection between such painters and Heade is problematic.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, there are occasionally richly textured passages in Heade’s paintings, particularly in the foamy waves of his seascapes, that might suggest (although perhaps only that) knowledge of Courbet’s work.<sup>10</sup> One may further note the marked similarity, again perhaps only coincidental, between a typical Courbet red-paint signature and the bold red signature often employed by Heade, as in this painting. Indeed, Heade was unlike most

American landscape painters of his generation in the prominence he gave to his signatures.

Heade’s interest in painting the sea waned somewhat after the mid-1860s, although in the later years of the decade he created two of his most remarkable marines, *Approaching Storm: Beach Near Newport* (c. 1866–1867, MFA) and *Thunderstorm Over Narragansett Bay* (1868, Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth). His production of seascapes and coastal views picked up again in the 1870s, but of these works only a few (for example, *The Bay of Panama*, c. 1870–1875, location unknown) are tropical scenes, none of which has the vigor and freshness of observation that characterize earlier works such as *Rio de Janeiro Bay*.<sup>11</sup>

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## Notes

1. An undated note in NGA curatorial files from William P. Campbell states: “The Graham Galleries said NGA 1941 came ‘from a private home in New Jersey.’” When Heade’s small oil entitled *Harbor in Brazil* (fig. 2) was consigned to Sotheby’s, New York, for auction, its owner informed the auction house that it had come from a house called “Speedwell” in Morristown and that the National Gallery’s painting had been in the same collection (information provided by Dara Mitchell, American Paintings department, Sotheby’s, in a telephone conversation; memorandum of 10 June 1992, in NGA curatorial files). See also *American Paintings, Drawings, and Sculpture*, Sotheby’s, New York, 27 May 1992, no. 6. “Speedwell” was founded by Alfred Vail (1807–1859), who coined the telegraph with Samuel F. B. Morse (1791–1872); John H. Lidgerwood was Vail’s grandnephew.

2. Stebbins 1975, 64; see also Wilmerding 1968.

3. Stebbins 1975, 64, 69.

4. From a probably late September 1863 section of the diary Heade kept while in Brazil in 1863–1864 (typescript copy in NGA curatorial files). Heade also noted (10 January 1864) that he was encouraged by the emperor of Brazil to paint one or more views of Rio de Janeiro in addition to the images of hummingbirds.

5. These include *The Harbor at Rio de Janeiro*, 1864 (Hirschl & Adler Galleries, New York; Stebbins 1975, 228, no. 84); *Sunset—Harbor at Rio*, 1864 (PAFA; not in Stebbins 1975), probably shown as *O pôr do Sol.—Vista do Rio de Janeiro, tomada de S. Domingos* [*Sunset—View of Rio de Janeiro, from S. Domingos*] in 1864 at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rio (*Exposição Geral das Belles Artes de 1864*, no. 75, 11); and, possibly, *Seascape (Brazilian View)*, 1865 (sold by Christie’s, New York, May 1994, no. 21; Stebbins 1975, 230, no. 92), which was executed in London; it is not certain what area the painting depicts, although it bears some relationship to the two pictures cited above.

6. William P. Campbell determined the location based on maps (undated notes in NGA curatorial files).

7. Stebbins 1975, 229, no. 86 (incorrectly identified as a study for *The Harbor at Rio de Janeiro*), and 230, no. 91, respectively.

8. That both were owned by the same collector is of interest, but the lack of information regarding the early history of the two precludes further speculation as to their relationship.

9. Stebbins 1975, 70–71, discusses the similarities but concludes: “Any firsthand influence should probably be ruled out, since Heade apparently did not go abroad between 1848 and 1864, and the first Courbet in this country, *The Quarry* [MFA], was not exhibited until 1866.” According to Fink 1978, 90: “paintings by Courbet were shown in the United States as early as 1859.” One of the most important figures for the introduction of French realist and Barbizon paintings into America was Providence dealer Seth Vose, who by 1860 was handling Heade’s works. Vose was probably introduced to the work of French artists by Providence painter Thomas Robinson (1835–1888), who had spent three years studying in Europe with Courbet; see Murphy 1979, xxxviii; and Vose 1987, 4–5. Whether Vose and/or Robinson in turn introduced Heade to the work of Courbet is unknown. Also unknown is whether any of Courbet’s wave paintings were exhibited in America before Heade began painting seascapes; none, for example, is listed in Yarnall and Gerdtz 1986, 1:848–849, as having been shown before 1866.

10. Stebbins 1975, 70–71, however, asserts the contrary: “though their compositions are often related, their techniques are certainly not: Courbet worked in a broad, painterly manner, often using a palette knife, while Heade retained the tight handling of the American style.” There were many other artists, both American and European, who depicted breaking waves and who might have influenced Heade (see Stebbins 1975, 69–70). One especially well-known example was *Clearing Up, Coast of Sicily* (1847, Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore), by German painter Andreas Achenbach (1815–1910), exhibited several times in New York in the late 1840s and early 1850s. American painters were specifically advised to study this “magnificent” work for “the fidelity with which natural appearances [have] been studied” (“Chronicle of Facts and Opinions,” *Bulletin of the American Art-Union*, August 1850, 81), and its influence is clearly discernible in the seascapes of such artists as Albert Bierstadt and Heade’s friend Church. Achenbach’s manner of portraying backlit, translucent waves with spiky crests, while typical of the Düsseldorf school, is ultimately quite different from Heade’s handling.

11. See Stebbins 1975, 248, no. 182.

#### References

- 1969 Stebbins: n.p., as *Brazilian Seascape*.  
1975 Stebbins: 87, 228–229, no. 85 repro.  
1975 Walker: 549, no. 832, color repro.  
1980 Wilmerding: 94–95, color repro.  
1982 Mrozek: 20, fig. 5.  
1988 Wilmerding: 108–109, color repro.

1982.73.1 (2864)

### *Cattleya Orchid and Three Brazilian Hummingbirds*

1871

Oil on wood panel, 34.8 × 45.6 (13 3/4 × 18)

Gift of The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation

#### Inscriptions

At lower right: M. J. Heade / 1871

**Technical Notes:** The support is a Winsor and Newton prepared mahogany panel, 1.2 cm thick and with horizontal grain, trimmed on the right edge before painting. The orchid is thinly painted, allowing the off-white ground to show through. The paint was applied wet-in-to-wet with small brushes. There are some areas of impasto, especially in the whites. The sky has a fine crackle pattern that does not continue into the foreground. Generally, the paint is in excellent condition, with only a few small losses and minimal abrasion. The varnish has not discolored.

**Provenance:** Private collection; (sale, Adam A. Weschler & Son, Washington, D.C., 23 May 1982, no. 1316);<sup>1</sup> (Hirschl & Adler Galleries, New York).

HEADE’S INTEREST in painting pictures of hummingbirds dates to at least 1863, when he made his first visit to Brazil.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the primary impetus for this trip was an ambitious project involving an illustrated book on the tiny birds that he planned to call “The Gems of Brazil.” According to one contemporary, it was “his intention while in Brazil to depict the richest and most brilliant of the hummingbird family,—about which he is so great an enthusiast—to prepare in London or Paris a large and elegant album on these wonderful little creatures, got up in the highest style of art. He is only fulfilling a boyhood dream in doing this.”<sup>3</sup> Heade’s plan was to create chromolithographs after his paintings to accompany a text he would author that would be “as reliable in the little ground it covers in this extended branch of Natural History as any work yet published on the subject.”<sup>4</sup> Although he did manage to complete many small paintings of hummingbirds seen against tropical backgrounds and to have executed a few chromolithographs, he apparently encountered insurmountable technical problems in producing the delicate effects of color he desired, and the project was never brought to completion.<sup>5</sup>

Heade was by no means the first person to envision a lavishly illustrated study of hummingbirds. Englishman John Gould had completed his monu-

mental *Monograph of the Trochilidae* (1849–1861) before Heade made his first South American trip. Gould was almost single-handedly responsible for a tremendous rise of popular interest in hummingbirds in England and America in the 1850s and 1860s, and his success surely helped pave the way for Heade's project. Heade certainly realized that he could not hope to equal the scientific accuracy of Gould's work, but he could bring something new to his endeavor—experience. Gould had never been to South America and observed hummingbirds in their actual habitats.<sup>6</sup> Heade's images of the birds could depict their habitats accurately and show the ways in which the creatures interacted with their natural settings. Traditional illustrations generally eschewed landscape backgrounds and depicted the birds in isolation, with perhaps only a branch or flower to suggest a setting. Heade's view and his decision to include the hummingbirds' environments may have been influenced by the theories of Charles Darwin, which posited an organic and dynamic relationship between animals and their surroundings.<sup>7</sup>

Although Heade abandoned the "Gems of Brazil" project in 1865, it did not mark an end to his depictions of hummingbirds. During the late 1860s he created a number of tropical landscapes (for example, *South American River*, 1868, MFA) and began to concentrate on floral still lifes.<sup>8</sup> Early in 1870 Heade returned to South America, where he spent time "sketching on the banks of the Magdalena River, New Grenada [present-day Colombia]"; he also visited Jamaica.<sup>9</sup> Much of his effort over the next several months went into painting a large work called *The Mountains of Jamaica* (location unknown), but at some point in 1870 he also created a large composition combining hummingbirds and passion flowers in a landscape setting, *Tropical Landscape with Ten Hummingbirds* (1870, private collection).<sup>10</sup> Probably also dating from late 1870 are Heade's first pictures of orchids, such as *Tropical Orchid* (c. 1870, Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, New York).<sup>11</sup> Many travelers in South America, including the famous German naturalist Alexander von Humboldt, had commented on the beauty and profusion of orchids in tropical areas.<sup>12</sup> Humboldt considered orchids and other exotic plants just as emblematic of the unique character of the tropics as the great volcanoes portrayed by Heade's friend Fred-eric Church. Thus, whereas Church interpreted the South American scene in vast, cosmic terms, Heade's focus on the orchid and close-up views of

nature indicates a more personal and intimate, yet equally suggestive vision. Further, Heade's orchid paintings contain an undeniable sexual charge, for the flower was widely recognized in the Victorian era as having strong sexual connotations.<sup>13</sup>

In January 1871 Heade for the first time combined orchids and hummingbirds.<sup>14</sup> *Cattleya Orchid with Three Brazilian Hummingbirds* is one of three known works signed and dated 1871, all executed on prepared wooden panels of the same size. The others are *Orchid with Two Hummingbirds* (Reynolda House Museum of American Art, Winston-Salem, North Carolina) and *Cattleya Orchid with Two Brazilian Hummingbirds* (private collection).<sup>15</sup> Although the three pictures are generally similar in composition and handling, the differences among them suggest that Heade was carefully examining the possibilities of his new subject. In *Orchid with Two Hummingbirds* the flower is placed at the right of the composition and the hummingbirds at the left, while the reverse is the case in *Cattleya Orchid with Two Brazilian Hummingbirds*. Shifts in other compositional elements—the placement of branches and trees and the arrangement of the pods and leaves of the orchids—are also apparent.<sup>16</sup>

The National Gallery's painting, however, differs significantly from the other two works in that it depicts not two, but three hummingbirds (two Brazilian "Amethysts" and a "Sappho Comet") and a nest with eggs.<sup>17</sup> No other known Heade painting depicts three hummingbirds, and the inclusion of the nest is also unusual in the hummingbird and orchid pictures. It may have been the first of the 1871 pictures and accordingly experimental, with Heade combining a subject common in his early hummingbird paintings—birds around a nest—with his new interest in the orchid.<sup>18</sup> Whatever the case, *Cattleya Orchid with Three Brazilian Hummingbirds* is an important early statement on a theme that Heade developed with remarkable inventiveness and success over the rest of his career.<sup>19</sup> It also clearly shows the artist's sensitivity to color—the muted greens of jungle foliage, the translucent grays and blues of the atmosphere, the bright pink of an orchid, the subtle iridescence of a hummingbird's throat—and his careful manipulation of paint to convey the full range of textures found in nature.

FK



Martin Johnson Heade, *Cattleya Orchid and Three Brazilian Hummingbirds*, 1982.73.1

## Notes

1. Adam A. Weschler & Son, *18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Century American, English, Continental and Oriental Furniture and Decorations, Paintings, etc.* Washington, 23 May 1982.

2. Stebbins 1975, 126. Heade himself observed: "A few years after my first appearance in this breathing world I was attacked by the all-absorbing hummingbird craze, and it has never left me since; with the natural result that what is known about them I know, and what I don't know about them others do—or think they do" (as quoted in McIntire 1948, 10–11).

3. "Art Enterprise," *Boston Transcript*, 12 August 1863.

4. Heade, draft of an introduction for "The Gems of Brazil" Manuscript Collection papers, AAA.

5. See Stebbins 1975, 126–137. Sixteen of the original paintings were discovered in England in 1981; for a discussion of these works see Franklin Kelly, "The Gems of Brazil," in *Manoogian* 1989, 116–123.

6. Martin Johnson Heade, "Taming Hummingbirds," *Forest and Stream*, 14 April 1892, as quoted in Stebbins 1975, 129. Gould had based his research on hummingbird specimens and did not actually see a live one until 1857, when he was shown a rubythroat while on a visit to Philadelphia (Stebbins 1975, 129–130). The importance Heade attached to his paintings of hummingbirds actually made in Brazil is indicated in a passage of 11 January 1864 in the journal he kept while in Brazil in 1863–1864 (typescript copy in NGA curatorial files): "Today I hung up my pictures in Milford store, and at once had an offer for them by an Englishman. There are constant inquiries as to whether I can be induced to paint anything for sale, but I always give them to understand that I did not come to Brazil for that purpose; and as to the birds, an offer of 10,000 dollars would be no inducement to sell them."

7. Foshay 1980, 229–314.

8. Of particular interest to him were apple blossoms, which he portrayed both as cut specimens and in views of orchards in spring. The latter works demonstrate his attempts to capture the appearance of growing flowers in landscape settings, an essential aspect of the orchid and hummingbird pictures. See "Heade, the Artist," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 1 July 1867; "Fine Arts," *New York Evening Post*, 13 October 1868; and "Art Notes," *The Albion*, 10 July 1869, 398, for discussions of Heade painting apple blossoms and orchards.

9. "Personal," *Boston Daily Evening Transcript*, 29 December 1869, reported that Heade was planning to sail "in a few days;" "Art Notes," *New York Evening Post*, 2 May 1870, noted that he had "lately returned from a brief sketching tour."

10. The latter painting, 18 × 30 inches, is signed and dated. Unknown to Stebbins in 1975, it is reproduced in Foshay 1984, 134–135. There are no contemporary references to this unusual picture, which shows several different species of hummingbirds posed around vines and passion flowers set against a tropical river landscape. Stebbins (letter of 23 September 1991 in NGA curatorial files), believes there is no question about the 1870 date and suggests that the picture may have been a commission, although there is no evidence for this.

11. Heade's "Jamaica Sketchbook" (sold by Sotheby's, New York, 27 May 1992, no. 14) included a drawing

of a "Cattlea [*sic*] Orchid," indicating that his interest in the flowers may have been inspired by the 1870 trip; see Stebbins 1975, 139, 290. Orchids would have been easily available to Heade for study in "Orchid houses" in New York (Stebbins 1975, 146). In 1871 William J. Hayes (1830–1875), Heade's fellow resident at the Tenth Street Studio Building, painted an elaborate composition showing more than seventy varieties of orchids on a single canvas (James M. and Edith Hays Walton; Foshay 1984, 111, pl. 84), which was discussed in the *New York Evening Post* of 30 March 1871 (I am grateful to Gerald L. Carr and Col. Merl M. Moore for directing me to this and other references from the *Post*).

12. Humboldt 1848, 1:88, 93.

13. Stebbins 1975, 138–139, 142–143.

14. "M. J. Heade's last finished work presents a study of the flower of the South American 'Orchid,' or air plant, with humming birds [*sic*] posing over it, drawn against a tropical background" ("Art Notes," *New York Evening Post*, 27 January 1871).

15. Respectively, Stebbins 1975, 238, no. 133; and 239, no. 134. The National Gallery picture was not known to Stebbins in 1975 and he considered another work of similar size, also signed and dated 1871, *Apple Blossoms and Hummingbird* (Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, Massachusetts), as possibly Heade's first hummingbird with growing flower and landscape composition (Stebbins 1975, 121–123). The subsequent discovery of the 1870 *Tropical Landscape with Ten Hummingbirds* called that assumption into question, as did a newspaper account (*New York Evening Post*, 30 March 1871) indicating that *Apple Blossoms and Hummingbird* was created after the first orchid and hummingbird painting.

16. The depiction of the blossoms in each of the paintings is very similar.

17. For other "Amethyst" hummingbirds, see Stebbins 1975, nos. 75, 195, 198, and 225, and see *The Gems of Brazil* series. Nests with eggs appear in several of Heade's early hummingbird pictures; see Stebbins 1975, nos. 73 and 81, and *The Gems of Brazil*.

18. Heade knew from observation that hummingbirds are rarely seen together and seldom tolerate another's presence; however, he believed that pairs were commonly found around nests during mating season and in his early paintings stressed "a sense of domestic felicity and quiet" (Stebbins 1976, 132). The National Gallery painting has an added note of tension: The female bird seems prepared to defend the nest against the larger bird at the lower right. In this way, the painting foreshadows Heade's masterpiece of 1875, *Two Fighting Hummingbirds with Two Orchids* (private collection; Stebbins 1975, no. 186). Stebbins (letter of 23 September 1991 in NGA curatorial files) agrees that the National Gallery painting may have been the first of the series, owing to "the experimental nature of the composition and particularly of the birds, though it is still an effective and beautiful painting."

19. According to Stebbins (letter of 23 September 1991 in NGA curatorial files), fifty-four orchid and hummingbird paintings are known, including one signed and dated 1902 (Thyssen-Bornemisza collection, Lugano), just two years before Heade's death.

## References

- 1984 Walker: 549, no. 833, color repro.  
1988 Wilmerding: 13, repro. 14.  
1989 *Manoogian*: 120, fig. 2.  
1989 Manthorne: 118, 120, fig. 61.  
1990 *Reynolda House*: 68.

1996.14.1

### *Giant Magnolias on a Blue Velvet Cloth*

c. 1890

Oil on canvas, 38.4 × 61.5 (15 1/8 × 24 3/16)

Gift of The Circle of the National Gallery of Art in Commemoration of its 10th Anniversary

#### Inscriptions

At lower right: M.J. Heade

**Technical Notes:** The painting is executed on a fine, light weight, plain-weave fabric support that has been lined. The original tacking margins have been removed and the stretcher is not original. An off-white ground layer was applied overall. The major outlines of the flowers were drawn probably in graphite. The white blossoms were painted first, primarily wet-into-wet, with little glazing. The leaves and stem were painted next; first the primary modeling was blended wet-into-wet, building paint from dark to light. The deepest shadows were then painted in heavy transparent glazes. The background was painted last, directly on top of the ground in a series of glazes. Highlights were added on top of the middle tones created in the initial stages of painting the velvet; these were glazed and reduced in tone as the painting process progressed. The paint layer is generally in very good condition, with a fine crackle throughout, a few widely scattered small losses, and a small amount of abrasion in the shadows of the closed magnolia bud. There is a small tear in the upper left corner that has been repaired. The thin, matte varnish covers an unevenly removed older varnish layer.

**Provenance:** (Victor Spark, New York, 1962-c. 1965); Dr. and Mrs. Samuel Finkelstein, New York, c. 1965-1995; by descent to [private collection]; consigned 1995 to (Hirschl and Adler Galleries, New York).

**Exhibited:** *American Paintings of the Nineteenth Century*, California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, 1964, no. 45; *The American Vision: Paintings, 1825-1875*, M. Knoedler & Co., New York, 1968, no. 43; *Martin Johnson Heade*, MFA; University of Maryland Art Gallery; WMAA, 1969, no. 52; *The Natural Paradise: Painting in America, 1800-1950*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1976; *A New World: Masterpieces of American Painting, 1760-1910*, MFA; CGA; Grand Palais, Paris, 1983-1984, no. 68.

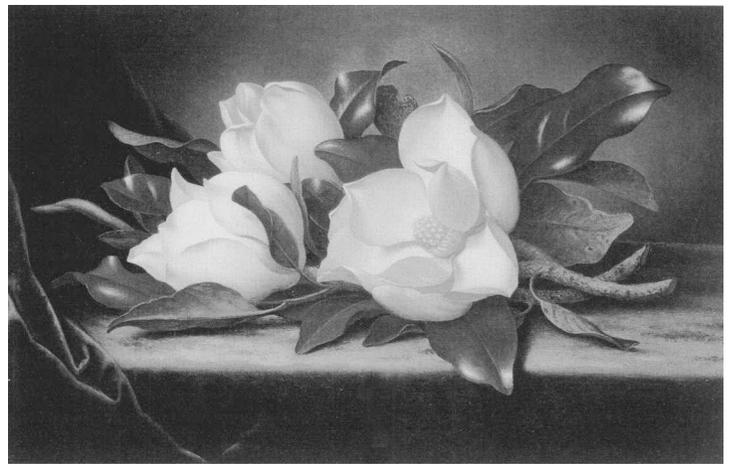


Fig. 1. Martin Johnson Heade, *Giant Magnolias*, oil on canvas, c. 1885-1895, R. W. Norton Art Gallery, Shreveport, Louisiana

HEADE was the only major American artist of the nineteenth century to make important contributions in landscape, marine, and still-life painting.<sup>1</sup> Virtually all his still lifes were floral pieces, starting with elegantly simple pictures of flowers in vases in the early 1860s (such as *A Vase of Corn Lilies and Heliotrope*, 1863, Saint Louis Art Museum) and culminating in the 1880s and 1890s with a glorious series of roses, magnolias, and other flowers spread out on tables covered with velvet cloths. Although Heade continued to paint landscapes until the end of his life, the flower pictures—and, most especially, the magnolia paintings—are considered the strongest of his late works.<sup>2</sup> Only one of the dozen or so pictures of giant magnolias is dated (*Magnolia Grandiflora*, 1888, Jo Ann and Julian Ganz, Jr.), but most were doubtless executed around the same time.

After a lifetime of restless travel, uneasy personal relationships, and only modest critical and popular success as an artist in the northeast, Heade finally married and settled permanently in Saint Augustine, Florida, in 1883. There he found his first and only important patron, the oil and railroad magnate and developer Henry Morrison Flagler (1830-1913), who purchased his works on a regular basis throughout the 1880s and 1890s. At the age of sixty-four Heade had at last found personal and professional stability, and the renewed energy and interest in painting evident in the magnolia pictures may well have been inspired by his new circumstances.<sup>3</sup>

The paintings in the series vary in size, in the number of flowers depicted, in their arrangement



Fig. 2. Martin Johnson Heade, *Study of Three Blossoms of Magnolia*, c. 1880, St. Augustine Historical Society, Florida

(sometimes placed in glass vases, other times more informally spread out on velvet covered tables), and in the color (blue, red, or brown) of the velvet. The reclining magnolia paintings are among the most original still lifes of the nineteenth century, having no obvious precedents in either American or European art.<sup>4</sup> The most successful examples, which Stebbins considers the culmination of the entire series, depict two or three blossoms on blue cloths.<sup>5</sup> Of these, Stebbins ranks the present painting and another closely related picture, *Giant Magnolias* (fig. 1), the “classic examples,” with the former “one of the most complex, and perhaps most beautifully executed, of these pictures.”<sup>6</sup> Both were based on an oil sketch now in Saint Augustine (fig. 2), although the National Gallery painting depicts only two open flowers and a closed bud instead of the three unfolded blossoms shown in the Shreveport example. It is not possible to establish which of these two finished oils was executed first, but they do seem to depict different moments in time. That all the flowers are open in the Shreveport painting suggests they are slightly older than in the Gallery’s version. This impression is supported by the appearance of the leaves, which in *Giant Magnolias on a Blue Velvet Cloth* are a lush and vibrant green and energetic and vital, whereas they are more somberly colored and more collapsed by gravity in *Giant Mag-*

*nolias*. Heade, however, surely did not intend for the pictures to operate as a pair. Indeed, as Stebbins has noted, *Giant Magnolias on a Blue Velvet Cloth* achieves on its own a palpable sense of time’s passage: “Its three flowers in various stages of development suggest that we are watching a single blossom unfold.”<sup>7</sup>

In *Giant Magnolias on a Blue Velvet Cloth*, as in other paintings from the series, Heade was obviously intrigued by the formal possibilities of the play of the shapes of leaves, petals, and folds of cloth, and he infused the work with a sinuous rhythm of lines formed by the curving edges of flowers and leaves. He was apparently equally fascinated by contrasts of color, texture, and tone, because the brilliantly lit yet softly glowing white petals make a distinct contrast to the green leaves, which shine with an almost metallic brilliance. The magnolia paintings have an undeniable sensuousness, but it is unclear whether the artist specifically intended for them to carry sexual connotations.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, the mysteriously shadowed interior space, the lush colors, full, curving contours, overall sense of opulence, and implied perfumed scent of the flowers make them deeply suggestive, bringing to mind, as John I. H. Baur once observed, “odalisques on a couch.”<sup>9</sup>

FK



Martin Johnson Heade, *Giant Magnolias on a Blue Velvet Cloth*, 1996.14.1

## Notes

1. Stebbins 1975, 111.
2. Stebbins 1975, 166.
3. Stebbins, Troyen, and Fairbrother 1983, 282.
4. Stebbins 1975, 166.
5. Stebbins 1975, 174.
6. Stebbins 1975, 174; Stebbins, Troyen, and Fairbrother 1983, 282.
7. Stebbins, Troyen, and Fairbrother 1983, 282.

8. Stebbins 1975, 176.

9. *Commemorative Exhibition: Paintings by Martin J. Heade and F. H. Lane from the Karolik Collection in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* (New York, 1954); quoted in Stebbins 1975, 176.

## References

1975 Stebbins: 174–176, 276, no. 328.

## George P. A. Healy

1813 – 1894

GEORGE PETER ALEXANDER HEALY was born in Boston on 15 July 1813, the first of five children of William Healy, an Irish immigrant and captain of a merchant vessel, and his wife Mary Hicks. Healy showed an early artistic interest: By 1830 the self-taught painter had opened a portrait studio from which he hoped to help support his family. Although commissions were at first sparse, young Healy received important encouragement from Thomas Sully (1783–1872), who advised him to make painting his profession. His fortunes also improved in 1831 when Elizabeth Boardman Otis (Mrs. Harrison Gray Otis), a leader in Boston society, granted him permission to paint her portrait and recommended him to other potential patrons.

In 1834 Healy went to France where he studied with Antoine-Jean Gros (1771–1835). A year later he traveled through Italy, visiting museums and churches in the company of Lady and Sir Arthur Faulkner who soon provided his introduction to London society. It was in England that Healy met and, in 1839, married Louisa Phipps. The couple settled in Paris where Healy embarked upon the beginning of a long and happy marriage and thriving career. His diplomatic manners and affable demeanor, together with his obvious skill, brought him tremendous success throughout Europe and the United States. Prolific, as well as talented, he had by 1867 produced more than six hundred portraits.<sup>1</sup> The constant stream of commissions included dignified, imposing portraits of such celebrated figures as Pius IX and Elizabeth of Romania, the latter of whom developed a warm friendship with Healy and his family.

Although Healy, sometimes accompanied by his wife, traveled to the United States several times during the 1840s and early 1850s, it was not until 1856 that the entire family (which included five daughters and one son) settled in America. They took up residence in the booming city of Chicago, which Healy used as a base for his work in Boston, Philadelphia, New Orleans, and other cities. During the Civil War years he often traveled to Washington to paint military figures and members of President Lincoln's cabinet. He took his family back to Europe in 1867, but visited the United States many times over the following years in order to fill commissions.

In 1892 Healy, his wife, and one daughter returned to Chicago. The artist died in that city on 24 June 1894. DC

## Notes

1. Lewison 1968, 70.

## Bibliography

Healy 1894.  
de Mare 1954.  
Lewison 1968: 54–59, 69–73.

1970.34.1 (2539)

## *Roxana Atwater Wentworth*

1876  
Oil on canvas, 76.8 × 63.5 (30 1/4 × 25)  
Gift of Lady Vereker

## Inscriptions

At center left: G.P.A. Healy. / 1876.



George P. A. Healy, *Roxana Atwater Wentworth*, 1970.34.1

**Technical Notes:** The support is a 2 × 1 twill fabric that has been lined. The painting was apparently stretched on an out-of-square stretcher, since triangular remnants of the top and bottom tacking margins, visible through x-radiography, have been opened and incorporated into the painted surface. Over the smooth, off-white ground the design was roughed out in reddish brown paint. This lay-in is visible, using stereomicroscopy, beneath the brushstrokes in the upper paint layer of the leaves, the rose petals, and the background beyond the sitter's head. The same paint appears to have been thinned and used as a transparent imprimatura in the background. Except for the fleshtones, the picture is generally very thinly painted. There are low brushmarks in the dress, moderate impasto in the face, and dots of high impasto in the earring and collar. A very small amount of inpainting is located in the upper background and close to the bottom edge. The varnish has yellowed.

**Provenance:** John Wentworth [1815–1888], Chicago, from 1876; his daughter, the sitter, Roxana Atwater Wentworth [later Mrs. Clarence Winthrop Bowen, 1854–1935], New York; her daughter, Roxana Wentworth Bowen [Lady Gordon Vereker, 1895–1968], Valbonne, France; her estate.

ROXANA ATWATER WENTWORTH, born 28 October 1854, was the only surviving child of five of John Wentworth (1814–1888) and Roxana Marie Loomis.<sup>1</sup> Her father, who was a descendant of John Wentworth, a New Hampshire representative to the Continental Congress and a signer the Articles of Confederation, had an illustrious career in Illinois as a newspaper publisher, lawyer, real estate investor, congressman from Illinois (five terms between 1843 and 1867) and mayor of

Chicago (1857–1860).<sup>2</sup> In 1892 Roxana married Clarence Winthrop Bowen, of New York City and Woodstock, Connecticut, the publisher of the Congregational newspaper, *The Independent*. She died on 10 July 1935 in New York City.

The portrait of Roxana Wentworth was executed not later than September of 1876. At that time, after having been in the United States since 1875, Healy sailed back to France and by November 1876 was at work on a portrait of Leon Gambetta.<sup>3</sup> Healy previously had painted Roxana Wentworth's father in 1858 (New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord) and would do so again in 1879 (Hood Museum, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire).

The National Gallery's portrait is a rather typical one for the artist, whose popularity was based on his facility in capturing a likeness, skillful technique, speed of execution, and his great personal charm, rather than on a talent for dramatic presentations or incisive, psychological interpretations of his sitters. While not as forceful as some of Healy's earlier works, such as the lively, elegant portrait of *Euphemia White Van Rensselaer* (1842, MMA), *Roxana Atwater Wentworth* is a sympathetic image of a graceful young woman.

DC

#### Notes

1. Wentworth 1878: 715.
2. *DAB* 19:657–659.
3. de Mare 1954: 183.

## Winslow Homer

1836 – 1910

WINSLOW HOMER was born in Boston, Massachusetts, the second of the three children, all sons, of Henrietta Benson and Charles Savage Homer. His artistic education consisted chiefly of his apprenticeship to Boston lithographer John H. Bufford and a few lessons in painting from Frédéric Rondel after that. Following his apprenticeship, Homer worked as a freelance illustrator for such magazines as *Harper's Weekly*. In 1859 he moved to New York City, where he began his ca-

reer as a painter. He visited the front at least twice during the Civil War, and his first important paintings were of Civil War subjects. In 1867 he spent a year in France (the first of two visits to Europe), and it had no discernibly significant effect on his art. In 1873 at Gloucester, Massachusetts, he began to paint in watercolor. In 1875 he submitted his last drawing to *Harper's Weekly*, ending his career as an illustrator. He traveled widely in the 1870s in New York State, to Virginia, and

Massachusetts, and in 1881 he began a two-year stay in England, living in Cullercoats, near Newcastle. Returning to America in 1883, he settled at Prout's Neck, Maine, where he would live for the rest of his life. From there he continued to travel widely, to the Adirondacks, Canada, and Florida to fish, and to Bermuda and the Caribbean to escape winters in Maine. In all those places he was painting the watercolors upon which much of his later fame would be based. In 1890 he painted the first of the series of seascapes at Prout's Neck that were the most admired of his late paintings in oil.

Homer died in his Prout's Neck studio in 1910.  
 NC

### Bibliography

- Downes 1911.  
 Goodrich, *Homer*, 1944.  
 Gardner 1961.  
 Beam, *Homer*, 1966.  
 Wilmerding 1972.  
 Hendricks 1979.  
 Cooper 1986.  
 Cikovsky 1989.  
*Homer* 1995.

1994.59.2

## *The Dinner Horn* (*Blowing the Horn at Seaside*)

1870  
 Oil on canvas, 48.9 × 34.9 (19 1/4 × 13 3/4)  
 Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

### Inscriptions

At lower left: WINSLOW HOMER .1870.

**Technical Notes:** The support is a very fine, highly textured, plain-weave fabric. Although lined, the original tacking margins have been retained. The thin, yellowish-white ground layer was applied over the entire support except for a narrow, irregular border along part of the left tacking margin. Major contours were underdrawn in probably a dilute black paint. The horn was shortened at the underdrawing stage. The paint was applied in overlapping patchy strokes in the foliage and in long, smooth strokes in the meadow. A rougher texture was created in the foreground by dragging the paint across the fabric's prominent vertical threads. Four trees in the middle background, two on either side of the girl, were painted out by Homer. Several long tree branches were truncated as well during the painting sequence. These changes appear as pentimenti, except for the two trees on the left side of the girl which are fully visible only with infrared

reflectography. The painting is in extremely good condition and the varnish has not discolored.

**Provenance:** Given by the artist to Charles Collins, New York state;<sup>1</sup> by descent in the Collins family to Virginia Collins Cronester; (sale, Sotheby Parke Bernet, New York, 23 April 1981, no. 50, bought in); (Nicholas Hubby, Boston); Richard A. Manoogian, Grosse Point, Michigan; (Vose Galleries, Boston); sold May 1985 to Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, Upperville, Virginia.

**Exhibited:** Annual Exhibition, Century Association, New York, January 1871, as *Blowing the Horn at Seaside*. Somerville Gallery, New York, February 1871, as *The Dinner Horn*. Winter Exhibition, NAD, 1871–1872. PAFA, on long-term loan, 1974–1981. *Winslow Homer*, NGA; MFA; MMA, 1995–1996, no. 41, as *The Dinner Horn*.

HOMER USED the trumpeting figure of a young woman in several works in the early 1870s. The *Dinner Horn* is the first of the series—surely the painting exhibited at the Century Association in New York in January 1871 with the title *Blowing the Horn at Seaside*.<sup>2</sup> The figure appeared in June 1870, in a wood engraving in *Harper's Weekly* entitled “The Dinner Horn” (fig. 1). In an undated oil sketch on panel, Homer considered the figure in a horizontal format (fig. 2). And in a painting finished in 1872,<sup>3</sup> Homer placed a differently and more primly dressed but similarly posed figure in a shaded porch (fig. 3).

Fig. 1. After Winslow Homer, “The Dinner Horn,” wood engraving, *Harper's Weekly* (11 June 1870), Washington, National Gallery of Art, 1994.59.27





Fig. 2. Winslow Homer, *The Dinner Horn*, oil on panel, c. 1870-1873, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Julia Appleton Bird



Fig. 3. Winslow Homer, *The Dinner Horn*, oil on canvas, 1872, The Detroit Institute of Arts, Gift of Dexter M. Ferry, Jr., 47.81

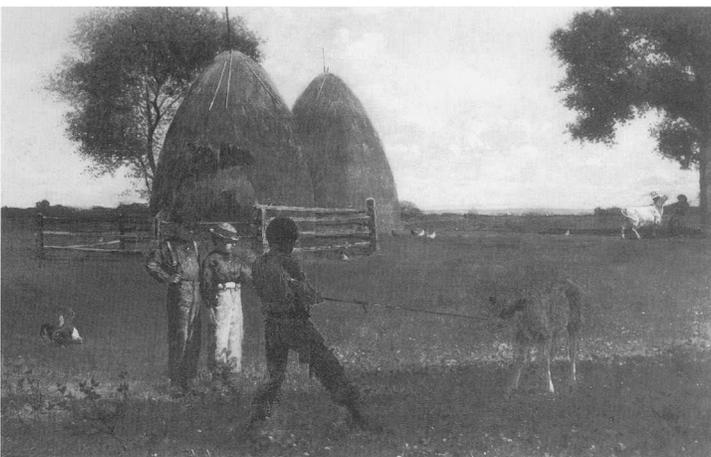


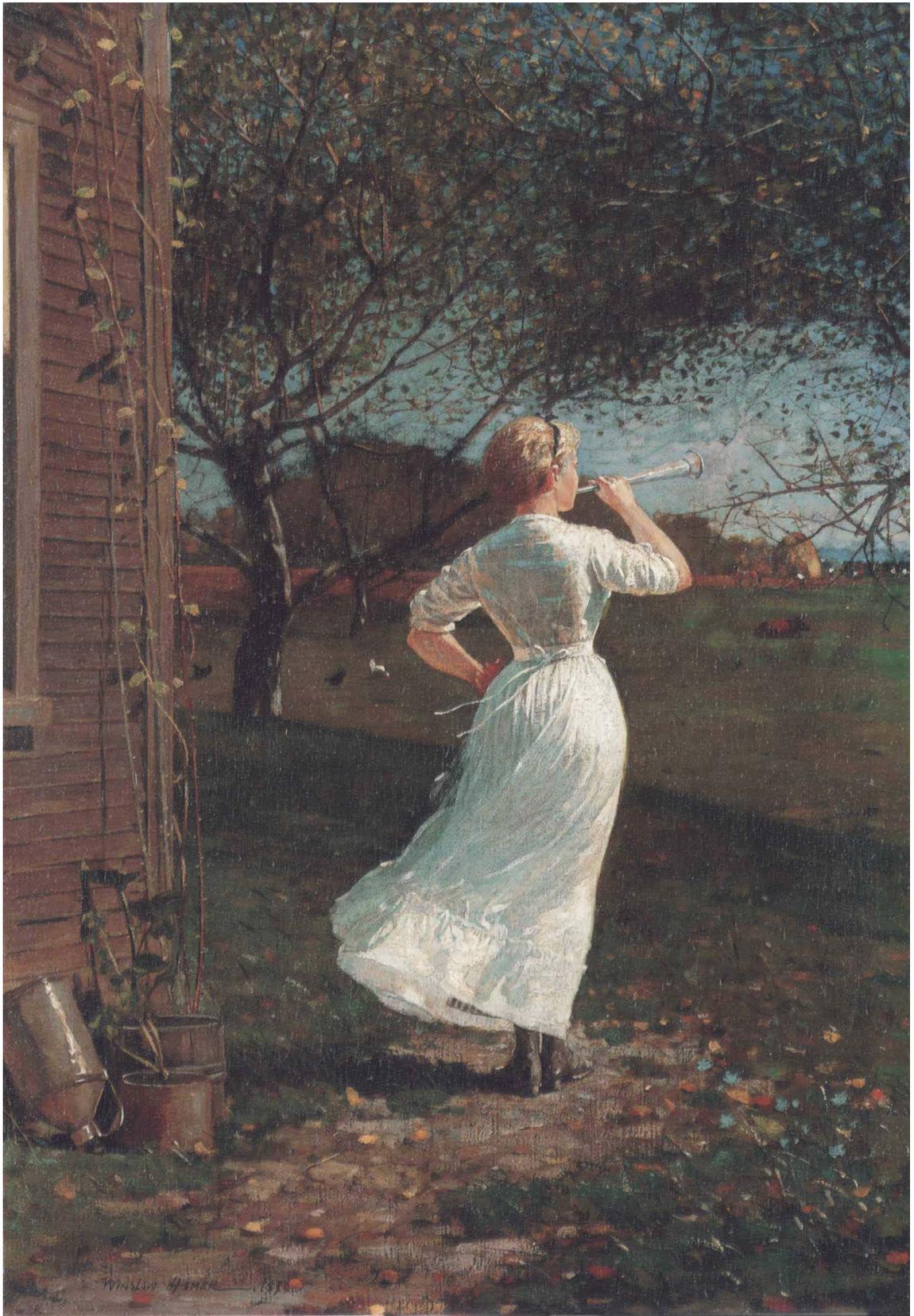
Fig. 4. Winslow Homer, *Weaning the Calf*, oil on canvas, 1875, Raleigh, North Carolina Museum of Art, Purchased with funds from the state of North Carolina



Fig. 5. Winslow Homer, *Long Branch, New Jersey*, oil on canvas, 1869, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, The Hayden Collection, 41.631



Fig. 6. Winslow Homer, *Eagle Head, Manchester, Massachusetts*, oil on canvas, 1870, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. William F. Milton, 1923



Winslow Homer, *The Dinner Horn (Blowing the Horn at Seaside)*, 1876

*The Dinner Horn* is the first of the farm (as distinct from harvest) subjects that Homer painted in the 1870s. Its clearest cognate seems to be found in the farmyard setting of a painting like *Weaning the Calf* of 1875 (fig. 4). But in both date and spirit it is more truly and closely related to the revealingly dressed women who, in various forms and degrees of erotic appeal, appear in beach and bathing scenes—the overdressed women in *Long Branch, New Jersey* and the bathers in *Eagle Head, Manchester, Massachusetts* (figs. 5 and 6)—that date from 1869 and 1870 and are closely contemporary with *The Dinner Horn*. For

like them, as its original title indicates, *The Dinner Horn*, too, was a seaside subject. Their essential similarity, however, lies not in the setting they share, but in their eroticism. The figure revealed by the almost transparently thin dress clinging to it in the breeze, and the glimpse of petticoat and ankle, are conceived in the same teasingly erotic terms. And it is in *The Dinner Horn* that an interest in women's shod feet, ankles, and legs, which Homer revealed in several private, almost furtive sketches (figs. 7, 8, 9), assumes its most public form.

The overturned milk can at left contributes an-



Fig. 7. (above left) Winslow Homer sketchbook, New York, Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution, 1912-12-140v

Fig. 8. (above right) Winslow Homer sketchbook, New York, Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution, 1912-12-114v

Fig. 9. (left) Winslow Homer sketchbook, New York, Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution, 1912-12-126



Fig. 10. Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *The Broken Pitcher*, oil on canvas, 1773, Paris, Musée du Louvre

other aspect to the erotic complexion of *The Dinner Horn*. For the milk can is the nineteenth-century metallic counterpart of the broken milk pitchers and mirrors that appear with such obvious sexual meaning in, for example, the paintings of Jean-Baptiste Greuze (1725–1805) in the late eighteenth century (fig. 10). The white-clad trumpeting figure the milk can accompanies as an attribute becomes, with an irony that is entirely typical of Homer, something other than angelic.

NC

#### Notes

1. This provenance was given for the painting in the 1981 sale catalogue. However, *The New York Times* of 26 February 1871, reporting on the exhibition and sale at the Somerville Gallery on 23 February, lists a painting by Winslow Homer titled “Dinner Horn” as having sold for \$150 to an unnamed buyer. This was probably the National Gallery painting, and Charles Collins was possibly the buyer.

2. Pentimenti show that there were originally trees to the right of the figure.

3. “The Realm of Art, Among the Brushes, Mahlsticks and Easels,” *New York Evening Telegram*, 8 June 1872.

#### References

1995 *Homer*: 109, color repro. 108.

1985.64.21

### *The Red School House*

1873

Oil on canvas, 55.5 × 39.5 (21 7/8 × 15 9/16)

Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

#### Inscriptions

At lower right: Homer 1873

At upper right, scratched into paint and then overpainted: Homer 1873

**Technical Notes:** The primary support is a very fine, closely woven fabric that has been lined but has cusping along the left edge. The double-layered ground consists of an off-white layer beneath an opaque grey-colored one that is allowed to show through parts of the finished painting and forms the body color of the dress. The paint surface is composed of multiple layers applied wet-into-wet and wet-over-dry with brushes and palette knife to create a smoothly textured surface with areas of impasto. The sky was laid in two layers, the second partially obscuring an earlier signature. The painting is in very good condition, despite small areas of paint wrinkling, especially in the sky. The varnish has not discolored.

**Provenance:** Nellie C. M. Taylor [Mrs. George H. Taylor], Boston, in 1919.<sup>1</sup> (E. & A. Milch, Inc., New York); sold 1919 to Gilbert E. Rubens [1884–1960], New York; (E. & A. Milch, Inc., New York); sold 22 November 1935 to Thomas Edward Hanley [1895–1969], Bradford, Pennsylvania;<sup>2</sup> by inheritance to his wife, Tullah Innes Hanley, Bradford, Pennsylvania;<sup>3</sup> (E. V. Thaw & Co., New York); sold 14 August 1970 to Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, Upperville, Virginia.

**Exhibited:** *A Loan Exhibition of Winslow Homer*, Wildenstein & Co., New York, 1947, no. 16. *Loan Exhibition of Paintings and Drawings from the Hanley Collection*, Wildenstein & Co., New York, 1961, no. 20. *T. Edward Hanley Exhibition*, Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1962, no cat. *Selections from the Collection of Dr. and Mrs. T. Edward Hanley*, Gallery of Modern Art, New York; PMA, 1967, unnumbered. *Selections from the Collection of Dr. and Mrs. T. Edward Hanley*, Museum of the Southwest, Midland, Texas, 1967, no. 57. *Selections from the Collection of Dr. and Mrs. T. Edward Hanley*, Denver Art Museum, 1968, unnumbered. *Works from the Hanley Collection*, Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts, Ohio, 1968, no. 17. *Works from the Hanley Collection*, Canisius College, Buffalo, New York, 1969, no. 34. *American 19th-Century Paintings*, Bernard Danenberg Galleries, New York, 1970, no cat.<sup>4</sup>

LITTLE IS KNOWN about *The Red School House*. It has no provenance until this century, except the belief of the first recorded owner, reported in 1919, that her father acquired it directly from the artist.<sup>5</sup> Because it was not exhibited during Homer’s life-



Fig. 1. Winslow Homer, *School Time*, oil on canvas, c. 1874, Upperville, Virginia, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

time there are no records or critical commentary that indicate whether the title is original or was assigned later.

Its authenticity is not in doubt. The painting is signed and dated twice, first in the sky, probably when it was finished, and again in the lower right, probably after the first signature was covered when the sky was repainted (that the date in both cases is 1873 suggests that the repainting did not too distantly follow its completion).

Fig. 2. Winslow Homer, *The School Mistress*, watercolor, Louisville, Collection of The J.B. Speed Art Museum, Gift of Mr. Henry Strater

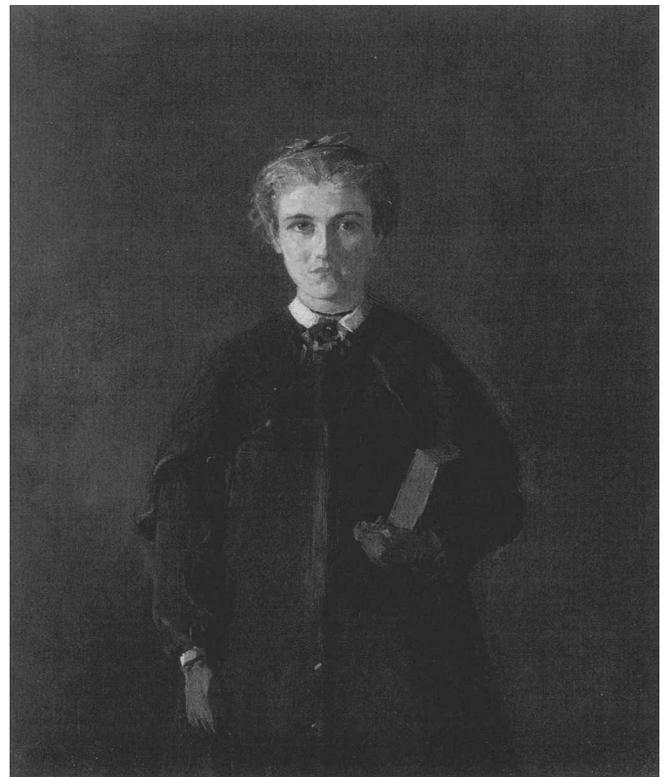


This painting is related to a series of school subjects that Homer painted in the early 1870s. The schoolhouse in the distance resembles the one depicted in such other paintings in the series as *School Time* (fig. 1) and the two versions of *Snap the Whip* (Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio, and MMA). Overall, however, it is most closely related to a watercolor (fig. 2) in which the figure, much enlarged and differently dressed in *School Time*, is similarly posed. The group of children and building in the distance are also similar, although further from the foreground figure. The watercolor is not dated, and in style it more strongly resembles Homer's watercolors of 1880, such as *Woman with Flower*, than it does works of 1873.<sup>6</sup>

Although titled *The Red School House* the painting is in fact a portrait, in which the schoolhouse and its attendant figures are secondary and very abbreviated parts. The name of the person depicted is not known, but her high cheek bones and down-turned mouth are similar to the features of the person in such other works as *The School Girl*, c. 1871 (fig. 3), who represents a school teacher, and *Young Girl at the Window* of 1875 (fig. 4), who wears a black fichu at her neck.<sup>7</sup>

Homer is seldom thought of as a portraitist, and it is true that he seldom painted conventional

Fig. 3. Winslow Homer, *The School Girl*, oil on canvas, c. 1870, Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts, Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Roger Kinnicutt, 1946.<sup>9</sup>





Winslow Homer, *The Red School House*, 1871.64.21

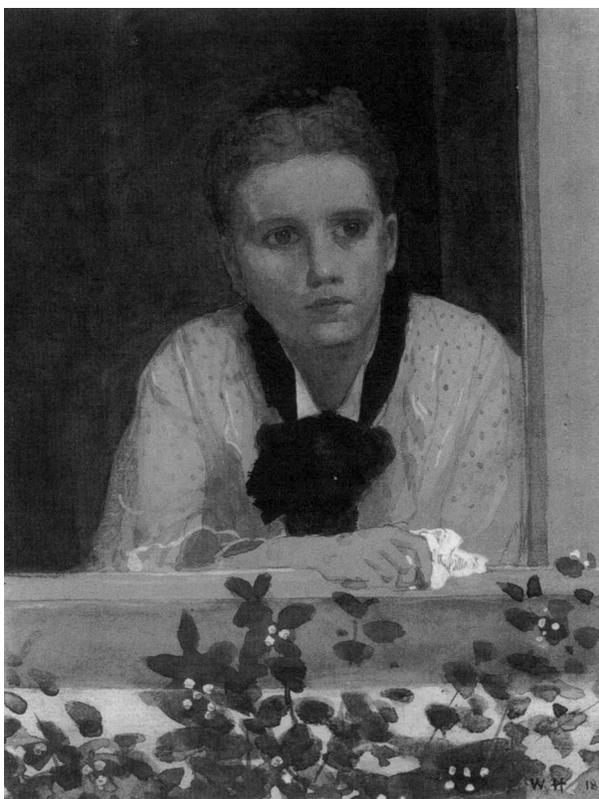


Fig. 4. Winslow Homer, *Young Girl at Window*, watercolor, 1875, From the collection of the New Britain Museum of American Art, Connecticut, Harriet Russell Stanley Fund, photo credit: E. Irving Blomstrann

commissioned portraits.<sup>8</sup> But recognizably individual if not always nameable personalities are a recurrent presence in his art, from General Francis Channing Barlow in *Prisoners from the Front* of 1866, to Orson Phelps, Harvey Holt, Rufus Wallace, and Michael Flynn (see *Hound and Hunter* [1947.11.1], fig. 5), who served as models for his Adirondack paintings of the early 1890s.<sup>9</sup> Recognizable individuals are particularly prevalent in his paintings of the 1870s, such as the *Portrait of Helena de Kay* of 1871–1872 (Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, Lugano, Switzerland), the double portrait *Almira Houghton Valentine and Mary Chamberlain Valentine* of 1877 (Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford), and his watercolor portrait of his brother Charles of 1880 (private collection).<sup>10</sup>

Because the issue of Homer's sexuality has entered recent discussions of his work, the presence of women of discernible individuality assumes a significance that it might not have had before now.<sup>11</sup> The exact nature of Homer's relationships to the women in his paintings of the 1870s is not known,

except that they were never lasting ones. But the reappearance of two (and perhaps more) women in works made in periods of no more than several years in length strongly implies a relationship of closeness and, very possibly, intimacy. Homer was the marriageable age of thirty-four in 1870, and the recurrent appearance of these women in the following years may correspond to periods of courtship. In any event, the appearance of more than one woman suggests an active, unrepressed, though in the end disappointed, heterosexuality on Homer's part.

NC

#### Notes

1. According to Lloyd Goodrich's provenance, as supplied by Abigail Booth Gerdts, 16 September 1991 (in NGA curatorial files), "Mrs. Taylor is reported to have said in 1919, that her father acquired this painting directly from Homer."

2. The painting was exhibited in *Selections from the Collection of Dr. and Mrs. T. Edward Hanley* at the Denver Art Museum from 22 February to 30 April 1968. Dr. Hanley died 9 April 1969, leaving his estate to his wife, Tullah Innes Hanley.

3. "Hanley Leaves Art Works to Colleges and Museum," *New York Times*, 27 April 1969, states "T. Edward Hanley, the oil heir, left the bulk of his estate, valued at up to \$15-million, to his wife, Tullah Innes Hanley." The collection presumably was dispersed according to his expressed wishes, but that dispersal evidently did not include *The Red School House*. The painting was exhibited by Mrs. Hanley in the exhibition *Works from the Hanley Collection* at Canisius College in Buffalo from 23 November to 23 December 1969.

4. Paul Mellon records (in NGA curatorial files).

5. See note 1.

6. See Cooper 1986, fig. 54.

7. She also resembles a figure in an untitled and undated drawing at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum, SI, New York (1912-12-76).

8. One exception is *Officers at Camp Benton, Maryland*, 1881 (Boston Public Library), painted largely from photographs twenty years after the event it depicts, and probably commissioned by the figure in the center, Col. Francis Palfrey. It is one of Homer's least successful paintings.

9. Philip C. Beam (Beam, *Homer*, 1966) has recognized Homer's neighbors at Prout's Neck, Maine, as models for a number of late paintings. For Homer's earlier use of a model, see *Sunset* (1964.4.1).

10. Another person seems to be depicted in *Autumn* (1877, [1985.64.22]) and *The Butterfly Girl* (1878, New Britain Museum of American Art, Connecticut); a reporter who saw *Butterfly Girl* and another figure painting in Homer's studio in 1878 described them as "two portrait studies" ("Gossip of Local Art Circles," *New York Daily Graphic*, 16 January 1878). For speculation on the identity of the women in Homer's paintings of the 1870s, see Adams, "Fortune," 1983; Adams 1984, 38–45; and Adams 1990, 244–252.

11. See, for example, Hess 1973, 75–76; Adams, “Mortal Themes,” 1983, 112–126; Adams, “Fortune,” 1983; Adams 1984, 38–45; Adams 1990, 244–252; and Prown 1987, 31–45.

#### References

- 1979 Hendricks: 94.  
 1986 Cikovsky: 48, 56, repro. 52.  
 1990 Carren: 1:52.

1964.4.1 (1913)

### *Sunset*

c. 1875  
 Oil on canvas, 39.4 × 57.2 (15 1/2 × 22 1/2)  
 Gift of John W. Beatty, Jr.

#### Inscriptions

At lower right: Homer

**Technical Notes:** The support is a fine, plain-weave fabric with a white ground. Infrared reflectography reveals a cursorily brushed underdrawing outlining the background trees and figure and a slight repositioning of the boy’s right arm. X-radiography shows reserves for the boy’s shadow and the trees. The sky was painted in two stages, and traction crackle in the upper pink layer reveals a lower blue layer of paint. In 1956, the painting was relined and the varnish thinned during restoration. Considerable inpainting covers the traction crackle in the sky and water, and reinforces the boat’s prow and the foliage along the horizon. The varnish has not discolored.

**Provenance:** By inheritance 1910 to the artist’s brother, Charles Savage Homer, Jr.; by inheritance 1917 to his wife, Mrs. Charles Savage Homer, Jr.; given to John W. Beatty [1851–1924], Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; by inheritance to his son, John W. Beatty, Jr. [1890–1963], Homewood, Pennsylvania.<sup>1</sup>

**Exhibited:** *National Gallery Loan Exhibition*, Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte, North Carolina, 1967, no. 14.

ITS TITLE was assigned to this painting by Lloyd Goodrich for his catalogue raisonné of Homer’s paintings.<sup>2</sup> The only mention of the painting during Homer’s lifetime was made by an *Appleton’s Journal* reporter who saw it, with several other pictures, in Homer’s studio in early November 1875. Describing one of his subjects as “the very picturesque figure of a young fisher-boy, who left his nets, for a good ‘consideration,’ to devote his time to the business of posing for Mr. Homer,” he wrote, “In one of the pictures, in which this boy appears, he is sitting



Fig. 1. Winslow Homer, *Looking Out*, pencil and Chinese white, 1875, Upperville, Virginia, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon



Fig. 2. Winslow Homer, *Sunset: Beaching the Boat*, watercolor, 1875, private collection, photograph courtesy of Berry-Hill Galleries, Inc., New York

upon the edge of a broad, round-keeled boat, that has been drawn upon a pebbly beach, beyond which this blue sea-water is dancing in a small cove.” The location of this picture is unknown, but the description corresponds exactly to the drawing *Looking Out*, signed and dated 1875 (fig. 1). The *Appleton’s* reporter continued, “In another sketch, taken just after sunset, this fisherboy again appears in his boat, which has floated up one of the little channels so characteristic of salt marshes in the neigh-

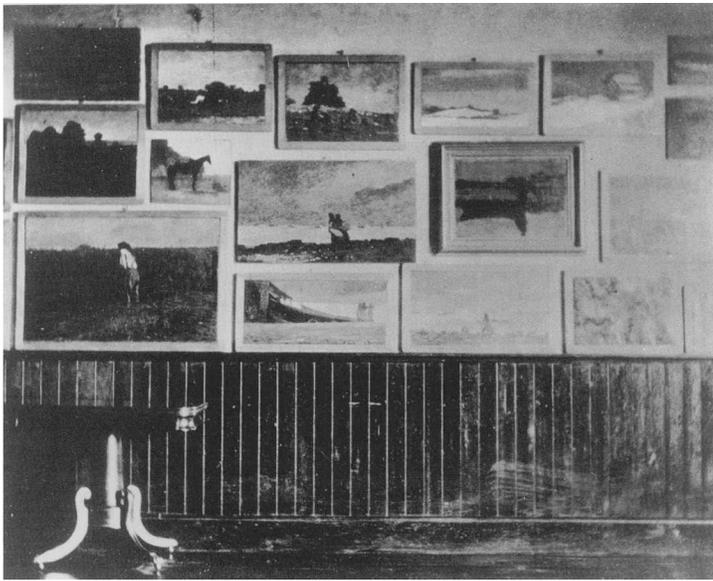


Fig. 3. photograph of the wall of Winslow Homer's Prout's Neck studio, date unknown, Brunswick, Maine, Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Gift of the Homer Family

borhood of the sea. The boy's figure is outlined darkly against the evening light, and the dark shapes of the tall rushes that border the channel also appear conspicuously."<sup>3</sup> This refers unquestionably to the National Gallery's oil. It closely resembles a watercolor, *Sunset: Beaching the Boat*, signed and dated 1875 (fig. 2). The *Appleton's Journal* writer referred to the oil as a "sketch," and in its present state it is clearly unfinished. For this reason, and because it contains a group of three children standing on the shore at the right and because it is executed with considerably greater and more precise detail, the watercolor cannot have been made in preparation for the oil, but seems instead to be based upon and to carry it to a more complete state.

Although the painting is not dated, the description of it in *Appleton's Journal* in 1875, the related watercolor dated 1875, and an old label removed from the stretcher that read, "Improved Canvas Stretchers. Patented January 1875. Factory, 107 to 109 Orchard St., Brooklyn, E.D.,"<sup>4</sup> all leave little doubt that it was painted in 1875.

At the end of June 1875 the *Boston Transcript* had reported that Homer "is now making a tour of the Massachusetts coast, studying child-life on the

seashore, in the fishing towns, and fields,"<sup>5</sup> so the *Appleton's Journal* writer was probably correct in saying that *Sunset*, with the other paintings he saw in Homer's studio, was "the result of his summer vacation." Precisely where in Massachusetts Homer found his subject is not known.

*Sunset* was never exhibited publicly during Homer's lifetime, nor did it leave his possession; it appears with a number of his paintings in an undated photograph of the wall of his Prout's Neck studio (fig. 3). It passed to his older brother Charles after Homer's death, and at his brother's death to his wife. She presented the painting to John W. Beatty, who was from 1896 until 1922, two years before his death, the first director of the Department of Fine Arts of the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh. He showed Homer's paintings regularly in the Carnegie's annual international exhibitions, and was close to him in the last years of his life. Beatty's reminiscences of Homer, based on that friendship, were written at the end of his own life.<sup>6</sup>

NG

#### Notes

1. Homewood is a suburb of Pittsburgh. Beatty's last will and testament gives Pittsburgh as his residence.

2. Letter and enclosure of 26 February 1965 from Edith Havens Goodrich to William P. Campbell (in NGA curatorial files) give the title assigned by Lloyd Goodrich and his record on the painting.

3. "The Arts," *Appleton's Journal* 14, 6 November 1875, 603.

4. See note 2.

5. "Letter from New York," *Boston Daily Evening Transcript*, 29 June 1875.

6. "Recollections of an Intimate Friendship," in Goodrich, *Homer*, 1944, 207-226. For Beatty, see *Who Was Who* 1:45.

#### References

- 1878 "The Arts." *Appleton's Journal* 14 (6 November): 603.  
 1979 Hendricks: 101, 284, repro. 284.  
 1981 Williams: 172, repro. 172.  
 1986 Wilmerding, *Dad's Coming*: 399, repro. 398.



Winslow Homer, *Sunset*, 1964.4.1

1943.13.1 (760)

*Breezing Up (A Fair Wind)*

1873–1876

Oil on canvas, 61.5 × 97.0 (24<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 38<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)

Gift of the W. L. and May T. Mellon Foundation

**Inscriptions**

At lower left: Homer

At lower right: Homer 1876.

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight, plain-weave fabric support has been lined and cusping is found only on the vertical edges. Over the white ground of moderate thickness is a thin reddish-brown imprimatura. X-radiography, infrared reflectography, and pentimenti reveal many changes in the composition: alterations in the angle of the mast and the position of the tiller and rudder; the deletion of two boats in the background; the addition of the schooner at right on top of the completed sky; and the replacement of the figure of a boy in the bow with an anchor. The flattened impasto is, presumably, a consequence of previous treatments. In 1966, the varnish was thinned and the painting was restored. In 1995, the discolored varnish was removed from the surface and a triangular black grey overpaint in the upper right corner was removed. The picture was revarnished and inpainted to hide pentimenti.

**Provenance:** Purchased from the artist by Charles Stewart Smith [1832–1909], New York, by 1878; by inheritance to his son, Howard Caswell Smith, Oyster Bay, New York; sold 1943 to (Wildenstein & Co., New York).

**Exhibited:** NAD Annual, 1876, no. 194, as *A Fair Wind*. Kurtz Art Gallery, New York, 1877, no cat., as *A Fair Wind*.<sup>1</sup> *Exhibition of Oil Paintings*, Union League Club, New York, 1887, no. 33, as *Breezing Up*. *Winslow Homer Centenary Exhibition*, WMAA, 1936–1937, no. 14, as *Breezing Up* or *A Fair Wind*. *American Painting from the Eighteenth Century to the Present*, Tate Gallery, London, 1946, no. 105. *40 Masterpieces: A Loan Exhibition of Paintings from American Museums*, City Art Museum of St. Louis, 1947, no. 24, as *Breezing Up*. *A Loan Exhibition of Winslow Homer*, Wildenstein & Co., New York, 1947, no. 20, as *A Fair Wind* or *Breezing Up*. *Homer, Eakins, Ryder, Inness, and Their French Contemporaries*, Fort Worth Art Association, 1949, no. 18, as *Breezing Up*. *Winslow Homer: A Retrospective Exhibition*, NGA; MMA, 1958–1959, no. 37. *A Retrospective Exhibition: Winslow Homer*, MFA, 1959, no. 33, as *Breezing Up*. *Trois Millénaires d'Art et de Marine*, Petit Palais, Paris, 1965, no. 18. *Paintings by American Masters: Fifth Anniversary Exhibition*, Kalamazoo Art Center, Michigan, 1966, 10, as *Breezing Up*. *Interpex Exhibition*, New York, 1967, no cat. *Winslow Homer*, WMAA; LACMA; AIC, 1973, no. 35, as *Breezing Up* or *A Fair Wind*. *American Marine Painting*, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond; Mariners' Museum, Newport News, Virginia, 1976, no. 44, as *Breezing Up*. *Winslow Homer*, NGA; MFA; MMA, 1995–1996, no. 76.

THE PAINTING that most forcefully brought Winslow Homer to public attention was *Prisoners from the Front* of 1866 (MMA), and in the years that followed it became the standard for Homer's artistic achievement. None of his other paintings was thought to measure up to the standard it set, except *Breezing Up*. When it was shown at the annual exhibition of the National Academy of Design in New York in 1876 one critic characterized it as "among the best things he has given to the public since 'Prisoners at the Front.'" Another wrote, "Mr. Homer gives us this spring the most admirable sketch he has made since the period of his war-pictures." A few years later, Earl Shinn termed it Homer's "greatest hit since the 'Confederate Prisoners.'"<sup>2</sup>

*Breezing Up* was also considered superior to the four other paintings that Homer sent to the Academy exhibition in 1876, all of which, indeed, exemplified what were often said to be his principal faults: The "half-expressed thoughts, strange eccentricities of drawing, rude handling of material" that one critic found "perplexing"; and a "coarseness of . . . execution" that another considered the "fault . . . with his pictures in general."<sup>3</sup>

But in *Breezing Up*, on the other hand, Homer "has at last painted a picture . . . that will at once delight and surprise those who have feared we were never to have anything from his hand but sketches." "It is free from those abominable lazinesses and hurrying which formerly disfigured some of his best productions." Even the critic from the *Art Journal*, who thought the picture typical of Homer's "hasty mode of treatment," found it winning nevertheless: "It may be accepted as the most spirited of his works; the waves roll, the boat flies swiftly before the wind, and the group of happy boys are felicitous in every pose." Two others concurred: "It is painted in his customary coarse and negligé style, but suggests with unmistakable force the life and motion of a breezy summer day off the coast. . . . There is no truer or heartier work in the present exhibition." Homer's "gift of painting from the first intention is a precious one when it results as it not always, and not often, does in a work like this, of which we dare affirm that there is not anywhere—at home, in France, or even in England—a painter capable of its mate."<sup>4</sup>

*Prisoners from the Front* also was admired for its truth, and for what it seemed very perspicuously to mean, and that was so of *Breezing Up* as well. "The fishing boat, bending to the wind, seems actually to cleave the waters," wrote the *Sun*; "the



Winslow Homer, *Breezing Up (A Fair Wind)*, 1943.13.1



Fig. 1. Winslow Homer, *Sailing the Catboat*, oil on canvas, 1873?, private collection



Fig. 2. Winslow Homer, *The Flirt*, oil on panel, 1874, Upperville, Virginia, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

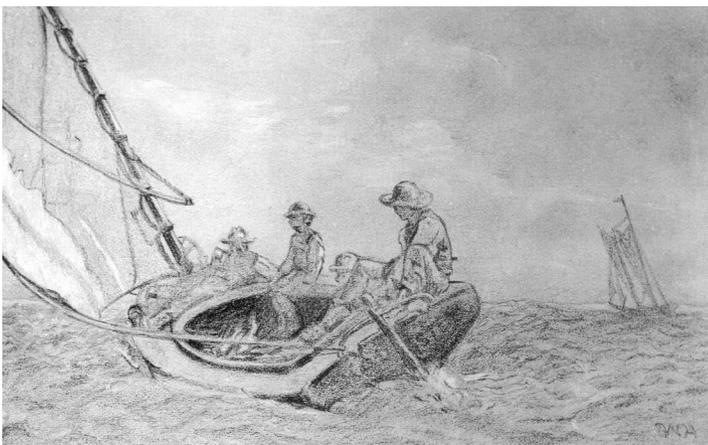


Fig. 3. Winslow Homer, *Breezing Up*, graphite highlighted with black crayon and white chalk on wove paper, c. 1879, Washington, National Gallery of Art, John Davis Hatch Collection, Avalon Fund, 1981.4.5

spectator can almost feel the bracing salt breeze blowing on his cheek," wrote the *Evening Express*; "No eye that delights in salt water, and in the sight at least of a sail-boat bounding over it; and no eye that can take pleasure in the human body painted with a master hand, with absolute truth of action, with energetic restraint of muscle, with the freedom of life to move or not to move, and all as if in play, but must admit that there is no picture in this exhibition, nor can we remember when there has been a picture in any exhibition, that can be named along side of this," the *Tribune* said.<sup>5</sup>

But the critic from the *Nation*, when he spoke of "the boatman's barefoot boy . . . whose bright eye evidently sees such enormous horizons," sensed a larger meaning, one about which Shinn was later more precise: "The type of the skipper's young American son, gazing brightly off to the illimitable horizon" is "one of the neatest symbols yet struck off of our country's quiet valor, hearty cheer, and sublime ignorance of bad luck."<sup>6</sup> *Prisoners from the Front* had been painted at the end of the Civil War, and it seemed to epitomize the war's causes and effects with singular clarity and completeness. *Breezing Up* appeared in a similarly charged historical moment: It was the year of America's centenary celebration, amid a climate of optimism and futurity—of "enormous" and "illimitable horizons." The many who commented on the painting's freshness, energy, and freedom responded to and interpreted it in exactly those terms.

When first exhibited the painting was called *A Fair Wind*, a title that described both meteorological and nautical conditions—lack of precipitation and a favoring wind—but may have had another meaning as well, since Homer's titles were often ironic or punning and not merely descriptive. In this case, it likely refers to the great exposition or fair, which, closely coinciding with the first exhibition of *A Fair Wind*, opened in Philadelphia on 10 May 1876 to celebrate the nations' centennial.

It is not known precisely when or by whom the painting's title was changed. It was still called *A Fair Wind* when it was shown at the Kurtz Gallery in New York in February 1877. In August 1878 an article on Homer, probably by George W. Sheldon, referred to "'A Fair Wind' . . . in Mr. Charles Smith's gallery," and again in 1879, it was referred to in the same way in Sheldon's *American Painters*.<sup>7</sup> But when it was published that year in Earl Shinn's *Art Treasures of America* it was titled *Breezing Up*, as it was when Charles S. Smith, its

first owner, lent it to an exhibition at the Union League Club in New York in 1887. The change in title, then, took place during Homer's lifetime. It could have been Homer's change. But the painting acquired its new title when it had been out of Homer's hands for a few years; therefore it is more likely that its owner changed it. That would not, in any case, have troubled Homer; he wrote the purchaser of an 1892 watercolor, "You may as well name it as anyone."<sup>8</sup>

*Breezing Up*—a title unalterably sanctioned by familiarity and usage—depicts an older man and three boys sailing a catboat in the harbor of Gloucester, Massachusetts. It is most obviously related to two other works by Homer, a watercolor, *Sailing the Catboat* (fig. 1), and a smaller oil, *The Flirt* (fig. 2). A drawing (fig. 3), bearing the initials WH, was unquestionably done after the painting and surely in preparation for the wood engraving that appeared as an illustration in Samuel G. W. Benjamin's *Art in America* (1880), which it resembles exactly. It has been suggested that it was made by Homer himself, but as it displays little of Homer's style or skill as a draftsman, that suggestion is not compelling.<sup>9</sup>

Neither *Sailing the Catboat* nor *The Flirt* is dated, although the former is probably one of the group of watercolors that Homer painted at Gloucester in the summer of 1873.<sup>10</sup> It is usually assumed that both works were preparatory to *Breezing Up*. *Breezing Up* is dated 1876, and a January 1876 visitor to Homer's studio reported that the artist was "at work" on it then, a few months before its first exhibition in April. But in a letter of 3 April 1876 Homer spoke of having put in "three years work" on it, which would mean that he began the painting in 1873.<sup>11</sup>

There are two reasons to believe that Homer was not exaggerating. One is that he made several important changes in *Breezing Up*. The deletion, clearly visible through infrared reflectography (fig. 4), of two large schooners and the figure of a boy seated in the bow of the catboat, and the addition of a schooner at far right, easily could have taken three years to resolve. The other reason is that before these changes were made the conception of the painting, in which the harbor contained other boats, closely resembled that of a wood engraving entitled *Gloucester Harbor* (fig. 5), published in *Harper's Weekly* on 27 September 1873. Nor is this only a resemblance of conception: The appearance and position of the larger schooner in the print and the

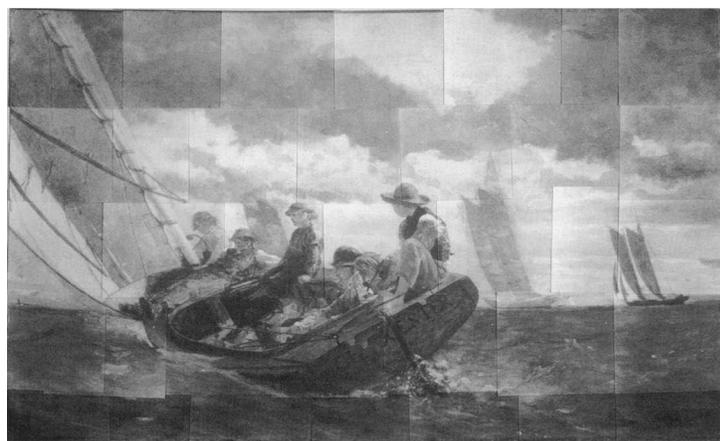


Fig. 4. Infrared reflectogram (1.5–2.0  $\mu\text{m}$ ) of 1943.13.1



Fig. 5. After Winslow Homer, "Gloucester Harbor", wood engraving, *Harper's Weekly* (1873), Washington, National Gallery of Art, Avalon Fund, 1986.31.118

one originally included in the painting are the same.

The resemblance of *Breezing Up* to the 1873 engraving indicates, too, that its relationship to *Sailing the Catboat* and *The Flirt* was not direct. They were not the image from which Homer began but the one to which, after evident struggle, he decided to return. In its original state, *Breezing Up* was a composite, assembled from the image of *Sailing the Catboat* and a detail in *Gloucester Harbor*. It was not alone among Homer's work of 1873 in being so: *Gloucester Harbor* and other engravings published in 1873 were

similarly concocted from different images, their parts often depicted separately in watercolors (like the boys in the dories in *Gloucester Harbor*).<sup>12</sup> This suggests that Homer was following the same pictorial procedure in both his paintings and his prints.

In addition to the changes already described in *Breezing Up*, Homer made two others. In both *Sailing the Catboat* and *The Flirt* (most clearly in the latter) the tiller and sheet are held by the older man, and the position of the tiller heads the boat correctly into the wind. In *Breezing Up*, the tiller's position has been changed to head the boat perilously before the wind, and it is held by the boy in the stern.<sup>13</sup> It is difficult to understand why Homer made these changes, ones that required significant repainting but had consequences that are both barely noticeable and nautically incorrect. For the boy—the “young American” who “sees such enormous horizons”—to guide the boat instead of the old man reinforces the painting's symbolic meaning, to be sure, but it does not create nor even significantly change that meaning. The second change is comparable: Homer replaced the boy in the bow of the boat, who is present in *Sailing the Catboat* and *The Flirt*, with an anchor. The anchor is a well-known symbol of hope, and as such also pertains to the painting's possible meaning. But its absence would not fundamentally alter that meaning either.

Although *Breezing Up* has become one of Homer's most famous and popular paintings, he dissuaded one of his patrons, Lawson Valentine, from acquiring it. “I am very much obliged to you for noticing my picture at the Academy & expressing a wish to buy it. Take my advice and don't do it. I am about to paint much better pictures & will give you a chance at them.”<sup>14</sup> By the time Homer wrote this letter on 3 April critics had already expressed their admiration for the painting, but perhaps, even after many adjustments and “three years work,” he was still not satisfied with it. Or perhaps, as he suggested, it did indeed stand at a changing point in his art from which he believed “much better pictures” would follow.

The painting's first owner, Charles Stewart Smith (1832–1909), was a slightly older contemporary of Homer. After his retirement from the textile business in 1887 he served as president of the New York Chamber of Commerce, was active in reform politics in New York City, and was a founder and trustee of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.<sup>15</sup> By about 1880 he had a sizable collection, chiefly of contemporary American and French paintings (in-

cluding one other Homer), and later collected Japanese prints and ceramics which he gave respectively to the New York Public Library and Metropolitan Museum of Art.<sup>16</sup>

NC

#### Notes

1. “Fine Arts, American Paintings,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 26 February 1877, reported “Winslow Homer [exhibited] a spirited fishing party called ‘A Fair Wind.’”
2. “Art Matters, A Hasty Glance at the Academy Exhibition,” *New York Evening Express*, 20 April 1876; “Fine Arts, The National Academy Exhibition, II,” *Nation* 22, 20 April 1876, 268; Strahan 1880, 2:92.
3. “The National Academy of Design (Second Notice),” *Art Journal* 2, 1876, 190; “Fine Arts, National Academy of Design—Fifty-first Annual Exhibition,” *New York Tribune*, 1 April 1876.
4. “Fine Arts, Fifty-first Annual Exhibition of the National Academy of Design,” *New York Tribune*, 28 March 1876; “Fine Arts, Fifty-first Annual Exhibition of the National Academy of Design,” *New York Times*, 8 April 1876; “The National Academy of Design (Second Notice),” *Art Journal* 2, 1876, 190; “The National Academy of Design,” *New York Sun*, 30 April 1876; “Fine Arts, National Academy of Design—Fifty-first Annual Exhibition,” *New York Tribune*, 1 April 1876.
5. “The National Academy of Design,” *New York Sun*, 30 April 1876; “Art Matters, A Hasty Glance at the Academy Exhibition,” *New York Evening Express*, 20 April 1876; “Fine Arts, National Academy of Design—Fifty-first Annual Exhibition,” *New York Tribune*, 1 April 1876.
6. Strahan 1880, 86.
7. “Fine Arts, American Paintings,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 26 February 1877; George W. Sheldon, “American Painters—Winslow Homer and F.A. Bridgman,” *Art Journal* 4, August 1878, 227; Sheldon 1879, 28. The title remained unchanged in the 1881 edition, and when Sheldon's text was reprinted in Montgomery 1889, 2:718, 720, but in Benjamin 1880, 124, it is *Sail-Boat*.
8. “Paintings at the Union League Club,” *New York Tribune*, 11 March 1887. Later, for example, Homer changed to *The Fog Warning* (MFA) the title of a painting of 1885 at first called *Halibut Fishing*. For Homer's letter, see *Homer* 1958, no. 146. The 1892 watercolor *Boy Fishing* is in the San Antonio Museum. In 1901 Homer wrote his dealers, M. Knoedler & Co., who had asked about titles of his watercolors: “The titles of my w-c-s I did not think of any consequence. The question should be are they good, or bad,” and then he went on, facetiously, “The two fishermen are fishing for trout—call them Thom—Dick—or Harry. The two log pictures are on the Hudson river anywhere you choose to place them—The trout is a trout—” (letter of 20 April 1901, M. Knoedler & Co. archives, New York).
9. Burger 1976, no. 67, maintains the drawing was a copy by Homer, and that the purpose for which it was made explains its properties of style and execution.
10. Cooper 1986, 38, says, without explanation, that it was “probably executed during Homer's first trip to Prout's Neck in May 1875.”

11. "Mr. Homer is at present at work upon a marine picture showing a fishing boat going into port under the effect of a strong breeze" ("Fine Arts," *New York Evening Post*, 5 January 1876). Letter of 3 April 1876 from Homer to Lawson Valentine, Library, Colby College, Waterville, Maine.

12. One example is the illustration *Sea-Side Sketches—A Clam-Bake* in *Harper's Weekly* (23 August 1873), for which Homer drew upon two watercolors, *A Basket of Clams* (1873, Arthur G. Altschul, New York) and *The Clambake* (1873, Cleveland Museum of Art); another is *See-Saw—Gloucester, Massachusetts* in *Harper's Weekly* (12 September 1874), which derived from the watercolor *Girls with Lobster* (Cleveland Museum of Art) and its related oil *Girls in a Landscape* (Mrs. Norman B. Woolworth) and the watercolor *The See Saw* of 1873 (Canajoharie Library and Art Gallery, New York); yet another is *Ship-Building, Gloucester Harbor* in *Harper's Weekly* (11 October 1873), which is related to the oil *The Boat Builders* (1873, Indianapolis Museum of Art), the drawing for it (private collection), and the oil *Shipbuilding, Gloucester* (1871, Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, Massachusetts).

13. This was the state of the painting when it was exhibited at the National Academy of Design in 1876: "A man holds tightly to the sheet, a boy steers, and two other boys occupy different portions of the boat in delightfully natural and easy positions" ("The Fine Arts, Exhibition of the National Academy," *New York Times*, 8 April 1876).

14. Homer to Lawson Valentine, New York, 3 April 1876 (Library, Colby College, Waterville, Maine).

15. For a biography, see *Who Was Who* 1:1139.

16. Strahan 1880, 3, 86; *Smith* 1935.

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 1878 Sheldon, George W. "American Painters—Winslow Homer and F.A. Bridgman." *Art Journal* 4 (August 1878).

- 1879 Benjamin, Samuel G.W. "Present Tendencies of American Art." *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 58 (March): 488, repro. 488, as *Sail-Boat*.  
 1879 Sheldon: 28, as *A Fair Wind*.  
 1880 Benjamin: 124, repro. 124, as *Sail-Boat*.  
 1880 Strahan 2: 92.  
 1887 "Paintings at the Union League Club." *New York Tribune* (11 March 1887), as *Breezing Up*.  
 1889 Montgomery: 2:718, 720, as *A Fair Wind*.  
 1911 Downes: 90.  
 1932 Bolton: 53.  
 1943 Carlyle Burrows. "Art Events of the Week." *New-York Herald Tribune* (27 June 1943).  
 1944 *Art Digest* 18 (1 January): 11, repro. 11.  
 1944 Cairns and Walker: 174, color repro. 175.  
 1944 Goodrich, "Homer": repro. 59.  
 1944 Goodrich, *Homer*: 70, 72, repro. 11.  
 1947 Gibbs: 10, repro. 10.  
 1947 Louchheim, "Homer": 40–41, 59–60, color repro. 40.  
 1947 "Tate": no. 68, repro. 107.  
 1948 Walker: 323, color repro. 317.  
 1951 Walker: 29 and 44, no. 29, color repro. 29.  
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 1959 Goodrich: repro. 29.  
 1961 Gardner: 197, color repro. 73.  
 1962 Gould, *Homer*: 152, 166, repro. opp. 166.  
 1963 Walker: 290, 337, color repro. 291.  
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 1966 Cairns and Walker: 2:490, color repro. 491.  
 1966 Flexner: 88, color repro. 88–89.  
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 1968 Wilmerding: 214, 218, 221, repro. 216.  
 1969 Prown: 87, 89, 90, color repro. 87.  
 1971 Campbell: repro. 269.  
 1972 Wilmerding: 92, 94, 134, 137, 174, detail color repro. 127.  
 1973 Williams: 183.  
 1975 Stein: 137.  
 1975 Wilmerding: 12, 13, color repro. 61.  
 1976 Wilmerding, *Art*: 134, repro. no. 160.  
 1979 Hendricks: 118–199, 275, 276, 282, color repro. 107.  
 1980 Wilmerding: 9, 15, 106, no. 34, color repro. 107.  
 1980 Wilmerding, "*Right and Left*": 59–85, color repro. 60, repro. 83.  
 1981 Williams: 172–173, repro. 174.  
 1983 Beam: 14, 19, 28, 46.  
 1984 Walker: 554, color repro. 555.  
 1986 Cooper: 38, 245, color repro. 39.  
 1986 Judge: 45, color repro. 33.  
 1987 Prown: 41–42, repro. 36.  
 1987 Wilmerding: 151, 157, color repro. 158.  
 1988 Wilmerding: 18, 31, 120, no. 37, color repro. 121.  
 1990 Carren: 1: viii, 106–118, 215; 2: repro. 41.  
 1990 Cikovsky, "Homer": 144–145, repro. 144.  
 1990 Cikovsky, *Winslow Homer*: 56, 58, 61, 87, 147, color repro. 59.

- 1990 Wilmerding and Ayres: 16, 44, 46–49, repro.  
44.  
1991 Wilmerding, 206, 227.  
1995 *Homer*: 143–145, color repro. 144.

1985.64.22

## Autumn

1877  
Oil on canvas, 97.1 × 58.9 (38 1/4 × 23 3/16)  
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

### Inscriptions

At lower right: HOMER '77

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight, plain-weave fabric support has been lined, but there is cusping along all four cut edges. Over the white ground a transparent brown layer was applied that shows through the upper paint layer in some areas. The paint is generally fluid and translucent, with brushstrokes of opaque paint applied both under and over the more translucent layers. X-radiography reveals minor changes: a round neckline beneath the scarf, and a pentimento of the woman's right hand. Infrared reflectography shows slight adjustments in the right side of her hat and to the right of her upper arm. There is a moderate amount of inpainting throughout. The varnish is uneven and has become slightly hazy.

**Provenance:** (sale, Leavitt Art Rooms, New York, 29–30 January 1878, 2nd day, no. 95). (Doll & Richards, Boston, June 1878); sold 1 July 1878 to Stephen Westcott Nickerson, Narraganset Hotel, Providence, Rhode Island.<sup>1</sup> Charles T. Barney [1851–1907], New York.<sup>2</sup> Edward Runge, New York; (his sale, American Art Association, New York, 9 January 1902, no. 71); purchased by E.A. Rorke. M.J. Hegarty, White Plains, New York, c. 1911; consigned 30 July 1936 to (M. Knoedler & Co., New York);<sup>3</sup> sold 10 May 1943 to Dr. Philip G. Stevens, New Haven, Connecticut,<sup>4</sup> until at least 1944.<sup>5</sup> H. B. Yotnakparian. Polly M. Leavitt, Bangor, Maine. Theodore Leavitt, New York, until at least 1950.<sup>6</sup> (Robert Carlen Galleries, Philadelphia); probably sold 1951 to Irving H. Vogel, Philadelphia.<sup>7</sup> (Wildenstein & Co., New York), by 1954 until 1957.<sup>8</sup> Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Shaye, Detroit, 1958 until at least May 1962.<sup>9</sup> (Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York); sold December 1964 to Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, Upperville, Virginia.<sup>10</sup>

**Exhibited:** *Winslow Homer Centenary Exhibition*, WMAA, 1936–1937, no. 16. *Exhibition of Paintings by Winslow Homer*, Babcock Galleries, New York, 1941, no. 19. *Winslow Homer*, Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts, 1944, no. 13. *Dramatic Choices: The Theater Collects*, Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York, 1950, no. 31. *American Painting, 1865–1905*, Art Gallery of Toronto, Canada; Winnipeg Art Gallery Association, Canada; WMAA, 1961, no. 35. *American Paintings and Drawings from Michigan Col-*

*lections*, Detroit Institute of Arts, 1962, no. 67. *Winslow Homer*, WMAA; LACMA; AIC, 1973, no. 38. *Winslow Homer*, NGA; MFA; MMA, 1995–1996, no. 88.

IN 1876 Homer discouraged a collector from buying a painting of that year, *Breezing Up*, by announcing, “I am about to paint much better pictures.”<sup>11</sup> The two new paintings he sent to the annual exhibition of the National Academy of Design the following year, however, were not noticeably different in subject, style, or quality from those he did before.<sup>12</sup>

*Autumn* did represent something new and, in its novelty, may have represented for Homer the kind of “better pictures” that he had promised the year before. By the time he painted *Autumn* in 1877 fashionably dressed young women had figured in Homer's art for more than a decade, so frequently, indeed, that in 1874 *Sunday Morning*, a painting of a woman in a hammock (perhaps one of the ones now known as *Sunlight and Shadow* or *Summer Afternoon* [both Cooper-Hewitt Museum, SI, New York]) was criticized as a “namby-pamby” subject that few other artists still painted.<sup>13</sup>

Although there were precedents in Homer's earlier art, *Autumn* also presents new and different concerns. In 1877 Homer earned compliments for his independence from “the fashionable foreign masters whose works are so much sought after by American collectors,” but it is precisely among such artists, just then popular among the post-Civil War generation of American collectors, that *Autumn's* cognates are located.<sup>14</sup> It is not Homer's own work of the late 1860s and early 1870s that *Autumn* resembles, but the modishly dressed single figures that in the late 1870s recurred with particular frequency in the work of such artists as Auguste Toulmouche, Charles Bagniet, James Tissot, Giovanni Boldini, Alfred Stevens, and in the work, too, of even more assertively modern painters such as James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903) and Edouard Manet (1832–1883). Just at the time he was being praised for his native independence, in other words, Homer was accommodating himself both to fashion and foreign influence more openly than he had ever done before.<sup>15</sup>

Homer had also been recognized for an often excessive and purposeful originality—a “disregard of conventionality, rather unduly emphasized, a rather forcible as well as frank assertion of individuality,” as a writer in the *New York World* put it in 1877.<sup>16</sup> But as a personification of a season of the



Winslow Homer, *Autumn*, 1985.64.22



Fig. 1. Winslow Homer, *The Butterfly Girl*, oil on canvas, 1878, From the collection of the New Britain Museum of American Art, Connecticut, Friends of William F. Brooks, photo credit: Michael Agee

year, *Autumn* belongs to a literally ancient and, in the late nineteenth century, still current convention of allegorical representation; Alfred Stevens, for instance, painted a four-part season cycle composed of similarly elegant single figures (Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts).<sup>17</sup> It is possible that Homer was thinking of something similar, that in the end he never completed. To a sale held in January 1878 he sent paintings, described as “full length figures,” entitled *Autumn* (probably this one) and *Summer*.<sup>18</sup> He also executed other paintings of the same size and vertical format that may have been intended as parts of a contemplated allegory of the seasons.<sup>19</sup> The most fully realized of them, dated 1878 yet evidently

completed by early January, is now titled *The Butterfly Girl* (fig. 1); however, given its subject and setting, it may be the *Summer* exhibited in 1878.<sup>20</sup>

A reporter who saw *Autumn* and *The Butterfly Girl* in Homer’s studio—perhaps coached by Homer himself, who, of course, must have been present—claimed that their purpose was essentially decorative: “The pictures do not profess to tell any story, for which true art has no necessity, and the adjuncts are simply used to intensify the attitude and beauty of the figures, which possess a strong vitality and interest.”<sup>21</sup> During the late 1870s America was awash in this sort of aestheticism, which belittled storytelling in favor of pure, unmeaning beauty, coupled with a frenzy for decoration.<sup>22</sup> To neither tendency, as *Autumn* and other of his works of the period indicate, was Homer immune.

This is reflected in his decorative projects, of which only traces survive, principally his painted tiles.<sup>23</sup> But Homer was also said to have done a series of mural decorations for the Franklin Square offices of New York publishers Harper & Brothers in New York, in the late 1870s, which, interestingly, in light of the allegorical character of *Autumn*, included an image of “The Genius of the Press.”<sup>24</sup> Homer’s friend and contemporary, painter/decorator John La Farge, also mentioned Homer’s interest at this time in “stained glass and wall decorations.”<sup>25</sup> In a number of Homer’s surviving works a decorative sensibility is unmistakably evident, for example the elaborately artificial costumes of the shepherdesses in his watercolors and drawings of the late 1870s—*Fresh Air* (1877, The Brooklyn Museum)—or the greater explicitness and refinement of design in such watercolors as *Blackboard* or *Backgammon* (The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco), both also of 1877.<sup>26</sup>

In its overt stylishness and formal strategy of two-dimensional flatness, *Autumn* partakes of both aspects of decorativeness. Although a decorative tendency is visible in Homer’s work before 1877 (for example in the highly sophisticated asymmetrical composition of *Breezing Up*, quite likely inspired by some experience of Japanese art), it is possible that the “better pictures” Homer promised in 1876 were ones that, like *Autumn* of 1877, marked a significant change in his artistic policy and persona.

In 1874 one critic wrote: “There is an original vein in this artist, and in working it, his love for truth and directness keeps him well clear of affectation—into which vice we have never once known him to fall. Nor . . . does he in the least recall the

manner of any famous artist. . . . It is true he has a manner of his own, . . . but the manner has sprung from the artist's individual way of looking at Nature, not from his way of looking at some other man's pictures."<sup>27</sup> Unaffected, individual, and independent—this was the image Homer projected and enacted for much of the decade of the 1870s. In paintings like *Autumn*, under pressures of fashion that he had never felt or at least never yielded to before, Homer relinquished some of his individuality and independence in order to ape—to affect—fashionable modes of artistic style and belief.

Two people encountered *Autumn* in the twenty-five years after it was painted. One was the American impressionist painter Theodore Robinson, who saw it at an exhibition in New York: "A rum Homer at Ortgies," he noted in his diary on 20 January 1896. "'Autumn,' a neat study of a model in walking dress and gloves, about 1870 with conventional brown background." In general, Robinson greatly admired Homer, but in this case his admiration was measured—"rum" means queer or odd—and he preferred another Homer, an English-period watercolor, that he viewed at the same time.<sup>28</sup> Someone else who encountered it was Homer himself. A few days before 9 January 1902, Knoedler's notified him that *Autumn* was to be sold at auction, and asked whether they should bid on the painting and, if so, to what price.<sup>29</sup> Homer replied: "I thank you for the notice of that picture in the collection of Mr. Edward Runge—I sold it for \$350 to some man in Connecticut—Someone has that amount of pleasure out of it & it is no matter if it is now given away by the owner, *I care not*."<sup>30</sup> He cared enough to authorize Knoedler to bid on it: "If it looks as if it could be put in good order & a fine picture made out of it I am the man to do it—if you should get stuck in bidding on it I would make it worth all the money you paid by working on it *a Day*."<sup>31</sup> It is not clear if he intended to refresh it—to "overlook" it, as he put in the case of other pictures—or to repaint it more drastically.<sup>32</sup> In any case, Knoedler did not receive Homer's instructions until the day after the sale. The painting sold to another party for \$120, less than half its original price.

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#### Notes

1. Doll & Richards records, box 53, AAA.
2. Chase 1910, 13.
3. Per 1 November 1995 letter from Melissa De Medeiros, Librarian at M. Knoedler (in NGA curatorial files).

4. See note 3.

5. Identified in *Homer* 1944, no. 13; the exhibition ran from 16 November to 17 December 1944.

6. Identified in *Dramatic Choices* 1950, no. 31; the exhibition ran from 4 November to 1 December 1950.

7. This provenance was "unconfirmed, but probable" according to a letter of 16 September 1991 from Abigail Booth Gerds (in NGA curatorial files). No record of this sale can be found in the Robert Carlen Galleries Papers, AAA.

8. Wildenstein & Co. advertisement, *AM* 31 (September 1957), 4.

9. "American Paintings and Drawings from Michigan Collections," Detroit Institute of Arts, 10 April-6 May 1962.

10. Invoice dated 29 December 1964 from Marlborough-Gerson to Paul Mellon (in NGA curatorial files).

11. Letter from Homer to Lawson Valentine, 3 April 1876 (Library, Colby College, Waterville, Maine).

12. *Answering the Horn* (Muskegon Museum of Art, Michigan), was particularly admired by one writer for its characteristically original treatment of American subject matter and termed "one of the best expressions of his happiest manner" ("Fine Arts, The Academy Exhibition, II," *New York Evening Mail*, 23 April 1877). But another said it was only "up to his average work" ("National Academy of Design, Fifty-second Exhibition," *New York Sun*, 15 April 1877).

13. "City Intelligence, Our Art Exhibitions," *New York Commercial Advertiser*, 29 April 1874.

14. "Home Subjects for American Art," *Leslie's Weekly* 44, 4 August 1877, 366.

15. Interest in recent European art at exactly the time Homer painted *Autumn* is signaled by the publication of Benjamin 1877.

16. "The Academy Exhibition, IV," *New York World*, 23 April 1877.

17. George H. Boughton's allegorical *Winter* was reproduced in Benjamin 1877, 15.

18. "The Annual Sale of American Pictures," *New York Evening Post*, 25 January 1878, 3, where their titles were given as *Summer* and *Winter*. The sale was held at Leavitt Art Rooms, New York, on 30 January 1878; "The Sale of American Pictures," *New York Evening Post*, 31 January 1878, 3.

19. They are *Woman in Autumn Woods* (Santa Barbara Museum of Art) and *Gathering Autumn Leaves* (Cooper-Hewitt Museum, SI, New York).

20. Both *Autumn* and *Butterfly Girl* were in Homer's studio in the middle of January, before the sale later in the month that included one or both of them: "In one, a young lady stands under a canopy of brown autumn foliage and scatters the crisp autumn leaves with one hand, in the other, she has just caught a butterfly in her net and is looking up at the moth which hovers above" ("Gossip of Local Art Circles," *New York Daily Graphic*, 16 January 1878, 458). If *Butterfly Girl* is *Summer*, it is very different from the version of that subject that Homer exhibited at the academy in 1880, which was described as "A miss wearing a sun-bonnet and light summer dress, with a flower sprig in one hand, . . . walking down a grassy slope" ("Glimpses of Studios and Galleries," *Andrews' American Queen* 3, 24 April 1880, 254).

21. "Gossip of Local Art Circles," *New York Daily Graphic*, 16 January 1878, 458.

22. See Burke et al. 1987. A writer in the *New York Evening Post* (2 April 1881) described the "principle" to which the mostly younger artists of the Society of American Artists subscribed and, in the bargain, the tenets of aestheticism as they were generally understood: "Art . . . is decorative in its functions. It has no relations with morals, it has no relations with literature, its office is neither to instruct nor to preach, neither to tell stories nor to read homilies; as an ennobling force in human society it has no mission whatever; its only proper prerogative is to please persons who are in sympathy with it by the exposition of lineal and chromatic beauty; and as such it is an end in itself."

23. The most complete and ambitious were two tiled fireplaces of 1878; see Hendricks 1979, figs. 192, 195. Homer belonged to the Tile Club beginning in 1877, at the meetings of which its members decorated ceramic tiles; see W. Murray Laffan, "The Tile Club at Work," *Scribner's Monthly* 17, January 1879, 401–409, and Young 1970, 81–91.

24. If executed, Homer's murals no longer survived early in this century; their subjects are given in Downes 1911, 244.

25. Gustave Kobbé, "John La Farge and Winslow Homer," *New York Herald* (4 December 1910).

26. For *Fresh Air*, see Cooper 1986, no. 43, 57; for *Backgammon*, see Richardson 1976, no. 70.

27. "Fine Arts, The Water Color Exhibition," *New York Tribune*, 14 February 1874.

28. Robinson diary, FARL. Robinson called on Homer in New York early in his career; in 1894 he bought one of his English watercolors (diary, 30 March 1894); and he repeatedly spoke with admiration of Homer and his paintings.

29. Knoedler to Winslow Homer, 4 January 1902, M. Knoedler & Co. archives, New York.

30. Homer may have been confused: The painting's first recorded owner was Stephen Westcott Nickerson of Providence, Rhode Island; when the painting was sold at auction at the Leavitt Art Rooms in New York on 30 January 1878 it went for \$265.

31. Homer to Knoedler, 8 January 1902, M. Knoedler & Co. archives, New York.

32. See letter of 31 March 1900, from Homer to Knoedler, M. Knoedler & Co. archives, New York.

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- 1878 "The Annual Sale of American Pictures." *New York Evening Post* (25 January 1878): 3.  
1878 "Gossip of Local Art Circles." *New York Daily Graphic* (16 January 1878): 458.  
1878 "The Sale of American Pictures." *New York Evening Post* (31 January 1878): 3.  
1910 Chase: 13.  
1937 Pène du Bois: 50, repro. 51.  
1957 Wildenstein & Co. advertisement. *AM* 31 (September): repro. 4.  
1959 Goodrich: repro. 40.  
1961 Gardner: color repro. 74.  
1966 Flexner: color repro. 84–85.  
1972 Wilmerding: 93.

- 1979 Hendricks: 133, detail repro. 127.  
1988 Wilmerding: 122, no. 38, color repro. 123.  
1990 Carren: 1: x, 149–150, repro. 2: 61.  
1990 Cikovsky, "Unfinished Business": 106, repro. 108.  
1995 *Homer*: 159, color repro. 158.

1947.11.1 (906)

## *Hound and Hunter*

1892

Oil on canvas, 71.8 × 122.3 (28<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 48<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>)

Gift of Stephen C. Clark

## Inscriptions

At lower right: Winslow Homer 1892

**Technical Notes:** Probably in the 1920s or 1930s the original fabric support was removed and replaced, at which time the painting was reportedly transferred to an additional white ground and several fabric layers. During relining in 1976 two outer fabric layers were removed, leaving only a single fabric support, to which two new lining fabrics were attached. The original ground layer is white, upon which multiple layers of opaque and glazed paint were applied with visible brushwork but no impasto. The painting was transferred in the 1920s or 1930s because of the shrinkage of the fabric; what caused the shrinkage is not clear. In 1976 the upper varnish layers were thinned prior to inpainting. The thick varnish has yellowed, giving the painting a murky appearance.

**Provenance:** Consigned by the artist 1900–1902 to (M. Knoedler & Co., New York). Louis Ettlinger [1845–1927], New York, by 1908;<sup>1</sup> by inheritance to his daughters, Flora Ettlinger Whiting [Mrs. Giles Whiting, 1880–1971], New York, and Josephine Ettlinger McFadden [Mrs. William A. McFadden, d. 1932], New York; Mrs. Giles Whiting, New York, and her nephew, Louis E. McFadden, Peekskill, New York; (Wildenstein & Co., New York); sold 20 March 1946 to Stephen C. Clark [1882–1960], New York.

**Exhibited:** *Exhibition of Old Master and Modern Paintings . . . Loan Collection*, Union League Club, New York, 1892, as *In the Adirondacks. World's Columbian Exposition*, Chicago, 1893, no. 574 and no. 1118.<sup>2</sup> Carnegie Institute Annual, Pittsburgh 1900–1901, no. 120. *Sixty-fifth Exhibition, Oil Paintings and Sculpture*, Boston Art Club, 1902, no. 27, as *Hunter and Dog—Northwoods*;<sup>3</sup> NAD Annual, 1908, no. 89. Carnegie Institute Annual, Pittsburgh 1908, no. 139. *Catalogue of a Summer Loan Exhibition of Oil Paintings*, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, 1908, no. 44.<sup>4</sup> *Loan Exhibition of Paintings by Winslow Homer*, MMA, 1911, no. 12. *Life In America: A Special Loan Exhibition Held during the Period of the New York World's Fair*, MMA, 1939, no. 230. *Exhibition of Paintings from the Stephen C. Clark Collection*, Century Association, New York, 1946, no cat.<sup>5</sup> *A Loan Exhibition of Winslow Homer*, Wildenstein & Co., New

York, 1947, no. 29. *Winslow Homer: A Retrospective Exhibition*, NGA; MMA, 1958–1959, no. 60. *A Retrospective Exhibition: Winslow Homer*, MFA, 1959, no. 56. *Winslow Homer in New York State*, Storm King Art Center, Mountainville, New York, 1963, no. 12. *The Triumph of Realism: An Exhibition of European and American Realist Paintings, 1850–1910*, The Brooklyn Museum; Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond; California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, 1967–1968, no. 78. *La Pintura de los Estados Unidos de Museos de la Ciudad de Washington*, Museo del Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico City, Mexico, 1980–1981, no. 25. *New Horizons: American Painting, 1840–1910*, State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow; State Russian Museum, Leningrad; State Art Museum of Belorussia, Minsk; State Museum of Russian Art, Kiev, 1987–1988, no. 59. *Winslow Homer*, NGA; MFA; MMA, 1995–1996, no. 179.

BEGINNING in 1870 Winslow Homer often visited the Adirondack region of upstate New York.<sup>6</sup> He went to fish (in 1888 he became a member of the North Woods Club at Minerva, which he used almost every year for the rest of his life), but he also made many of his finest and most moving paintings there, in oil and particularly in watercolor. His most intensive and productive visits to the Adirondacks took place in 1889, 1891, and 1892, and it is from this period that this painting dates.<sup>7</sup>

*Hound and Hunter* of 1892 is related to a watercolor (fig. 1) that Homer described in an inscription on its surface as the “original sketch for the painting.” The oil differs only slightly, principally in its more

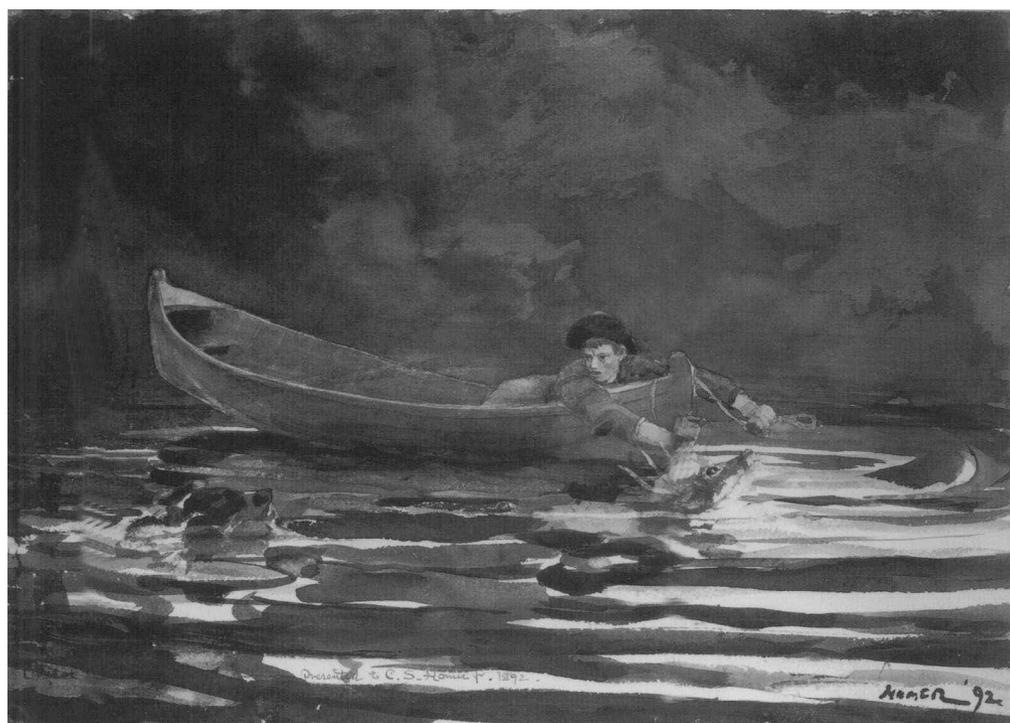
oblong format and the comparatively greater detail of its background.

Homer’s first reference to the oil painting appears in a letter of 15 October 1891 written on the stationery of the Club House of the Adirondack Preserve Association: “I am working very hard & will without doubt finish the two oil paintings that I commenced Oct 2nd & great works they are.<sup>8</sup> Your eye being fresh from European pictures, great care is required to make you proud of your brother.” “The original ideas of these paintings are in water-color & will not be put on the market, but will be presented to you with the one that I made expressly for you —.”<sup>9</sup>

About a year later, on 25 October 1892, Homer informed Thomas B. Clarke, his dealer and the chief collector of his paintings, that he planned to show “my only new oil with ten or so watercolors (all Adirondacks)” in Boston that winter. In a postscript that is an excellent specimen of the care and calculation with which he managed his affairs, Homer added:

I think I owe it to you to give you more particulars about this oil picture—I have had it on hand over two seasons & now it promises to be very fine. It is a figure piece pure & simple—& a figure piece well carried out is not a common affair[.] It is called ‘Hound & Hunter.’ A man[,] deer[,] & dog on the water[.] My plan is to copyright it[,] have Harper publish it in the weekly to make it known[.] Have Klackner publish it as a print & then exhibit it for sale first in Boston (at \$2000) with my watercolors.<sup>10</sup>

Fig. 1. Winslow Homer, *Sketch for “Hound and Hunter,”* watercolor, 1892, Washington, National Gallery of Art, Gift of Ruth K. Henschel in memory of her husband, Charles K. Henschel, 1975.92.7



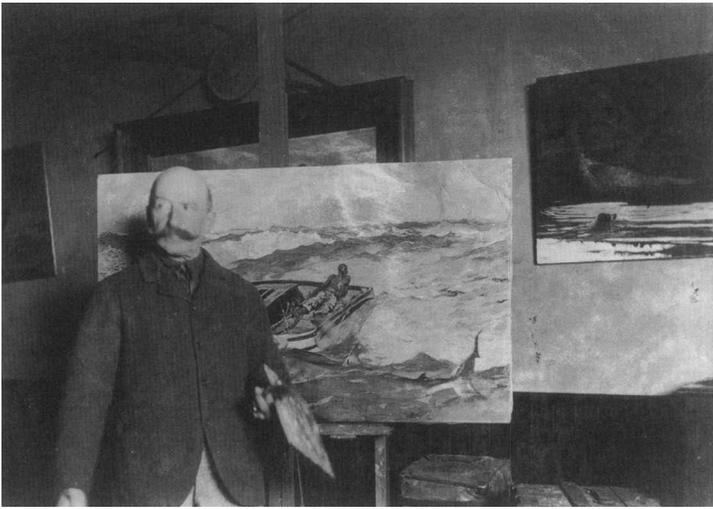


Fig. 2. Winslow Homer at his easel with *The Gulf Stream* in his Painting Room at Prout's Neck, Maine, about 1899, Brunswick, Maine, Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Gift of the Homer Family, 1964.69.179.9

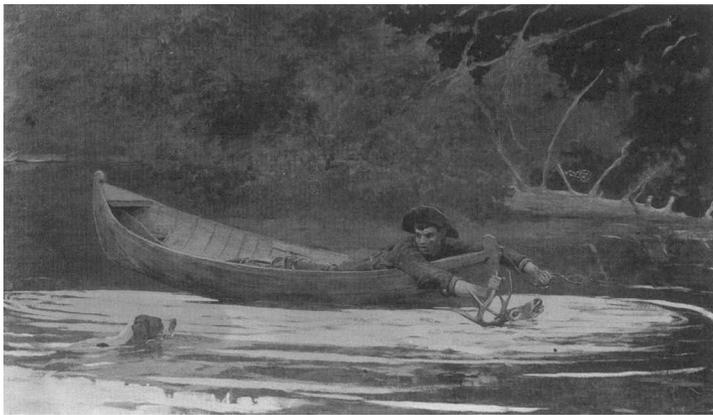


Fig. 3. photograph, taken c. 1900–1902, of *Hound and Hunter* before Homer changed it



Fig. 4. Arthur Tait, *Deer Driving on the Lakes*, oil on canvas, 1857, private collection, photograph courtesy of Kennedy Galleries, Inc., New York

*Hound and Hunter* was first exhibited not in Boston, but at the Union League Club in New York in December 1892, and not as *Hound and Hunter* but as *In the Adirondacks*.<sup>11</sup>

Homer inveterately altered his paintings (see *Breezing Up* [1943.13.1]), but he scarcely tampered with *Hound and Hunter*, although it remained in his possession for many years (fig. 2). One passage did trouble him—the head of the deer. In the watercolor “sketch” the head is almost wholly above the water; in the oil painting it was originally only partially submerged (fig. 3); and at some later point Homer lowered it still further, until the deer’s eye was barely above water.<sup>12</sup>

By a method called hounding, deer were hunted in the Adirondacks by driving them with dogs into lakes where they could be easily clubbed, shot, or drowned by hunters in boats. It is clearly shown in Arthur F. Tait’s painting, *Deer Driving on the Lakes* (1857) (fig. 4).<sup>13</sup> It is not an ingratiating subject, particularly on the scale of a large oil painting, which is probably why it remained so long unsold. When it was first exhibited, critics believed that the deer was still alive, which made it even less appealing.<sup>14</sup> On 11 December 1892 Homer answered such criticism in a testy letter to Clarke: “The critics may think that that deer is alive but he is not—otherwise the boat & man would be knocked high & dry[.] I can shut the deer’s eyes, & put pennies on them if that will make it better understood.” He then explained: “They will say that the head is the first to sink[.] That is so. This head has been under water & from the tail up has been carefully recovered in order to tie the head to the end of the boat[.] It is a simple thing to make a man out an Ass & fool by starting from a mistaken idea—So anyone thinks this deer alive is *wrong*.”<sup>15</sup> It was perhaps in response to criticism of this sort that Homer slightly but tellingly bowdlerized the picture by repainting the deer’s head to make it more fully submerged, thereby making the animal more lifeless than it had been originally, and the painting more saleable than it had proved to be in its earlier state.<sup>16</sup> If the change was made around 1907 or 1908, when it seems that the painting was sold, the change may have been a condition of its sale, although nothing in the correspondence between Homer and Knoedler, or in the painting’s provenance, confirms this hypothesis.

Homer himself thought highly of *Hound and Hunter*. In October 1891 he wrote that it and another picture he was painting were “great works,” ones



Winslow Homer, *Hound and Hunter*, 1947-11.1



Fig. 5. photograph of "Farmer" Flynn, (seated), *American Art Journal* 22 (1990)

that could equal the European pictures his brother had just seen. And at the very end of his life, he said to Bryson Burroughs, who told him of his admiration for the painting, "I am glad you like that picture; it's a good picture." Then he commented on a detail of close observation that he particularly admired and had taken great pains to paint: "Did you notice the boy's hands—all sunburnt; the wrists somewhat sunburnt, but not as brown as his hands; and the bit of forearm where the sleeve is pulled back not sunburnt at all? I spent more than a week painting those hands."<sup>17</sup>

The model for the hunter is Michael Francis "Farmer" Flynn (fig. 5), who began working at the North Woods Club for about a year in 1891, and whom Homer used in a number of his other Adirondack oils and watercolors.<sup>18</sup>

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#### Notes

1. Lent by him to the 12th annual exhibition at the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, May-June 1908. *Hound and Hunter* is reproduced in Mather 1927, 84, with the caption, "From the painting *Hound and Hunter* in the possession of Louis Ettlinger, New York, photograph by courtesy of M. Knoedler & Co." Ettlinger died 22 January 1927.

2. In the *Official Catalogue of the World's Columbian Exposition* (1893, 20), *Hound and Hunter* is listed as no. 574. In the *Revised Catalogue, Department of Fine Arts, World's*

*Columbian Exposition* (1893, 73), it is listed as no. 1118.

3. Lloyd Goodrich thought this listing referred to Homer's other major Adirondack painting of the early 1890s, *Huntsman and Dogs* (PMA); see Hendricks 1979, 210, pl. 41. The wording however, mentions only one dog. See also Homer to Knoedler, 24 January 1902, M. Knoedler & Co. archives, New York: "Will you please have that Hound and Hunter returned to me. When the exhibition is over in Boston—I wish to use the frame and shall return the painting." Also, Knoedler to Homer, 25 January 1902, M. Knoedler & Co. archives, New York: "We note what you say about your 'Hound and Hunter' being returned after the Boston Art Club exhibition is over." Chadbourne, Gabosh, and Vogel 1991, 218, state incorrectly that this was a sculpture.

4. Catalogue courtesy of Judy Throm, AAA.

5. Century Association Papers, 1929–1966, AAA microfilm N-CA2, fr. 344.

6. See the statistics of Homer's visits in Tatham, "North Woods Club," 1990, 115–128. For Homer and the Adirondacks, the introduction by Lloyd Goodrich and the essay by James W. Fosburgh in *Homer* 1959; Fosburgh 1963, 72–87; and Tatham 1988, 20–34.

7. According to the compilation of Homer's Adirondack works by Lloyd Goodrich and Edith Havens Goodrich, he definitely painted twenty-five and perhaps as many as thirty-two watercolors in 1889; in 1891, one major oil and seven watercolors; and in 1892 *Hound and Hunter* and definitely twenty-six watercolors and perhaps six more; see *Homer* 1959, 23–26.

8. The other being, perhaps, his second great Adirondack oil, *Huntsman and Dogs* (1891, PMA).

9. He gave it to his brother as promised, inscribing it, "Presented to C. S. Homer, Jr., 1892." The watercolor on which *Huntsman and Dogs* was based, *Guide Carrying a Deer* (Portland Art Museum), was also a gift to his brother, inscribed "To C. S. H. Jr. with the compts. of Winslow Homer Christmas 1891."

10. Letter of 25 October 1892 from Homer to Clarke, AAA, as quoted in Stepanek 1977, 23. The painting was not published in *Harper's Weekly* or as a print by Christian Klackner.

11. A description ("Pictures Lent to the Union League Club," *New York Times*, 9 December 1892) of the work in the Union League Club exhibition leaves no doubt that it is the same painting: "Winslow Homer is seen in one of his Adirondack pictures of the chase. It is an incident of deer shooting. A country boy has shot a stag in the water, and, lying at full length in the stern of his boat, is trying to keep the creature's head above water until he can fasten the antlers with the boat's rope. He is angrily calling to his hound which swims up to the boat on the left, presumably ordering it off lest the dog should try to get into the light boat and upset it. The scene is very true to life and is a well-painted anecdote of the chase."

12. When the change was made is uncertain. The reproduction used in the catalogue for the Carnegie Institute exhibition of 1900 and in the newspaper article ("The Pittsburgh Art Exhibition," *Brush and Pencil* 7, December 1900, 145), show the deer's eye fully above water; seven years later (McSpadden 1907, between 186 and 187, and Knaufft 1907, 689) the eye was, as it is today, partly covered. Homer consigned the painting to his New

York dealer, M. Knoedler & Co., on 26 March 1900, and it was returned to him in 1902. On 31 March 1900, shortly after Knoedler received the painting, Homer wrote about it and another that he had sent: "The two pictures, after hanging in my studio about eight years, needed some overlooking, which I did with great care and interest. Painting also on both of them." Possibly the change to *Hound and Hunter* was made at this time; however, a photograph in the Knoedler files, probably made while the painting was on consignment from 1900 to 1902, does not show it, suggesting that the change was made sometime later, before 1907 or 1908.

13. See Cadbury 1986, 137.

14. "Pictures Lent to the Union League Club," *New York Times*, 9 December 1892.

15. Letter of 11 December 1892 from Homer to Clarke, AAA, as quoted in Stepanek 1977, 23.

16. In the watercolor "sketch" the deer, its head stretching above the water, clearly struggles desperately for life.

17. Burroughs 1933, 64.

18. See Tatham, "Trapper" 1990, 54–60.

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- 1892 "Pictures at the Union League Club." *New York Evening Sun* (December).  
 1892 "Pictures Lent to the Union League Club." *New York Times* (9 December 1892).  
 1893 "American Paintings: The Exhibit[ion?] of Mr. Winslow Homer." *Art Amateur* 28 (March): 116.  
 1893 "Minor Exhibitions." *Art Amateur* 28 (January): 45.  
 1893 "Pictures at the Union League Club." *New York Tribune* (15 December).  
 1900 "The Pittsburgh Art Exhibition." *Brush and Pencil* 7 (December 1900): 143, repro. 145.  
 1907 Knaufft: repro. 689.  
 1907 McSpadden: 186–187, repro. opp. 186, as *The Hunter*.  
 1908 Shaw: repro. 103.  
 1911 Downes: 163–165, 258, 286.  
 1911 Hoeber: repro. 14013.  
 1914 Cox: repro. between 38–39.  
 1923 Pousette-Dart: 56th repro.  
 1927 Mather: no. 127, repro. 84.  
 1932 Bolton: 54.  
 1933 Burroughs: 64.  
 1944 Goodrich, *Homer*: 123–124, 170–171.  
 1947 Gibbs: 33.  
 1948 "Homer": 175–176.  
 1948 *Museum News* 25 (15 January): 2.  
 1948 Walker 1948: 323, color repro. 313.  
 1958 Porter: color repro. 27.  
 1959 *Homer*: 25, no. 50, repro. 78.  
 1961 Gardner: 205.  
 1962 Cairns and Walker: 148, color repro. 149.  
 1963 Walker: 337, repro. 328.  
 1964 Goodrich: 87.  
 1966 Beam, *Homer*: 107, 133.  
 1966 Flexner: 162.  
 1966 Tatham: 87, repro. 87.  
 1973 Hyman: 77–78, repro. 76.  
 1973 Williams: 191.

- 1975 Walker: 559, no. 846, color repro.  
 1979 Hendricks: 205–206, 210–211, 214, 243, 268, 276, 283, color repro. 205.  
 1980 Wilmerding: 15, 27, repro. 27.  
 1980 Wilmerding, "Right and Left": 66–67, repro. 67.  
 1981 Williams: 173, repro. 175.  
 1983 Brown: 94, color repro. 95.  
 1984 Walker: 557, color repro. 556.  
 1986 Cooper: 14, 183, 153, color repro. 185.  
 1986 Judge: 65.  
 1988 Wilmerding: 18, 31, repro. 31.  
 1990 Carren: 1: xii, 221–224, 230, repro. 97.  
 1990 Cikovsky, "Homer": 143–144, 154, repro. 143.  
 1990 Cikovsky, *Winslow Homer*: 6, 101, 104, 105, 108, 132, 137, 140, repro. 108.  
 1990 Robertson: 21, 71, 78.  
 1990 Tatum, "Trapper": 62–64, 67, repro. 63.  
 1991 Chadbourne, Gabosh, and Vogel: 218.  
 1991 Cikovsky: 12, repro. 11.  
 1991 Wilmerding, "Right and Left": 229, repro. 231.  
 1995 *Homer*: 276, 278, color repro. 277.

1951.8.1 (1067)

## *Right and Left*

1909

Oil on canvas, 71.8 × 122.9 (28 1/4 × 48 3/8)

Gift of the Avalon Foundation

## Inscriptions

At lower right: Homer 1909

**Technical Notes:** A moderately thin layer of white ground covers a fine, plain-woven fabric support that has been lined. Paint application ranges from thin in the foreground water to multilayered in the ducks, and it displays brushwork throughout. The painting is in good condition. Abrasion of paint in some of the thinner passages and ground, perhaps by the artist, has been inpainted. Discolored varnish was removed and the painting was restored in 1983.

**Provenance:** Consigned by the artist January 1909 to (M. Knoedler & Co., New York); sold by 3 August 1909 to Randal Morgan [1854–1926], Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania; by inheritance to his wife, Mrs. Randal Morgan, Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania; consigned 1950 to (M. Knoedler & Co., New York).<sup>1</sup>

**Exhibited:** Century Association, New York, 1909.<sup>2</sup> PAFA Annual, 1910, no. 461. *Catalogue of a Loan Exhibition of Paintings by Winslow Homer*, MMA, 1911, no. 22. *Winslow Homer Centenary*, PMA, 1936, no. 30. *Winslow Homer Centenary Exhibition*, WMAA, 1936–1937, no. 34. *Centenary Exhibition of Works of Winslow Homer*, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, 1937, no. 25. *Art in Our Time*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1939, no. 41. *Sport in American Art*, MFA, 1944, no. 66, as *Right and Left [Duck Shooting]*. *A Loan*

*Exhibition of Winslow Homer*, Wildenstein & Co., New York, 1947, no. 39. *Masterpieces of Philadelphia Private Collections*, PMA, 1947, no. 63, as *Left and Right. The Coast and the Sea: A Survey of American Marine Painting*, The Brooklyn Museum, 1948–1949, no. 63. *Shooting and Fishing in Art*, Baltimore Museum of Art, 1958, no. 17. *Winslow Homer: A Retrospective Exhibition*, NGA; MMA, 1958–1959, no. 78. *A Retrospective Exhibition: Winslow Homer*, MFA, 1959, no. 72. *Maine and Its Artists, 1710–1963*, Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine; MFA; WMAA, 1963–1964, no. 64 (exhibited only at MFA and WMAA). *Homer and the Sea*, Mariners' Museum, Newport News, Virginia; Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, 1964, no. 53. *Seventy-five Masterworks—An Exhibition of Paintings in Honor of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the Portland Art Association*, Portland Art Museum, Oregon, 1967–1968, no. 600. *In Memoria, Ailsa Mellon Bruce*, NGA, 1969, no cat. *Winslow Homer 1836–1910*, William A. Farnsworth Library and Art Museum, Rockland, Maine, 1970, no. 22. *Winslow Homer*, WMAA; LACMA; AIC, 1973, no. 72. *A New World: Masterpieces of American Painting, 1760–1910*, MFA; CGA; Grand Palais, Paris, 1983–1984, no. 110. *Europa/Amerika: Die Geschichte einer künstlerischen Faszination seit 1940*, Museum Ludwig, Cologne, 1986, no. 71. *Le Japonisme*, Grand Palais, Paris; National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo, 1988, no. 305. *Reckoning with Winslow Homer: His Late Works and Their Influence*, Cleveland Museum of Art; Columbus Museum of Art; CGA, 1990–1991, fig. 32, 37–39. *Winslow Homer*, NGA; MFA; MMA, 1995–1996, no. 235.

*Right and Left* is probably the painting Homer alluded to on 8 December 1908: "I am painting when it is light enough—on a most surprising picture but the days are short & sometimes very dark."<sup>3</sup> It was finished on 7 January 1909, had been received at Knoedler's gallery in New York by 30 January, was being considered for purchase by its first owner by 19 April, and had been acquired no later than 3 August, when Homer was paid for it.

There are two accounts of the painting's origin. One was told by William Howe Downes, Homer's first biographer: "The artist bought a fine pair of plump wild ducks for his Thanksgiving dinner. He did not intend to make a painting of them, but their plumage was so handsome, he was tempted; and before he got through with them his Thanksgiving dinner was spoiled." Philip C. Beam got another version from Homer's nephew Charles: "Winslow's good friend Phineas W. Sprague from Boston summered at the Neck [Prout's Neck, Maine], and often stayed on for the fall duck-hunting. In October or November of 1908 he bagged several ducks, and hung a brace of them on Homer's studio door. When Winslow saw them his imagination was set at work and he soon conceived

the design for *Right and Left*."<sup>4</sup> To the degree that these stories imply that the ducks were to be eaten, they are not fully plausible. The Goldeneye duck, which feeds mainly on crustaceans and mollusks, is edible but not desirable—a "second-class table bird."<sup>5</sup> It is unlikely that Homer would buy them for his Thanksgiving meal, or be given them as a present—unless, of course, it was understood that they were only to be painted, not eaten.

There are also two versions of how Homer developed his subject. Downes wrote: "He employed his usual careful methods of observation in this case. He went out, day after day, in a boat, with a man who was armed with a double-barreled shotgun, and studied the positions and movements of the birds when they were shot." Beam's version is: "To see what a shotgun blast looked like to someone under fire, Homer hired [his neighbor] Will Gogins to row offshore in a boat and fire blank charges up toward the cliff where [Homer] stood watching."<sup>6</sup>

We do not know directly from Homer how the painting originated or how it was made, but through Daniel H. Farr, of Knoedler's, he evidently told its first owner, Randal Morgan of Philadelphia, "all the details . . . which led up to the painting of 'Right & Left.'" Perhaps in some way they became the basis for one or another of these stories.<sup>7</sup>

Downes said that Homer "had no title for the picture" and that it received the one by which it is now known when at Knoedler's: "[A] sportsman came in, caught a glimpse of the picture, and at once cried out: 'Right and left!'—admiring, not so much the picture *per se*, as the skill of the hunter who could bring down a bird with each barrel of his double-barreled shotgun in quick succession. So the work was christened."<sup>8</sup> Knoedler's receipt acknowledging arrival of the painting on 30 January 1909 terms it (in quotation marks, as though it were Homer's title, not a description of the subject) "'The Golden Eye or Whistler Duck.'" But by 19 April, Knoedler's was referring to it as "Right & Left."<sup>9</sup> The painting does indeed depict a pair (female on the right, male on the left) of Goldeneye ducks (*Bucephalia clangula*), known as the Whistler duck because of the noise made by its wings in flight. It is common to Maine.<sup>10</sup>

Before making up his mind to buy it, Morgan wanted to know something more about the painting. Farr relayed the questions to Homer: "First of all he wants to know what direction the big wave is travelling in[.] He thinks it is coming toward the spectator. He would also like to know what causes



Winslow Homer, *Right and Left*, 1951.8.1

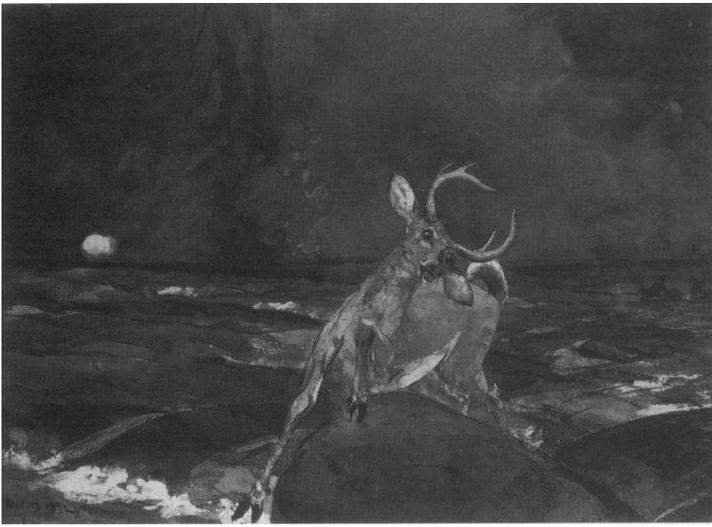


Fig. 1. Winslow Homer, *A Good Shot, Adirondacks*, watercolor, 1892, Washington, National Gallery of Art, Gift of Ruth K. Henschel in memory of her husband, Charles R. Henschel, 1975.92.5



Fig. 2. Currier and Ives, *The Death Shot*, hand-colored print, Washington, Library of Congress

the chopiness in that part of the picture nearest the spectator. He feels it is the result of the preceding wave after it has broken possibly on the rocks. Mr. Morgan also feels that this chopiness caused the ducks to get off from their feeding. Are these surmises correct? He is deeply interested in the painting & I think will keep it, so I know you won't mind sending us a line which we may forward to him in order that he can understand the details better."<sup>11</sup> Several years earlier Homer had responded with

considerable sarcasm to such questions from Knoedler's about another of his paintings, *The Gulf Stream* (1899, MMA).<sup>12</sup> In this case his response is not known, but it cannot have been too scornful because on 3 August 1909 Knoedler's informed Homer that the painting had been sold for \$5,000 (of which the artist received \$4,000).<sup>13</sup>

The questions that Randal Morgan asked are very different from those that have been asked of the painting since. The depiction of the moment of death, added to the fact that the painting was completed about a year and a half before Homer's own demise, have encouraged interpretations of a more metaphysical bent.<sup>14</sup> For John Wilmerding, in 1976, it embodied "a sense of the momentary and of the universal, mortality illuminated by showing these creatures at the juncture of life and death." Roger B. Stein, in the same year, saw it as Homer's "bleak" vision of chaos, given order only by pictorial form. John Caldwell believed that the viewer, recognizing "that the two ducks are dead or at the moment of dying," is "reminded of, his own mortality." I have written that "the very moment of extinction is, by the painting's outwardly pressing force, an unmediated, intensely and almost empathetically, shared experience of mortality." Marc Simpson has seen in it "[Homer's] poignant identification with the hunted."<sup>15</sup>

Recent interpretations also have been more attentive to the painting's style, and particularly its affinitive or derivative resemblances to other art. In 1961 Albert Ten Eyck Gardner wrote: "The restrained color and the extraordinary composition of his wonderful study *Right and Left* . . . are so Japanese in style one hesitates to emphasize the point." In 1966 Philip Beam, citing a specific resemblance, said it was "reminiscent of Okyo Maruyama's *Flying Wild Geese*." John Wilmerding cited the same resemblance, and added one to Hiroshige as well. The painting's Japonism was virtually sanctified by its inclusion in the large *japonisme* exhibition held in 1988 at the Grand Palais in Paris and the Museum of Western Art in Tokyo, in the catalogue of which it was compared to depictions of birds in Hokusai's *Santei-Gafu*. Wilmerding has also suggested some American stylistic precedents: Eadweard Muybridge's photographs of birds in flight in *Animal Locomotion* (1887), and John James Audubon's *Golden-Eye Duck*.<sup>16</sup>

These are all perfectly plausible. Japanese influence in particular was not only commonplace to the point of ubiquity by the first decade of the



Fig. 3. Currier and Ives, *American Feathered Game: Wood-Duck and Golden Eye*, 1854, New York, Kenneth M. Newman, The Old Print Shop

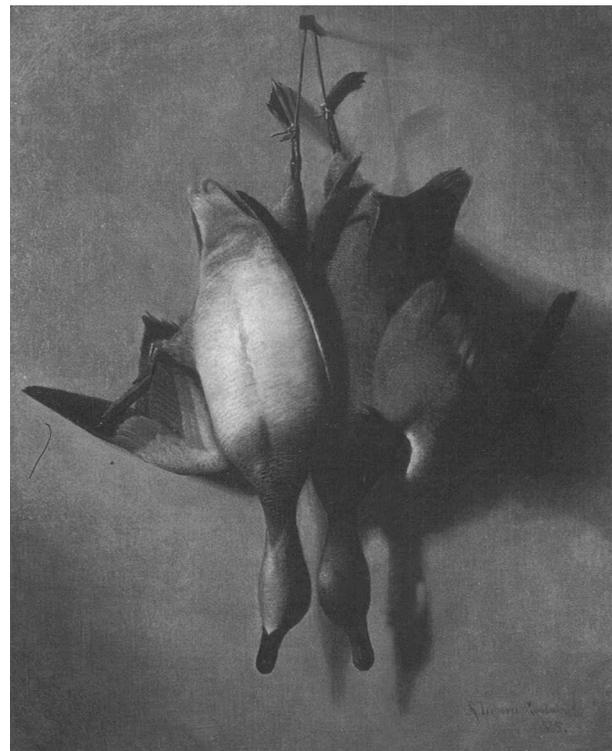
twentieth century but had been visible in Homer's art since the 1870s.<sup>17</sup> Yet it is not obligatory to suppose that it, or any other, was a stylistic influence Homer actively sought in the invention of *Right and Left*. His late paintings—*Right and Left* was his last important one—grew, on the whole, less from external influence than from internalized experience. The strategies of narration and formation that Homer employed in *Right and Left* are easily locatable within his own art; for example, the device of the shot aimed disturbingly toward the viewer in *Right and Left*, as Marc Simpson has seen, is prefigured in one of Homer's earliest paintings, *Inviting a Shot before Petersburg, Virginia* (1864, Detroit Institute of Arts), and had recurred in the watercolor *A Good Shot, Adirondacks* of 1892 (fig. 1).<sup>18</sup>

There is also a larger relationship between *Right and Left* and *A Good Shot*. *A Good Shot* is directly in the tradition of the sporting picture, closely resembling, for example, the Currier and Ives print *The Death Shot* (fig. 2) even to the puff of rifle smoke in the distant woods. Like *A Good Shot*, *Right and Left* also celebrates in its title a feat of good shooting. This is not a singular case. Homer's many water-

colors of fishing subjects also have analogues in sporting images, as does his painting *Hound and Hunter* of 1892 to Arthur Fitzwilliam Tait's *Deer Driving on the Lakes* of 1857 (see p. 324, fig 4). Although recent discussions have tended to exempt it from that tradition, *Right and Left* is a sporting picture. The "sportsman" who supplied its title and its first owner, both of whom were more interested in it from that point of view than for its formal sophistication or metaphysical implication, clearly understood that, and before its metaphysical translation the painting was included in exhibitions of sporting art.<sup>19</sup>

Also, like many sporting pictures, especially Homer's fishing paintings, *Right and Left* is a form of disguised, embellished, or historiated still life, made from artistically posed arrangements of dead animals. Beam's account of its origin suggests that it was inspired by the gift of a brace of ducks hung on Homer's studio door, and the tradition of game still life to which it belongs (fig 4; see also fig. 3), suggests that it, too, was painted from a similarly conventional arrangement of dead birds.<sup>20</sup>

Fig. 4. Richard La Barre Goodwin, *Hanging Ducks (probably Red-heads)*, oil on canvas, 1885, Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester, Marion Stratton Gould Fund, 64.39



Homer was perfectly aware of the sporting character of such works. Ready to exhibit an exhibition of his Adirondack watercolors in New York in 1890, for example, he prepared the text for an advertisement “for publication in the Sporting papers” that read: “To Flyfisherman & Sportsman[.] On exhibition Feby 6th to 12th a small collection of Watercolors taken in the North Woods, by Winslow Homer N. A. and treating exclusively of fish & fishing [at] Reichard & Co.[,] 225 Fifth Ave.” And in 1901 he said of six watercolors he sent to Knoedler’s, “They may be of interest to the fishermen now turned loose for spring fishing.”<sup>21</sup> *Right and Left* has been inducted into the canon of Homer’s great pictures—Wilmerding termed it “possibly [his] greatest work”—and installed in the even more exalted canon of international *japonisme*.<sup>22</sup> Yet its origins and artistic referents may have been more humble.

Throughout much of his artistic life Homer was attentive to subjects and motifs in the realm of popular art. His artistic maturity in the 1860s coincided with the explosive proliferation of images produced by such graphic technologies as wood-engraving, lithography, chromolithography, photography and, later, photomechanical reproduction. He was himself trained by a commercial lithographer, J. H. Bufford in Boston, and for many years he worked regularly for *Harper’s Weekly* and other magazines that were profusely illustrated with wood-engravings, for which he provided designs. To an extent not equaled by earlier artists nor by his contemporaries, Homer’s high art repeatedly finds correlatives, if not exact sources, in the domain of low or popular art. Such of his subjects as Long Branch, New Jersey, schools, sailing, fishing, and life-saving were ones frequently depicted—at about the time that Homer depicted them—in the popular illustrated press. Similarly, many of Homer’s sporting subjects allude, perhaps opportunistically but also as an essential aspect of their meaning and as a mode of their address, to the realm of popular, mass-producing imagery. In its flatness of space and shape *Right and Left* bears one of the cardinal formal aspects and expressive devices of modern painting.<sup>23</sup> In its transactions with popular imagery it bears another of the cardinal modern strategies of meaning and style.<sup>24</sup>

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## Notes

1. “MK [M. Knoedler] has from Mrs. R. M. [*Right and Left*] to net her . . . July 1950” (Doll & Richards records, box 53, AAA).
2. According to the invoice of 2 July 1951 from M. Knoedler & Co. (in NGA curatorial files), *Right and Left* was exhibited at the Century Association, New York, in 1909; however, no catalogue for this exhibition has been located and there is no record of the exhibition in the Century Association Papers, AAA.
3. Homer to Charles Savage Homer, Jr., 8 December 1908 (Winslow Homer Papers, Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Maine). Downes 1911, 244, said it was painted in November 1909. Homer suffered a paralytic stroke in May 1908, from which he had largely recovered by the end of the year, except for difficulty tying his necktie. Roland F. Knoedler wrote to Homer on 31 October 1908, “I am sorry you have not been working” (M. Knoedler & Co. archives, New York).
4. Downes 1911, 244–245; Beam, *Homer*, 1966, 249.
5. Letter of 3 April 1992 from Storrs L. Olson, Curator, Division of Birds, NMAH, to the author (in NGA curatorial files). In *Ornithological Biography* John James Audubon said the flesh of the Goldeneye duck was “fishy, and in my opinion unfit for being eaten” (as quoted in *Audubon* 1993, 250).
6. Downes 1911, 245; Beam, *Homer*, 1966, 249.
7. Daniel H. Farr to Homer, 19 April 1909, M. Knoedler & Co. archives, New York.
8. Downes 1911, 245.
9. Letter of 30 January 1909 from Knoedler to Homer and letter of 19 April 1909 from Daniel H. Farr to Homer, M. Knoedler & Co. archives, New York.
10. Letter of 3 April 1992 from Olson to Cikovsky (in NGA curatorial files).
11. Letter of 19 April 1909 from Farr to Homer, M. Knoedler & Co. archives, New York. Farr enclosed a photograph of the painting on which he marked the parts Morgan wanted to know about.
12. “You ask me for a full description of my picture of the ‘Gulf Stream.’ I regret very much that I have painted a picture that requires any description. The subject of the picture is comprised in *its title* & I will refer these inquisitive schoolmams to Lieut Maury [Mathew Fontaine Maury, the celebrated oceanographer]. . . . You can tell these ladies that the unfortunate negro who is now so dazed & parboiled, will be rescued & returned to his friends and home, & ever after live happily” (as quoted in Goodrich, *Homer*, 1944, 162).
13. Letter to Homer of 3 August 1909, M. Knoedler & Co. archives, New York. On 13 April 1901 Knoedler’s asked Homer for “a few descriptive lines” about *West Point, Prout’s Neck, Maine* (Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts) on behalf of its purchaser and on 18 April 1901 acknowledged receipt of his “descriptive letter.” (Letters of 13 and 18 April 1901, M. Knoedler & Co. archives, New York.)
14. The ducks are falling “as if just mortally wounded by a hunter” (Downes 1911, 245).
15. Wilmerding, 1976, 136. (Later, he spoke of its “singular confrontation with mortality” and “suggestion of life and death held in vivid balance” [Wilmerding, “*Right and Left*,” 1980, 61, 62], and of “the pivotal moment be-

tween life and death" [Wilmerding 1980, 108].) Stein 1976, 74–76. Caldwell's entry for *Right and Left*, in Stebbins, Troyen, and Fairbrother 1983, 340. (The question of the ducks' states of mortality has worried several commentators on the painting; Wilmerding gives his own view and summarizes others in "Right and Left," 1980, 83–84.) Cikovsky, *Winslow Homer*, 1990, 145. Simpson 1988, 181.

16. Gardner 1961, 206; Beam, *Homer*, 1966, 248; Wilmerding, "Right and Left," 1980, 77, figs. 16, 17; *Le Japonisme* 1988, 214, no. 305; and Wilmerding, "Right and Left," 1980, 80–81. Wilmerding also compares it to Audubon in Wilmerding 1980, 124. The *Golden-Eye Duck* was pl. 342 in *Birds of America* (1827–1838). Caldwell's entry in *New World* also cites the influence of Audubon's print as well as Japanese prints. Dwight 1965, 49, no. 80, noted the resemblance many years before; neither Wilmerding nor Caldwell cites him.

17. As in, for example, *Breezing Up* of 1876; see Meech and Weisberg 1990.

18. *Civil War* 1960, 181. Similarly, in *Searchlight* (1901, MMA) the beholder is placed in the position of the victim, towards whom the beams of the hostile lights are directed.

19. Exhibited at *Sport in Art* (1944, MMA) and *Shooting and Fishing in Art* (1958, Baltimore Museum of Art). See, too, Wilkinson 1992, 46–48, in which it is discussed and reproduced.

20. Wilmerding, "Right and Left," 1980, 108, termed it "a frozen still life." *Searchlight* was described by a newspaper critic as "A curious sort of still life" ("Union League Pictures," *New York Evening Post*, 11 January 1902).

21. Letter of 19 January 1809 from Homer to Messrs. Reichard & Co., Scarborough, Maine, William T. Evans Papers, AAA. Letter of 15 April 1901 from Homer to Knoedler, M. Knoedler & Co. archives, New York.

22. Wilmerding, "Right and Left," 1980, 59.

23. See Andrew Wyeth's comments as quoted in Wilmerding, "Right and Left," 1980, 85. On its flatness, see Cikovsky, "Homer," 1990, 145–146.

24. See Varnedoe and Gopnik 1990.

## References

- 1910 "Pennsylvania Academy": 22, repro. 22.  
 1911 Downes: 244–245, 258, 282, 286, repro. opp. 244.  
 1912 Pach: 76, repro. 77, as *Un Coup Double*.  
 1923 Pousette-Dart: 58th repro.  
 1926 Freund: 40, repro. 38.  
 1932 Bolton: 52, 55.  
 1936 Clifford: 6, repro.  
 1942 Watson: repro. 84  
 1944 Goodrich, *Homer*: 198, repro. 62.  
 1946 Baldinger: 227, repro. 229.

- 1947 Louchheim, "Main Line": 16, repro.  
 1951 Walker: 29, 44, no. 35, repro. 35.  
 1952 Cairns and Walker: 176, color repro. 177.  
 1959 Goodrich: 31, repro. 92.  
 1961 Gardner: 206, color repro. 92.  
 1962 Gould, *Homer*: 289.  
 1963 Ripley: 66, 67, repro. 67.  
 1963 Walker: 337, repro. 328.  
 1965 Dwight: no. 80, 49.  
 1966 Beam, *Homer*: 247–249, repro. 248.  
 1966 Beam, *W. Homer*: n.p.  
 1966 Cairns and Walker: 2:492, color repro. 493.  
 1966 Flexner: 180–181, color repro. 180–181.  
 1968 Wilmerding: 222, repro. 224.  
 1971 Cott: 249, 258, repro. 257.  
 1972 Wilmerding: 168, 172, 177, color repro. 206.  
 1973 Hyman: 87, 89, repro. 88.  
 1976 Stein: 74–76, color repro. 77.  
 1975 Walker: 559, no. 847, color repro.  
 1976 Wilmerding: 136, repro. no. 163.  
 1977 Young: 34, repro. 41.  
 1979 Hendricks: 246–247, 260, 268, 277, 283, color repro. 260–261.  
 1980 *American Paintings*: 11, repro. 177.  
 1980 Wilmerding: 10, 15–16, 108, no. 35, color repro. 109.  
 1980 Wilmerding, "Right and Left,": 59–85, color repro. 60, repro. 83.  
 1981 Williams: 173, repro. 176, color repro. 158.  
 1983 Adams, "Mortal Themes": 122, color repro. 126.  
 1984 Walker: 557, color repro. 556.  
 1985 McEwen: 106, 108, color repro. 101.  
 1986 Cooper: 184, 239.  
 1986 Judge: 86–89, 92, color repro. 88.  
 1986 Wilmerding, *Marine*: 160, color repro. 161.  
 1988 Scully: 214, color repro. 210.  
 1988 Simpson: 48, 181, repro. 182.  
 1988 Wilmerding: 18–19, 124, no. 39, color repro. 125.  
 1989 Reed: 76.  
 1990 Tatham, "North Woods Club": 126, repro. 127.  
 1990 Cikovsky, "Homer": 146.  
 1990 Cikovsky, *Winslow Homer*: 128, 135, 136, 140, 144, 146, color repro. 144.  
 1990 Robertson: 34, 37–39, 41, 173, repro. 39.  
 1990 Wilmerding and Ayres: 16.  
 1990 Young: repro. 425.  
 1991 Wilmerding: 208 ff.  
 1991 Wilmerding, "Right and Left": 240, 241, repro. 224, color repro. no. 17.  
 1992 Wilkinson: 47–48, repro. 46–47.  
 1995 *Homer*: 388–389, color repro. 388.

# Daniel Huntington

1816 – 1906

A POWERFUL and prominent figure within the New York art world during the second half of the nineteenth century, Daniel Huntington produced more than 1000 works, spanning the genres of history and literary painting, landscape, and portraiture. He was particularly active in the National Academy of Design and the Century Association, both of which he led as president for a number of years.

Although he appears to have been exposed to the art of painting through a distant family relationship with John Trumbull, Huntington did not seriously consider a career as an artist until he was almost twenty. He was attending school at Hamilton College, in Clinton, New York (after transferring from Yale in the wake of his dismissal over a disciplinary incident), when he met Charles Loring Elliott, who encouraged his pursuit of an artistic career. By 1835 he had moved to New York City to study with Samuel F.B. Morse (1791–1872) and Henry Inman. He also enrolled in the antique school of the National Academy that year. By 1836 he had opened his own studio and seen his first works (two landscapes, a portrait, and a genre scene) accepted at an Academy Annual.

In 1839 Huntington made his first of several lengthy trips abroad, traveling to England, France, and Italy. In Rome he was exposed to the art of the German Nazarenes and their enthusiasm for renaissance-inspired religious painting. His *Mercy's Dream* (1841, PAFA), a scene from John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, was painted shortly after his return to New York. It brought him immediate fame and became widely known through copies and engravings. Several years later, he began to take on students, and by 1850 he was well enough established to have an unusual one-man exhibition of some 130 paintings, complete with a printed catalogue. Shortly thereafter, he seems to have turned from subject painting to the more lucrative trade in portraiture. For the next fifty years most of his work fell into the category of conservative, dignified images of the leading men and women of the American social and pecuniary elite. In this he was

quite successful, and he died in New York possessed of considerable wealth.

JD

## Bibliography

- Tuckerman, *Book*, 1867: 321–332.  
Daniel O' C. Townley. "Daniel Huntington, Ex-President N.A.D." *Scribner's Monthly* 2 (May 1871): 44–49.  
Sheldon 1879: 100–109.  
S. G. W. Benjamin. "Daniel Huntington, President of the National Academy of Design." *American Art Review* 2 (1881): pt. 1: 223–228; pt. 11: 1–6.  
Gilchrist 1965: 709–711.

1947.17.56 (964)

## Dr. James Hall

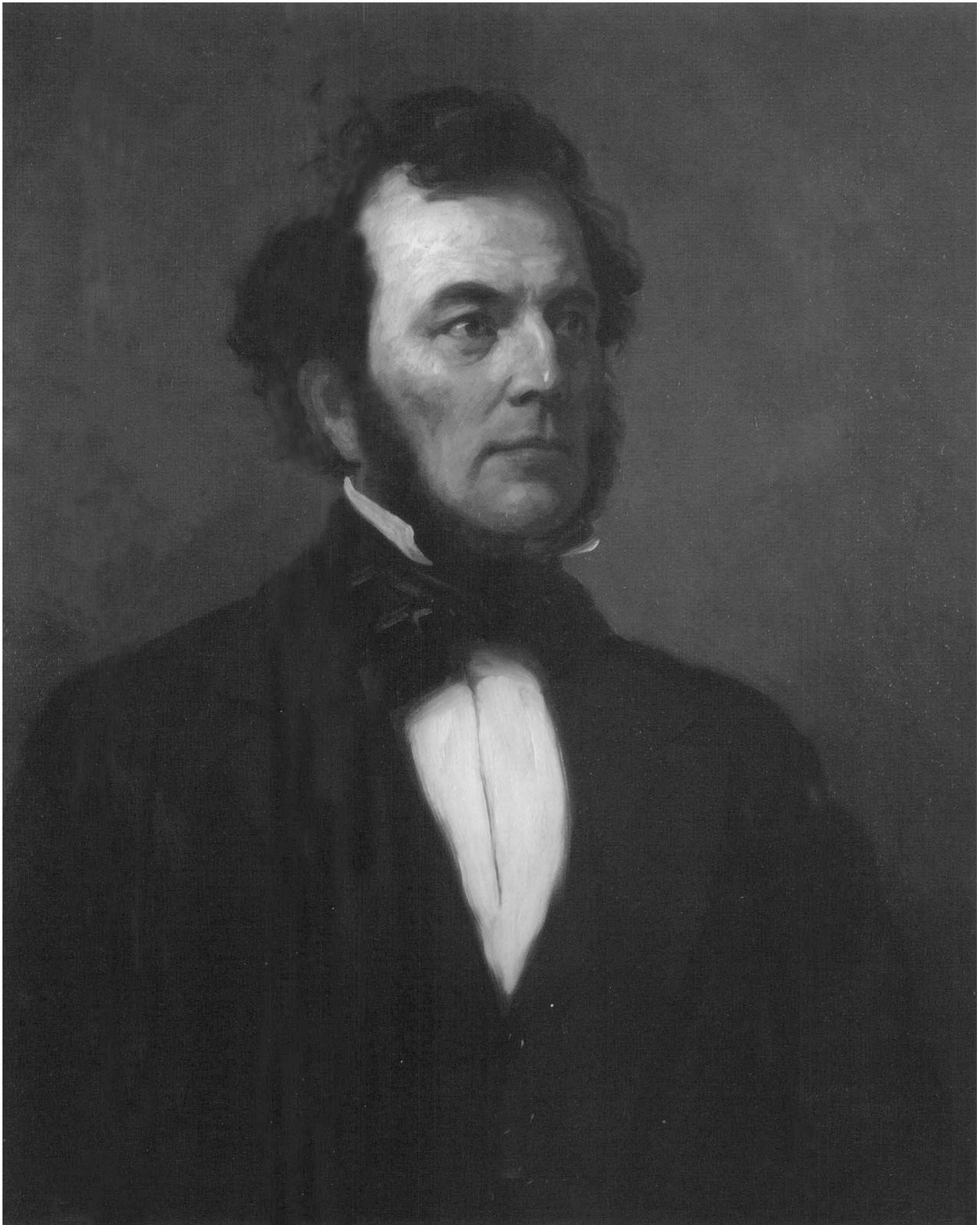
1857  
Oil on canvas, 76.5 × 63.3 (30<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 24<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)  
Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The support is a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric. The painting remains unlined and is attached with tacks to the original four-member, half-mitered half-slip-joined stretcher. Stenciled on the reverse of the fabric is "Williams, Stevens, Williams & Co. . . . 353 Broadway New York." The tan-colored ground is thin and smooth. The paint was largely applied with a wet-into-wet technique in fairly free strokes. The painting is in fair condition, with little inpainting. There are minor tears scattered in the tacking edges. A larger mended tear, approximately 5.7 cm in length, is located at upper right. Throughout the surface there is a fine crackle pattern. The varnish is uneven and has become extremely discolored.

**Provenance:** The artist, New York. (sale, Anderson Galleries, New York, 26 November 1920, no. 91); Thomas B. Clarke [1848–1931], New York<sup>1</sup>; his estate; sold as part of the Clarke collection 29 January 1936, through (M. Knoedler & Co., New York), to The A.W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

**Exhibited:** *Exhibition of Paintings by Early American Portrait Painters*, Union League Club, New York, December 1921, no. 19. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered. *The Lazzaroni: Science and Scientists in Mid-Nineteenth Century America*, NPG, 1972. NPG, on long-term loan since 1967.

HUNTINGTON'S BUST of James Hall was painted in preparation for a large group portrait entitled



Daniel Huntington, *Dr. James Hall*, 1947.17.56

*Men of Science*, which was never actually executed. In early 1857 the artist received a commission for the picture—intended to be 9 by 14 feet—from William Wright, a politician and industrialist who lived in Hoboken, New Jersey. Huntington's canvas was to be part of a grandiose scheme of four paintings by four different artists celebrating American accomplishments in commerce (Thomas P. Rossiter, 1818–1871), literature (Thomas Hicks, 1823–1890), art (George Baker 1821–1880), and science (Huntington). These, as Huntington explained to a scientist chosen to appear in the work, were to be “engraved in Europe in a high style of art” and placed in “a gallery . . . being erected for them.”<sup>2</sup> Wright, however, lost his fortune soon after selecting the artists. In the end, only Rossiter's painting was completed (1857, NYHS); the commission as a whole was withdrawn.

Huntington was engaged to produce *Men of Science* at a time when his principal residence was in England; he probably returned to the United States for the express purpose of seeking sittings from the twenty-eight men who were to constitute the group. In this he was apparently diligent, for evidence suggests that he had obtained likenesses—either from life sittings or from existing portraits—of nearly all the scientists before he learned that the commission had been canceled. The portrait of Hall was a product of an actual sitting.<sup>3</sup>

Born in Hingham, Massachusetts, to English parents, James Hall (1811–1898) distinguished himself as a geologist and the foremost American paleontologist of his era. For half a century, he presided over the landmark paleontological survey of New York State. Through most of his long life, he maintained a residence in Albany in order to be close to the state legislature, which he constantly lobbied for support of his survey. He was also director of the New York State Museum. Although his career was intimately connected to New York State, he conducted fieldwork in the Mississippi Valley basin as well; for a time he was state geologist of both Iowa and Wisconsin. Known as a combative, jealous, and fiercely territorial colleague, he alienated many in his profession, although he always remained respected for the methodological paradigms he established. He died at age 87 in New Hampshire, shortly after returning from a grueling trip to Russia.<sup>4</sup>

Huntington's execution of the portrait of Hall was rapid and relatively unblended. Intended only to seize a likeness, the sketch is loose and patchy, with primed canvas occasionally showing through

subsequent brushwork (as in the hair and collar). The brown background of the painting is quite brushy, and a discernible build-up of impasto highlights the temple and nose. Hall looks upward somewhat blankly, as if his attention were directed toward someone or something outside the frame, a slight irresolution that might be explained by the requirements of Huntington's overall composition. Several pencil sketches preserved at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum (New York) give an idea of his initial thoughts for the layout of the *Men of Science* canvas.<sup>5</sup> They show a hall-like space with clusters of figures grouped in front of an architectural backdrop. Some sit around a table, some descend a stairway, and some stand at the wings, but all seem to be engaged in discussion with one another, the likely reason for the distracted countenance of Hall.

The appearance of *Men of Science*, had it been completed, is suggested by another large-scale (7 feet 3 inches by 9 feet) Huntington project, *The Atlantic Cable Projectors* (1895, Chamber of Commerce of New York State), honoring the pioneers of the telegraph industry.<sup>6</sup> While there are fewer figures in this work, they are placed on the canvas in much the same way as the “Men of Science” pencil sketches, pointing, gesticulating, and quite visibly interacting. (Huntington even included a self-portrait, with sketchbook in hand.)

Although he must have experienced great disappointment when Wright's commission dissolved, Huntington salvaged some of his work on *Men of Science*. He sold a few of the scientific heads, for example, to the sitters or their relatives. He even seems to have remained on good terms with Wright. Huntington had expended a great deal of energy in securing his individual likenesses of the scientists; however, when the project folded, he must have felt (or Wright must have hinted) that the patron was owed something for the \$500 advance the artist had received. To pay this debt, Huntington painted a double portrait of Wright and his child, an act that, under the circumstances, seems quite generous.<sup>7</sup>

JD

#### Notes

1. The name of the auction house and the date of the purchase are recorded in an annotated copy of *Clarke* 1928 in the NGA library.

2. Huntington to Joseph Leidy, 13 May 1857, Society Collection, HSP (AAA microfilm P23, fr. 550). For the most extensive discussion of the series, see Gerdtz, “Natural Aristocrats,” 1981, 54–55. See also “Sketchings. Domestic Art Gossip,” *The Crayon* 4, April 1857, 123. A good

deal of mistaken information about the commission has been published over the years. "Art Gossip," *Cosmopolitan Art Journal* 2, December 1857, 38, erroneously reported, for example, that Huntington had been assigned the literature, rather than the science painting. Later, French 1879, 89, incorrectly stated that the artist had begun making studies of the scientists as early as 1850, and Samuel G.W. Benjamin, "Daniel Huntington, President of the National Academy of Design," *American Art Review* 2, pt. 2, 1881, 3-4, discussed *Men of Science* as though it had actually been completed.

3. In 1898 chemist Henry Carrington Bolton attempted to resuscitate *Men of Science* and asked the secretary of the Smithsonian Institution for help in finding funds. In his letter to S. P. Langley (10 September 1898, copy in NGA curatorial files) he explained, "Although Mr. Huntington is advanced in years, his vigor is great and his skill is at its height, and perhaps he would consent to finish this long delayed picture. I make this suggestion entirely of my own motion, for the benefit of American students of science, and not for the sake of getting an order for Mr. Huntington who is independently rich and still busy." Bolton then listed the proposed sitters for the painting, indicating that Huntington still possessed life sketches of many, including Hall. Huntington's manuscript inventory (NAD) lists "Mr. Hall of Albany" as painting no. 400, executed in 1857. His notes suggest that in late 1857 or early 1858, it and the other heads of scientific men were sent to England, where the artist expected to complete the large composition.

4. The most extensive treatment of his life is Clarke 1921.

5. These sketches can be viewed on AAA microfilm NCUD-14.

6. Other comparable commemorative group portraits, a celebratory and nationalistic genre quite popular in the middle years of the nineteenth century, are discussed in Gerdtts, "Natural Aristocrats," 1981, 54.

7. Bolton's letter (see note 3) discusses the disposition of some of the heads. Huntington (Papers, NAD) notes the advance payment and subsequent execution of the portrait of Wright and his child.

## References

- 1952 Rutledge and Lane: 123.  
1987 Hall issue: 1 repro.  
1992 Romm: repro. 303.

1947.17.57 (965)

## *Dr. John Edwards Holbrook*

1857  
Oil on canvas, 72.0 × 58.9 (28<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 23<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)  
Andrew W. Mellon Collection

## Inscriptions

On reverse of original canvas: Dr. Holbrook of / S. Carolina / 1856 or 7

**Technical Notes:** The support is a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric that has been lined. Stenciled on the reverse of the original fabric is "Williams, Stevens, Williams & Co."<sup>1</sup> The off-white ground is thin and smooth. The brushwork is predominately wet-into-wet, with fairly free strokes and a low impasto visible in the lighter areas. Paint loss is minimal, and there are only scattered areas of inpainting on the face and at lower right. A small tear has been mended at upper left. In 1962, the painting was lined and restored, and discolored varnish was removed.

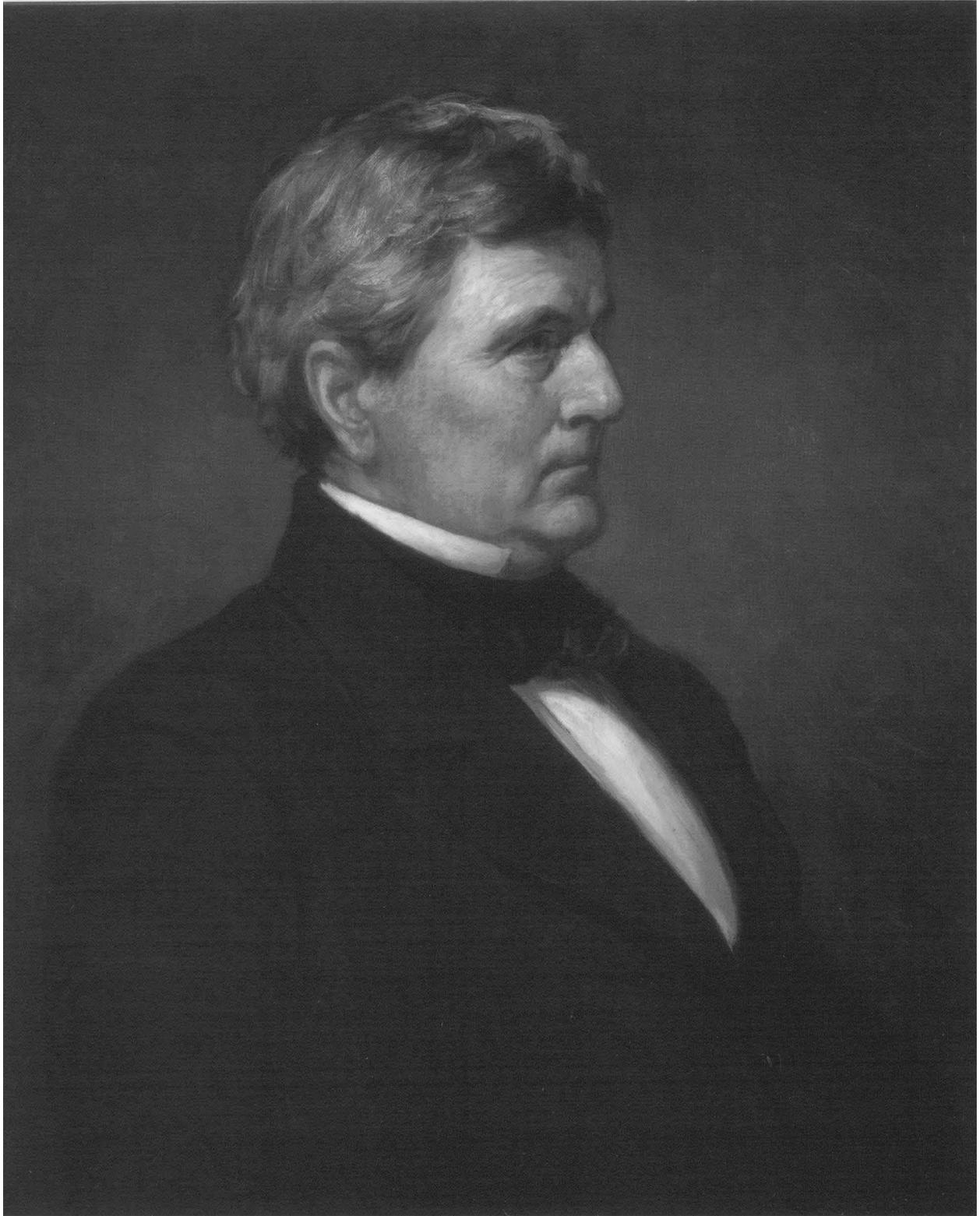
**Provenance:** The artist, New York; his estate, in 1908.<sup>2</sup> (sale, Anderson Galleries, New York, 26 November 1920, no. 90); Thomas B. Clarke [1848-1931], New York;<sup>3</sup> his estate; sold as part of the Clarke collection 29 January 1936, through (M. Knoedler & Co., New York), to The A.W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

**Exhibited:** *Memorial Exhibition of Works by the Late Daniel Huntington, N.A.*, Century Association, New York, 1908, no. 28. *Exhibition of Portraits by Early American Portrait Painters*, Union League Club, New York, 1923, no. 14. *A Loan Exhibition of Paintings by Early American Portrait Painters*, Century Association, New York, 1928, no. 9. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered. NPG, on long-term loan, 1967-1981.

JOHN EDWARDS HOLBROOK (1794-1871) was the preeminent herpetologist of the first half of the nineteenth century and the first significant American contributor to that branch of science. He was born in Beaufort, South Carolina, but was raised in Massachusetts. Graduating from Brown University in 1815, he went on to receive a medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania three years later. Soon after he traveled to Europe for several years of additional study and was introduced to the study of reptiles by a group of French herpetologists affiliated with the Jardin des Plantes in Paris.

Holbrook returned to the United States to become a professor of anatomy at the Medical College of South Carolina, however, his great passion was the study of reptiles and fish. His *North American Herpetology* was published in 1842, and his *Ichthyology of South Carolina* appeared in 1855. Both set the standards for scientific inquiry in their fields. While serving as a medical officer in the Confederate Army, Holbrook saw his life's research destroyed by Union troops near the end of the Civil War. Stricken by that loss and by the death of his wife, he gave up his scientific career completely and spent the rest of his years quietly with relatives.<sup>4</sup>

Huntington executed Holbrook's straightforward likeness for his large *Men of Science* group por-



Daniel Huntington, *Dr. John Edwards Holbrook*, 1947.17.57

trait, which was never completed.<sup>5</sup> The artist noted in his personal inventory that this “profile” head of Holbrook was done in “one sitting only.”<sup>6</sup> He normally required from three to twelve sittings for a portrait, so it is unsurprising that Huntington’s sketch seems quickly executed.<sup>7</sup> The speed with which he worked is particularly apparent in the dark coat, where great sliding strokes, thick and sweeping, form the contours of the sitter’s bulk. Above, Holbrook’s high-keyed, florid complexion is created by a liberal use of pink, with cream impasto added at the temple and nose. His silvery hair, almost metallic in tone, likewise bears evidence of hurried, looping brushwork. The severity of the pose, nearly devoid of characterization, functions solely as a record of a man’s appearance, one which Huntington intended to preserve for later use, but to which, in the end, he never returned.

JD

#### Notes

1. The inscription and partial stencil mark, recorded by a photograph in the NGA conservation files, are now concealed by the lining.
2. *Huntington* 1908, 5.
3. The name of the auction house and the date of the purchase by Clarke are recorded in an annotated copy of *Clarke* 1928 in the NGA library.
4. See *Holbrook* 1871.
5. See the discussion of *Dr. James Hall* [1947.17.56] for further information on this project.
6. Inventory, Huntington Papers, NAD. The Holbrook sketch is listed as painting no. 401 in this inventory, which also relates that the head was stored for years in the artist’s “garret” following the withdrawal of the commission.
7. “An Artist on Art,” *Appleton’s Journal* 18, December 1877, 540.

#### References

- 1950 Mansueti: repro. 19.  
1952 Rutledge and Lane: 124.

1947.17.7 (915)

### *Henry Theodore Tuckerman*

1866  
Oil on canvas, 68.2 × 56.2 (26<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 22<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>)  
Andrew W. Mellon Collection

#### Inscriptions

At lower left: D. Huntington / 1866  
On back of stretcher (in a different hand?): Henry J [sic].  
Tuckerman by D. Huntington 1866

**Technical Notes:** The support is a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric, unlined and attached with tacks to the original four-member, half-mitered half-slip-joined stretcher. Stenciled on the reverse of the canvas is “GOUPILS / 772 / BROADWAY.” The off-white ground is thin and smooth. The paint was largely applied with a wet-into-wet technique in fairly free strokes. The painting is in fair condition, with little inpainting, and there are minor tears scattered at the tacking edges. At the lower center the tacking edge is missing. The painting is attached to the stretcher at this spot with three tacks going through the front of the canvas. There is also a mended tear at lower center. The varnish has become extremely discolored.

**Provenance:** The artist, New York; his estate, in 1908.<sup>1</sup> George D. Smith.<sup>2</sup> (sale, Anderson Galleries, New York, 26 November 1920, no. 84); Thomas B. Clarke [1848–1931], New York;<sup>3</sup> his estate; sold as part of the Clarke collection 29 January 1936, through (M. Knoedler & Co., New York), to The A.W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

**Exhibited:** NAD Annual, 1867, no. 347. *Oil Paintings on Exhibition at Providence Horse Guards Armory (late Westminster Hall), under the Auspices of the Rhode Island Society for the Encouragement of Domestic Industry*, 1867, no. 114. Utica Art Association Annual, New York, 1867, no. 54. *First Chronological Exhibition of American Art*, Brooklyn Art Association, New York, 1872, no. 68. Brooklyn Art Association Annual, 1877, no. 436, as *Portrait*. *Memorial Exhibition of Works by the Late Daniel Huntington, N.A.*, Century Association, New York, 1908, no. 51. *Exhibition of Portraits by Early American Portrait Painters*, Union League Club, New York, February 1924, no. 7. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered. NPG, on long-term loan since 1967.

HENRY THEODORE TUCKERMAN (1813–1871) was one of the most prolific American writers of the nineteenth century, publishing in the fields of poetry, biography, criticism, history, and travel literature. The oldest son of a wealthy Boston merchant (his mother died when he was a boy), Tuckerman attended Boston Latin School and, at age 17, entered Harvard College. Two years later poor health forced him to withdraw and seek the milder climate of Italy, where he spent almost two years. There he began his literary career, publishing his first work, *The Italian Sketchbook*, upon his return to Boston in 1835. For some time he was editor of *The Boston Miscellany of Literature and Fashion*, but in 1845 he left his post and his native city for New York, where his professional life was centered thereafter.

Tuckerman became extremely well known in New York social and literary circles, contributing frequently to a variety of periodicals. A noted friend of American artists, he took a studio in the cele-

brated Tenth Street Building, where tenants included most of the leading painters of his time. His intimate acquaintance with these artists and his extensive personal collection of their works enabled him to write several sympathetic volumes of biographical essays and appreciations, notably his important *Book of the Artists* (1867). Tuckerman's death in New York several years later followed a period of increasing deafness and ill health.<sup>4</sup>

There is no evidence that Tuckerman ever commissioned a portrait of himself from Huntington. Instead, the National Gallery's picture seems to be a likeness executed at the behest of the artist.<sup>5</sup> It was widely exhibited by Huntington in the years following its execution, probably because of the popular appeal of the sitter. As a portrait, it provoked a mixed response from critics, who seemed mainly concerned with its fidelity to the original. During the initial exhibition at the National Academy, one writer termed it "an excellent portrait," while another complained that it was "idealized to an extent that all but frustrates identification."<sup>6</sup> A decade after the execution of the painting, Huntington admitted in an interview that a certain degree of idealization falls within the legitimate province of the portrait painter, particularly if the likeness is to be appreciated by the sitter's relatives and friends.<sup>7</sup>

Tuckerman's *Book of the Artists* appeared the same year as the portrait and contained an unusually long twelve-page chapter devoted solely to Huntington. In addition, an engraving of the painter appeared on the volume's frontispiece, the only such artist's likeness to be included. (This was perhaps in recognition of his status as president of the National Academy.) In his essay, Tuckerman enthusiastically praised the painter for his successful work in a variety of genres, a catholicity of interests unusual among his peers. "Few of our painters have exhibited greater versatility of talent or more broad and pure artistic sympathies," he wrote. "[Huntington's] artist-life is singularly representative and suggestive."<sup>8</sup>

Less suggestive, perhaps, is Huntington's depiction of the writer, which has little to distinguish it from many other similar portraits from the artist's hand. The brushwork, however, is more cohesive than that of the sketches for the *Men of Science* project (see *Dr. James Hall* [1947.17.56] and *Dr. John*

*Edwards Holbrook* [1947.17.57]), confirming that this painting was considered finished and exhibitable by the artist. Also notable is the somewhat dramatic illumination, casting deep shadows across the surface of Tuckerman's stiff head and pooling in the motion-filled background, which, with its blue patches occasionally breaking through the whitish paint, seems a slight evocation of a cloud-filled sky.

JD

## Notes

1. *Huntington* 1908, 7.
2. Rutledge and Lane 1952, 125, note that Knoedler & Co. records listed "George D. Smith" as a previous owner, without providing further details or dates.
3. The name of the auction house and the date of the purchase by Clarke are recorded in an annotated copy of *Clarke* 1928 in the NGA library.
4. See Duyckinck 1872; Tuckerman 1914, 169–184; and Flexner 1969, 53–57.
5. In the Huntington Papers, NAD, is a document labeled, "List of Studies from Life now in the Studio—& copies," dated 1875. Included is an entry marked "Henry T. Tuckerman—(for myself)." Wendy Greenhouse (letter of 9 July 1992 in NGA curatorial files) points out that the painting of Tuckerman does *not* appear in Huntington's "Inventory," which was mainly a record of his commissioned paintings. As Huntington occasionally passed the summer at Newport, Tuckerman's habitual summer home, it is possible that the portrait was executed there.
6. "Art Matters: National Academy of Design," *American Art Journal* 7, 4 May 1867, 22; and "Fine Arts. Exhibition of the National Academy of Design," *The Albion* 45, 20 April 1867, 189.
7. "An Artist on Art," *Appleton's Journal* 18, December 1877, 537.
8. Tuckerman, *Book*, 1867, 321.

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- 1877 "The Brooklyn Art Association." *New York Evening Post* (23 April).
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- 1984 Johns: repro. 339.



Daniel Huntington, *Henry Theodore Tuckerman*, 1947.17.7

# Charles Cromwell Ingham

1796–1863

CHARLES INGHAM was born in Dublin, Ireland, where he became a pupil of William Cumming (1769–1852), a portrait painter known for his likenesses of female subjects. Following four years of study with Cumming, Ingham adopted his master's specialty. Thus, when he left Ireland and moved to New York in 1816, he soon became known as that city's premier "ladies' painter." The highly finished style he employed throughout his career—one requiring numerous lengthy sittings—was thought particularly appropriate for depictions of women; men, it was said, were too busy to submit to his laborious process of repeated layers of glazing and opaque highlights. In general, his portraits (some of which, despite the typing of his work along gender lines, were of men) were warm in coloring and noticeably painstaking in draftsmanship. He also produced miniatures and an occasional landscape and history painting.

In New York, Ingham was extremely active in artists' organizations. Initially a member of the American Academy of the Fine Arts, he became a founder of the National Academy of Design when it arose in opposition to the older body in 1826. Although already a professional artist, he enrolled as a student in the antique school during the first season of the new organization; years later he returned for additional study in its life school (1844–1845). His involvement with and support of the National Academy—often as an officer—was unflagging, except for a period during the 1850s, when his views on expanding the membership ran counter to the majority. Convinced that limits should be maintained on the number of artist-members, so as to maintain organizational exclusivity, he went so far as to bring suit against the academy, greatly offending his fellow artists. Such headstrong actions were said to be characteristic of his impulsive nature.

Ingham was also described as eminently sociable. He was a founder, for example, of the Sketch Club (serving as its first president) and of the Century Association. His contacts extended beyond New York, and he exhibited sporadically in Philadelphia, Washington, Albany, and Brooklyn. Boston was another city that knew his work;

he spent the winter of 1842–1843 there. In addition, Ingham developed an amateur's interest in architecture. At least one of his projects—a grandiose stairway for the National Academy—was executed, and he published an architectural essay, "Public Monuments to Great Men," in 1858. During the final years of his life, however, he suffered from ill health, which required him to scale back many of these activities. He died in New York City.

JD

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Dunlap 1834: 2:271–274.  
Cummings 1865: 221–223, 301–302, 353.  
Tuckerman, *Book*, 1867: 69–70.  
Strickland 1913: 1:541.  
Gardner 1952: 245–253.

1947.17.73 (981)

## *Cora Livingston*

c. 1833  
Oil on canvas, 91.4 × 71.1 (36 × 28)  
Andrew W. Mellon Collection

## Inscriptions

On reverse: Miss Coralie Livingston / Saml. F. B. Morse  
Pinxt<sup>1</sup>

**Technical Notes:** The support is a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric that remains unlined and on its original four-member, mortise-and-open-slotted stretcher. The ground is thin, uniform, and white. The paint was applied thinly and fluidly, with considerable use of a dark red glaze over a brighter red color in the dress and chair upholstery. A slight pentimento indicates a change in the right contour of the sitter's face. Infrared reflectography reveals extensive, varied, and detailed underdrawing, particularly in the face and hands. Inpainting is minimal. The varnish has become moderately discolored.

**Provenance:** (Rose M. de Forest [Mrs. Augustus de Forest], New York); sold 2 August 1921 to Thomas B. Clarke [1848–1931], New York;<sup>2</sup> his estate; sold as part of the Clarke collection 29 January 1936, through (M. Knoedler & Co., New York), to The A.W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

**Exhibited:** *Exhibition of Paintings by Early American Portrait Painters*, Union League Club, New York, November

1921, no. 8, as *Coralie Livingston Barton* by Samuel F.B. Morse. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered.

WHEN the present portrait was purchased as part of the Thomas B. Clarke collection, its early attribution to Samuel F.B. Morse was universally disputed by experts. In this climate of doubt, questions were also raised as to the identity of the sitter.<sup>3</sup> The evidence now indicates that the Morse authorship was indeed incorrect—the portrait is entirely typical of the work of Charles Ingham—but the person portrayed does seem to be Cora Livingston (1806–1873), later Barton, a prominent political wife and daughter, and the wealthy owner of a picturesque Hudson River estate.

Cora Livingston was the only child of Edward Livingston—a New York lawyer and U.S. Representative to Congress who had relocated to New Orleans—and his second wife, Louise Moreau de Lassy. Although she grew up in New Orleans, Livingston also spent time among her father's relatives in New York, where eventually she was to pass most of her adult life. Politics and business took her family to the nation's capital while she was still a teenager; there she entered Washington society and became a particular favorite of Andrew Jackson, a close friend of her father.

When Jackson appointed Edward Livingston his minister to France in 1833, Cora and her new husband, Thomas P. Barton, accompanied her parents to Paris. Several years later, the entire family retired to their New York estate, Montgomery Place, at Annandale-on-Hudson. Cora and Thomas Barton also maintained a winter residence in New York City. Following the deaths of her father in 1836 and her husband in 1869, she set about completing their lifeworks: Her father had been a penal reform theorist, and her husband, a pioneering American bibliophile, had formed a great collection of rare English and French books. Shortly before her own death, she succeeded in publishing (in French and English) a two-volume compendium of her father's writings and finished cataloging her husband's collection, which she ultimately sold to the Boston Public Library.<sup>4</sup>

The National Gallery's portrait was likely painted in New York shortly before Livingston's marriage to Barton. The style of her dress and hair indicates a general date range of circa 1830–1835; however, that she does not wear a wedding band argues for completion of the portrait before her marriage in 1833. This was the period of Ingham's

greatest popularity, when he was the undisputed leading painter of women. As he wrote on 24 October 1833, "I am now very busy, people coming in for new pictures every day & not finishing the old ones."<sup>5</sup>

The likeness exhibits all the hallmarks of an Ingham portrait: a certain hardness and severity to the angular face, a great deal of attention to the placement of fingers and hands, a sinuosity in the wrists, and a preference for the kit-cat format (36 by 28 inches).<sup>6</sup> Infrared reflectography reveals a painstaking and elaborate system of underdrawing (using both a fine pencil and a softer, crayonlike instrument), with the contours and modeling of the hands and facial features worked out to an unusual degree. Ingham's vaunted system of repeated layering of semiopaque color and more transparent glazes is evident in the well-blended face, the seamless and sensitive modulation of light and shadow in the expertly foreshortened hands, and the successive applications of paint on the velvet dress: a bright red underlayer, followed by darker maroon glazing (especially concentrated in areas of shadow), followed in turn by lavender and white highlights at the edges of folds.<sup>7</sup>

Critics repeatedly praised Ingham's portraits for their rich "harmony" and "transparency" and consistently criticized them for their fussiness and overinsistent build-up of skin to an unnatural firmness.<sup>8</sup> English travel writer Frances Trollope called it "hard and unfleshy," while an anonymous poet subjected Ingham to a much more protracted critique in 1830, one which is applicable to Livingston's likeness:

Flesh hard as Iv'ry, or as bone,  
Polished as fine as any hone. . . .

It lags its hands, and with surprise  
Finds from the seat it cannot rise,  
The face turns pale as any cheese,  
Or chalk, or any white you please. . . .

If polish and pumice, now the trade is,  
Go on, try hard to please the ladies;  
Velvet and plush thy motto be,  
Like copal teaboards let us see  
Thy pictures glazed with mulish power,  
And waste a life, to paint a flower.<sup>9</sup>

While Ingham's authorship of the National Gallery's portrait would seem to be certain, there remains a question about the sitter.<sup>10</sup> No record exists of Cora Livingston having sat for Ingham. The resemblance of the woman depicted here to the several known portraits of Edward Livingston, howev-



Charles Cromwell Ingham, *Cora Livingston*, 1947-17-73

er, makes the identification highly plausible.<sup>11</sup> The sellers of the portrait to Thomas B. Clarke claimed that it had hung in the Bartons' New York City home on West 22nd Street, which would explain its absence at Montgomery Place, where the furnishings have remained largely intact. They also claimed that it had been purchased from a member of the Barton family.<sup>12</sup> This seems to ring true, for in her will, Cora Livingston Barton left the West 22nd Street home and all its contents to her cousin's granddaughter, Julia Barton Hunt.<sup>13</sup> Finally, about the time that the National Gallery's portrait first came on the market, another portrait of Cora Livingston sold at auction.<sup>14</sup> Such a coincidence implies that the house on 22nd Street had recently been closed and its contents dispersed.

JD

### Notes

1. The lettering in faded dry ink applied directly to the canvas is similar to a number of false inscriptions on works sold by the dealer de Forest to Thomas B. Clarke. See Rutledge and Lane 1952, 91A.

2. The name of the seller and the date of the purchase by Clarke are recorded in an annotated copy of *Clarke* 1928 in the NGA library.

3. Rutledge and Lane 1952, 91–92. Doubts were originally raised because the NGA painting does not resemble a portrait said to depict Cora Livingston, which hangs in Montgomery Place; however, that portrait appears highly idealized, and its history is not altogether certain.

4. Facts relating to the life of Cora Livingston Barton are largely drawn from biographies of members of her family. See, for example, Hunt 1864 and Hunt 1886.

5. Ingham to Thomas S. Cummings, Cummings Papers, AAA microfilm NC1.

6. For similarities of pose, dress, and facial construction, see Ingham's portrait of Frances Wilkes Colder (1830, MMA). The guitar shown here reappears in his portrait of Martha M. Ellery (see FARL 122–6/a).

7. Ingham lavished particular attention on the area framed by the carefully posed, almost waxen hands. He even took pains to vary the angle of the shadows cast by the six guitar strings, thus acknowledging a single, consistent light source.

8. See David B. Dearing, "Charles Cromwell Ingham: Exhibitions and Critical Response," 1982, typescript (in NGA curatorial files). Dunlap 1834, 2:273, wrote, "The peculiar style of oil painting which this artist has adopted is (as it respects this country) emphatically his own. It may be designated as the style of exquisite finishing. It's process is successive glazings; and he produces a transparency, richness, and harmony of colouring rarely seen in any country."

9. Both as quoted in Gardner 1952, 248, 249.

10. Independent of the NGA investigation, FARL also attributed the painting to Ingham. Other experts have supported the attribution as well. See notes of William P. Campbell (in NGA curatorial files).

11. There are portraits of Livingston by John Trumbull (City Hall, New York), Charles Bird King (Redwood Library, Newport, Rhode Island), and James Barton Longacre (private collection). The relatively undistinctive features of the sitter of the NGA portrait echo her mother's description of Cora Livingston at age sixteen—"not a beauty, not a genius, but a good and affectionate child"—and Massachusetts congressional representative Josiah Quincy's description of her at age twenty—"She is not handsome,—I mean not transcendently handsome. She has a fine figure, a pretty face, dances well, and dressed to admiration." Both quoted in Wharton 1902, 223, 224.

12. See Rutledge and Lane 1952, 91, and undated prospectus in NGA curatorial files.

13. Dutchess County Surrogate records, File No. 6946, New York. Julia Barton Hunt was not technically a member of the Barton family. She was related to Cora Livingston Barton through the latter's mother. She had been named, however, after Thomas P. Barton, which would explain the dealer's assertion that she was a member of that family.

14. On 5 February 1920, Henkels auction house (Philadelphia) offered an anonymous portrait of Cora Livingston (no. 20), which was described in the catalogue as: "Full bust, head to left, in the uniform of an officer of a military company, of which she was an honorary member. Canvas. Size 29 1–2 in. × 24 1–2 in."

### References

1928 Barker: repro. 285, as *Coralie L. Barton* by Samuel F. B. Morse.

1930 Sherman: 37, as *Coralie Livingston Barton* by Samuel F. B. Morse.

1952 Rutledge and Lane: 91–92.

# Henry Inman

1801 – 1846

HENRY INMAN'S FATHER was an English-born brewer who settled near Utica, New York, and raised his family. The future artist received some artistic instruction from an itinerant portrait painter in his native town, and after his family moved to New York City in 1812, he continued to study drawing. His important training began two years later when he was accepted for a seven-year apprenticeship by John Wesley Jarvis, then the premier portrait painter in New York. During the course of his term, Inman accompanied Jarvis on several painting trips, notably to New Orleans, and assumed responsibility for the backgrounds and drapery of his master's works. He soon learned to paint miniatures and executed his first large oil portrait in 1817. Consequently, by the time his apprenticeship ended in 1821, he was more than ready to launch his own career.

Inman settled in New York, marrying Jane O'Brien in 1822. Although a recent student himself, he soon took on George Twibill (1806?–1836) and Thomas S. Cummings (1804–1894) as pupils. With the latter he formed a portrait-painting partnership which lasted until 1828. (Later he would teach William Sidney Mount [1807–1868], Daniel Huntington, and his master's son, Charles Wesley Jarvis [1812–1868].) In addition to portraits, he began painting an occasional genre picture, and eventually his catholic interests extended to landscape. With Cummings, Inman was instrumental in forming the National Academy of Design; in 1826 he became its first vice president. Inman became closely identified with the Academy, studying for two years in its antique school and exhibiting there every year for the rest of his life—sometimes with as many as eighteen works in a single show. Publicly visible, he became the member most often singled out for vituperative newspaper criticism by the Academy's early enemies.

Inman often contributed illustrations to gift books, but in 1831 he increased his involvement in the print industry by moving to Philadelphia, where he had established a partnership with lithographer Cephas G. Childs a year earlier. He also continued to paint portraits, competing with

Thomas Sully for commissions in Philadelphia and making short trips to Baltimore and New York in search of others. For a time he lived on a farm that he purchased across the river from Philadelphia, in Mt. Holly, New Jersey, but in 1834 he sold his real estate and returned to New York. These years were busy for Inman, filled with teaching, large numbers of commissioned portraits, and a major project of copying more than 100 paintings of Native Americans (the originals were mainly by Charles Bird King) for lithographic reproduction. The copies later traveled as a separate exhibition.

During a prosperous period Inman had engaged in land speculation, but following the Panic of 1837 he found himself in financial difficulty. This, coupled with his chronic asthma and failing health, turned his final years into something of a struggle. In addition, a younger generation of New York portrait painters—including Huntington and Charles Loring Elliott—was becoming increasingly popular, winning ever more commissions.

In 1844 he took a long-deferred trip to England, accompanied by his daughter Mary. Although his health did not improve, he was able to execute a group of portraits in London and study the landscape in Scotland and northern England. Not long after returning to New York in 1845, he fell sick and died. Left unexecuted at his death was his commission of a large work, *The Emigration of Daniel Boone to Kentucky*, for the Capitol rotunda. (He had been paid \$6,000, but had never moved beyond a few early studies.) Inman was accorded a lengthy, ceremonial funeral procession through the streets of Manhattan, and a month later an unusual memorial exhibition of 126 of his paintings earned nearly \$2,000 for his widow and six children, one of whom, John O'Brien Inman, later became an artist.

JD

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- Tuckerman, *Book*, 1867: 233–246.  
Bolton, "Inman," 1940: 353–375.  
Gerds 1977: 26–48.  
Gerds and Reborá 1987.

*George Pope Morris*

c. 1836

Oil on canvas, 76.2 × 63.8 (30 × 25 1/8)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The support is a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric that has been lined. Cusping is present along all four of the cut edges. Stenciled on the reverse of the original fabric is "PREPARED BY / EDWARD DECHAUX / NEW YORK."<sup>1</sup> The ground appears to be white and smoothly applied. It is entirely covered by subsequent layers of paint. Finely brushed underdrawing is visible throughout the face, with paint generally applied wet-over-dry. A horizontal tear (about 24 cm long) above the head has been repaired. The varnish is very thick and has become somewhat discolored.

**Provenance:** The sitter [1802–1864], Cold Spring, New York, and New York.<sup>2</sup> (Rose M. de Forest [Mrs. Augustus de Forest], New York); sold 8 November 1917 to Thomas B. Clarke [1848–1931], New York;<sup>3</sup> his estate; sold as part of the Clarke collection 29 January 1936, through (M. Knoedler & Co., New York), to The A.W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

**Exhibited:** NAD Annual, 1836, no. 146. *Exhibition of Portraits by Early American Artists*, Union League Club, New York, March 1922, no. 20. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered. *The Art of Henry Inman*, NPG, 1987, no. 45.

GEORGE POPE MORRIS was a central figure in the community of artists and writers—often called the “Knickerbocker” Group—who dominated the cultural scene in New York City before the Civil War. Through his forceful editorship of the *New-York Mirror* and several subsequent periodicals, he provided significant patronage and encouragement for American arts and letters at a time when such support was as crucial as it was rare.<sup>4</sup>

Morris was born in Philadelphia in 1802. He came to New York as a boy and worked within the household of Samuel Woodworth, an author and publisher. As a teenager, he was already writing poetry and contributing to a variety of periodicals. Ultimately, he would publish a novel, two plays, several anthologies, and many essays and poems. Of the latter, the most famous was his exceedingly popular “Woodman, Spare that Tree” of 1837.

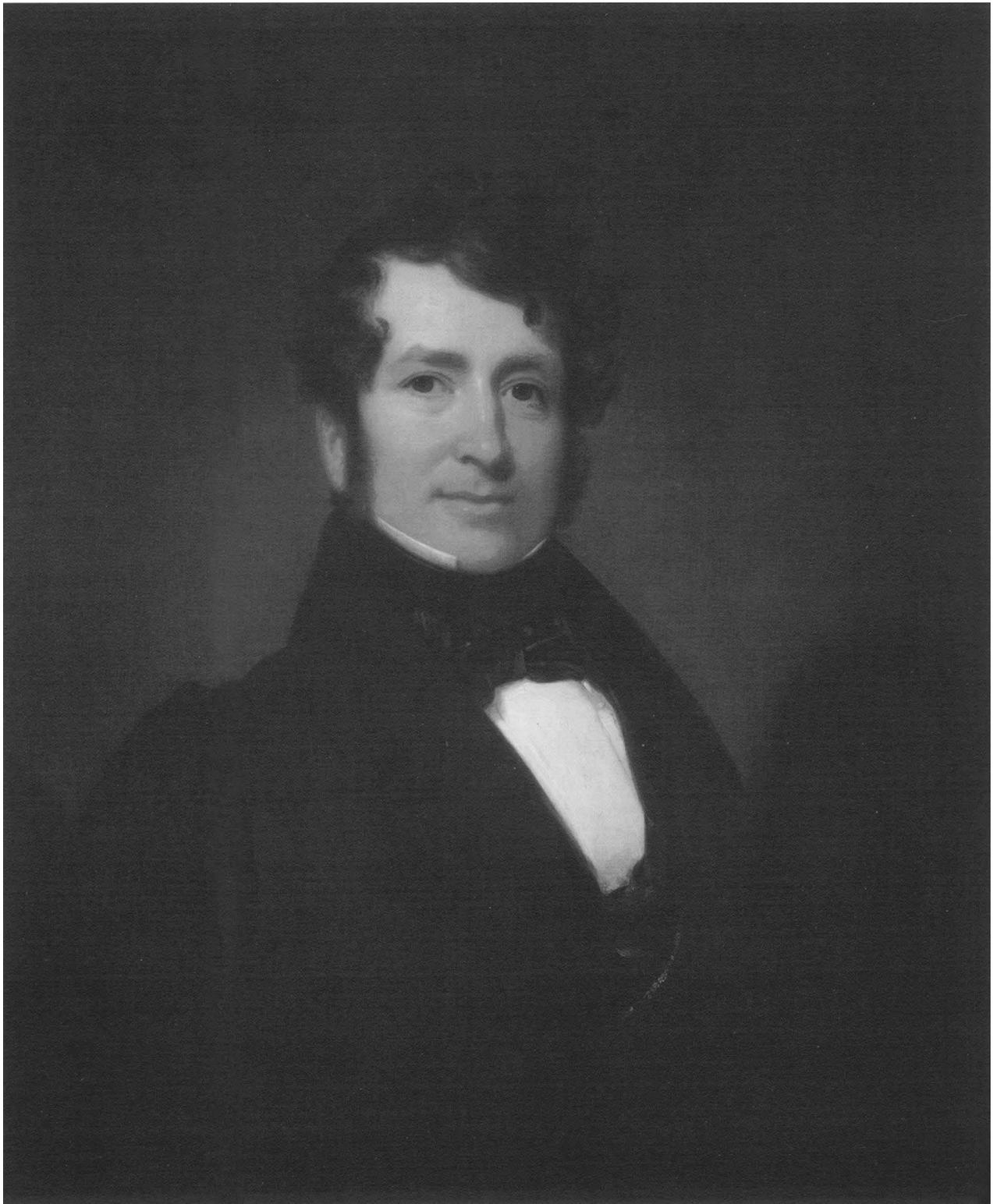
His greatest contribution, however, was as an editor. With Woodworth, he founded the weekly *New-York Mirror* in 1823, but within a year became the sole owner and publisher. The *Mirror* served as a cradle for American writers such as William C.

Bryant, James K. Paulding, N. P. Willis, Fitz-Greene Halleck, and Edgar Allan Poe. It was also distinguished for its promotion of the visual arts, particularly through the commissioning of portraits and costly engravings by Asher B. Durand, John William Casilear, and others. As early as 1834, the first historian of American art could write, “George P. Morris, Esq. editor and proprietor of the *New-York Mirror*, deserves our notice and thanks as a friend of artists, and the arts of design. By the engravings which ornament this popular work, taste is propagated, and the study of the fine arts in all their branches encouraged.”<sup>5</sup>

Each year, Morris’ greatest expenditure was to artists and engravers; however, in 1842 this cost proved to be too much, and the *Mirror* went out of business. For the next two decades, Morris owned and edited a series of new publications, including the *New Mirror*, *Daily Evening Mirror*, and *Home Journal*, but none of these had the influence and staying power of his original *Mirror*. In 1857 he fell ill and traveled south in an effort to recuperate. Thereafter he spent much of his time at his estate, Undercliff, on the Hudson River north of New York. He died in 1864.

The National Gallery’s portrait was not the first likeness commissioned by Morris from Inman. The *Mirror* had earlier published several of the artist’s paintings, and it had long taken an editorial stance (with the reviews almost certainly penned by Morris) that was wholeheartedly supportive of his work. Morris was friendly with a number of New York painters, but Inman had an additional tie to the editor: The artist’s closest sibling, John, worked as a writer at the *Mirror* from 1828 to 1831, and again in 1835 and 1836, when this portrait was likely commissioned.<sup>6</sup> Inman’s likeness of Morris was engraved at least twice, by George Parker and Charles Burt. The Parker engraving (with the awkward addition of a beard) was published as the frontispiece of the *Mirror* on 27 January 1840.<sup>7</sup>

When it was shown at the National Academy in 1836, the portrait was warmly received, as much for its artistic virtues as the popularity of the sitter. While the *Mirror* modestly chose not to comment on the likeness of its editor in its extensive series of reviews of the exhibition, the critic of the *Spirit of the Times* was effusive: “*Inman* has a noble portrait of Col. Morris. This is decidedly the best head we ever saw by this admirable artist. It is the man himself. While we were looking at it we could almost imagine that the Colonel would leave the frame—step



Henry Inman, *George Pope Morris*, 1947.17.8

out of the canvass and speak to us in his usual pleasant, and familiar way. Every body would know it that ever saw the Colonel's name in a newspaper."<sup>8</sup>

Inman's portrait is markedly spare and sober, with a plain, matte background (distinguishable only by the chevron-shaped aura of light about his head) and an utter lack of props and accessories. In this it is similar to his portraits of Martin Van Buren (1835, NYHS) and Valentine Mott (1835, Society of the New York Hospital), which have nearly identical dimensions, formats, and dates.<sup>9</sup> It is a confident likeness, straightforwardly constructed with extremely thin layers of blended paint. The underdrawing around the eyes and nose, quickly shaded with widely spaced hatching and readily apparent through the translucent paint, gives an idea of the rapidity with which Inman conceived and executed the painting.

JD

### Notes

1. The stencil mark is now concealed by the lining, but it has been traced onto the reverse of the new fabric. Edward Dechaux is listed as a seller of artist's materials in New York directories from 1835 to 1865; see Katlan 1987, 78.

2. In the 1836 National Academy catalogue, Morris is listed as the owner of the painting.

3. The name of the seller and the date of the purchase by Clarke are recorded in an annotated copy of *Clarke* 1928 in the NGA library.

4. The most extensive treatment of Morris is found in Auser 1960.

5. Dunlap 1834, 2:465.

6. Auser 1960, 44.

7. Another version of the Morris likeness exists in a miniature by Inman (R. W. Norton Art Gallery, Shreveport, Louisiana).

8. "National Academy of Design," *Spirit of the Times* 6, 21 May 1836, 106. This review was first quoted in Gerdts and Rebora 1987, 112. Morris, active in the New York State militia since 1819, was known by his military honorific. When he later attained the rank of brigadier general, he was almost always referred to as "Gen. Morris."

9. These two works are illustrated in Gerdts and Rebora 1987, 101, 107. Inman possibly simplified the composition of his portrait of Morris so that it might more easily be engraved for publication. A year earlier at the National Academy exhibition of 1835, a likeness of Morris by William Dunlap (no. 155, listed as belonging to Morris) had been exhibited. That Morris did not have this readily available portrait engraved by Parker and Burt suggests that he had a specific purpose in mind for his new portrait by Inman.

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1836 "National Academy of Design." *New York Herald* (12 May).

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1933 Bolton: 160, as *George Peples Morris*.

1940 Bolton, "Catalogue": 410, no. 98.

1944 Richardson: 38, no. 89, repro.

1952 Rutledge and Lane: 87.

## George Inness

1825 – 1894

BORN IN NEWBURGH, New York, George Inness was raised in New York City and Newark, New Jersey. His early life was disrupted by severe illness; as a result he received little formal academic or artistic education. In Newark, he studied with itinerant painter John Jesse Barker, and in New York, probably in 1843, with French-born landscape painter, Régis-François Gignoux. Inness visited Italy in 1850. In 1853 he visited France, where he studied French Barbizon landscape painting, admiring especially the work of the most radical of the Barbizon artists, Théodore

Rousseau. This was, in its influence upon his style, the most decisive experience of Inness' artistic life. In the early 1860s Inness moved from New York to Medfield, Massachusetts, and in 1864 to Eagleswood, New Jersey. At Eagleswood he was introduced to the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg. This became his religious faith, and determined, too, the increasingly allusive, expressive, and almost mystical character of his later art.

Inness lived in Italy from 1870 to 1874 and in France briefly in 1875. In 1876 he settled in Montclair, New Jersey. He lived in Montclair for the

rest of his life, but traveled widely, often for the sake of his health, to Niagara Falls, New York, Goochland, Virginia, San Francisco and San Diego, California, and Tarpon Springs, Florida.

He died on a trip to Scotland in 1894.

NG

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Cikovsky 1993.

1945.4.1 (779)

## *The Lackawanna Valley*

c. 1856

Oil on canvas, 86.0 × 127.5 (33<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 50<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)

Gift of Mrs. Huttleston Rogers<sup>1</sup>

### Inscriptions

At lower left: G. Inness

**Technical Notes:** A moderately thin off-white ground covers a medium-weight, plain-weave, double-threaded fabric that has been lined. Paint was applied in a medium-thick film with highlights of the foliage in the foreground in impasto but otherwise wet-over-dry, with much visible brushwork. The pitted and quilted texture of paint and ground in the sky is unlike the rest of the painting, suggesting that it was repainted, perhaps by the artist himself. Cracks reveal a lower paint layer. Infrared reflectography discloses a ruled grid pattern that resembles a similarly ruled study drawing (fig. 1). The painting is in very good condition, with paint loss and old inpainting throughout, and a large area of loss to the right of the roundhouse. In 1971, the painting underwent varnish removal and was restored. The varnish has become slightly yellowed; the inpainting has discolored.

**Provenance:** Commissioned c. 1856 by the Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western Railroad, Scranton, Pennsylvania.<sup>2</sup> The artist, from 1891; by inheritance 1894 to his daughter, Mrs. Jonathan Scott Hartley, New York; (her sale, American Art Association, New York, 24 March 1927, no. 76, as *The First Roundhouse of the D. L. and W. R. R. at Scranton*); (Henry Schulteis Gallery, New York); (sale, Parke-Bernet Galleries, New York, 24 February 1938, no. 54, as *The First Roundhouse of the D. L. & W. Railroad, Scranton, Pennsylvania*); (Henry Schulteis Gallery, New York); sold 14 May 1944 to (M. Knoedler & Co., New York); purchased February 1945 by Millicent Rogers [1900–1953], Washington, D.C.

**Exhibited:** *George Inness: An American Landscape Painter 1825–1894*, George Walter Vincent Smith Art Museum,

Springfield, Massachusetts; The Brooklyn Museum; Montclair Art Museum, New Jersey, 1946, no. 5. *American Painting from the Eighteenth Century to the Present Day*, Tate Gallery, London, 1946, no. 120. *The Railroad in Painting*, Dayton Art Institute, 1949, no. 33. *American Processional*, CGA, 1950, no. 203. *The Paintings of George Inness*, University of Texas Art Museum, Austin, 1965–1966, no. 8. *The American Scene 1820–1900*, Indiana University Art Museum, Bloomington, 1970, no. 27. *Nineteenth-Century America: Paintings and Sculpture*, MMA, 1970, no. 95. *Wilderness*, CGA, 1971, no. 114. NGA 1980, 150. *The Railroad in the American Landscape: 1850–1950*, Wellesley College Museum, Massachusetts, 1981, no. 8. *George Inness*, MMA; Cleveland Museum of Art; Minneapolis Institute of Art; LACMA; NGA, 1985–1986, 74, 76. *The Pastoral Landscape: The Modern Vision*, Phillips Collection, Washington, 1988–1989, no. 130. *Northeastern Pennsylvania in Art: A Century of Tradition*, Everhart Museum, Scranton, Pennsylvania, 1990, no cat.

SINCE ITS ACQUISITION by the National Gallery in 1945, *The Lackawanna Valley*, virtually unknown earlier, has become one of George Inness' most famous paintings. Painted at the outset of his career, it stands out among his early works in the precocity of its sensitive rendering of the delicate light and atmosphere of early morning and its remarkable technical skill; however, its fame rests chiefly on its subject. Since the publication in 1964 of Leo Marx's seminal study, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*, *The Lackawanna Valley* has been embraced by American cultural historians as the iconic figuration of the transaction between nature and the machine, and has become something of a fixture in discussions of the railroad and technological change in nineteenth-century America.

The origin of *The Lackawanna Valley* is obscure. A commission from the Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western Railroad in Scranton, Pennsylvania, for which Inness was paid \$75, so the story goes, it was subsequently sold with a job lot of office furniture and turned up about forty years after it was painted—in what has been called variously a junk shop, a bric-a-brac shop, an old curiosity shop, and a dim little shop—in Mexico City. There Inness himself found and acquired it.

Odd as it may seem, that is not impossible. Inness visited Mexico City as part of a western excursion through New Orleans to southern California and San Francisco in early 1891.<sup>3</sup> A western correspondent reported to the readers of the *New York Herald* in February 1891: "On his recent trip to Mexico Mr. Inness saw high on the wall of a bric-a-brac shop a landscape which looked a little familiar to



George Inness, *The Lackawanna Valley*, 1945-4.1



Fig. 1. George Inness, study for *The Lackawanna Valley*, drawing, c. 1856, location unknown

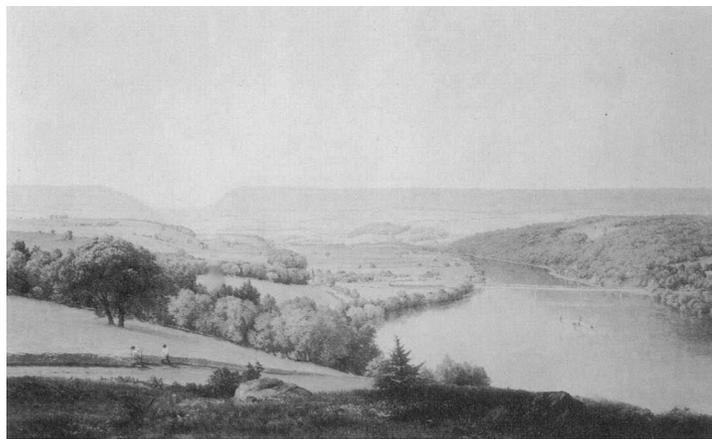


Fig. 2. George Inness, *The Delaware Water Gap*, oil on canvas, 1857, private collection

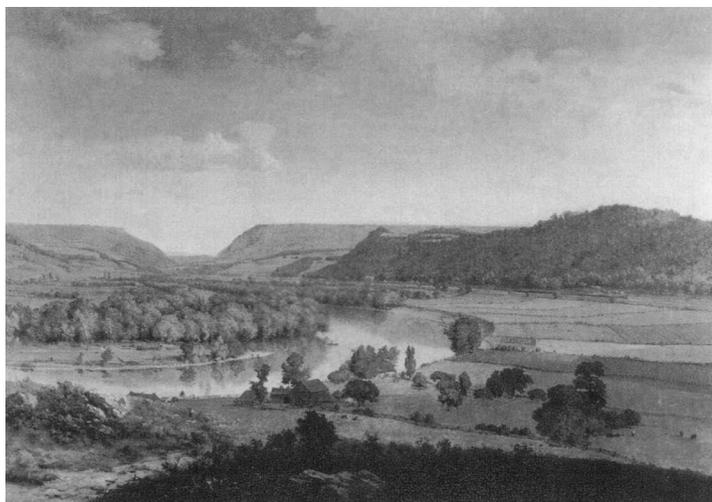


Fig. 3. George Inness, *Delaware Water Gap*, oil on canvas, 1857, New Jersey, Collection of The Montclair Art Museum, Gift of Mrs. F.G. Herman Fayen, 30.2

him. He found it was one of his own, painted in the fifties, and bought it." The painting, the correspondent reported, "is a landscape showing miners on a hillside at work, a steamboat and a railroad train."<sup>4</sup> Two years later, in 1893, when Inness himself told the story of the painting's rediscovery, he provided other details about the landscape itself: "Here," he said in an interview with a *Herald* reporter at his Montclair, New Jersey studio, "is a picture I made of Scranton, Pa., done for the Delaware and Lackawanna Company, when they built the road. . . . You see I had to show the double tracks and the round house, whether they were in perspective or not."<sup>5</sup>

It has always been assumed unquestioningly, on the basis of Inness' own testimony, that *The Lackawanna Valley* was the painting he found in Mexico City, even though the painting described in the *New York Herald* account of 1891 was clearly not *The Lackawanna Valley*.<sup>6</sup>

In 1911 Elliott Daingerfield, who was close to Inness during the last decade of the artist's life, published still another account which, he claimed, came from Inness himself: "[Inness] told me of doing a set of these pictures for the Erie Railroad [he surely meant the Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western] people about the time that road was finished, which were to be reproduced and used in advertising. Many years later he found one of these huge canvases in a dim little shop in Mexico City, which he gleefully bought for a few Mexican dollars." Daingerfield described the pictures collectively as "wide reaches of field and meadow" containing "the business of the harvest, grazing cattle—the rush of trains, flowing streams under broadly-lit skies—all typical American scenes."<sup>7</sup> The paintings Daingerfield described correspond most closely to the one described in the *New York Herald* in 1891 (with allowances for misreading or misremembering miners for harvesters and rafts for steamboats), and not at all to *The Lackawanna Valley*.

Nevertheless, *The Lackawanna Valley* is probably the painting that Inness found in Mexico City. It is the only one among other possible candidates that Inness owned; it was in his studio in 1893 and passed at his death to his daughter, who sold it in 1927. But it also seems that this was not the only one the Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western railroad commissioned him to paint. Based on what the artist told him, Daingerfield reported that Inness had executed a "set" of paintings for the railroad. And there are two early paintings, both dated 1857,

both measuring 32 by 52 inches, and both depicting the Delaware Water Gap, the route of the D.L.& W., with “wide reaches of field and meadow,” “business of harvest,” “rush of trains,” and “flowing streams under broadly-lit skies” (figs. 2 and 3).<sup>8</sup> Of the same date, size, and subject, these two paintings can comfortably be considered a set.

It is also possible that *The Lackawanna Valley* was part of the set, even though it is significantly different in size, shape, and subject. The three paintings could have formed a triptych with the squarer *Lackawanna Valley* as the central panel; however, two other explanations are more likely.<sup>9</sup> A “set” does not have to mean a fixed arrangement of objects; it can instead be a more informally related group of paintings sharing a common subject. Or it may be that there were two separate commissions from the railroad, one for *The Lackawanna Valley*, and the other for the pair of Delaware Water Gap paintings.

In any case, and in whatever configuration of form or sequence the three are related to one another, *The Lackawanna Valley*, rather than being a singular image, was closely associated with other paintings in a larger project commissioned by the railroad. Both Daingerfield and the artist’s son George Inness, Jr., said they were made for advertising. No advertisements, strictly speaking, are known, although a lithograph, published in 1859, was made after one of the Delaware Water Gap paintings.<sup>10</sup> But as a group the paintings were surely made to commemorate—and in that sense to advertise—the founding of the railroad a year or so before they were made, and they may also have served as propaganda for its enterprise. Sensitive to criticism of the merciless defilement of nature which construction of roadbeds necessarily entailed—the cutting and slashing, the leveling and defacing that Daniel Webster described in the late 1840s—railroads enlisted artists to license and sanction it.<sup>11</sup> That was precisely the purpose of a famous artists’ expedition organized by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad in 1858.<sup>12</sup> And it may have been the purpose of Inness’ paintings, too. *The Lackawanna Valley* depicts with considerable candor the founding of the railroad and, by the stump-filled field in the foreground, the despoilment of nature that it caused. But in the Delaware Water Gap paintings, which—because they depict the railroad’s established condition—may have been painted next, all traces of destruction and despoilment have disappeared, succeeded by an ideal pastoral serenity that, by the clarity of its message, advertises the



Fig. 4. photograph of Scranton, Pennsylvania (detail), 1859, Washington, Library of Congress

tranquil, untroubled, and untroubling coexistence of man’s work and nature’s beauty.

George Inness, Jr., said that *The Lackawanna Valley* was made on a trip to Scranton, Pennsylvania, in September 1855, and documented this by publishing a letter of that date from his father to his mother. The letter does not mention the painting, but the date has been accepted without question.<sup>13</sup> According to the annual report of the railroad, the roundhouse that is the central architectural object of the painting was not completed until 1856.<sup>14</sup> What is more, the thematic and geographical relationship of *The Lackawanna Valley* to the two Delaware Water Gap paintings, both dated 1857, suggests that a date of 1856 or 1857 may be more appropriate. This suggestion is reinforced by the resemblance of the infant city of Scranton as depicted in *The Lackawanna Valley* to the condition of the site in a photograph made about 1859 (fig. 4).

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#### Notes

1. According to the 21 May 1945 minutes of the NGA Board of Trustees, Millicent Rogers, living in Washington at the time, offered to purchase the painting for the NGA. It was then owned by M. Knoedler & Co., New York.

2. Commissioned of Inness at about this time and later sold by the railroad at an unknown date.

3. “Books and Pictures,” *New York Herald*, 22 February 1891; Arkelian 1978, 21–23. The trip to Mexico, reported at the end of February, was made on the way to California. The Inness party could have traveled by boat

from New Orleans to Tampico and by train from there to Mexico City, or by the Southern Pacific Railroad from New Orleans to El Paso, Texas, connecting with the Mexican Central Railway to Mexico City. From Mexico City they could have returned to El Paso and continued on the Southern Pacific to Los Angeles, or taken a train to San Blas, Mexico, and a boat from there to Los Angeles. See the map of the Mexican Central Railroad in *Travelers Official Guide of the Railway and Steam Navigation Lines in the United States and Canada*, New York, October 1891, 684.

4. "Books and Pictures," *New York Herald*, 22 February 1891.

5. "His Art, His Religion," *New York Herald*, 12 August 1894. In Inness 1917, 111, George Jr. referred to it as "a painting of the first roundhouse on the D. L. & W. Railroad," which became the title used also in the catalogue of the sale of the collection of Inness' daughter, Mrs. Jonathan Scott Hartley (*Inness* 1927, no. 76); when it was sold in 1938 (Parke-Bernet Galleries, *Paintings from the Fifteenth Century to the Present*, New York, 24 February 1938); and again in 1945, when it was sold by M. Knoedler & Co. When it was acquired by the NGA in May 1945, the title recorded in the minutes of the acquisition committee was *The Lackawanna Valley at Scranton*; several months later its title was simply *The Lackawanna Valley* ("First Inness" 1945, 96, 98). Its title, therefore, is not the artist's but is a modern invention.

6. Inness 1917, 108, 111.

7. Daingerfield 1911, 16–17.

8. The date of the Montclair painting was for many years read as 1859 (see Ireland 1965, no. 168, 41). But a subsequent close examination by the museum's curator, Stephen R. Edidin, showed it to be 1857.

9. Cikovsky 1988, 79, fig. 63.

10. For a lithograph after the Montclair painting in 1860, see *Currier & Ives* 1984, 2: no. 6597, fig. 714.

11. "Speech at the Opening of the Northern Railroad to Grafton, New Hampshire, August 28, 1847" in *The Works of Daniel Webster*, vol. 2, Boston, 1851, 2:412.

12. See Maddox 1981, 28–33.

13. Inness 1917, 108, 110.

14. In 1855, in the railroad's second annual report, Superintendent D. H. Dotterer wrote that "a very commodious engine-house . . . of brick, two hundred and twenty-four feet in diameter, with slate and tin roof, having thirty stalls, and a new turn-table, has been commenced; a portion of it will be ready to receive engines by the first of February, and the whole building completed next spring [1856]" (Cikovsky 1970, 50).

## References

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 1917 Inness: 108, 111.  
 1927 "Inness": 11, repro.  
 1936 "Inness": 360.  
 1944 Young: 18, repro.  
 1945 "First Inness": 96, 98, repro. 96.  
 1946 McCausland: 4, 21, 24, 28, 40, 68, repro. 11.  
 1948 Born: 156–159, repro. 158.  
 1948 Walker: 298, repro. 316.  
 1949 Larkin: 213.

- 1951 Walker: 23–24, 44, pl. 22.  
 1957 Jensen: 66, repro.  
 1959 Bouton: 6, 24, repro. 25.  
 1960 *Civil War*: repro. 14.  
 1963 Walker: 284, repro. 285.  
 1964 Marx: 220–221, pl. 2.  
 1965 Ireland: 28, repro.  
 1966 *Inness*: 14–15, repro. 7.  
 1966 Cairns and Walker: 2: 482, repro. 483.  
 1966 Green: 258, repro. 259.  
 1966 Neumeyer: 3: repro. 392.  
 1967 Callow: 127.  
 1967 Rinhart and Rinhart: 61, repro. 74.  
 1970 Cikovsky: 36–57, repro.  
 1970 Flexner: repro. 174.  
 1971 Campbell: 270.  
 1971 Cikovsky: 30, fig. 11.  
 1971 Valsecchi: 318, pl. 277.  
 1972 Haber: 32–33, repro. 33.  
 1973 Glubok: 8, repro.  
 1973 Werner: 12, 18, 20, 24, repro. 25.  
 1973 Wilmerding: 131, repro. 137.  
 1975 Bermingham: 27–28, 100, fig. 19.  
 1976 Kasson: 176–177, 179, repro. 173.  
 1976 McShine: repro. 147.  
 1975 Walker: 548, repro. 549.  
 1976 Wilmerding: 152–153, 259, pl. 185.  
 1977 Brown: 342.  
 1977 Cikovsky: 176–177, fig. 16.  
 1978 Arkelian and Neubert: 14–15, repro. 14.  
 1979 Cikovsky: 619–620, repro. 618.  
 1980 Lewis: repro. 347.  
 1980 Novak: 171–174, repro. 172.  
 1980 Wilmerding et al.: 150, repro.  
 1980 Wilmerding: 15, 98, repro. 99.  
 1981 Walther: 79, repro. 78 and cover.  
 1985 Cikovsky and Quick: 17, 74, 76, repro. 75.  
 1988 Wilmerding: 18, 112, repro. 113.  
 1988 Cafritz et al.: 230, repro. 215.  
 1988 Cikovsky: 71–91, repro. 72.  
 1990 "Northeastern Pennsylvania": n.p., repro.  
 1992 Pike: repro. 20.  
 1992 Kammen: 78, repro. 81.  
 1993 Cikovsky: 32, 33, 34, color repro. 32.

1962.2.1 (1659)

## Lake Albano, Sunset

c. 1874

Oil on canvas, 76.5 × 114.4 (30<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 45<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)

Gift of Alice Dodge in memory of her father, Henry Percival Dodge

## Inscriptions

At lower left: G. Inn[ess] 187[?]

**Technical Notes:** The relatively fine, plain-weave fabric support is covered by a pale yellow colored ground. The impasto has been flattened, probably by a past lin-



George Inness, *Lake Albano, Sunset*, 1962.2.1

ing, and there is extensive abrasion, although it is difficult to determine what is the result of damage and what was intentional scraping by the artist during repainting. X-radiography reveals that the artist completely revised the painting, changing it from a morning to an afternoon scene. He applied a rose-colored isolating layer over the original foreground and then painted over it. The sky has a golden yellow color consistent with other Inness paintings of the period, except in a number of small areas, where its absence may be an intentional, if ultimately unsuccessful, effect or the result of damage. The foreground has modest traction crackle, possibly indicating the presence of bitumen, and some small losses. The painting is, however, generally in good condition. In 1962, the painting was lined. Discolored varnish was removed then and again in 1986, when the prominent traction crackle in the sky was inpainted.

**Provenance:** Purchased 9 June 1874 from the artist by Mr. and Mrs. J. Cleaves Dodge, Paris;<sup>1</sup> by inheritance 1916 to Mrs. Dodge's nephew, Henry Percival Dodge, Paris; his wife, Agnes Page Dodge [Mrs. Henry Percival Dodge], Paris, 1936–1953; her stepdaughter, Alice Lamb Cleaves Dodge [1905–1985], Paris, 1953–1955, and Washington, D.C., 1955–1962.<sup>2</sup>

“THE PICTURE, which you have bought of me,” Inness wrote to J. Cleaves Dodge on 9 June 1874, “is a view of Lake Albano taken from near the Franciscan Convent which is situated on the east side of the lake and the garden wall of which you see on the right. On the opposite shore is Castel Gandolpho[sic] or as it is generally called by Italians, Castello.”<sup>3</sup> Lake Albano and the smaller Lake Nemi, a little to the south, are located about twelve miles southeast of Rome. They were among Inness' favorite subjects in Italy, and the sites of some of his finest Italian paintings.<sup>4</sup>

*Lake Albano, Sunset* is not—or is not now—one of them. To what extent the painting's faults are In-

ness' responsibility, or the responsibility of others and due to the circumstances of its later life is entirely not clear. X-radiography indicates that Inness substantially repainted the canvas. Its pattern of light and shadow originally corresponded to that of another view of the same subject, the lovely and pristine *Castel Gandolfo* (fig. 1), set in early morning. Probably because of that repainting, the sky has cracked severely. The artist's use of bitumen or a resinous admixture probably also caused the considerable traction crackle and “crawl” of paint in the foreground.

The painting has had a strenuous life, having been moved from place to place, packed and unpacked, subjected to extremes of temperature and humidity, and undergoing lining and, very likely at the same time, restoration. According to its donor, it hung until 1916 in the Paris apartment of its first owners. Then it “remained more or less packed up until 1925–6 when it was rebacked in Paris and re-framed.” It was left in France while its second owner, Henry Percival Dodge, to whom it had been bequeathed, served as American chargé d'affaires to the Serbian government in exile on Corfu and, subsequently, as minister to the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. From 1926 to 1930 “it was hung in a drawing room of the American Legation [then at 70 Bredgade] in Copenhagen while Mr. Dodge was Minister to Denmark.” Between 1930 to 1954 “the painting was in the Entrepôt Federal [Customs warehouse] in Lausanne, Switzerland.”<sup>5</sup>

Probably as a result of the 1925–1926 treatment its impasto has been flattened from lining and, possibly, a yellow glaze in the sky has been broken or skinned.<sup>6</sup> From restoration, handling, or both, it has also suffered from abrasion.

It is impossible to read the date on the painting. Inness sold it in 1874; *Castel Gandolfo* also seems to be dated that year.<sup>7</sup> But it is possible, particularly in view of Inness' extensive revisions, that it was painted a year or two before and belongs among his earliest Italian paintings.

There is also uncertainty about its title. Inness did not mention it by title in his letter to its first owners, and because it was never exhibited or discussed during the artist's lifetime it acquired no public title. Its final private owner, Alice Dodge, referred to it first as *View of Lake Albano* and then crossed that out in favor of the title now in use, *Lake Albano, Sunset*.<sup>8</sup>

Fig. 1. George Inness, *Castel Gandolfo*, oil on canvas, 1874, Portland Art Museum, Helen Thurston Auer Fund



## Notes

1. A letter of 9 June 1874 from Inness to J. Cleaves Dodge, Paris (in NGA curatorial files).
2. Alice Dodge kept a life interest in the painting after giving it to NGA in 1962; it came to the NGA at her death in 1985.
3. Inness to Dodge, 9 June 1874 (in NGA curatorial files), bears the postscript: "Recd. of Mr. J.C. Dodge Seven-thousand five hundred francs F.fr. 7500.00 for the painting above described."
4. *Lake Nemi* of 1872 (MFA), for instance, or *Castel Gandolfo* of 1874. See Cikovsky and Quick 1985, nos. 19 and 29.
5. "History of Inness painting 'View of Lake Albano [Lake Albano, Sunset]," compiled by Alice L.C. Dodge, 25 September 1962 (in NGA curatorial files).
6. NGA conservation records show that when the painting was donated in 1962, it was relined and given a new stretcher, and discolored varnish was removed.
7. The date of this painting is sometimes read as 1876, but it is more plausibly read as 1874; see Cikovsky and Quick 1985, no. 29.
8. See note 5.

## References

- 1965 Ireland: 136, repro.  
1981 Williams: 125, repro.  
1985 Cikovsky and Quick: 134, repro.

1973.16.1 (2654)

## *View of the Tiber near Perugia*

1872–1874

Oil on canvas, 98.0 × 161.5 (38<sup>9</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 63<sup>9</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)

Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund

## Inscriptions

At lower center, partially painted over: [Geo I]nness

Rome 187[2?]

At lower right: G. Inness 1874

**Technical Notes:** The support is a finely woven twill fabric that has been lined. There is cusping along the top and bottom cut edges. A white ground was applied to the fabric, followed by a reddish-brown imprimatura layer. Infrared reflectography reveals underdrawing, possibly in charcoal, consisting of several gently curving horizontal lines in the background. The paint was built up of many layers in a wet-into-wet technique and manipulated by brush, brush handle, and rubbing to achieve a variety of textural effects. A toned glaze covers the sky, giving the blue paint a yellow cast. X-radiography reveals two large flat rocks in the lower right hand corner, and dense layers throughout the left background. The changes indicated by x-radiography are probably those made during the reworking of the painting between 1872 and 1874. Traction crackle is found in thicker areas of brown paint but the painting is in good condition overall. The varnish has not discolored.

**Provenance:** Darius Ogden Mills [1825–1910], Millbrae, California, c. 1874 or 1875;<sup>1</sup> his children, Ogden Mills [1856–1929] and Elizabeth Mills [Mrs. Whitelaw Reid], Millbrae, California, c. 1910–1943; Mills Estate, 1943–1947; the daughter of Ogden Mills, Gladys Mills Phipps [Mrs. Henry C. Phipps, 1883–1970]; her son, Ogden Phipps [b. 1908], New York; consigned November 1955 to (M. Knoedler & Co., New York); sold May 1956 to Huntington Hartford, New York; sold to (Hirschl & Adler Galleries, New York), by 1973.

**Exhibited:** *George Inness*, MMA; Cleveland Museum of Art; Minneapolis Institute of Art; LACMA; NGA, 1985–1986, not in cat. (exhibited only at NGA).

ANNOUNCING George Inness' upcoming trip to Italy at the end of March 1870, the *New York Evening Mail* wrote, "This going to Italy and painting there such scenes as cannot fail to inspire the idealist has been an earnest desire since he felt within him the confidence that he could interpret the poetry of that poetic land."<sup>2</sup> It was Inness' second trip to Italy. His first, nineteen years earlier—cut short by his expulsion for striking a French soldier who knocked off his hat when he refused to remove it at a Papal procession in Rome—lasted less than a year.<sup>3</sup> His "earnest desire" to go again was, therefore, a long deferred one. But he had another motive, less pure but more urgent. He had "engaged all his pictures to be painted abroad to a well-known art firm in Boston," Williams & Everett. He was to send them all his European paintings save those he himself managed to sell.<sup>4</sup>

Inness, his wife Elizabeth Hart, and their four children sailed for Europe on 30 April 1870.<sup>5</sup> "We stopped in London and Paris only a few days on our way to Marseilles, where we embarked for Civitavecchia, going from there to Rome," his son George Jr. reported later.<sup>6</sup> Inness completed his first Italian paintings in Rome in 1870.<sup>7</sup>

George Jr. recalled that the family "spent two summers at Perugia," but newspaper reports and paintings suggest that the artist visited there more often.<sup>8</sup> There is a painting inscribed "Perugia 1870."<sup>9</sup> The *Boston Transcript* reported on 28 April 1871 that Inness "will spend the summer in Perugia."<sup>10</sup> The fruits of that visit were *The Tiber below Perugia* (Toledo Museum of Art), dated 1871, and, probably, the *Valley of the Tiber, from the Vicinity of the Conistabili [Conestabile] Villa, Perugia, Italy* (location unknown), which he exhibited at the Royal Academy in London in 1872. In April 1873, the *New York Tribune* wrote: "Mr. George Innes [*sic*] is devoting himself entirely to Italian landscape, making large



Fig. 1. George Inness, *Near Perugia*, oil on canvas, 1872, private collection

paintings of the scenery and mountains near Perugia.<sup>11</sup> Given the earliness of the season, this probably refers to paintings begun in the summer of 1872. In January 1874, the *Boston Transcript* reported Inness had spent the previous summer in Perugia.<sup>12</sup>

Inness did not range widely in search of subjects in Italy. He did not visit Sicily or Capri, for example, as other Americans did, and painted only a few pictures in Venice. His favorite sites, where or of which he made his best Italian paintings, were Rome and the Campagna, lakes Albano and Nemi to the south, and Perugia to the north. "At Perugia, one hundred and fifty miles from Rome," Susan N. Carter informed readers of *Appleton's Journal* in August of 1874 (by which time Inness had left Italy for France), "he has made some of the best pictures of his life; its spacious amphitheatre of hills affording good scope for Mr. Inness's remarkable power of depicting atmospheric effects."<sup>13</sup> This is a perfect description of the *View of the Tiber near Perugia*, in which that remarkable power is its principal effect

and proper subject, rendered, moreover, with a summary freshness and a breadth of handling that is sometimes absent from those of his more highly finished Italian paintings made with an eye to the marketplace.

The painting is inscribed twice. The first inscription, partially painted over, reads "[Geo I]nness Rome 187[2?]," and the second, "G. Inness 1874." The later inscription indicates that, despite the conviction the painting carries of experience directly captured, it was confected in Inness' studio in Rome, not painted directly from nature in Perugia. It is frequently the case with Inness' paintings that, while they are as convincing as this one, they were often made at a significant remove in time and place from the subjects they depicted. For instance, one of his early Italian paintings, *St. Peter's, Rome* (1857, New Britain Museum of American Art, Connecticut), was made five years after he had been in Italy.<sup>14</sup> In whatever way Inness preserved earlier experiences—whether by aide-mémoires such as his own drawn or painted studies (of which few survive from any period), photographs, or by an exceptionally keen and retentive visual memory—there is no question that he drew repeatedly upon them.<sup>15</sup> A view closely similar though not identical to that in the National Gallery painting is found in others: *Near Perugia*, inscribed "G. Inness Rome 1872" (fig. 1) and *Near Perugia in Spring*, signed and dated 1879, five years after Inness left Italy.<sup>16</sup>

The two inscriptions on *View of the Tiber near Perugia* also tell that it was painted on two campaigns which, because the painting seems to have been acquired by its first owner from Inness in Italy (which Inness left in the spring of 1874) or Paris (which he left early in 1875 to return to America), cannot be widely distant in time. This must have resulted in the repainting that covered the earlier inscription and produced a greater breadth of handling and simplicity of form.<sup>17</sup>

We do not know why Inness visited Perugia. He may have done so to escape the summer fever—the *mala aria*—of Rome, or because he was attracted by a colony of American artists.<sup>18</sup> Henry James, who also visited Perugia in the early 1870s, noted, as did other visitors to Perugia, that the views from the city were more absorbing than the somewhat limited attractions of the city itself, chief among which were the works of the painter Pietro Perugino, Raphael's teacher. After a week James wrote, "I had had enough of Perugino, but I had not had enough of the view." "The little dusky, crooked



George Inness, *A View of the Tiber near Perugia*, 1973.16.1

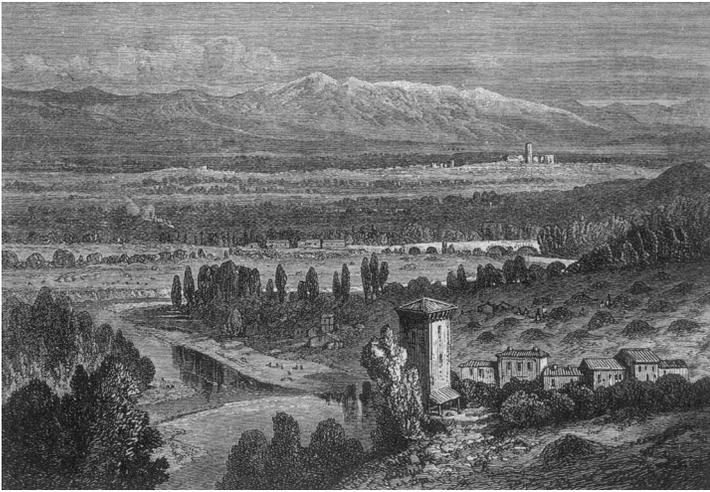


Fig. 2. "Following the Tiber," *Lippincott's Magazine* 15 (January 1875), p. 34

town is full of picturesqueness; but the view, somehow, is ever present, . . . and you are forever rushing up by-streets and peeping round corners in the hope of catching another glimpse of it." It consisted of a "wondrous mixture of blooming plain and gleaming river and waving multitudinous mountain." But James also sensed its greater significance: "Placed as you are, roughly speaking, in the centre of Italy, your glance seems to compass the lovely land from sea to sea."<sup>19</sup> The landscape seen from Perugia was by virtue of its variety and centrality a canonical image of Italy. Inness may have shared that understanding.

In a more particular way, the point of view that Inness chose for this and other of his paintings of the Perugian landscape may also have been fixed by the canon of precedent; for the same view, only higher and further to the right, was selected to illustrate "Following the Tiber," first published in *Lippincott's Magazine* early in 1875 (fig. 2).<sup>20</sup>

NC

#### Notes

1. Darius Ogden Mills was a prominent financier and philanthropist. After resigning the presidency of the Bank of California in 1873, Mills made a two-year trip to

Europe, and it was probably in Italy or in Paris that he purchased the painting from Inness.

2. "Art Gossip," *New York Evening Mail*, 31 March 1870.

3. This story was told a number of times during Inness' life and after it. Prompted by Inness' impending departure for Italy, it appeared in Earl Marble, "Impetuosity on Canvas," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 6 April 1870.

4. "Art Items," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 18 April 1870 and Inness 1917, 75. For a painting Inness sold abroad, see *Lake Albano, Sunset* (1962.2.1).

5. "Art Notes," *New York Evening Post*, 2 May 1870. His passport was issued 19 April 1870 (information supplied by Merl M. Moore, Jr.).

6. Inness 1917, 75.

7. For example, *Rome, the Appian Way and Olive Groves near Rome*; see Ireland 1965, nos. 516 and 518.

8. Inness 1917, 75.

9. Ireland 1965, 517.

10. *Boston Evening Transcript*, 28 April 1871.

11. "Artist Life in Rome," *New York Tribune*, 12 April 1873.

12. "American Artists at Rome," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 28 January 1874.

13. Susan Carter, "Notes from American Studios in Italy," *Appleton's Journal* 12, 8 August 1874, 188.

14. Cikovsky and Quick 1985, no. 5.

15. A watercolor (Detroit Institute of Arts) exists for *St. Peter's, Rome* (1857, New Britain Museum of American Art, Connecticut), and was probably used for the painting. *Sunset in the Woods* (1891, CGA) was made, Inness said, from a twenty-year-old sketch; Cikovsky and Quick 1985, nos. 5 and 54. Rothlisberger 1985, 317, figs. 20 and 21, has shown that one of Inness' Italian paintings, *The Appian Way* of 1870, was based directly on an Alinari photograph, but this is a rare occurrence, or at least one that cannot be frequently documented.

16. Cikovsky and Quick 1985, no. 37.

17. Neither optical nor technical examination reveals the precise nature or extent of Inness' changes.

18. Armstrong 1920, 196, named Inness among the "little colony of American artists, Coleman, Yewell, Vedder, and others" who once summered at Perugia.

19. James 1875, 221-222.

20. "Following the Tiber," *Lippincott's Magazine* 15, January 1875, 34. Plotting it from maps, Williams (1981, 125) has suggested that the view in Inness' painting is to the southeast, depicting the village of Ponte San Giovanni.

#### References

- 1964 *Huntington Hartford*: no. 15, repro.  
 1965 Ireland: 166-167, repro. 167.  
 1974 "Chronique": 139, repro. 138.  
 1975 Walker: 551, no. 836, color repro.  
 1981 Williams: 125, repro.

# John Wesley Jarvis

1780 – 1840

ALTHOUGH BORN IN ENGLAND, John Wesley Jarvis was the son of an American mariner who moved his family back to the United States by the mid-1780s. At the end of that decade, the Jarvises settled in Philadelphia, where the aspiring artist spent his childhood and began his artistic training. He frequented the studio of the aging Matthew Pratt (1734–1805), and he knew Danish painter Christian Gullager (1759–1826), but his formal instruction did not begin until around 1796, when he was apprenticed to Edward Savage (1761–1817). Jarvis later claimed that he learned little from this disagreeable master and that his time spent with David Edwin, an English engraver also working with Savage, proved much more beneficial.

Jarvis moved to New York with Savage by 1801, but within a year he was working on his own as an engraver. In 1803 he entered into a partnership with Joseph Wood (1778?–1830) that lasted seven years. Together they executed engravings, miniatures, and larger portraits. Jarvis had learned the technique of miniature painting from Edward Malbone (1777–1807), and by the time of the Wood partnership, he was also producing his first oil paintings. In addition, he operated a drawing school for a time and executed inexpensive silhouette portraits.

In 1809 Jarvis married Betsy Burtis (who died four years later, leaving him with two children); however, within a year he parted with his bride in order to seek portrait commissions in Baltimore. Although he made occasional trips back to New York, he remained in Baltimore for several years. While New York always remained his home base, he continued his habit of extended residency in other cities for most of his life. During the 1820s and early 1830s, for example, he sought work in South Carolina, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Virginia, Ohio, Georgia, and the District of Columbia. Prior to 1822, his apprentice, Henry Inman, probably accompanied him on these trips.

Jarvis had risen to the top of his profession in 1814, when he took over an unprecedented commission for six full-length portraits of the naval heroes of the War of 1812 for the City of New York (Gilbert Stuart had given up the project after a

dispute with the patrons). For more than a decade, he remained the premier portrait painter in New York, with important ties to the political, mercantile, and cultural elite. Yet Jarvis was also something of a social outsider, known for his ostentatious dress, flippant manner, and propensity to drink. He was celebrated as a hilarious storyteller, and his ties to the theater world were many. As early as the 1820s, however, he received some personal setbacks; in 1823 he was sued successfully by his apprentice John Quidor (1801–1881) for breach of contract, and the following year he lost custody of his children in a court battle with his estranged second wife, Lydia G. Liscome. A decade later, in 1834, he suffered a debilitating stroke while in New Orleans. Partially paralyzed and mentally incapacitated, he spent the rest of his life in New York City, cared for by his sister, Elizabeth Child.

JD

## Bibliography

Dunlap 1834: 2:72–96.  
Bolton and Groce 1938: 299–321.  
Dickson 1949.

1950.15.1 (1058)

## *Thomas Paine*

c. 1806/1807  
Oil on canvas, 65.4 × 52.1 (25 3/4 × 20 1/2)  
Gift of Marian B. Maurice

**Technical Notes:** The support is a medium-weight, plain-weave, closely woven fabric that has been lined. The white ground, perhaps with an additional warm pink tone applied on top of it, is of a medium thickness and is smoothly laid down. Subsequent paint was broadly and discontinuously applied, allowing the ground to show through selectively, particularly in the shaded areas of the flesh. Impasto is minimal throughout. In 1951 the painting was relined, discolored varnish was removed, and the painting was restored. The varnish has become somewhat discolored, and small areas of inpainting are apparent across the entire surface.

**Provenance:** Christopher C. Yates [d. 1848], New York and Albany, by 1836.<sup>1</sup> James Ferguson [d. 1867], Albany and Washington, D.C., by 1860.<sup>2</sup> His wife, Amelia

Ferguson, Washington, D.C. Horatio Bridge [d. 1893], Washington, D.C., and Athens, Pennsylvania, probably by 1868;<sup>3</sup> his wife, Charlotte M. Bridge [d. 1904], Athens, Pennsylvania; her grandniece, Marian Bridge Maurice, Athens, Pennsylvania.<sup>4</sup>

**Exhibited:** Washington Art Association Annual, 1860, no. 11, as by G. [sic] W. Jarvis. *American Processional, 1492–1900*, CGA, 1950, no. 93. *They Gave Us Freedom*, Colonial Williamsburg, 1951, no. 16. *American Portraits from the National Gallery of Art*, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, 1951, no. 19. *Opening Exhibition of the George Thomas Hunter Gallery of Art*, Chattanooga, Tennessee, 1952, unnumbered. Mint Museum, Charlotte, North Carolina, 1952, no cat. *Famous Americans*, Washington County Museum of Fine Arts, Hagerstown, Maryland, 1955, no cat. *This New Man: A Discourse in Portraits*, NPG, 1968, p. 74. *Art in Miniature*, Fine Arts Gallery of San Diego, 1969, no cat. “The Dye is Now Cast,” *The Road to American Independence, 1774–1776*, NPG, 1975, no. 196. *The Face of Liberty: Founders of the United States*, Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, 1975–1976, p. 236. NPG, on long-term loan since 1980.

ALTHOUGH it was only rediscovered by Harold Dickson in 1949, the National Gallery’s portrait of Thomas Paine by John Wesley Jarvis had long been the object of speculation by scholars of both artist and sitter. Paine’s biographer Moncure Conway, who knew the work through an engraving of 1842, asked in 1892, “What has become of the original of this . . . picture by the elder Jarvis?” More than fifty years later, Dickson, relying on second-hand information, speculated, “[I]f this elusive picture should still exist and prove to be as authentic as its inscription sounds, its discovery would be an important one.”<sup>5</sup> Today the likeness stands as a rare life portrait of the elderly Paine and one of the first datable efforts of the youthful Jarvis—physical evidence of a brief but illuminating friendship between the two men.

Paine was born in Thetford, England, and raised as a Quaker. He began working as a stay-maker while still a teenager, but during the next two decades he found employment as a grocer, a tax official, a teacher, a tobacco-mill operator, and a preacher. At age thirty-seven, Paine was dismissed from his position as chief excise officer at Lewes, causing him to lapse into bankruptcy. The same year, 1774, he separated from his second wife, Elizabeth Ollive (his first wife, Mary Lambert, had died in 1760) and, following the advice of a new friend, Benjamin Franklin, sailed for the American colonies.<sup>6</sup>

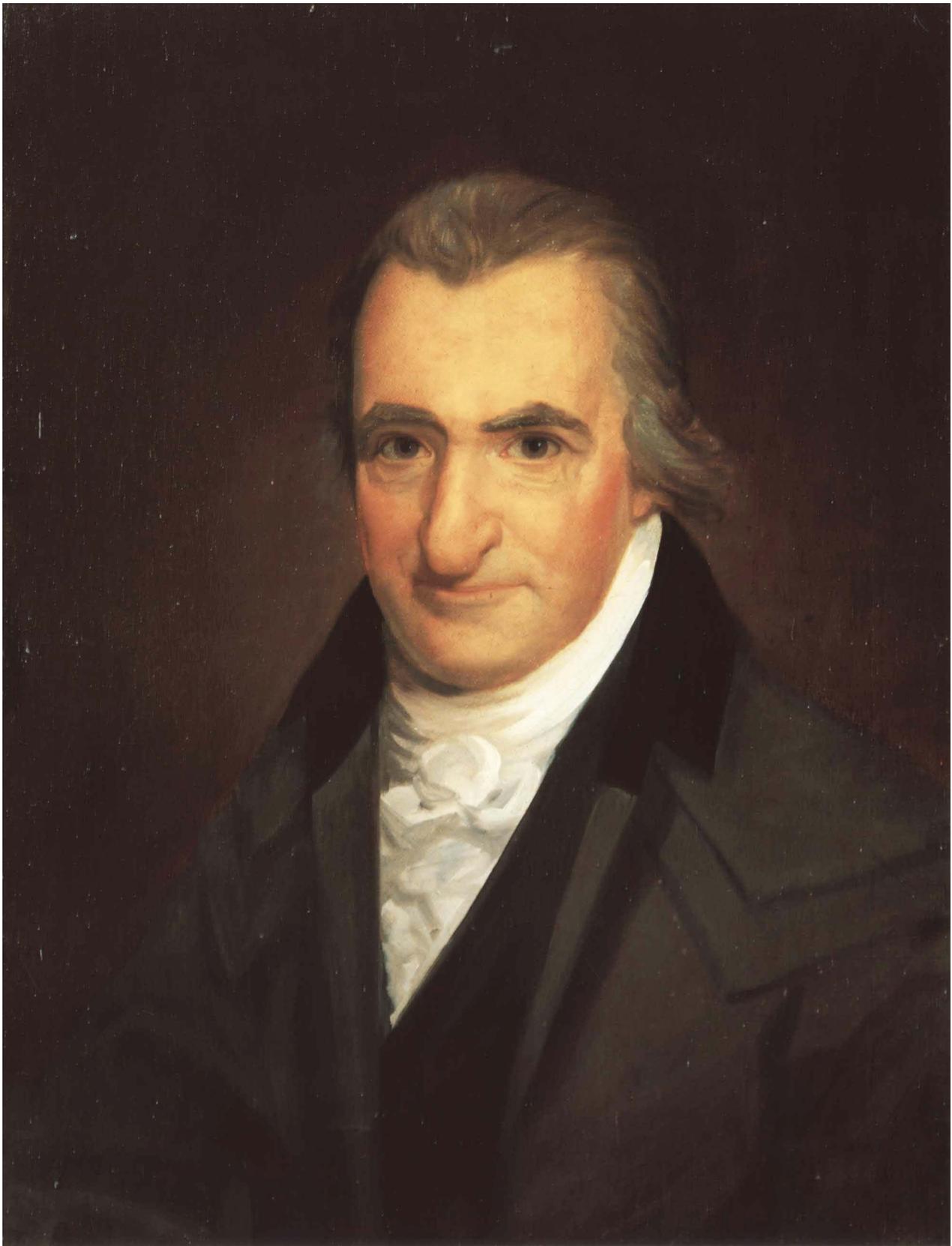
Little in Paine’s life in England prepared him for

the role he was to assume as chief pamphleteer for the American revolutionary cause. He began testing the power of his pen by writing essays against slavery and in support of women’s rights for the *Pennsylvania Magazine*. It was his treatise, *Common Sense* (1775), however, that galvanized the will of colonists and helped precipitate the war with England. Joining the Pennsylvania militia, he served as a soldier by day and remained a writer by night, releasing a series of inspirational pamphlets, each titled *Crisis*, at crucial moments when revolutionary morale was flagging.

After the war Paine found himself penniless and inadequately compensated for his services by the new government. In 1787 he left for Europe, where he was soon lionized by the antiroyalist French republicans. Once again, he threw himself into the struggle, authoring *The Rights of Man* in 1791. While the English government brought him to trial in 1792 for sedition, the new French Convention, in contrast, made him a citizen and sought his advice. This changed when Paine’s uncompromising pen was turned on the French government, criticizing its violent excesses and arguing against capital punishment. He was imprisoned in 1793, nearly perishing from the harsh conditions. From his cell, however, he managed to publish his deist manuscript, *The Age of Reason*.

When Paine finally returned to the United States in 1802, he was aged, somewhat infirm, and unprepared for the vehement reaction to his arrival. Sentiment had turned decidedly against him, owing largely to his perceived atheism and his writings critical of George Washington. He settled in New York but seems to have been restless, leaving his farmhouse in New Rochelle for several extended stays in New York City. He was further burdened by the task of caring for the refugee Bonneville family, the wife and children of a friend who had been imprisoned by Napoleon.

Paine’s life intersected with that of the young painter, Jarvis, during this final, troubled period. In November 1806, Paine, awaiting the availability of more permanent lodgings, moved in with Jarvis at 85 Church Street.<sup>7</sup> By all reports, the two social outcasts found themselves eminently compatible, and Jarvis later recounted a series of anecdotes detailing the good-natured joking and more serious discussions they shared. The rakish artist appreciated Paine’s wit and independence of spirit; their political views, ardently Jeffersonian, were also similar.



John Wesley Jarvis, *Thomas Paine*, 1950.15.1

Although frail and in declining health, Paine continued to write a great deal, and Jarvis seems to have aided in protecting the older man from the religious zealots who plagued his later years with attempts at conversion.<sup>8</sup> Reportedly Jarvis was one of the author's few visitors during his final illness. Later, he took the older man's death mask and executed a unique (for Jarvis) plaster bust of his former friend (NYHS). Aware of posthumous efforts to besmirch Paine's character, Jarvis took pains to refute charges of overindulgent drinking and dissolution. He also offered testimony in the writer's defense at the libel trial that followed the publication of an unfriendly biography by James Cheetham.<sup>9</sup>

It was during their short period of cohabitation that Jarvis probably executed the National Gallery's portrait. Although one of his earliest known oil paintings, *Thomas Paine* does not leave the viewer with a strong sense of an artist struggling with a medium completely new to him. In general, the paint appears to be confidently, simply, and economically applied, with little visible experimentation or correction. The underlayer of the face is barely covered by the thin, flat planes of glazed color that loosely structure the sitter's features. Detail is kept to a minimum throughout the work, with the more fluid brushwork of the neckcloth seeming particularly amorphous. Yet the disparate areas of the face do remain somewhat unblended, and there is a consequent blotchy, unvolumetric quality to the likeness. It is a passive image, lacking in the surface movement and brio prominent in the artist's later production. This overly smooth, unfinished appearance has been described by Dickson as characteristic of Jarvis' early style.<sup>10</sup> The conceptualized, perfectly ovular contour of the head also indicates a certain simplified reticence and containment on the part of the young, but nevertheless assured, portraitist.

Paine's complexion is unusually ruddy and flushed at the cheek, while the shadowed areas around the eyes and under the nose are slightly bluish in tone. A blue-gray touch also lightens his hairline and eyebrows, framing the full face and providing one of the few hints of his advanced age. The large nose, frequently commented upon by Paine's contemporaries, appears almost comical above the understated, prim mouth; however, Jarvis has not depicted the "scorbutic eruption" which disfigured Paine's nose during his last years.<sup>11</sup> Instead, he has concentrated on the equally celebrated black, intensely penetrating eyes. In all,

Jarvis' portrait seems frank and dignified, even elegant with the inclusion of a velvet-collared, gray-green cape (this, in contrast to Paine's supposed unkempt appearance, often cited by his enemies as evidence of his decayed moral fiber). Thus, the portrait perhaps functions as a visual equivalent of its maker's repeated attempts to defend the character of his one-time companion.

There is some confusion surrounding the execution and subsequent history of the portrait. Moncure Conway claimed that Jarvis painted Paine as early as 1803, however it is now apparent that he was referring to a supposed Jarvis copy of an earlier, more elegant Paine likeness by George Romney.<sup>12</sup> In 1807 Thomas Sully charged Jarvis \$30 for a portrait of Paine that he had "copied from Jarvis and sold to him," as Sully wrote in his personal register. It is not clear from the entry, however, whether Sully had been engaged to copy the National Gallery's painting or a Jarvis version of the Romney type.<sup>13</sup> By 1845, one of these copies had apparently entered the collection of Gilbert Vale, a Paine biographer. In his magazine, *The Beacon*, Vale advertised the sale of "a full size of Thomas Paine, by the elder Jarvis, the only one which Mr. Jarvis ever painted of him."<sup>14</sup> This same portrait was probably exhibited in 1872 at the Brooklyn Art Association, where the catalogue listed a Jarvis portrait of Paine owned by D.S. Blake, who was Vale's son-in-law.<sup>15</sup> Other Jarvis/Romney portrait/copies are known to have existed, including one with a Brooklyn provenance acquired by Conway as a Jarvis and thought by Conway to be the original life portrait by Romney of 1792.<sup>16</sup>

The history of the National Gallery's portrait appears to be distinct from this confusing web of picture trails. Its first known owner, established by the inscribed label on the painting's reverse, was Christopher Yates, a New York City physician who moved to Albany around 1840. Yates devoted considerable study to the New York cholera epidemic of 1832. As Jarvis risked his life to execute medical illustrations during this same epidemic, it is possible that the two men became acquainted and that the portrait was later purchased by the physician.<sup>17</sup>

Several years after Yates returned to Albany, this likeness of Paine was engraved (inside a wreath and surrounded by numerous symbolic attributes) by Julius R. Ames for *The Bible of Nature, and Substance of Virtue . . .* (Albany 1842), its only known publication in the nineteenth century.<sup>18</sup> It was also in Albany that the portrait was probably acquired by

James Ferguson, an astronomer who may have been attracted to it because of Paine's own early interest in astronomy.<sup>19</sup> Ferguson later moved to Washington, where he finished his career at the Naval Observatory. This connection with the Navy undoubtedly resulted in the passing of the portrait to Horatio Bridge, a Washington-based naval officer in whose family it descended before coming to the National Gallery.

JD

## Notes

1. A paper label formerly affixed to the reverse of the original canvas, dated "New York Augt. 1836.," signed by "J.W. Jarvis" and "Chas. Jarvis.," and apparently in the latter's handwriting, reads: "This certifies that the portrait of the late Thomas Paine, author of the 'Rights of Man' & now in the possession of Doctor Yates in this city, was painted by me from about the year 1805, and is the only original portrait of that gentleman executed in America." Dickson, "Jarvis," 1950, 8, notes that the looped signature used by John Wesley Jarvis in his later years is consistent with this example. He accounts for Charles Wesley Jarvis' signature and role in writing the authentication with the observation that the elder Jarvis had suffered an incapacitating stroke two years earlier. His son saw to his affairs during this late period.

2. The catalogue for the Washington Art Association Annual in 1860 lists the owner of the Jarvis portrait of Paine as "Prof. Ferguson" [*sic*].

3. Amelia Ferguson, in a letter dated 30 November 1868 and sent to "Mrs. Bridge" (in NGA curatorial files), authorized the latter "to sell the portrait of Thomas Paine Esqr for any sum over \$30." Bridge's husband apparently purchased the portrait instead of selling it. An unsigned, handwritten scrap of paper of uncertain provenance, sent to the NGA curatorial files in 1972 from the archives of the University of Pennsylvania, copies the inscription (see n. 1, above) and continues: "The above portrait was purchased by the late Horatio Bridge U.S.N. in Washington, D.C. about 1860 and was left by his widow to her grand niece Marian Bridge Maurice Feb. 22nd 1904 [illegible] now in her house in Athens, Penna. March 25, 1905."

4. Letter of 11 February 1953 from Margaret Stewart Maurice (in NGA curatorial files) provides provenance information within the Bridge and Maurice families. See also the wills of Horatio and Charlotte M. Bridge, nos. 5416 and 7470, Bradford County, Pennsylvania.

5. Conway 1892, 479; Dickson 1949, 106. For the inscription mentioned by Dickson, see n. 1 above. The modern discovery of the painting is related in Dickson, "Jarvis," 1950 and Dickson, "Paine," 1950.

6. For details of Paine's life, see Conway 1892, an exhaustive biography which is still useful and reliable. See also Hawke 1974.

7. Jarvis wrote to his friend Charles King on 2 May 1807: "I have had Tom Paine living with me for these five months. He is one of the most pleasant companions I have met with for an old man." Dreer Collection, HSP (AAA microfilm P20, fr. 497).

8. After Paine's death, Jarvis is said to have drawn a caricature of several gloating ministers surrounding his corpse; see Dickson 1949, 104.

9. Conway 1892 and Dickson 1949, among others, discuss the relationship of Paine and Jarvis in detail. A more recent historian has written that "the five months they shared the apartment counted among the happiest of Paine's last years" (Hawke 1974, 389). For a relatively contemporary account, see Gilbert Vale, "The Albion,—Thomas Paine and Jarvis, the Celebrated Painter and Humorist," *Beacon*, 11 August 1838, 314. Cheetham 1809 is unreliable.

10. Dickson 1949, 309.

11. Dickson 1949, 99.

12. Conway 1892, 480. The copy known to Conway was in the John Johnston collection, New York.

13. See Biddle and Fielding 1921, 242. A memo, dated 10 September 1987, in the curatorial files of the NPG, indicates that the late Monroe Fabian, a Sully scholar, suspected the NGA portrait to be the copy executed by Sully; however, no evidence supports this notion.

14. "Two Valuable Portraits," *Beacon*, 3 May 1845, 159.

15. *Catalogue of the Works of Art Exhibited at the Twenty-Fourth Reception with the First Chronological Exhibition of American Art of the Brooklyn Art Association*, 1872, no. 80. Existing photographs of the installation of the "First Chronological Exhibition of American Art" (Brooklyn Historical Society) fail to resolve the question of which Jarvis portrait was exhibited. Daniel S. Blake, the owner listed, was the husband of Gilbert Vale's daughter Euphemia.

16. See Moncure Conway, "Romney's Portrait of Thomas Paine," *Athenaeum*, 26 June 1897, 848; Ward and Roberts 1904, 2: 115; and Chamberlain 1910, 186. Several copies of the Romney type are illustrated in Bement 1949. A late glass silhouette of Paine, also said to be by Jarvis, is in the collection of the Thomas Paine National Historical Association, New Rochelle, New York.

17. See Kelly and Burrage 1920, 1279; and Dickson 1949, 307.

18. The engraving, illustrated in Dickson, "Jarvis," 1950, 10, carries the inscription, "J.W. Jarvis, pinx. 1805." This date likely came from the label on the painting's reverse, which gives the date imprecisely as "about the year 1805"; however, it has usually been assumed that the NGA portrait was executed during the period in which artist and sitter shared lodgings, that is, c. 1806/1807.

19. See B.T. Sands, "The late Mr. James Ferguson, of the Naval Observatory, Washington," *Astronomische Nachrichten* 71, 7 April 1868, 102–103.

## References

- 1892 Conway.
- 1912 Van der Weyde: 651–652, 654.
- 1916 Van der Weyde: 230.
- 1927 Harrington: 582.
- 1940 Dickson: 64.
- 1949 Bement: 34.
- 1949 Dickson: 89, 105–106, 116, 380, no. 387.
- 1950 Dickson, "Jarvis": 5–11, repro. 4.
- 1950 Dickson, "Paine": 115, repro.
- 1972 Ketchum: 61, color repro. 60.

1974 Hawke: 389.  
1981 Williams: 84–85, repro. 85.  
1986 Zellman: 1:88, color repro.

1943.14.1 (1942)

### *Commodore John Rodgers*

c. 1814  
Oil on canvas, 91.2 × 71.1 (35 7/8 × 28)  
Gift of Nannie R. and Christina Macomb

**Technical Notes:** The original support is a heavy-weight, coarsely woven fabric with an uneven, high texture. It has been lined, but cusping is present along all four cut edges. The white ground is thick and smooth with a warm pink toning layer beneath the face and sky. Subsequent paint was laid down thickly with generous and quick brushstrokes, coalescing to a finer blend in the area of the face. Only the darker regions of the composition were thinly painted. A translucent brown tone serves as a base in selected areas. Inpainting is located in the shadows of the coat and in the sky to the left of Rodgers' head. The milky varnish was unevenly applied.

**Provenance:** Charlotte I. Bullus, New York; by whom given in 1838 to Minerva Denison Rodgers [d. 1877], wife of the sitter, Washington, D.C.;<sup>1</sup> her daughter, Ann Rodgers Macomb [d. 1916], Washington, D.C.; her daughters, Nannie R. Macomb and Christina Macomb, Washington, D.C.<sup>2</sup>

**Exhibited:** Possibly PAFA Annual, 1814, no. 103. Possibly NAD Annual, 1834, no. 132. *Exhibition of Early American Paintings Miniatures and Silver*, "National Gallery of Art," 1925–1926, no. 25.<sup>3</sup> *Exhibition of Portraits, Miniatures, Silver and Other Mementoes of the Rodgers Family*, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, 1935, no cat. *Loan Exhibition: Naval Personages & Traditions*, Naval Academy Museum, Annapolis, 1940, no. 27. NMAH, on long-term loan, 1964–1975.

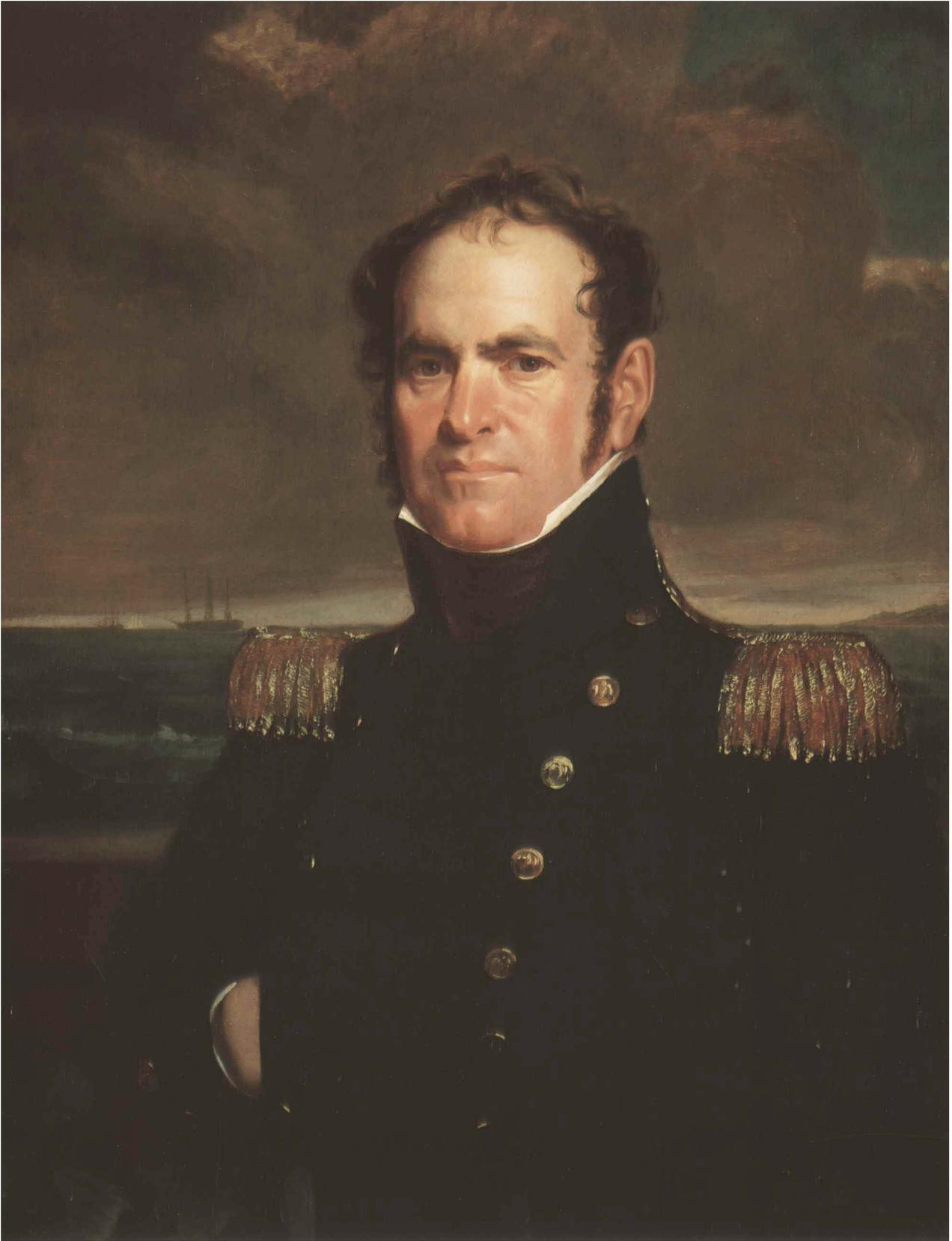
JOHN RODGERS (1773–1838) was born to Scottish immigrants in Havre de Grace, Maryland. At his request, he was put to sea as a boy, serving a five-year apprenticeship on a merchant ship. By age nineteen, he had been made captain of his own vessel. For several years he engaged in trade with Europe; however, in 1797 he left the merchant service to become an officer in the United States Navy. His performance in the war with the Barbary States (1801–1803) was particularly distinguished, and he was elevated to the rank of Commodore. Although he would ultimately become the navy's senior commanding officer and the longstanding president of the Navy Board of Commissioners, Rodgers was

never given the rank of admiral; widespread prejudice against that title, which Americans associated with royalist British aristocracy, remained prohibitive during his lifetime.<sup>4</sup>

Prior to the War of 1812, the American navy was not at all popular with the public. These sentiments changed after a series of spectacular sea victories against the British. Although he was one of the highest ranking officers at the time, Rodgers played little part in these victories. His encounters with the enemy were largely uneventful, and there were even accusations of timidity leveled against him. Thus Rodgers was not among the officers selected for inclusion in John Wesley Jarvis' impressive and unprecedented commission of six full-length portraits of naval heroes for New York City. He was, however, accorded a lavish banquet in New York on 7 March 1814, following the completion of his last cruise of the war. More than 400 people sat down to dinner, and a large transparency of the commodore was illuminated at the Park Theatre. Jarvis is known to have executed a transparency of Commodore Stephen Decatur's cruise for the Park Theatre in 1815, so it is possible that he was responsible for Rodgers' as well.<sup>5</sup> In any event, it seems likely that the artist, recently returned from Baltimore, took this opportunity to secure a sitting of Rodgers, when the officer's notoriety was at its peak.

There are two known versions of the portrait, the National Gallery's canvas and a smaller work on panel (United States Naval Academy Museum, Annapolis). The likenesses are quite similar, with the figure—his hand resting inside the front flap of his tunic—set ominously against a turbulent, leaden mix of air and water. In both, his earnest expression and direct gaze take on some of the foreboding quality of the cloud-choked sky. The National Gallery's painting is more highly finished, however, and shows more of Rodgers' surroundings, with three ships and a spit of land placed on the horizon, a patch of blue optimistically breaking through in the upper right corner, and the wooden rail of his own ship clearly discernable at left. These differences suggest that the Annapolis panel was the initial study, with the more elaborate National Gallery canvas being the final product. Neither painting is securely documented, however, and their whereabouts during the early years of the nineteenth century are not firmly established.<sup>6</sup>

A Jarvis portrait of Rodgers was exhibited in May 1814—just two months after the great banquet



John Wesley Jarvis, *Commodore John Rodgers*, 1843.14.1

in the sitter's honor—at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and the Philadelphia *Port Folio* reviewed it, writing, "This picture is a work of great merit, has great expression of character, and is an excellent likeness. There are, perhaps some defects in the colouring; but, upon the whole, we have no hesitation in pronouncing it a first rate production."<sup>7</sup> The catalogue of the exhibition noted that the painting was to be engraved for "Delaplaine's Repository of the Portraits and lives of the Heroes, Philosophers, and Statesmen of America." While such an engraving never appeared in that volume, the painting seems to have stayed for some time in Philadelphia, where Jarvis' friend David Edwin was to execute a print. Two years after the exhibition, Jarvis requested of artist Bass Otis, "By the by, if you know who has got my Portrait of Com. Rogers [*sic*] I wish you would ask them to send it to me. I have written and written to divers persons but cannot even get an answer. The last I heard it was at Edwins."<sup>8</sup>

It is likely that Jarvis would have chosen the more finished version (that is, the National Gallery's painting) for exhibition and engraving. Similarly, it was probably this work that was shown years later at the National Academy of Design's Annual exhibition of 1834, about which the *American Monthly Magazine* commented, "This would be a good picture, but the color of the entire piece is too dark, and wanting relief."<sup>9</sup> At the time, the portrait may already have been owned by the family of John Bullus, a physician and art collector who had served as navy agent at New York during the War of 1812 and conducted the personal affairs of Rodgers throughout the conflict.<sup>10</sup> Following the death of the commodore, his widow, Minerva Rodgers, asked that a copy be made of the Bullus portrait, which was then on loan to the Brooklyn Naval Lyceum; instead, John Bullus' wife Charlotte offered the original. This is apparently the painting that remained within the sitter's family until it was given to the National Gallery.<sup>11</sup>

JD

## Notes

1. Correspondence relating to the gift is found in an envelope marked "Jarvis Portrait," in the Rodgers Family Papers, ser. I, cont. 17, Library of Congress. None of the correspondence makes specific mention of the artist; however, in a letter of 19 November 1838 to Minerva Rodgers, Charlotte Bullus writes, "The likeness has always been considered most excellent, and being an original one, is preferable to a copy."

2. Provenance information beginning with the ownership of Minerva Denison Rodgers was conveyed by Nannie R. Macomb and Christina Macomb to FARL, 1926.

3. In 1925 the "National Gallery of Art" was the institutional precursor of the present NMAA.

4. The standard biography of Rodgers is Paullin 1910.

5. Dickson 1949, 186. In addition to his unofficial role as portraitist to the naval command, Jarvis was apparently involved in the War of 1812 in another capacity. When New York City seemed threatened by attack in the summer of 1814, he is said to have organized a local militia company. That year he also published a cartoon in the *New York Evening Post* (25 April 1814) that was critical of President James Madison's handling of the conflict. See Dickson 1946, fig. 1.

6. The smaller portrait is undocumented prior to 1869, when it was transferred to the U. S. Naval Academy from the Navy Department in Washington.

7. "Review of the Fourth Annual Exhibition of the Columbian Society of Artists and The Pennsylvania Academy," *Port Folio* 4, July 1814, 98, as quoted in Dickson 1949, 164.

8. Jarvis to Otis, 30 March 1816, Gratz Collection, HSP, Philadelphia.

9. "Miscellaneous Notices of the Fine Arts, Literature, Science, The Drama, Etc.," *American Monthly Magazine* 3, June 1834, 285.

10. Letter of 3 January 1992 from James W. Cheevers (in NGA curatorial files) discusses the relationship of Bullus and Rodgers.

11. "Jarvis Portrait," Rodgers Family Papers. Despite the primary documents, it cannot be said with absolute certainty that the NGA portrait is the one originally owned by the Bullus family. Several other portraits of Rodgers that can be linked both to the sitter's family and the Brooklyn Naval Lyceum cause a good deal of confusion. A Rodgers likeness attributed to Gilbert Stuart, for example, was donated by his descendants to the United States Naval Academy Museum in 1946. This painting is thought to have been given in 1839 to Minerva Rodgers by Robert Smith, the former secretary of the navy, with the understanding that it would hang in the Brooklyn Naval Lyceum. (See the Rodgers Family Papers, ser. I, cont. 19b, Library of Congress.) In addition, the United States Naval Academy Museum had, at one time, a copy of the smaller version of Jarvis' portrait, executed by John G. Chapman, that also was said to have been given to the Brooklyn Naval Lyceum in 1839. The donor was William Kemble, a friend of Chapman. See letter of 3 March 1969 from John Bullard (in NGA curatorial files).

## References

1814 "Review of the Fourth Annual Exhibition of the Columbian Society of Artists and the Pennsylvania Academy." *Port Folio* 4 (July): 98.

1834 "Miscellaneous Notices of the Fine Arts, Literature, Science, The Drama, Etc." *American Monthly Magazine* 3 (June): 285.

1938 Bolton and Groce: 317.

1949 Dickson: 164, 196, 363, no. 200.

# David Johnson

1827–1908

DAVID JOHNSON was born in New York City, and his career was centered there for most of his long and quiet life. Although he claimed to be self-taught, it is now known that beginning in 1845 he studied for two years in the antique school of the National Academy of Design, where his classmates included future landscape colleagues Frederic Church, Sanford R. Gifford (1823–1880), and George Inness. In addition, he later received limited instruction from Jasper Cropsey and, probably, his older brother Joseph Johnson (1821–1890), a sometime portrait painter. Within a few years Johnson was making sketching trips in the Catskill mountains. His first dated landscape was completed in 1848.

Throughout the next decades, he traveled in New York, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, New Jersey, and Virginia, executing modest, thinly painted landscapes characterized by careful construction, meticulous naturalism, and an avoidance of dramatic effects. His election as an associate, and then full member of the National Academy came in 1860 and 1861. Johnson's paintings—forest interiors, views in ravines, quiescent lake scenes, and large tree studies—were usually shown at the Academy or the Brooklyn Art Association, although he also sent works to exhibitions in Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Buffalo, and Utica, New York. Still, his career was conducted largely outside of the public spotlight. The only element of professional controversy occurred in 1874, when he served on the three-person Hanging Committee to select works for the Academy's annual exhibition. The committee rejected several paintings by John La Farge, who, insulted, pressed for the rights of Academicians to have guaranteed acceptance. The conservative backlash was one of a series of events that led to the founding of the Society of American Artists by disgruntled younger painters.

In later years Johnson's style occasionally broadened, leading to recent speculation about a possible European trip. (He is known to have owned a number of works by lesser European Barbizon artists, and was called by critics "the American Rousseau.") Johnson's paintings were never

immensely popular, however; a sale of his work in 1890 at the Fifth Avenue Art Galleries suggests a degree of financial duress. In 1894, following a period of dwindling output, he gave up the YMCA studio he had occupied for over two decades, although he continued to paint. Ten years later he retired to Walden, New York, where he died.

JD

## Bibliography

Baur 1980: 32–65.  
Baur and Conrads 1987.  
Owens 1988.

1947.17.62 (970)

## *Edwin Forrest*

1871  
Oil on canvas, 61.3 × 51.1 (24 1/8 × 20 1/8)  
Andrew W. Mellon Collection

## Inscriptions

At lower left: David Johnson./1871.  
On reverse: David Johnson/1871.

**Technical Notes:** The painting support is a plain-weave fabric, with double threads in the horizontal direction, that is unlined and mounted to its original four-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher. An off-white ground was evenly applied to a medium thickness without masking the fabric weave. The brushwork is straightforward and mechanical, with subsequent layers applied over paint which first was allowed to dry completely. This slow, methodical handling is evident throughout the painting, a single exception being the right shoulder, where the artist broadened the jacket silhouette. A final, carefully applied white line of paint defines the perimeter of the painting. In 1952 the painting underwent varnish removal and was restored. The painting is in very good condition, and the varnish has not discolored.

**Provenance:** Marie Louise Johnson, wife of the artist, Walden, New York; sold 20 May 1919 to Thomas B. Clarke [1848–1931], New York;<sup>1</sup> his estate; sold as part of the Clarke collection 29 January 1936, through (M. Knoedler & Co., New York), to The A.W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

**Exhibited:** *Exhibition of Portraits by Early American Portrait Painters*, Union League Club, New York, February 1924, no. 5. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered. *This New Man: A*

A POWERFUL SYMBOL of mid-nineteenth-century cultural nationalism, Edwin Forrest (1806–1872) was the first American actor to become an international theatrical star. Born in Philadelphia, he began work as a clerk but by age fourteen had become a professional actor. Forrest spent his early career touring in the western regions of Ohio and Kentucky and further south along the Mississippi River. He soon developed an overpowering, forceful style of acting and became known for his intense patriotism and support of dramas with specifically American themes, such as *Metamora* (1829), a play he purchased from John A. Stone. Forrest rode the crest of the nativist wave of sentiment sweeping the country during the 1840s. His antagonistic rivalry with English actor William Macready even led to fatal violence in 1849, when his supporters attacked a New York theater in which Macready was performing, causing the Astor Place Riot.

Known for his combative, suspicious, and egotistical nature, Forrest became embroiled in another sensational controversy when he sued his wife, Catherine, for divorce in 1851. The verdict against him in the subsequent trial was a personal and financial blow from which he never recovered. Although he remained popular for a time, by the end of his career Forrest was struggling against the prevailing taste for a lighter, subtler acting style (embodied by Edwin Booth) that had supplanted the demand for his dour tragedies and histrionic manner. He continued to perform until his death, however, even when gout left him confined to a chair placed in the middle of the stage. His will provided for the establishment of a home in Philadelphia for retired actors.<sup>2</sup>

It was during this final stage of Forrest's life that Johnson executed the National Gallery's portrait. In a letter purported to be from Johnson's widow, she explained that because of the theatrical connections of the painter's brother, a number of actors were frequent visitors to his studio. While she could recall no sitting by Forrest, she did offer that "Mr Johnson was a great admirer of Edwin Forest [*sic*] not only for his great ability as an actor, but also for his remarkable strength of character, and this was a trait that Mr Johnson dearly loved."<sup>3</sup> It is unsurprising that she would have no recollection of a For-

rest sitting; all evidence indicates that the portrait was copied from a photograph. The execution of the painting is thin, matter-of-fact, and controlled. The image, moreover, matches almost exactly several photographs and engravings of the actor that were current at the end of his life.<sup>4</sup> All include his trademark string tie and plain black ribbon attached to his pocket watch.

Johnson was primarily a landscape painter who dabbled in portraiture and still life as well. His portraits, relatively rare but scattered evenly throughout his career, are often copies of other paintings or photographs.<sup>5</sup> Few seem to have been commissioned, and it is difficult to speculate on the reasons for their existence. Although questions have been raised as to the history of *Edwin Forrest*, there is no clear evidence to refute either Johnson's authorship or the assertion in his widow's letter of friendship between the actor and the painter.<sup>6</sup> Forrest amassed a large art collection and was known to enjoy the company of artists, and Johnson's signature on the portrait appears typical and convincing. (While technical examination indicates that it was added after the rest of the paint had dried, the later addition of signatures, even many years after the completion of paintings, was a common practice of the artist.)<sup>7</sup> Finally, the manner of execution of the likeness, with its emphatic, fleshy volume in the features of the face, bears resemblance to a Johnson portrait with a solid provenance, his *Self-Portrait* (1894, NAD).

JD

#### Notes

1. The name of the former owner, "Mrs. David Johnson," and the date of the purchase by Clarke are recorded in an annotated copy of *Clarke* 1928 in the NGA library.

2. The several biographies of Forrest include Moses 1929 and Moody 1960.

3. Typewritten letter of 23 May 1919, addressed to Charles Harris, an associate of Thomas B. Clarke, and signed "Mrs David Johnson" (in NGA curatorial files).

4. See, for example, pl. 20, in Moody 1960; and the several undated photographs by Napoleon Sarony in the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. Another painter, Charles W. Wright, also appears to have created an oil portrait of Forrest from a Sarony source. See his *Edwin Forrest* (n.d., NYHS).

5. As with, for example, his copy of a Charles Loring Elliott portrait of William Sidney Mount or his portrait of Winfield Scott after Mathew Brady (1850 and 1861, both PAFA).



David Johnson, *Edwin Forrest*, 1947.17.62

6. On these questions, see Rutledge and Lane 1952, 127; and notes in the NGA curatorial files.

7. Owens 1988, n. 49. Furthermore, there is an old label on the reverse of the stretcher for Goupil's gallery, Fifth Avenue and 22nd Street. This was indeed the address for Goupil's in 1871.

## Eastman Johnson

1824 – 1906

FOR MANY YEARS the foremost genre painter in the United States, Eastman Johnson was among the first American artists of his era to receive extensive training abroad. His oeuvre thus serves as an important link to two generations, combining traditional, domestic subjects with more advanced technique and expression.

Johnson was born in Lovell, Maine, but he grew up in nearby Fryeburg. In 1834 his family moved to Augusta, where his father was involved in state government. There he opened a crayon-portrait studio at age eighteen, after working briefly in a Boston lithography shop. About two years later, he moved to Washington, D.C., to take black-and-white likenesses of eminent national figures, such as Dolly Madison and John Quincy Adams, in the hope of building a gallery of famous personages. By 1846 he had returned to Boston, where he received a good deal of patronage from the family of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

His artistic education began in earnest in 1849, when he traveled to Düsseldorf and received rigorous training in drawing at that city's academy. More congenial to the artist was the time he spent in the studio of Emanuel Leutze, where he concentrated on painting. In 1851 he went to London to see the Great Exposition of All Nations and then relocated to The Hague, remaining there for more than three years. A lengthy stay at The Hague was somewhat unusual for an American artist, but Johnson apparently found much inspiration there in the Dutch Old Masters as well as ready patronage through U. S. Ambassador August Belmont. His European education continued with several months spent in the Paris studio of Thomas Couture until the death of his mother brought him home in 1855.

For the next few years Johnson cast about for

## References

- 1929 Salisbury: 74, repro.  
1952 Rutledge and Lane: 127.  
1980 Baur: 56, fig. 37, incorrectly identified as owned by NPG.

work, traveling to Lake Superior to visit a sister and sketch members of the Chippewa Tribe, painting in Cincinnati, renting a studio in New York, and spending time with his family in Washington, D.C. The turning point came in 1859 with the exhibition in New York of his *Negro Life at the South* (NYHS). This politically ambiguous picture of the leisure activities of a group of slaves was a sensation at a time when the topic of slavery was being universally debated; it resulted in his election as an associate member of the National Academy of Design. For two decades thereafter, Johnson explored themes of national life in a number of humble interior scenes and larger rural tableaux, each picture usually the result of careful study through numerous drawings and oil sketches.

Johnson exhibited widely and was active in the National Academy, the Century and Union League clubs, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and even the Society of American Artists, a group normally associated with a younger generation of painters. He was comfortable in upper-class society, owned a large home in Manhattan, and spent his summers on the island of Nantucket, the scene of many of his paintings. During the last twenty years of his life, his work changed distinctly. Although quite successful in the field of genre painting, he gave it up for unknown reasons and returned to portraiture, the artistic activity of his youth. Able to command extremely large fees, he painted the likenesses of prominent gentlemen of New York City until his death.

JD

## Bibliography

- Tuckerman, *Book*, 1867: 466–471.  
Baur 1940.  
Hills 1972.  
Hills 1977.

1963.10.157 (1821)

## *The Early Scholar*

c. 1865

Oil on academy board on canvas, 43.2 × 53.7 (17 × 21 1/8)  
Chester Dale Collection

### Inscriptions

At lower left: E.J.

**Technical Notes:** The support consists of a thin (0.3 cm) cardboard panel mounted to a medium-weight, coarsely woven fabric. The ground layer is thin and buff-colored and is largely covered by a warm, transparent brown glaze that serves as the middle tone of the painting. Thicker applications of the same brown paint create the darker shadows. Extensive underdrawing, probably pencil, is visible throughout. The highlighted areas and the lighter background region appear to have been painted last, with a thicker, more opaque paint. The thick coat of varnish is milky and has discolored. The painting is extensively abraded across its entire surface. This abrasion has been inpainted. Many of the major lines of the composition have been reinforced by inpainting.

**Provenance:** The artist, New York.<sup>1</sup> F. Reside; his estate; (sale, Silo's Galleries, New York, 21 February 1931, no. 274); Chester Dale [1883–1962], New York.<sup>2</sup>

**Exhibited:** *An Exhibition of American Paintings from the Chester Dale Collection*, Union League Club, New York, 1937, no. 24. *Eastman Johnson, 1824–1906: An American Genre Painter*, The Brooklyn Museum, 1940, no. 95.<sup>3</sup>

THIS RENDITION of *The Early Scholar*, likely Johnson's initial oil sketch, is one of at least three versions of the composition. Multiple examples of the same scene are not unusual in the artist's oeuvre, and in this case, the subject itself—a child warming beside a stove—is one that he returned to again and again.<sup>4</sup> A work of identical dimensions, also entitled *The Early Scholar*, was sold at the artist's estate sale; it was described as being signed and dated, lower left, "E.J., 1868."<sup>5</sup> In all likelihood, it was the finished version that Johnson exhibited at the National Academy of Design in 1868. Still another *Early Scholar* (private collection), also of identical dimensions, is signed and dated, lower left, "E. Johnson / 1865." The National Gallery's painting, bearing only the artist's initials, appears to be the original version and the source for both of these later, more finished works.<sup>6</sup>

As an initial sketch, or *ébauche*, it is probably the closest of the three versions to the work of Thomas Couture, the French master with whom Johnson

briefly studied. Its open brushwork, with clearly visible underdrawing, is typical of the Couture method, as is the generally warm brown tonality with impasto halftones. The precision of his armature of underdrawing, without any loose or unresolved crossing of lines, suggests that, as was often his practice, Johnson transferred the basic outlines of *The Early Scholar* from a cartoon or drawing where he had already worked out the perspective.

In subject, as opposed to technique, the painting participates in the international wave of popularity for the works of another French painter, Edouard Frère. Promoted by John Ruskin, Frère's sentimental scenes of rural French poverty, in which children cheerfully fill roles of adult responsibility, became very widely exhibited and sold in England and the United States during the 1850s and 1860s. Frère also developed a sub-specialty of boys and girls seeking warmth on a cold winter's day.<sup>7</sup> The similarity of approach of Frère and Johnson was often noted by American critics, who nevertheless discerned a distinctly American stamp on the latter's genre scenes. "It is as a painter of the fire-side . . . that Mr. Johnson is best to us," wrote Eugene Benson. "In those sad and luminous faces of children we see that life is serious to the American from his childhood. In New England his chief object is to keep warm and to 'get on.' The boy warming his hands is to Mr. Johnson what the little French *gourmand* is to Theodore Frère [*sic*]."<sup>8</sup>

By the time that Johnson began work on *The Early Scholar*, its generic setting—a rude country school presumably in New England—had assumed an exalted position in the mythology of the early United States.<sup>9</sup> School reforms had recently resulted in a more sympathetic and standardized system of education, with better-trained teachers (often women rather than the formerly predominant men), increasingly comfortable buildings, more advanced furnishings, and a less rigid system of discipline. Yet Johnson's contemporaries looked back with nostalgia at the spartan conditions of an early nineteenth-century education. In retrospect, they saw the schoolhouse, usually built as a communal undertaking, as a symbol of an emerging social polity in rural areas. Thomas Jefferson had earlier stressed the necessity of free public education in a democracy, and although it was by no means within the grasp of every boy and girl in the antebellum era, the concept became universally championed as a means of ensuring the perpetuation of the republic by inculcating shared tenets of citizenship.<sup>10</sup>

Writers of the 1870s seemed to delight in the character-building privations that they maintained had been prevalent in the early schoolhouse experience. The bare frame structures were often sloppily constructed, with poor ventilation, few windows, and no insulation. The uncomfortable, rough-hewn benches lacked backs, and there were few teaching aids, such as maps or blackboards. The punishments frequently meted out by schoolmasters, moreover, were cruelly severe. Perhaps the most common shared memory, however, was of the almost unendurable cold in the badly heated rooms. "Oh dear! can there by any thing worse for a lively, muscular, mirthful, active, little boy than going to a winter district school," asked an essayist in 1873.<sup>11</sup> Heman Humphrey, president of Amherst College, likewise remembered,

For the most part, the winter schools were miserably supplied with wood. . . . In many cases the understanding was that the larger boys must cut the wood as it was wanted. It always lay in the snow, and sometimes the boys were sent to dig it out in school-time, and bring it in, all wet and green as it was, to keep us from freezing. That was the fuel to make fire with in the morning, when the thermometer was below zero; and how the little children cried with the cold, when they came almost frozen and found no fire burning; nothing but one or two boys blowing and keeping themselves warm as well as they could by exercise, in trying to kindle it!<sup>12</sup>

Evidently Johnson was familiar with this scenario and with the lessons of responsibility and initiative it was believed to instill. His art of the 1860s is peppered with themes of childhood work, self-reliance, and acceptance of adult duties.<sup>13</sup> His children often appear as sober, dignified, and resolutely moral toilers, in keeping with their contemporary celebration as prelapsarian embodiments of blissful purity.<sup>14</sup> This message was reinforced when the finished version of *The Early Scholar* was shown at the National Academy in 1868 along with a much larger and more explicitly didactic and programmatic work by Johnson: *The Boyhood of Lincoln* (1868, University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor). Similar in theme, it depicted the future president seated in a rustic cabin next to a blazing hearth, studying a book by the light of the fire. Touching on the American "up-from-nothing" fable, it became widely popular through several copies and a lithographic reproduction.

Despite the enthusiastic attention devoted to Johnson's *Boyhood of Lincoln*, critics had many good words for *The Early Scholar* as well. The *New York Daily Tribune* found the "genuine American boy" to

be "worthy of Frère" but "by no means painted in imitation of that master." The *New York Times* revealed in the painting's narrative: "It is a cold morning and Johnny has found his way to school in advance of the other pupils. He is at the queer old stove warming his toes and fingers, preparatory we may safely conclude to plunging into study." The *New York Evening Post*, writing a year earlier and possibly referring to the National Gallery's version in the artist's studio, paid attention once again to the schoolhouse itself: "The rude desks and benches, where generations of boys with jackknives had carved their names, the master's high seat, the shackly old stove-pipe, and the logs of wood lying about the stove, are all faithfully represented."<sup>15</sup>

In the National Gallery's painting, these last named objects are certainly visible, but they are hazy, subordinated to the work's dim tonality and dull grayish scumble. The dark stove, its pipe, and the corner of the blackboard form a stark, two-dimensional, geometric motif that collapses the space of the left side of the scene. In contrast, the stepped series of student desks extends the right portion of the painting into an ambiguous distance. Pentimenti above and to the left of the benches indicate that Johnson experimented with the compositional balance that the grouping provides.

In the center foreground is the young boy, the profile of his round face lost to the shadows. Far more suggestive is the long curve of his back as his body strains to fold inward—his feet raised and his pants pulling at the knee—in an effort to move his extremities as close to the stove as possible. The rocker, in a seemingly sympathetic motion, also tilts forward, responding to this displacement of the child's weight. An intense, orange-yellow corona around the stove door warns of its fiery contents; the boy's hands and cheeks as well as the toe of his shoe pick up the glow of this heat. Poignantly alone in the adult-size chair and surrounded by the ghostly forms of his empty classroom, the boy is nevertheless at the center of an aura of life and warmth created by Johnson. Such quiet, but profound moments of solitude and abstraction were the artist's forte, where a judicious arrangement of objects and a subtle understanding of the language of the body obviated the need for any overt narrative.

JD

#### Notes

1. An undated photograph reproduced in French 1906, 123, depicts Johnson's studio, in which the NGA



Eastman Johnson, *The Early Scholar*, 1963.10.157

version of *The Early Scholar* can be discerned on the left wall.

2. Provenance information is provided in undated notes, NGA curatorial files, from information conveyed by Mary Towar Bullard (Mrs. Chester) Dale in May 1959.

3. The catalogue entry for the NGA painting in this exhibition has incorrect provenance information.

4. Among many possible similar examples are his *Girl by the Stove* (Nassau County Museum, Syosset, New York), *Warming Her Hands* (1862, sale, Christie's, 26 September 1991), and *The Village Post Boy* (1861, location unknown).

5. *Johnson* 1907, no. 113. The description of the painting in the catalogue notes the inclusion of the boy's mittens, indicating that this version differed slightly from the earlier NGA picture. The work was sold to W. J. Curtis.

6. The version dated 1865 is lighter in tone than the NGA sketch and much more exacting in its depiction of the various compositional elements. Included are a pair of mittens and several small pieces of kindling scattered on the floor, areas of exposed wall where the plaster has chipped away, and a lower, more horizontal teacher's desk—none of which appears in the NGA picture.

7. Frère's *The Cold Day* (1858, Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore), for example, a group of three children gathered around a stove, was purchased by W. T. Walters from a New York gallery in 1860; see Johnston 1982, 92. His *Winter—Boy with Wood* was shown at the National Academy in 1859 (the same year as Johnson's triumphant exhibition of *Negro Life at the South*), and his *Cold Morning* and "Warm Me" were exhibited at the Philadelphia Great Central Fair in 1864. A measure of Frère's popularity—and of the appeal of his romanticization of poverty and want—can be gauged by reading W. D. Conway, "Edouard Frère, and Sympathetic Art in France," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 43, November 1871, 801–814.

8. Eugene Benson, "Eastman Johnson," *Galaxy* 6, July 1868, 111, as quoted in Hills 1977, 96–97.

9. See Cikovsky 1986, 47–69, for a discussion of the American schoolhouse as well as a variety of primary and secondary sources on the subject.

10. For an elaboration of these ideas, see Schroeder 1977, 4–9; and Gulliford 1984.

11. "A School of the Olden Time," *American Educational Monthly* 10, January 1873, 8.

12. "The Old School-house and the New; or, Fifty Years Ago and To-day," *American Educational Monthly* 8, October 1873, 475.

13. See Hills 1977, 91, 94.

14. A typical essay is Eugene Benson, "Childhood in Modern Literature," *Appleton's Journal* 1, 24 April 1869, 118–119, as cited in Ames 1969–1970, n. 28.

15. "Fine Arts. National Academy of Design. The East Room," *New York Daily Tribune*, 18 June 1868; "Fine Arts. National Academy of Design," *New York Times*, 14 May 1868; and "Fine Arts. Eastman Johnson," *New York Evening Post*, 19 January 1867. Other discussions of *The Early Scholar* are found in *National Academy of Design. Exhibition of 1868*, New York, 1868, 35; "Fine Arts. Forty-Third Exhibition of the National Academy of Design. Second Notice," *Nation* 6, 7 May 1868, 377; and "Fine

Arts. Academy of Design," *The Albion* 46, 16 May 1868, 237.

## References

- 1940 "Johnson": 20.  
1965 *Dale*: 36, repro.  
1980 Wilmerding: repro. 72.  
1981 Williams: 148–149, repro.  
1987 Link: color repro. 21.  
1988 Wilmerding: repro. 82.

1978.72.1 (2731)

## *The Brown Family*

1869

Oil on paper, mounted on canvas, 59 × 72.4 (23 1/4 × 28 1/2)  
Gift of David Edward Finley and Margaret Eustis Finley

## Inscriptions

At lower right: E. Johnson 1869

**Technical Notes:** The support is a single sheet of paper. A second, narrow band of paper (4 cm wide) added at the top edge was probably part of the artist's original intention. Both pieces have been lined to fabric. An extremely thin, cream-colored priming layer covers the paper and is occasionally visible in the background. Extensive underdrawing, probably pencil but with a few lines in a liquid medium, is also visible throughout, including perspective lines for the carpet and fireplace and details such as the strapwork on the walls. Infrared reflectography and x-radiography indicate slight adjustments to the figures of the man and child. Paint was generally applied thinly, with a greater degree of finish to the figures than the background. With the exception of the fireplace flames and the occasional highlights on metal surfaces, there is little impasto. In 1978, prior to acquisition, discolored varnish was removed and the painting was restored. Several small paint losses, particularly on and around the figure of the man, have been inpainted. The varnish has not discolored.

**Provenance:** Eliza Maria and James Brown, New York; given December 1870 to their grandson, James Clifton Brown [d. 1917] and his wife, Amelia Brown, Faygate, England; their son, Howard Clifton Brown [d. 1946], Faygate, England; his daughter, Elizabeth Clifton Brown Calvert, Faygate, England; her sister and brother-in-law, Katherine and Ion Garnett-Orme, Cheriton, England, by about 1950;<sup>1</sup> (Peter H. Davidson & Co., New York), by 1978.

**Exhibited:** *La Pintura de Los Estados Unidos de Museos de la Ciudad de Washington*, Museo del Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico City, 1980–1981, no. 23. *Bilder aus der Neuen Welt: Amerikanische Malerei des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts*, Orangerie des Schlosses Charlottenburg, Berlin; Kunsthaus, Zurich, 1988–1989, no. 55.

THE National Gallery's picture by Eastman Johnson is one of two versions of a group portrait of members of the James Brown family, well-known residents of New York City. Included are James (1791–1877), his second wife Eliza (1803–1890), and their grandson, William Adams Brown (1865–1943). James Brown was born in Ireland and brought to the United States as a boy by his father, Alexander, the founder of the family dry goods business that eventually became Brown Brothers and Company, an international mercantile banking firm still in existence. Although there were many Brown relations involved, James became the undisputed head of the U.S. branch of the business, and his older brother William (d. 1864) managed the English house. Never a conspicuous figure in New York upper class society, James was known as a quiet man of wealth and power who supported cultural and religious organizations, including the New-York Gallery of the Fine Arts and Union Theological Seminary (where young William eventually held a professorship). At James Brown's death, the mayor ordered city flags to be flown at half-staff.<sup>2</sup>

Johnson's depiction of the Browns falls midway in a series of family groups he executed between 1864 and 1874.<sup>3</sup> Collectively, these conversation pieces serve as a means of transition from Johnson's "first" career as a narrative figure painter to his final years as a portraitist, partaking somewhat of both genres. But they also root him in the general artistic climate of the post-Civil War era. Such group portraits became newly popular at this time, with examples constantly emanating from the studios of Seymour Joseph Guy (1824–1910), Edward L. Henry (1841–1919), George H. Story (1835–1923), and Robert Weir (1803–1889), among others. Notable in *The Brown Family* is the mixing of generations, with the elder Browns and the boy William depicted unaccompanied by his parents, John Crosby and Mary Brown. Here as well, Johnson seems to have been part of a small trend.

The artist could have found thematic inspiration for his painting in a very similar lithograph released in 1868 by Currier and Ives, entitled *Old Age* (fig. 1), one of a series known as *The Four Seasons of Life*.<sup>4</sup> Each image includes an elderly couple with a young child in a similar interior setting (that of the print being much more modest than the Brown parlor). In each the woman is knitting and the man is pausing in his newspaper reading to turn toward a grandchild. Johnson's focus on grandparents continued in his *Hatch Family* of several



Fig. 1. Currier and Ives, *Old Age* from *The Four Seasons of Life*, c. 1868 (photo in NGA curatorial files)

years later, where a knitting grandmother and newspaper-reading grandfather again have center stage; however, he was not the first painter to explore this cross-generational theme. Precedents include Aaron Draper Shattuck's *The Shattuck Family, with Grandmother, Mother, and Baby William* (1865, The Brooklyn Museum) and a painting sometimes attributed to J. A. S. Oertel and known as *Visiting Grandma* (1865, NYHS), but that is almost certainly Joseph Oriel Eaton's *First Letter*, which was exhibited at the National Academy of Design in 1865, where Johnson undoubtedly saw it (Johnson's *Blodgett Family* was in the same exhibit).<sup>5</sup>

The three figures of *The Brown Family* are placed within an elaborate setting that vies with its inhabitants for dominance. The unusual attention paid to interior decoration here must have been at the request of the sitters. Brown family documents indicate a great attachment to this particular domestic "frame," and its constituent parts were passed from generation to generation. (The Browns even commissioned a series of photographs of their home from Mathew Brady, one of which was obviously Johnson's source for much of his painting [fig. 2].) The first James Brown home in New York was in lower Manhattan on Leonard Street. When the family moved uptown in the late 1840s to a large new house at the corner of Ninth and University Place, they commissioned a costly interior from French designer Léon Marcotte in the Francis I-Renaissance Revival style. Marcotte was asked to incorporate selected items from their previous residence, such as the crystal chandelier (visible in the other version of

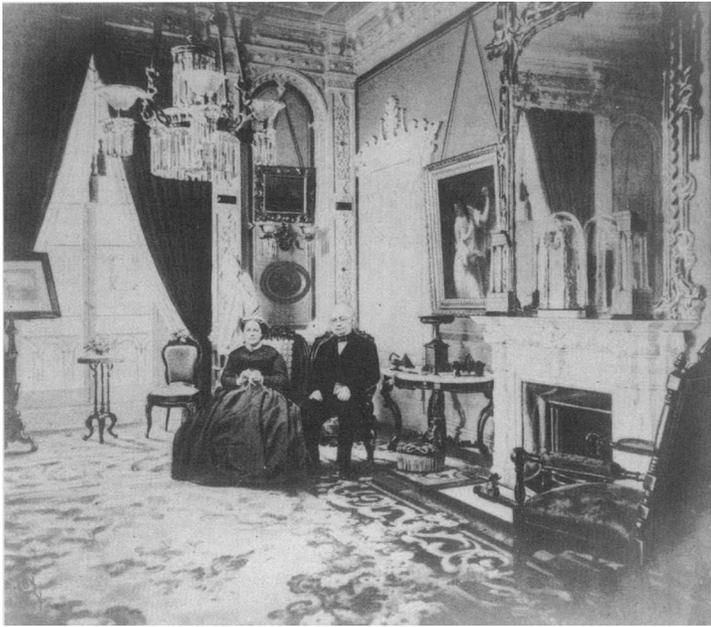


Fig. 2. The Brown Family, c. 1856 (photo in NGA curatorial files)

Fig. 3. Eastman Johnson, *The Brown Family*, oil on canvas, 1869, The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller III, 1979.7.67



the painting [fig. 3]) and the wall sconces here depicted in the new parlor.<sup>6</sup>

The widely popular French Renaissance Revival was considered particularly appropriate for wealthy families. This was especially true of the infrequently employed Francis I style, with its tall proportions, heavy furniture, richly carved mantels and frames, and extravagant wall and drapery treatments (brightly colored, rather than the darker hues that later became standard).<sup>7</sup> The style must have suited the Browns, for when they moved yet again—about the time Johnson was commissioned to execute their portrait—they transported the entire room, including the ceiling, fireplace, and strapwork wall panels, to their final home on Park Avenue and 37th Street.<sup>8</sup> A family photograph of this reconstituted parlor taken in 1890 demonstrates that two decades after the move, the same furniture, pictures, light fixtures, and carpets were placed exactly as they had been in 1869 on University Place. Later photographs of the home of Mary and John Crosby Brown indicate that even after the deaths of his parents James and Eliza, John perpetuated their memory by moving the parlor's mantel, furniture, and decorations into his own town house.<sup>9</sup>

“Home” was evidently a concept so important to the Browns that they literally and physically took it with them every time they moved. Yet the degree of their affection for these decorations was matched only by the scorn they elicited from the critics who viewed Johnson's composition. Of the two versions of the portrait, the San Francisco picture (fig. 3) is the larger, and it depicts much more of the interior arrangements of the room, an emphasis judged particularly unfortunate by most reviewers of the painting. It was this version that Johnson chose to exhibit at the National Academy in 1869, under the title *Portraits*, and the voluminous press accounts of the painting indicate that it became something of a sensation.<sup>10</sup> The only passage of the canvas to bring nearly consistent kind words from reviewers was the figure of the boy in his blue velvet suit. “Nothing could be more natural than the action of the little child, laying its hand on grandpapa's arm, to attract his attention from the newspaper,” wrote the *New York Times* characteristically.<sup>11</sup>

Here, for the most part, the praise stopped. All remaining attention was directed toward the room itself. New York taste evidently had passed up the Browns, and the writers were appalled at Johnson's minute celebration of their lavish home. It was “gaudy,” “garish,” and “painfully elaborated” ac-



Eastman Johnson, *The Brown Family*, 1878.72.1

ording to the *Art Journal*. For the *Nation*, it represented “the monstrosities of modern fashionable upholstery and decoration.” The *New York Leader* weighed in with the simple opinion that “for the first time in very many years [Johnson] has painted a bad picture.”

Much of the blame fell on the Browns themselves. *Watson’s Art Journal* saw the portrait as “painted to suit the tastes of his sitters.” This was apparently the only way for that publication’s critic to explain the “figures that an artist would never think of painting, and certainly not in their peculiar costumes.” The crowning blow came in a lengthy diatribe written by Clarence Cook for the *New York Daily Tribune*. Beginning where *Watson’s Art Journal* had left off, Cook asked,

Is it possible that an artist could have invented or chosen this dreadful room? We cannot believe that Mr. Johnson would do either. He might possibly have invented the furniture and decoration, under the influence of nightmare or indigestion; but he could never, we should think, have chosen it under the most harrassing circumstances. And, if it were chosen for him, we offer him our most respectful sympathies for the torture that he must have endured in painting it. But he has gone to his task in a noble spirit of self-sacrifice, determined to do even if he had to die. What conscience has been expended on the chandelier. It looks as if made up of the artist’s crystallized tears of vexation at having to waste his time over the tasteless thing. What quiet skill has given us the mantelpiece, though it must have hung like a millstone round his neck in the doing. And how skillfully he has wrought the whole discordant upholstery mess into a harmony which, while it allows nothing to escape, makes it easy to forget all the incongruous detail.

In light of the existence of the National Gallery’s version of the picture, the most ironic comment came from the *Leader*. For his “aping” of Pre-Raphaelitism, the reviewer warned, Johnson “may be pardoned once.” “But,” the writer continued, “he must be reminded that criticism will scarcely overlook his back-sliding should he persist in it.” Johnson did persist in repeating his “errors,” however, as the present painting attests. What is unknown is why he painted the smaller version of *The Brown Family*. The paper support would suggest that it was a study; however, it is much too finished to have served merely as a compositional sketch. That it omits the upper half of the room so faithfully portrayed in the San Francisco picture may be significant.<sup>12</sup> Did the Browns, mortified by the public condemnation of their home, ask that a second version of the composition be edited?

Matters are complicated by an enigmatic letter from John Crosby Brown to his half-nephew, James Clifton Brown, in which he explains that the National Gallery’s picture is to be the latter’s Christmas present from his grandparents, James and Eliza Brown. It is a picture, he adds, “the history of which is curious, as it owes its existence to a combination of misunderstandings which I will tell you about when we meet. To make a long story short I will simply say in this present note, that it is Eastman Johnson’s handiwork, and considered as a specimen of his workmanship very good. It is in reality a copy of a portion of the picture he painted for me, the crayon drawing of which your mother has, and is really a very good likeness of your grandfather, with a poor one of your grandmother.”<sup>13</sup> Knowledge of the “misunderstandings”—presumably between Johnson and the Browns—would probably explain the genesis of this second version of *The Brown Family*; however, the story has never come to light.<sup>14</sup>

The reduced proportions of the National Gallery’s picture create a more pronounced focus on the figural group: The relation of the Browns to their parlor space has been changed significantly, and young William’s gesture, more of a narrative aside in the San Francisco version, becomes the compositional crux of the painting. It is William, in fact, who energizes the composition and effectively sets it in motion. Using a standard device of genre painting, Johnson has assigned him the role of newcomer. Dressed for the street, he apparently has just arrived in the parlor—a lateral element introduced so as to interrupt the inward-facing, domestic unit of his grandparents. The viewer’s attention is directed toward William’s interaction with his grandfather through the cue of Eliza Brown, who, somewhat recessively, remains in the background as an observer, her head turned slightly, but perceptibly, in the direction of the two males.<sup>15</sup> Even the carved winged heads of the mantel seem placed as visual guides, deflecting the viewer’s eye back to the more important left half of the scene.

William’s grip on his grandfather’s arm is surprisingly resolute, making their locked gazes appear all the more striking. They are further linked by their similarly crossed legs and their implied ties to the world beyond the heavy drapes of the parlor—James through the newspaper he reads, and William through his outdoor clothing, the soft, powdery fuzz of which is sensitively conveyed by Johnson. The older man’s “peculiar costume” (as *Watson’s Art Journal* had dubbed it), no less conser-

vative and out-of-date than his parlor decorations, also alludes to his work outside the home. John Crosby Brown remembered that his father “dressed until past seventy in the old-fashioned costume of a New York merchant—black trousers, swallow-tail coat, wide black stock, low open waistcoat and thick linen shirt bosom.”<sup>16</sup> This evocation of his business life can be seen to relate as well to the grandson at his side.

Children, as Patricia Hills has written in her discussion of Johnson’s family groups, were “a patent symbol of fecundity and of assured lineage in a property-oriented society. . . . [D]epictions of several generations in unity became reminders to younger generations of filial ties and responsibilities.”<sup>17</sup> Such sentiments seem appropriate here, for young William was the oldest son of John Crosby Brown, the only child of James who took an active hand in managing the business, eventually becoming head of the New York office. Moreover, Brown Brothers and Co. experienced an organizational watershed in 1868, when the articles of partnership were redrawn to distribute power more widely.<sup>18</sup> Previously, James Brown had enjoyed absolute control of both the English and U.S. offices.

In this light, Johnson’s painting can perhaps be understood as a kind of commemoration of James Brown’s gradual retirement from active business, with a nod to the future in the person of William (whose pose and demeanor seem oddly mature for a three-year old). For the Browns, business and family were largely coextensive, so in the end, it is entirely appropriate that what may have been seen as an informal investiture should take place under the watchful eye of Eliza Brown—and in the richly patterned room containing the furnishings which eventually became tangible Brown heirlooms, passed from home to home and generation to generation.

JD

## Notes

1. Provenance information provided, 1978, by Peter H. Davidson & Co., and by letters dated 26 June 1992, from Katherine Garnett-Orme and Elizabeth Calvert (in NGA curatorial files).

2. Much has been written about the Brown family and their banking dynasty. Particularly helpful are John Crosby Brown, *A Hundred Years of Merchant Banking* (New York, 1909); William Adams Brown, *A Teacher & His Times* (New York, 1940); and Kouwenhoven 1968. Brown 1940, 23, quotes a friend describing James Brown as “finding most of his social pleasures in his own home and in his own family circle,” a characterization which accords well with Johnson’s portrait.

3. These include *The Blodgett Family* (1864, MMA), *The Hatch Family* (1871, MMA), and *The Warren Family* (1873, Shelburne Museum, Vermont). The most extensive discussion of these portraits as a group is Hills 1977, 112–125.

4. Hills 1977, 119.

5. *Visiting Grandma*, showing two young children writing at a table in a somewhat lavish parlor as an elderly woman looks on and knits, is signed with an intertwined J, O, and E, and dated 1865. When acquired by NYHS in 1970, it was tentatively assigned to Oertel and given its present title. (See Koke 1982, 3:20–22, where the painting is illustrated.) The records of the National Academy indicate, however, that Eaton exhibited a work entitled *The First Letter* in 1865; the catalogue listed it as belonging to “J.O.E.” The subject corresponds to the latter title and is consistent with the work of Eaton, a little-known portrait and genre painter. The monogram also matches his typical signature.

6. Documents relating to this and subsequent Brown family homes are in the Brown Brothers Harriman archive, NYHS. See also Brown 1940, 31–37, and Kouwenhoven 1968, 82–86. Conflicting primary materials give a range in the dates (varying from 1846 to 1851) for the construction of the University Place house and the family’s occupancy. It is probable that the interior arrangements were not installed until at least 1848–1849, when Marcotte moved to New York and established his business; see Ledoux-Lebord 1984, 469, and Fleming and Honour 1984, 523. The remodeled chandelier from the Leonard Street house, as well as other pieces of furniture from the parlor depicted in the painting, are still in the possession of Brown family descendants.

7. For a broad overview of the period, see the well-illustrated Mayhew and Myers 1980, 213–239.

8. Coincidentally, this move placed the Browns at the same intersection as the residence later depicted by Johnson in *The Hatch Family*, which also featured a Marcotte-designed interior. Brown shortly saw to it that three of his children moved into houses contiguous with his own (and connected to it by passageways). His home remained at the center of this dynastic grouping, which eventually numbered six town houses, where he presided as patriarch much as he does in the painting.

9. The photographs documenting these homes are in the Brown Brothers Harriman archive, NYHS. The exact date of the move from the University Place house has never been established. The 1890 photograph, however, depicts a room so similar to the University Place parlor (as shown in the earlier photograph [fig. 2]), that it thus becomes plausible that Johnson painted the National Gallery’s picture in the new, rather than the old, Brown home. Such speculation is buttressed by the fact that the new room on Park Avenue differed in its fenestration, requiring that the large window shown behind the Browns be blocked up in the new house (a mirror was installed where the window had been). This might account for Johnson having closed the drapes in his painting and would certainly call into question the conventional understanding of the composition as a nostalgic commemoration of the home the Browns were leaving behind. The latter interpretation was first proposed in MMA 1970, no. 143 (where the San Francisco version is

discussed). Even the Brown descendants differ in their recollection of where the Johnson painting was executed. John Crosby Brown ("Reminiscences of the Early Life of John Crosby Brown," p. 23, Brown Brothers Harriman archive, NYHS) identifies the San Francisco picture as depicting the University Place home; William Adams Brown (the boy in the scene) remembers it as the Park Avenue parlor (Brown 1940, 41).

10. The painting was discussed, usually at length, in "Fine Arts," *Nation* 9, 29 April 1869, 340; "Fine Arts. The National Academy of Design," *New York Times*, 30 April 1869; "Fine Arts. The National Academy of Design," *The Albion* 47, 1 May 1869, 243-244; "National Academy of Design," *New York Leader*, 1 May 1869; "Table-Talk," *Appleton's Journal* 1, 8 May 1869, 186; "The Fine Arts. The National Academy of Design," *New York Daily Tribune*, 22 May 1869; "National Academy of Design," *Watson's Art Journal* 11, 22 May 1869, 1; "Art in New York," *Art Journal* 2, May/June 1869, 108; "National Academy of Design," *Appleton's Journal* 1, 5 June 1869, 309; "Fine Arts," *Putnam's Magazine* 3, June 1869, 747; and "Fine Arts. The National Academy of Design," *Galaxy* 7, June 1869, 910. All the quotations that follow are taken from these reviews.

11. These exact words were seemingly plagiarized a month later in the review in *Putnam's*. In contrast, *Appleton's* could not bring itself to take even the child seriously: "What the little urchin says may be read in the listener's wincing and astonished expression. It can be nothing else than the question: 'Have a weed, Grandpa?'"

12. There are very few differences in the two paintings. Omitted in the NGA work is the statue of the infant Hercules that is visible in the San Francisco canvas. The latter painting, however, lacks the group of bibelots clustered around the black classical compote that are visible in both the NGA picture and the photograph (fig. 2). The greatest difference is the modified scale of the NGA picture, which lacks nearly the entire upper half of the San Francisco canvas.

13. Letter dated 22 December 1870 from John Crosby Brown to James Clifton Brown (typescript, NGA curatorial files). The location of the "crayon drawing" mentioned by Brown is unknown.

14. The misunderstandings apparently were not sufficient cause for a break in friendly relations between Johnson and the Browns. The visitors book of "Brighthurst," John Crosby Brown's New Jersey estate, indicates, for example, that the artist and his wife were guests of the family on 30 May 1888 (Brown Brothers Harriman archive, NYHS). John Crosby Brown and Johnson may also have remained in contact through their work at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where both served as early trustees.

15. Critics generally were less pleased with Eliza Brown's stiff pose than they were with the more inventive actions of James and William. Some, such as the writer for the *Art Journal*, seemed to sense Johnson's reliance on a photographic source: "The lady is seated with full face to the front, and posed in portrait style, her hands photographed in the laudable occupation of knitting." Indeed, the somewhat twisted configuration of her fingers is copied exactly from the photograph (fig. 2).

16. Brown 1909, 230.

17. Hills 1977, 115.

18. See Kouwenhoven 1968, 143.

## References

- 1968 Kouwenhoven: 151.  
 1979 Gustafson: 1286, repro.  
 1980 Wilmerding: 15, 72, no. 17, color repro. 73.  
 1981 *La Pintura*: 86.  
 1981 Southgate: 349.  
 1981 Williams: 150-151, color repro. 156.  
 1983 Brown: 90, color repro. 91.  
 1985 Lubin: 117, repro. 118.  
 1988 Clark: 104, repro. 105.  
 1988 Orangerie des Schlosses Charlottenberg: no. 55.  
 1988 Wilmerding: 18, 82, no. 18, color repro. 83.  
 1989 Simpson, Mills, and Saville: 112.  
 1994 Simpson: 177.

1947.17.63 (971)

*Joseph Wesley Harper, Jr.*

c. 1885

Oil on canvas, 69.2 × 56.5 (27 1/4 × 22 1/4)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

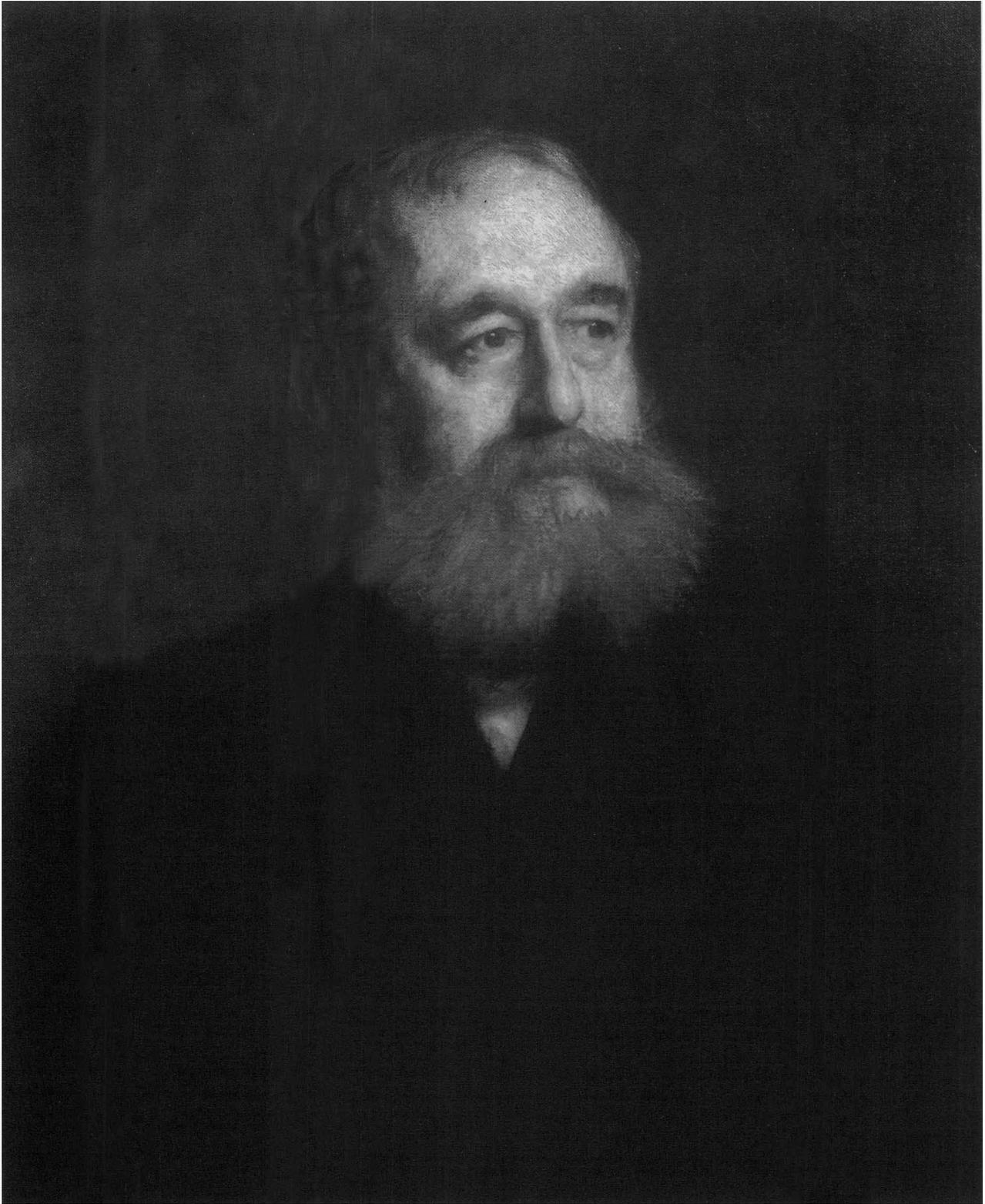
## Inscriptions

At bottom left edge: E.J.<sup>1</sup>

**Technical Notes:** The support, a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric, has been restretched onto a smaller stretcher, resulting in its having been folded over some 7 to 20 cm on the sides and bottom. The painting has not been lined. The whitish ground, which was applied prior to stretching, is covered in some areas with a dark, transparent brown tone. This brown shows through the subsequent paint applied to the face, leaving a patchy, dark impression. The paint layers in the background and the coat were applied rapidly and thinly, with a pronounced brushiness. The area of the face shows discrete touches of relatively high impasto that do not completely cover the fine underdrawing executed probably in pencil. There is minor, scattered inpainting on the sitter's right cheek and in the left background. The varnish has become somewhat discolored.

**Provenance:** Elizabeth B. Johnson, the artist's widow, New York; sold 20 June 1909 to Thomas B. Clarke [1848-1931], New York;<sup>2</sup> his estate; sold as part of the Clarke collection 29 January 1936, through (M. Knoedler & Co., New York), to The A.W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

**Exhibited:** *Exhibition of Paintings by Early American Portrait Painters*, Union League Club, New York, December 1921, no. 7. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered. NPG, on long-term loan, 1967-1980.



Eastman Johnson, *Joseph Wesley Harper, Jr.*, 1947.17.63

JOSEPH WESLEY HARPER, JR. (1830–1896), was the son of one of the four brothers who founded Harper Brothers, a highly successful and influential publishing house in New York City. Born in Brooklyn, he was known as “Brooklyn Joe” to distinguish him from the other Josephs in the Harper family. One of the first Harpers to obtain an advanced degree, he graduated from Columbia College in 1848 and received a masters degree there in 1851; in 1873 he was elected a Columbia trustee. Harper entered the publishing business as a compositor around 1850 and later worked in the book division. He became a partner in 1869 and the senior member of the firm in 1890. His retirement in 1894 was partially occasioned by the crippling attacks of gout that rendered him practically immobile during his last years.<sup>3</sup>

Scholars have been hard-pressed to explain Johnson’s rather sudden abandonment of narrative figure painting in the early 1880s in favor of a return to portraiture, the genre in which he had begun his career forty years earlier. Certainly Johnson received lucrative fees for his portraits, but his genre paintings were also highly valued at the time. The answer perhaps lies more in the changing cosmopolitan art world, which was becoming less receptive to his traditional subject matter. In any event, the historical view of his late portraits has been marked by disappointment, beginning with the first serious Johnson scholar, John I.H. Baur: “[T]hey were undoubtedly excellent likenesses, but they were also formula paintings, done more with the eye than the brain, and of an almost uniform dullness.”<sup>4</sup>

In Johnson’s time, however, appreciation for his portrait work was much greater. Writing a year after the artist’s death, Mark Selby stated:

Really of nobody in our time could one say more decisively than of him, that his portraits—the best of his portraits—fully filled the German definition of a portrait as a ‘characterbild.’ . . . For it was in his portraits most of all that his outlook on life and his criticism of life were most vividly embodied. There are half a dozen portraits of his that one would like to see hung up in any gallery in the world, in the Prado, in the Louvre, . . . in the National Gallery, and be very confident that they would not be extinguished by their neighbors.<sup>5</sup>

If such an encomium seems not to apply to the National Gallery’s picture, it is perhaps because this portrait was simply an oil sketch, retained by the artist as a model for the more carefully finished

likeness (Columbia University, New York) he executed for the sitter. As Johnson’s nephew remembered, “He sometimes made duplicate portraits, keeping one for himself. . . . He used to get . . . about \$1,500 for a head and shoulders.”<sup>6</sup>

The oil sketch and finished portrait of Harper are quite similar, with the only compositional changes being the additions of a white pocket handkerchief and a gold watch fob in the Columbia likeness. As might be expected, the sketch has more pronounced underdrawing and both a thinner and more textured paint application than the final version. The flesh in the National Gallery’s picture also seems more vibrant, pink, and mobile, with a softness around the eyes which contrasts with the relatively forbidding expression of the Columbia portrait.

Both paintings were executed using a basic, two-step process: a thin, stained layer with additional underdrawing and threadlike strokes, and a subsequent overlay of broken dabs of dry, pithy, viscous paint. These latter touches are often discontinuous and dragged across the tops of the canvas threads, leaving much of the previous staining visible. In the National Gallery’s picture, the overall effect is one of a mottled tonality, quickly executed, with a slight hint at intimacy in Harper’s thoughtful countenance. This last quality is perhaps understandable, given that Johnson and his sitter were both members of the Century Club, a social gathering place for men interested in the arts and letters.

JD

#### Notes

1. As a result of the fabric having been folded over the bottom edge of its new stretcher, these initials are damaged.

2. The name of the seller, “Mrs. Eastman Johnson,” and the date of the purchase by Clarke are recorded in an annotated copy of *Clarke* 1928 in the NGA library.

3. For Harper’s biography, see “Joseph Wesley Harper,” *Harper’s Weekly* 40, 1 August 1896, 748; and Exman 1967, 142–144.

4. Baur 1940, 25. Hills 1977, 164–166, seconded Baur’s assessment, with additional speculation on the societal and market forces which may have prompted Johnson’s switch. For a recent, more nuanced view of Johnson’s portraits, see Hills 1990, 77–91.

5. Selby 1907, 538, 540.

6. Alfred W. Johnson, quoted in Baur 1940, 25. The finished version of Johnson’s portrait was given to Columbia University by the sitter’s widow.

#### References

- 1940 Baur: 68, no. 196.  
1952 Rutledge and Lane: 128.

# Matthew Harris Jouett

1788 – 1827

MATTHEW HARRIS JOUETT was born 22 April 1788 in Mercer County, Kentucky. Except for a few trips outside the state in search of commissions, he resided virtually all of his life in Kentucky. His father, Captain Jack Jouett, was known as the “Paul Revere of the South” for his 1781 ride warning Southern patriots of the approach of the British. Only able to afford an education for one of his eight sons, Captain Jouett allowed his children to make the choice. They selected Matthew. Although he studied law at Transylvania College in Lexington, Kentucky, Matthew subsequently abandoned the legal profession in favor of painting, leading his father to remark, “I sent Matthew to college to make a gentleman of him, and he has turned out to be nothing but a damned sign painter!”<sup>1</sup>

Jouett married in 1812. He served in the Kentucky Volunteers during the War of 1812, rising to the rank of captain. He became known for his charcoal sketches of fellow officers, which were admired for their verisimilitude. At the end of the war Jouett accepted responsibility for the loss of \$6,000 worth of payrolls and other papers that had been in his care, even though they disappeared during battle; he worked to repay this debt for much of the rest of his life.

Although Jouett’s reputation as a portraitist was such immediately after the war that he began to receive regular offers of employment, he decided he needed further training. In 1816 he went to Philadelphia, and then on to Boston, where he studied with Gilbert Stuart (1755–1828) for four months. Stuart considered Jouett, whom he called “Kentucky,” his favorite pupil, and conveyed to him the essentials of his late style of painting. In particular, Jouett learned Stuart’s use of heavy shading and little or no background detail. Jouett kept a meticulous journal while studying in Boston, a document that remains one of the main sources of information about Stuart’s methods.

Jouett returned to Lexington following his study with Stuart, established a studio, and began a busy practice as a portrait painter. He is believed to have completed more than 300 portraits before his death at age thirty-nine. His primary concern

was to capture his sitters’ faces as accurately as possible, and the results were often direct and candid. His insistence on truthful portrayals led him to dismiss one friend who planned to sit for his portrait dressed in outlandish clothing and to refuse the request of a small child who wanted the color of her eyes changed. Most of Jouett’s portraits were bust-lengths of prominent Kentuckians such as Governor Isaac Shelby, Senator John Brown, and statesman Henry Clay. He also completed a full-length portrait of the marquis de Lafayette (Kentucky Historical Society) and copies of famous paintings such as Gilbert Stuart’s “Athenaeum” portrait of George Washington.

Some of Jouett’s late works are characterized by a slightly softer use of line and more chiaroscuro, which may reflect a knowledge of Thomas Sully’s style gained on a visit to Philadelphia in 1823. Generally, however, his style remained consistent until his death on 10 August 1827.

FK

## Notes

1. Samuel W. Price, *The Old Masters of the Bluegrass* (1902, 99), quoted in Floyd 1980, 12.

## Bibliography

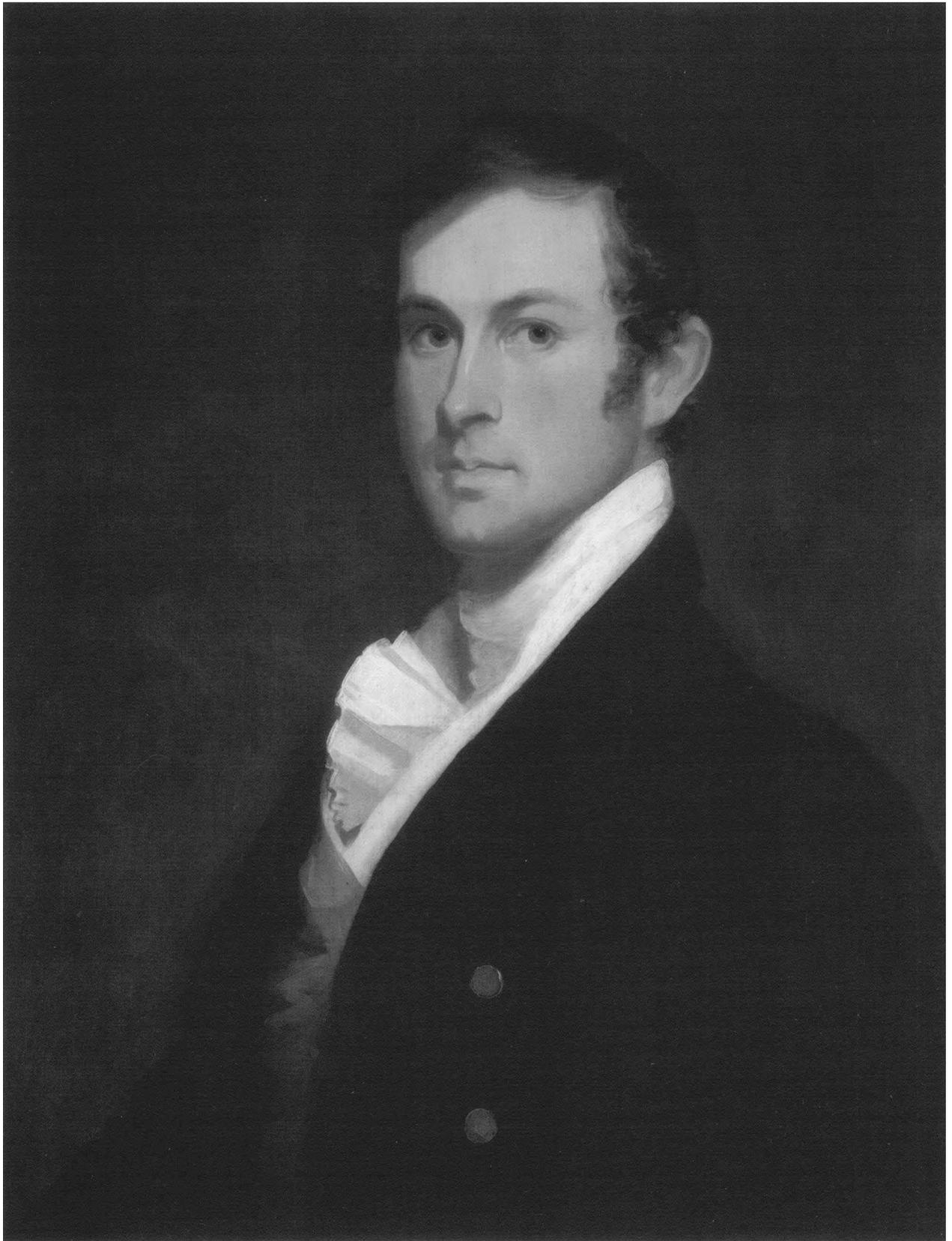
Charles Henry Hart. “Kentucky’s Master Painter.” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* 98 (May 1899): 914–921.  
Price, *Bluegrass*, 1902.  
Jonas 1938.  
Floyd 1968.  
Floyd 1980.

1942.8.6 (559)

## *Augustus Fielding Hawkins*

c. 1820  
Oil on wood panel, 71 × 53.5 (27<sup>15/16</sup> × 21<sup>1/16</sup>)  
Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The painting was executed on a 1.6 cm-thick vertically-grained poplar panel. The front of the panel was primed with a smooth, thin, off-white layer and the back with a gray layer. Gray brushed underdrawing is visible at the ear and on the ruffled shirt front both in natural light and with infrared reflectography.



Matthew Harris Jouett, *Augustus Fielding Hawkins*, 1942.8.6

The paint was applied using tight and smoothly blended brushstrokes, with low impasto only evident in the white ruffles and the forehead. X-radiography reveals that the sitter's left shoulder line was lowered 1.5 cm, that he once wore a semicircular hat, and possibly had a mustache. Inpainting is confined to a small circular area to the right of the sitter's left eye. The varnish has yellowed.

**Provenance:** The sitter [1798–1876]; his son, Strother Hawkins [1830–1905]; his daughter, Harriot Leavy Hawkins;<sup>1</sup> sold 1920 to Thomas B. Clarke [1848–1931], New York; his estate; sold as part of the Clarke collection 29 January 1936, through (M. Knoedler & Co., New York), to The A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

**Exhibited:** *Exhibition of Portraits by Early American Artists*, Union League Club, New York, March 1922, no. 8. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered.

*Augustus Fielding Hawkins* is a characteristic example of Jouett's mature portrait style: muted background, sharply delineated facial features, and somewhat more freely brushed cravat, collar, and coat. The emphatic contrast of dark and light along the right side of the sitter's face, sketchy treatment of the curls of hair, and dab of white paint on the tip of the nose are also hallmarks of his work, as is the bust-length format. Jouett specialist William Barrow Floyd considers "the drawing of the features and the modelling . . . among the best done by the artist."<sup>2</sup>

Jouett commonly left his portraits undated and unsigned, making it difficult to determine the exact year of execution; however, the relatively assured

handling of paint in this example suggests that it postdates the artist's period of study with Gilbert Stuart in Boston in 1816. In particular, the transparent skin tones, atmospheric handling of the background, and strong shading are all strongly suggestive of Stuart's influence.<sup>3</sup> The sitter, who was born in 1798, appears to be in his early twenties, which suggests a date of circa 1820.

Hawkins was, like Jouett, a native Kentuckian. He later became president of the Northern Bank of Kentucky, which was chartered in 1833–1834. He died in Lexington in 1876 at the age of seventy-eight. Jouett also painted a companion portrait of Hawkins' first wife, Harriot Leavy (d. 1840), which is now in the Mead Art Museum at Amherst College. FK

#### Notes

1. Although legal ownership of the portrait never passed from the direct descendants, Augustus Fielding Hawkins' niece Mary Leavy took physical possession of it at an unknown date (possibly around 1905, when Strother Hawkins died). It was subsequently in the possession of her daughter Lizzie Leavy, who in 1917 turned it over to the rightful owner Harriot Leavy Hawkins; letter of 23 July 1920 from Harriot Hawkins (in NGA curatorial files).

2. Floyd 1968, 54.

3. Floyd 1968, 18, 68.

#### References

- 1902 Price, *Bluegrass*: no. 106, 56.  
1928 Cuthbert: 304, repro. 303.  
1939 Martin: no. 189, 25.  
1968 Floyd: 48, 54, repro. 55.

## John Frederick Kensett

1816 – 1872

JOHN FREDERICK KENSETT was born on 22 March 1816 in Cheshire, Connecticut, the son of Thomas Kensett, an English engraver who had immigrated to America, and Elizabeth Daggett, a New Englander. By 1828, Kensett had begun studying engraving and drawing in his father's firm in New Haven, and in 1829 he worked briefly for the engraver Peter Maverick (1780–1831) in New York. Earning his living as an engraver during the 1830s, Kensett began to experiment with

landscape painting, in which he was encouraged by his friend John Casilear. In 1838 he exhibited a work entitled *Landscape* at the National Academy of Design in New York and by 1840 he had decided to become a full-time painter. In that year he sailed for Europe with fellow artists Casilear, Asher B. Durand, and Thomas P. Rossiter (1818–1871). After an extended stay in Europe, with visits to London, Paris, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy, Kensett returned to New York in 1847. He

rapidly established a name as a landscape painter and was elected an associate of the National Academy in 1848. In 1849 he was named a full member of the Academy and was also elected to membership in the prestigious Century Club, which brought him into contact with leading artistic and literary figures of the day.

Kensett's early works were generally richly painted and owed much to the inspiration of Thomas Cole and English landscape painters such as John Constable (1776–1837). Works from the early 1850s, such as *A Reminiscence of the White Mountains* (1852, Manoogian collection) and *Conway Valley, New Hampshire* (1854, Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts) combined vigorous and expressive brushwork with carefully observed details of rocks, vegetation, and atmosphere in a strikingly effective way, and were well received. By the middle and later 1850s his style had become more precise and meticulous, reflecting the influence of Durand, and he began to favor more tranquil and simplified compositions, as in *Shrewsbury River, New Jersey* (1859, NYHS). Kensett was at the height of his powers in the 1860s and in works such as *View on the Hudson* (1865, Baltimore Museum of Art) he created some of the most accomplished American landscapes of the nineteenth century. Although he occasionally painted large works, Kensett generally preferred to work on small- to medium-size canvases. Unlike such contemporaries as Frederic Church or Albert Bierstadt, who traveled to exotic and far-off locales in search of inspiration, Kensett returned again and again to favorite spots that were easily accessible from New York. Never tiring of these places, Kensett produced a substantial body of works that are superficially similar yet possess subtle, but significant variations in composition, lighting, and atmosphere. He became so well known for painting certain places—including Bash-Bish Falls and Lake George, the coastal areas of Newport, and Beverly (Massachusetts)—that many of his contemporaries invariably associated them with his name.

Kensett maintained a high profile in the artistic and cultural circles of New York and was respected and well liked by his fellow artists. In 1859 he was appointed a member of the National Art Commission, which was charged with overseeing the decoration of the Capitol in Washington. He

was a founder of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1870 and served as a member of its board of trustees. In the late 1860s and 1870s he experimented with simpler and more austere, even reductive, compositions. Many of his works from 1870–1872 were unfinished, but examples such as *Eaton's Neck, Long Island* (1872, MMA) are remarkable for their powerful arrangements of a few boldly simplified shapes representing earth, sea, and sky.

On 14 December 1872 Kensett died at the age of fifty-six of complications from pneumonia contracted while trying to retrieve the body of a friend's wife from the waters off Contentment Island, Connecticut. His demise was considered virtually a national tragedy, and when the contents of his studio were auctioned in 1873 they brought more than \$136,000, an astonishing sum for the period. For many of his contemporaries Kensett's art had epitomized landscape painting. As was observed of his art in an obituary published in *The Aldine*: "It is pastoral poetry in painting. Regarded technically, we should say it was almost perfect of its kind."<sup>1</sup>

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#### Notes

1. "Art, John Frederick Kensett," *The Aldine* 5, February 1873, 48.

#### Bibliography

Johnson 1957: 71–92.  
Howat 1968.  
Driscoll 1978.  
Sullivan 1981.  
Driscoll and Howat 1985.

1968.7.1 (2346)

### *Landing at Sabbath Day Point*

c. 1853  
Oil on canvas, 25.4 × 39.9 (10 × 15<sup>11/16</sup>)  
Gift of Mrs. Sigourney Thayer

#### Inscriptions

At lower right: *JF.K.* [JF in ligature]

**Technical Notes:** The support is a plain-weave, tightly woven fabric that has been lined. A smooth white ground of medium thickness was applied to the fabric and over this the paint was built up first in thin, transparent layers and then in increasingly thicker layers moving from



John Frederick Kensett, *Landing at Sabbath Day Point*, 1968.7.1

background to foreground. It appears that the sky was painted first, followed by the mountain and water, with the foreground painted last. The condition of the paint layer is generally good, with a few scattered losses. In 1968 the painting was relined. At that time, discolored varnish was removed prior to inpainting. The varnish has yellowed.

**Provenance:** Andrew Kirkpatrick Cogswell [d. 1887], New Brunswick, New Jersey;<sup>1</sup> his second wife, Virginia Claiborne Latrobe Cogswell, New Brunswick, New Jersey, and Baltimore;<sup>2</sup> her son, John H.B. Latrobe Cogswell [d. 1967]; his half-niece, Mary V.R. Thayer [Mrs. Sigourney Thayer], Washington, D.C.

KENSETT VISITED Lake George, New York, one of the most popular resorts of nineteenth-century America, numerous times during his career and made the lake the subject of paintings on many occasions. An early work, *Lake George* (1853, Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, Massachusetts), is painted with energetic brushwork and has a somewhat crowded composition.<sup>3</sup> By 1869, the date of his most famous view of the lake (*Lake George*, MMA), Kensett had refined his approach significantly, concentrating on fewer elements and a more spacious composition.<sup>4</sup> The result was a painting with powerful presence and monumentality, and animated with shimmering effects of light and atmosphere.

It is difficult to assign a date to *Landing at Sabbath Day Point*.<sup>5</sup> Its small size, relatively informal composition, and free brushwork all suggest it was executed on the spot. Like other artists of the Hudson River School (see, in particular, Asher B. Durand), Kensett spent his summers on sketching tours gathering oil and pencil studies that he could use in creating finished works once back in his New York studio.<sup>6</sup> Yet he also considered his open air studies independent works of art; he both exhibited them in his studio and sold them.<sup>7</sup> Although *Landing at Sabbath Day Point* is not related to any known finished picture, its fairly vigorous brushwork and limited compositional expanse make it generally like Kensett's works of the early-to-mid-1850s.<sup>8</sup>

Sabbath Day Point, located on the west bank of Lake George approximately twenty-six miles north of the lake's southern tip, was a favorite spot for artists and travelers.<sup>9</sup> The site was rich in historical associations, having been the site of several famous eighteenth-century battles, and most important, in Kensett's day offered exceptional views up and down the lake.<sup>10</sup> *Landing at Sabbath Day Point*, al-

though modest in scale and ambition and charmingly informal in effect, conveys the attraction Kensett felt for Lake George, "that sheet of water which has a name par excellence among our American inland seas."<sup>11</sup>

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## Notes

1. The provenance was provided by the donor of the painting in an undated memorandum (in NGA curatorial files).

2. A death date for Virginia Cogswell has not been established. An obituary for her husband in the *New York Daily Tribune*, 14 February 1887, states that she was then "at the point of death"; however, according to Mary Thayer (undated memorandum in NGA curatorial files), Virginia Cogswell and her son John "returned to Baltimore to live" following the death of Judge Cogswell.

3. *Artists of Lake George* 1976, 12, fig. 13.

4. Driscoll and Howat 1985, 131, pl. 33.

5. The title was taken from an old handwritten label on the original stretcher, which also bore the printed number "612." The significance of the latter is unknown; it does not refer to the sale held in 1873 after Kensett's death (*Executor's Sale, The Collection of over Five Hundred Paintings and Studies by the Late John F. Kensett*, New York, 1873), where no. 612 was "Kauterskill Clove, N.Y."

6. Kensett's working methods are discussed in Driscoll and Howat 1985, 49–135 and 163–180. Kensett used unstretched canvases tacked to boards for plein air sketching; however, as the tacking margins of the present picture have been removed, it is impossible to verify whether tack holes were originally present.

7. Johnson 1957, 80.

8. According to John Howat (memorandum of conversation, 4 November 1968, in NGA curatorial files), the painting dates from "about 1850"; however, Kensett is not known to have visited Lake George before 1853 (Driscoll and Howat 1985, 96, 123). At least one painting of the Sabbath Day Point area (*Near Sabbath Day Point, Lake George*) was included in the estate sale following Kensett's death (see *Executor's Sale, The Collection of over Five Hundred Paintings and Studies by the Late John F. Kensett*, New York, 1873, no. 176), but it remains unlocated and its relationship to the National Gallery painting (if any) is unknown. A work entitled *Battery Islands and Sabbath Day Point, Lake George* (Sotheby's, *American 18<sup>th</sup> Century, 19<sup>th</sup> Century and Western Paintings, Drawings, Watercolors, and Sculptures*, New York, 17 October 1980), shows a different view of the lake than that depicted in the National Gallery painting.

9. The landing was probably used by steamboats that traveled the lake and made regular stops at Sabbath Day Point.

10. Lamb 1934, 50; Baedeker 1909, 124. "Lake George," *Gleason's Pictorial Drawing Room Companion*, December 1853, 365; see also O.B. Bunce, "Lake George and Lake Champlain," in William Cullen Bryant, ed., *Picturesque America*, 2 vols, New York, 1872.

11. Letter of 30 March 1854 from Kensett to J.R. Kensett as quoted in Spassky 1985, 2:35.

## References

1981 Williams: 118, repro. 120.

1953.1.1 (1172)

### *Beacon Rock, Newport Harbor*

1857

Oil on canvas, 57.2 × 91.4 (22 1/2 × 36)

Gift of Frederick Sturges, Jr.

#### Inscriptions

At lower right: JF.K. 57 [JF in ligature]

**Technical Notes:** The support is a moderately fine, plain-weave fabric that has been lined. There is cusping along all four cut edges. The fabric was prepared with a white ground; in some areas, such as the rocks and the water at right, a thick reddish brown imprimatura layer was also applied. The paint is generally very thin throughout the water and the sky, but areas of low impasto and thicker applications of wet-into-wet paint are evident, especially in the rocks and foliage. The paint layer is in good condition, with some scattered losses around the edges, and has minimal abrasion. In 1960 the painting was relined. At that time, discolored varnish was removed prior to inpainting. The varnish has become heavily discolored.

**Provenance:** Possibly Jonathan Sturges [1802–1874], New York, and Fairfield, Connecticut;<sup>1</sup> his son, Frederick Sturges [d. 1917], New York, and Fairfield, Connecticut; his son, Frederick Sturges, Jr. [1876–1977], New York, and Fairfield, Connecticut.

**Exhibited:** *The Hudson River School and the Early American Landscape Tradition*, AIC; WMAA, 1945, no. 130, as *Newport Harbor. One Hundred Years 1846–1946*, M. Knoedler & Co., New York, 1946, no. 55, as *Newport Harbor. De Gustibus . . . An Exhibition of American Paintings Illustrating a Century of Taste and Criticism*, CGA, 1949, no. 11, as *Newport Harbor. Exhibition of American Paintings from the Collections of Members*, Century Association, New York, 1949, as *Newport Harbor*, no cat. *Paintings by American Masters, Fifth Anniversary Exhibition*, Kalamazoo Art Center, Michigan, 1966, 8, as *Newport Harbor. John Frederick Kensett 1816–1872*, WMAA; Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts, Ohio; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Cummer Gallery of Art, Jacksonville, Florida, 1968–1969, no. 28. NGA 1980, 53, 55. *La Pintura de los Estados Unidos de Museos de la Ciudad de Washington*, Museo del Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico City, 1980–1981, no. 15, as *Peñasco, Puerto de Newport. John Frederick Kensett: An American Master*, Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts; LACMA; MMA, 1985–1986, 57, 108, 148, pl. 20. *En Ny Värld: Amerikanst landskapsmåleri 1830–1900 och ett urval samtida skandinaviskt landskapsmåleri*, Nationalmuseum Stockholm; Gothenburg Art Museum, Sweden, 1986–1987, no. 60.

IN THE mid-1850s Kensett began to turn his attention from scenes of mountains, lakes (such as *Landing at Sabbath Day Point, Lake George* [1968.7.1]), and woodland interiors to coastal views such as *Beacon Rock, Newport Harbor*. At this time his work also showed a shift from the dramatic landscape tradition of Thomas Cole to a quieter, more contemplative style notable for its carefully observed effects of light and atmosphere, muted colors, subtle tonal variations, and simplified compositions.<sup>2</sup> Kensett's experience of Newport, Rhode Island, which he visited numerous times starting in 1854, was apparently one of the key catalysts for these changes in style.<sup>3</sup>

*Beacon Rock, Newport Harbor* exemplifies the artist's new approach and his quickly developed skill at depicting coastal landscapes. Kensett was fascinated by Newport's rocky coastline, secluded beaches, and quiet harbors, and he created numerous compositions where massive rock formations are balanced by open expanses of water.<sup>4</sup> By the 1850s Newport had become an extremely popular resort, especially with New Yorkers, who could reach it by steamboat in a few hours.<sup>5</sup> The rising merchant class took pleasure in visiting the town to enjoy contemplating its historical associations, its architectural monuments, and, in particular, its lovely ocean and bay scenery. Many of these same people were also patrons of contemporary American landscape painters, and it was only natural that Kensett would turn his hand to filling the demand for paintings of Newport and its environs.<sup>6</sup>

One of Kensett's favorite areas in Newport was Brenton (or, Brenton's) Cove, which he depicted in several paintings over the course of his career.<sup>7</sup> The cove was named for William Brenton, governor of Rhode Island from 1666 to 1669 and original owner of much of the land in the Newport area.<sup>8</sup> It was he who selected the site for Newport and surveyed it, and he built a grand house on a point of land bordering Brenton Cove that would later become the site of Fort Adams. By the mid-nineteenth century Brenton Cove had become well known for affording "one of the finest views that can be obtained of Newport," with well-established paths giving sightseers easy access.<sup>9</sup>

Kensett's *Beacon Rock, Newport Harbor* shows a view from the cove across Newport Harbor, with the large mass of Beacon Rock on the right and Fort Adams on the left. A few sailboats ply the waters, seagulls hover in the sky and a lone fisherman stands on a rock at the water's edge. Although small

waves are shown lapping the foreground shore, as a whole the image is remarkable for its indelible sense of calmness, clarity, and quiet. Everyday existence is seemingly transfixed and locked in space by the carefully structured composition and the precise brushwork.<sup>10</sup>

So convincing is Kensett's depiction of the myriad details of external reality that *Beacon Rock, Newport Harbor* is successful simply as an image of a particularly scenic spot. But for those who sought deeper associations, other possible meanings were implicit in the historic associations of the site:

Each spot on which the eye may chance to rest recalls some event that happened there in earlier times. Looking out from this cove, you might have once seen poor Burgoyne sailing for England after his sad defeat; Cook's famous ship *Endeavor* was condemned, dismantled, and left to decay upon these shores; the Macedonian, prize of the frigate *United States*, was brought to anchor here; the British fleet, under Lord Howe, and the French fleet, under D'Estaing, both sailed by this rocky cove, one bringing misery and the other joy to the hearts of the old inhabitants of Rhode Island.<sup>11</sup>

Kensett, like other leading landscape painters of the day, chose sites for his paintings with particular care, taking into account both their scenic possibilities and the associations they might engender in the minds of receptive viewers.

Although Kensett generally painted quite thinly, he did on occasion use areas of low impasto and wet-into-wet application to define forms. In the National Gallery painting such passages are particularly evident in the surfaces of *Beacon Rock* and in the foliage. Also apparent is Kensett's distinctive method of allowing ground layers to show through the paint in various areas to give added richness. This is especially noticeable in the reddish brown tone that forms the substructure of the foreground rocks and in the cream-colored ground of the sky.<sup>12</sup>

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## Notes

1. According to Frederick Sturges, Jr. (letter of 18 January 1966 in NGA curatorial files), the picture was "painted for my grandfather Jonathan Sturges." Letters of 27 August and 7 December 1981 from Frederick Sturges III (in NGA curatorial files) state that family tradition held that all paintings in the Sturges collection were originally purchased by Jonathan Sturges. In this and four other instances (see *Casilear View on Lake George* [1978.6.1]; Durand, *Forest in the Morning Light* and *A Pastoral Scene* [1978.6.2 and 1978.6.3]; and *Kensett Beach at Beverly* [1978.6.5]) no certain evidence establishes ownership by Jonathan Sturges (see Edmonds, *The Bashful*

*Cousin* [1978.6.4], for more on Jonathan Sturges as a collector). No works by Kensett are mentioned in the discussions of the Jonathan Sturges collection in "Our Private Collections, No. II," *The Crayon* 3, February 1856, 57–58; Cummings 1865, 141; or Tuckerman, *Book*, 1867, 627. Kensett's account book has an entry in 1857 for a *Newport Scene* sold for \$300, which may refer to the National Gallery painting (letter of 26 July 1965 from Ellen H. Johnson, in NGA curatorial files); however, the name of the purchaser is not listed, making it impossible to verify this assumption.

2. For discussions of Kensett's shift in style and his developing interest in American coastal scenery during the mid-1850s, see Driscoll and Howat 1985, 95–135, and Sullivan 1990, 1030–1041.

3. Sullivan 1990, suggests that Kensett's friend George William Curtis (1824–1892), author of several books and articles extolling Newport's beauties, initially encouraged him to visit the area.

4. For example, *Berkeley Rocks, Newport* (1856, Vassar College Art Gallery, Poughkeepsie, New York), in Foshay and Mills 1983, 70, fig. 44.

5. Sullivan 1981, 132–133. Henry Ward Beecher, "Inland vs. Seashore," in Beecher 1855, 110, laments that Newport was becoming overcrowded.

6. Newport scenes by Kensett began appearing at the National Academy of Design exhibitions in New York in 1855 and regularly thereafter until his death. Some fifty paintings with "Newport" in the title were included in the 1874 estate sale of his works.

7. Among these are: *Entrance to Newport Harbor*, 1855 (Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Manella, Studio City, California; Driscoll and Howat 1985, 108, fig. 62); *Beacon Rock, Newport Harbor*, 1858 (Kennedy Galleries, New York; *Antiques* 120 [August 1981], repro. 227); *Bay of Newport*, 1863 (location unknown; sold Sotheby's, New York, 27 May 1992, no. 19A); *Marine off Big Rock*, 1869 (Cummer Gallery of Art, Jacksonville, Florida; Driscoll and Howat 1985, 107, pl. 21); *Newport, Rhode Island*, 1872 (William Vareika Fine Arts, Newport; *Antiques* 138 (November 1990, repro. 903); and *Newport Rocks*, 1872, unfinished (MMA; Driscoll and Howat 1985, 150, pl. 42). In these various depictions of Brenton Cove and Beacon Rock, Kensett made subtle, but significant adjustments in lighting, positioning of incidental details, and viewpoint, yet he retained the same basic compositional format. This process of repetition and refinement was an essential element in his art and may be found in the case of many other subjects he painted. Two paintings of Brenton Cove were included in the sale following Kensett's death: *Brenton's Cove, Newport, R.I.* and *Brenton's Cove, from near Jones' Cottage, Newport, R.I.*; see *Executor's Sale, The Collection of over Five Hundred Paintings and Studies by the Late John F. Kensett*, New York, 1873, 25, no. 365, and 26, no. 379. One of these may have been the 1872 painting owned by William Vareika.

8. *Appleton's* 1888, 1: 368.

9. T. M. Clarke, "Newport," in William Cullen Bryant, ed., *Picturesque America*, 2 vols, New York, 1872, 1:366. Clarke's discussion of Brenton Cove is accompanied by a full-page illustration of the cove, taken from a vantage point close to that seen in *Beacon Rock, Newport Harbor*, by W. J. Linton after C. Griswold.



John Frederick Kensett, *Beacon Rock, Newport Harbor*, 1953.1.1

10. It is precisely these qualities that have been identified by some scholars as forming the basis of what is called "luminism"; see Sullivan 1990. Although use of the term remains controversial, the appearance of these stylistic changes in Kensett's art around 1855 is undeniable.

11. T.M. Clarke, "Newport," in William Cullen Bryant, ed., *Picturesque America*, 2 vols, New York, 1872, 1:366.

12. Johnson 1957, 85, describes this technique: "In Kensett's skies his technical finesse is perhaps most obviously apparent. Here, the underpainting, frequently a light cream-yellow, is partially covered with blue strokes so minute as to be barely perceptible; working up into the sky the blue strokes are put on more densely so that less and less of the yellow is allowed to show, thus giving the effect of a warmer and brighter light at the horizon and a more saturated but still luminous blue higher in the sky." For further discussion of Kensett's working methods, see Driscoll and Howat 1985, 163-180.

#### References

- 1949 Larkin: repro. 206, as *Newport Harbor*.  
 1966 Raben: 19, repro. 84, as *Newport Harbor*.  
 1968 Howat: no. 28.  
 1974 Moore: 194-195, 269, fig. 154, color repro., as *Newport Harbor*.  
 1975 Walker: 559, no. 850, color repro.  
 1977 Andrus: 272-273, repro. 415.  
 1981 Williams: 118, repro. 120.  
 1981 Sullivan: v, 132, 134-141, 143, fig. 19, as *Newport*, 1857.  
 1982 Mrozek: 20, fig. 1.  
 1982 Garrett: 68, color repro. 69.  
 1983 Brown: 68, color repro. 69.  
 1984 Walker: 549, no. 834, color repro.  
 1985 Driscoll and Howat: 57, 108, 148, pl. 20.  
 1985 Wilmerding: 998, color repro. 999.  
 1987 Wilmerding: 53, color repro. 52.  
 1990 Sullivan: 1032, color repro. 1030-1031.

1978.6.5 (2719)

### *Beach at Beverly*

c. 1869/1872

Oil on canvas, 55.8 × 86.4 (21<sup>15/16</sup> × 34)

Gift of Frederick Sturges, Jr.

**Technical Notes:** The support is a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric that has been lined. The ground layer is white and was used as a visible part of the design layers in some areas, showing through in the sky and the water. Underdrawing, probably graphite, is visible to the eye in the area where the beach meets the rocks; additional underdrawing in the rocks and a horizon line is visible through infrared reflectography. The paint was applied with a variety of strokes, from very wet, fluid brushwork to dry stipple. The painting is generally in good condi-

tion, with a few scattered small losses and only minimal abrasion. The varnish has discolored.

**Provenance:** Possibly Jonathan Sturges [1802-1874], New York, and Fairfield, Connecticut;<sup>1</sup> his son, Frederick Sturges [d. 1917], New York, and Fairfield, Connecticut; his son, Frederick Sturges, Jr. [1876-1977], New York, and Fairfield, Connecticut.<sup>2</sup>

**Exhibited:** NGA 1980, 86, as *Beach at Newport*. *John Frederick Kensett: An American Master*, Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts; LACMA; MMA, 1985-1986, 135, as *Beach at Newport*. *American Paradise: The World of the Hudson River School*, MMA, 1987, 158-159, as *Beach at Newport*.

ALTHOUGH neither signed nor dated, *Beach at Beverly* is located on stylistic grounds among the works of Kensett's late career. The tightly controlled brushwork, subtle range of hues, and open expanse of sea and light-filled air ally it to his reductive and powerful works of circa 1869-1872 that are notable for their simplified compositions, suppression of extraneous detail, and sophisticated atmospheric effects. These culminated in the group of paintings known as "The Last Summer's Work" of 1872, in which the compositions are spare and light and greatly simplified forms served as the main organizing elements.<sup>3</sup>

Between 1859 and 1872 Kensett produced a number of paintings of the North Shore of Massachusetts, an area that had become popular as a summer resort for wealthy Boston families.<sup>4</sup> Friendly with many of the prominent Bostonians who vacationed along the North Shore, Kensett visited the region several times and produced more than thirty paintings of the area. Of this group, more than twenty were scenes of Beverly, a coastal town about twenty-five miles north of Boston.<sup>5</sup> *Beach at Beverly*, once thought to depict a scene in the area of Newport, Rhode Island, focuses on a rocky projection between Curtis Point and Mingo Beach on the Beverly shore.<sup>6</sup> This site is also featured in several other paintings, including *The Coast at Beverly* (fig. 1), and *Coast Scene* (c. 1859/1860, private collection).<sup>7</sup> It is also related, although less obviously, to *Coast Scene with Figures* of 1869 (fig. 2), which shows the same large mass of rocks but not the smaller rocks projecting into the water.<sup>8</sup>

In all these works the dominating compositional element is the large rock formation topped by bushes and small trees at the left. A few figures engaged in various activities usually appear in the fore-



John Frederick Kensett, *Beach at Beverly*, 1978.6.5



Fig. 1. John Frederick Kensett, *The Coast at Beverly*, oil on canvas, c. 1865-1870, Fort Worth, Amon Carter Museum

grounds, and the right sides of the compositions are filled by an open area of water. Kensett's contemporaries were well aware of his tendency to employ certain compositions repeatedly; as one observed: "His coast scenes have a remarkable resemblance to each other—a bold rock in the foreground, a bit of water with waves washing the beach, a tree or two, and a silver-gray sky."<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, within this general format the artist made adjustments, as he had in his earlier Beacon Rock series [see 1953.1.1], thus giving each work its own particular nuances and emphasis. In *Coast Scene with Figures* the sea is rough and a breaking wave is poised at the water's edge, while in *Beach at Beverly* and *The Coast at Beverly* the sea is more peaceful.

Beyond the addition of the rowboat and the figures on the beach and behind the trees, the differences between *Beach at Beverly* and *The Coast at Beverly* are less readily apparent. In *The Coast at Beverly* rocks in the foreground run to the water's edge, interrupting the curve of the beach; the largest sailboat is farther away, giving it a less prominent role; and some of the bushes are tinged with autumn colors, providing a red highlight at left (in the National Gallery painting it is the red cloth in the rowboat that draws attention).<sup>10</sup> A yet more subtle adjustment, involving a change in the viewpoint and in

the general character of the light, is arguably Kensett's most significant. *Beach at Beverly* has a slightly higher viewpoint, which serves to lower the horizon and increase the feeling of vast space.<sup>11</sup> At the same time, an area of dark clouds located over the rocks closes the left side of the painting more completely, thus providing a counterpoint to the seemingly infinite sweep of sky and sea at the right. Through these adjustments Kensett achieved a work in which the immediate and imminent—the figure walking on the beach, the boats sailing on the water, and the clouds approaching from the right—blend with the timeless and the permanent—the rocks, water, and sky.<sup>12</sup> It is this delicate balance, dependent on a highly sophisticated manipulation of composition, lighting, and paint itself, that gives *Beach at Beverly* an almost magical intensity and calm repose and ultimately distinguishes it as one of Kensett's most masterful achievements.

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#### Notes

1. According to letter of 18 January 1966 from Frederick Sturges, Jr., and letters of 27 August and 7 December 1981 from Frederick Sturges III (in NGA curatorial files), family tradition held that paintings in the Sturges collection were originally purchased by Jonathan Sturges. In this instance and four others (Kensett, *Beacon Rock*,



Fig. 2. John Frederick Kensett, *Coast Scene with Figures (Beverly Shore)*, oil on canvas, 1869, Hartford, Wadsworth Atheneum, The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund

*Newport Harbor* [1953.1.1]; Casilear, *View on Lake George* [1978.6.1]; and Durand, *Forest in the Morning Light* and *Pastoral Scene* [1978.6.2 and 1978.6.3]) no certain evidence establishes ownership by Jonathan Sturges (see *The Bashful Cousin* [1978.6.4] by Edmonds for more on Jonathan Sturges as a collector). No works by Kensett are mentioned in "Our Private Collections, No. II," *The Crayon* 3, February 1856, 57–58; Cummings 1865, 141; or Tuckerman, *Book*, 1867, 627.

2. Frederick Sturges, Jr., died 14 October 1977 (letter of 27 January 1982 from Frederick Sturges III, in NGA curatorial files). *Beach at Beverly* came to the National Gallery as a bequest with four other paintings.

3. Howat 1968, nos. 46, 47; Driscoll and Howat 1985, 137–161.

4. Bennewitz 1989, 46–65.

5. Bennewitz 1989, 47.

6. The location is identified in Bennewitz 1989, 59–60.

7. See Bennewitz 1989, 61, fig. 19. *Coast Scene with Figures* was originally purchased by Kensett's friend Charles Loring (1794–1867), a Boston lawyer. Bennewitz 1989, 53 (citing a letter of 14 March 1860 from Loring to Kensett, James R. Kellogg Collection, AAA), records Loring's enthusiastic response to the painting and to another Kensett view of Beverly which he had also purchased.

8. A smaller version of this painting (1872, location unknown) is illustrated in Bennewitz 1989, 63, fig. 22.

9. "Letter from New York," *Boston Daily Evening Transcript*, 28 March 1873.

10. A similar use of red highlights occurs in many other Kensett paintings, including *Beacon Rock, Newport Harbor* (1953.1.1).

11. The proportions of the two paintings are also slightly different, with *Beach at Beverly* having a somewhat more vertical format, which serves to add to the amount of sky.

12. Lacking documentary evidence, it is impossible to determine which of the two paintings came first, and neither can be assumed necessarily to represent a refinement or improvement over the other. Rather, they should be seen as testimony to Kensett's remarkable ability to explore numerous expressive possibilities within a limited compositional format.

#### References

- 1980 Wilmerding: 11, 90, 92, pl. 27, as *Beach at Newport*.  
 1981 Williams: 118, 120 repro., as *Beach at Newport*.  
 1982 Lynes: color repro. 64, as *Beach at Newport*.  
 1982 Garrett: 3, repro. 244, as *Beach at Newport*.  
 1985 Driscoll and Howat: 135, 176, pl. 35, as *Beach at Newport*.  
 1987 Radaker: 47, repro. 48, as *Beach at Newport*.  
 1987 Wilmerding: 53, color repro. 54, as *Beach at Newport*.  
 1988 Wilmerding: 106, no. 30, color repro. 107.  
 1989 Bennewitz: 47, 59, 60, repro. 48.

# John La Farge

1835 – 1910

JOHN LA FARGE was the eldest child in a family of urbane, affluent French immigrants who had earlier settled in New York City. His education was thorough, with attention given to literature, French, and Roman Catholicism. He received drawing lessons from his grandfather and training in watercolor technique from an unidentified English artist. Initially he saw his artistic practice only as an avocation, a diversion during his teenage years at Mount Saint Mary's College in Maryland and Saint John's College in New York. Afterward, he studied law in New York City, at which point he was experimenting with oil painting.

By 1856 La Farge had left for Paris, where family connections secured his entrée into that city's elite literary and artistic circles. While abroad, he traveled in northern Europe, copied the Old Masters, and spent a few weeks in the studio of Thomas Couture (1815–1879). The illness of his father, however, necessitated his return to the United States. After briefly taking up the study of law again in 1857, he rented a studio (which he maintained for the rest of his career) in New York's Tenth Street Studio Building, where he met the building's architect, Richard Morris Hunt. This was the likely impetus for La Farge's decision in 1859 to travel to Newport, Rhode Island, and study painting with the architect's brother, William Morris Hunt (1824–1879).

La Farge married Margaret Perry in 1860, and for most of the rest of his career, his family life centered on Rhode Island. In the late 1860s he cultivated an interest in Japanese art and developed a highly personal style of still-life and plein-air landscape painting. His wide interests eventually led him to innovations in other media as well. By 1875 he was working in stained glass, and a year later, he directed the decorative program for Trinity Church, Boston, designed by architect H. H. Richardson. La Farge became a leader in the mural movement, and his commissions for churches, government buildings, and opulent private homes were a welcome source of income in later years; however, this work usually kept him in Boston or New York, separated from his family. As an easel painter, he was associated

with the Society of American Artists, the organization of younger, stylistically progressive painters opposed to the National Academy of Design. La Farge, though, was also a member of the Academy, and he was extremely concerned with exhibiting his work widely, not just in New York, but across the country.

An inveterate traveler, La Farge made several trips to Europe and two highly publicized Pacific voyages—to Japan in 1886 and to the South Sea Islands in 1890–1891—with his close friend Henry Adams. He documented his trips with extensive series of watercolors and with a succession of articles and books. Nearly always in need of money to pay the many employees required for his glass and mural projects, he found that his writing helped cover these mounting bills; he also supplemented his income by lecturing on art matters. The great variety of La Farge's activities became increasingly taxing in his final years. Nevertheless, he continued to take on large commissions despite his fragile health, for fiscal insolvency was a recurrent threat. He died in Providence, Rhode Island.

JD

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Cortissoz 1911.  
Weinberg 1977.  
*La Farge* 1987.

1966.6.1 (2312)

## *The Entrance to the Tautira River, Tahiti. Fisherman Spearing a Fish*

c. 1895

Oil on canvas, 136 × 152.4 (53<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 60)  
Adolph Caspar Miller Fund

**Technical Notes:** The support is a very fine, plain-weave fabric that has been lined. The original tacking margins are intact. The thin white ground appears to have been commercially applied. A pale underlayer of pinkish wash is visible in the foreground, while a brighter red underlayer was used in the sky. Subsequent paint is opaque and was applied very thinly and dryly over the fabric nubs. A group of horizontal scratches through the

paint layer in the lower left corner appears to be intentional. The surface seems to be selectively varnished, with neighboring areas alternately matte and glossy. Several small damages throughout the surface have been repaired and repainted.

**Provenance:** The artist; his estate; (sale, American Art Galleries, New York, 29–31 March 1911, 2nd day, no. 599); Hamilton Easter Field [1873–1922], Brooklyn;<sup>1</sup> bequeathed to Robert Laurent [1890–1970], Brooklyn;<sup>2</sup> sold March 1966 to (Graham Gallery, New York).

**Exhibited:** *Exhibition of Glass, Oil and Water Color Paintings and Sketches by John La Farge, N.A.*, M. Knoedler & Co., New York, 1909, no. 71.<sup>3</sup> *Oil and Water Color Paintings and Sketches by John La Farge, N.A.*, Doll and Richards, Boston, 1909, no. 30. *Brooklyn Loan Exhibit*, Brooklyn Art Association, 1911, no. 72, as *Tautira River, Tahiti*. *Second Annual Exhibition, American and European Art*, Dallas Art Association, 1921, no. 169, as *In the South Sea Islands. American Painting and Sculpture, 1862–1962*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1932–1933, no. 66, as *Landscape, Tahiti. An Exhibition of the Work of John La Farge*, MMA, 1936, no. 30, as *Scene in Tahiti. A Century of American Landscape Painting, 1800–1900*, WMAA, New York, no. 41; Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, Massachusetts, no. 37; Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, no. 75, 1938–1939, as *Scene in Tahiti. John La Farge, 1835–1910, Loan Exhibition*, Macbeth Gallery, New York, 1948, probably no. 26. *The Coast and the Sea*, The Brooklyn Museum, 1948–1949, no. 70, as *Scene in Tahiti. The Collection of Robert and Mimi Laurent and the Field Foundation Collection*, Indiana University Art Museum, Bloomington; Colby College Art Museum, Waterville, Maine, 1965, no. 53, as *Scene in Tahiti. John La Farge, 1835–1910*, Graham Gallery, New York, 1966, no. 48, as *Scene in Tahiti, Entrance to the Tautira River*, 1891. Timken Art Gallery, San Diego, California, 1981. *John La Farge*, NMAA; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; MFA, 1987–1988, no. 84.

JOHN LA FARGE and his friend Henry Adams began considering a trip to the South Sea Islands as early as 1888; however, the artist, harried by deadlines and commissions, procrastinated until Adams threatened to make the voyage alone. Finally in mid-August 1890, they began their cross-country trek to San Francisco, where, a week later, they boarded a ship bound for Hawaii. La Farge also brought his servant, a Japanese valet named Awoki; the expenses of all three men were borne by Adams.<sup>4</sup>

The travelers made stops at four island groups: the Hawaiian, Samoan, Tahitian, and Fijian archipelagoes. The individual sojourns varied from one to four months, with the visits to Samoa and Tahiti being the longest. Hawaii proved to be a disappointment. In the view of Adams and La Farge, colonialism had all but decimated the indigenous

culture, and the artist found himself drawn only to the Hawaiian landscape, which he sketched in a typical series of freely brushed watercolors. Samoa and the Samoans, in contrast, appeared utterly pristine to the two Americans, unspoiled by western contact. La Farge, who repeatedly likened the residents and culture of Samoa to a “golden” age of archaic Greek civilization, was taken by the unself-conscious nudity of the islanders. He spent months attempting to capture their daily activities on paper, particularly the *sivà*, a traditional dance.

When they arrived at Tahiti on 4 February 1891, Adams and La Farge found themselves subject to more ambivalent feelings than either of the first two stops had provoked. For westerners, Tahiti had a stronger romance of myth than the other islands—largely because it was the site of Captain Cook’s famous anchorage over a century earlier—so they were disappointed to find that like Hawaii, Tahiti had suffered greatly under the colonial rule of the French. Hundreds of thousands had died as a result of European-introduced diseases, and the remnants of the local civilization were finding it difficult to preserve their language and customs.

La Farge and Adams were lucky to gain the friendship of the aristocratic Teva family, the former ruling clan who, under the French, had been removed from power. Leaving the uninteresting capital of Papeete, they traveled to the southeastern tip of the island where various Teva family members provided them with hospitality. Both Americans gained the confidence of the elderly matriarch, Ariitaimai, who related precious oral history and eventually adopted them into her clan.<sup>5</sup> La Farge’s growing knowledge of the local legends and beliefs thus enabled him to approach the magnificent Tahitian landscape with a depth of understanding that far surpassed what had been possible in either Hawaii or Samoa.

Tautira, a remote settlement at the opposite end of Tahiti from Papeete, afforded La Farge a breathtaking setting to explore both the pictorial possibilities and the cultural associations of the mountainous, coastal terrain.<sup>6</sup> He and Adams remained for over a month in a wooden house on the ocean, located about ten minutes away from the Tautira River, the subject of the National Gallery’s picture. La Farge’s view of the conical Mount Irava with the winding river in the foreground was a popular perspective with travel artists, and over several weeks he explored it repeatedly in a series of watercolors.

*The Entrance to the Tautira River, Tahiti. Fisherman*

*Spearing a Fish* was almost certainly begun several years after La Farge's return to the United States.<sup>7</sup> There are many examples of related watercolors—some executed in Tahiti, some copied by the artist in New York as sales diminished his supply of exhibitable studies—that probably served as trial compositions for the National Gallery's large oil. The closest sketch (Erving and Joyce Wolf Collection, New York), likely dating from the early 1890s, is lighter in tone than the large work, more sheer and diaphanous in the treatment of the sky and water. It incorporates the spearfisher and a similar view of the mountains but lacks the enigmatic single figure on the bank. Both works, however, undoubtedly have as a common source a photograph attributed to Charles Spitz (fig. 1), presumably one of many prints purchased by the artist during his trip.<sup>8</sup>

The genesis of the National Gallery's painting, the largest South Sea work ever executed by La Farge, is unclear. It seems likely that the artist would have begun the painting in anticipation of his major traveling exhibition, "Records of Travel," which debuted at the Salon de Champs de Mars (Paris) in 1895 and subsequently toured the United States. This show cost La Farge a great deal of energy; it included several hundred works from Japan and the South Seas and was accompanied by a long explanatory catalogue. *The Entrance to the Tautira River, Tahiti. Fisherman Spearing a Fish*, however, does not appear to have been included in the exhibition. Like other oils begun around 1894, it was probably not finished in time for the opening. Not until 1908 did La Farge embark on another extensive campaign of easel painting, when he completed an unusual number of oil works. The following year, the

National Gallery's painting first appeared in exhibitions in New York and Boston.<sup>9</sup>

Annotated copies of the catalogues for these shows indicate that La Farge priced the work at \$4,000 to \$6,000, the highest valuation he ever gave to an easel painting.<sup>10</sup> His own enthusiasm for the picture was confirmed by press notices: It "strikes the note of magnificence," wrote a reviewer for the *New York Times*. "[T]he splendor of the color and the naturalness of the presentation command the deepest admiration, and the work as a whole is stamped by that essential nobility, nobility of both conception and execution that sets the paintings of Mr. La Farge in a special class." Several weeks later in Boston the picture was described, in less measured tones, as "remarkable for its gorgeous and weird color. Purple mountains, with violet hills, in jagged silhouette against a Day-of-Judgement sky of sweeping, angry, pink cloud forms, and a strip of land of luscious greenness, rising out of a pearly sea. It is all almost unbelievable."<sup>11</sup>

La Farge's painting is indeed a grand statement, a composite of dozens of previous Tahitian studies, photographs, and memories. As has been noted by several authors, the painting seems to partake of the various media favored by La Farge. While scaled like a mural, in technique it more closely approximates a watercolor, with thin washes barely covering the pink and tan ground. Often the interlocking planes fail to meet one another, leaving neutral bands between areas of color that have been likened to both the exposed white of the watercolor page and the leading of stained glass. The stained-glass analogy was first proposed by Henry Adams, who, reflecting on the impossibly rich hues of the Tautira sunset, observed: "Glass is the only possible medium for such tones, and even glass could not render all."<sup>12</sup>

As Adams sensed, however, such comparisons remain inadequate, particularly with La Farge's unique and conflicted creation. In the aggregate, his brushwork gives the impression of the fluidity of watercolor, but at close range, his pasty paint is revealed to be inordinately dry and blotchy, occasionally smudged and labored. Likewise, any luminous effects reminiscent of stained glass come from his intense color scheme, rather than from the inherent transparency of his medium. Colors are hot in tone and almost oppressive in their relentless and unexpected juxtapositions. Aquas, mauves, and lichenous greens are placed alongside pinks, oranges and yellows. The sky, rust-colored verging on

Fig. 1. Charles Spitz, *Waitephia Valley. Man Spear Fishing*, c. 1886–1889, Honolulu, Bishop Museum





John La Farge, *The Entrance to the Tautira River, Tahiti. Fisherman Spearfishing*, 1966.6.1

brown, seems heavy and foreboding as it seeps toward the mountain peaks. There is little sense of depth, and the overall flatness and mattiness is reinforced by the predominant canvas weave.

La Farge, aware of the possibilities of simultaneous splendor and melancholy in the landscape, wrote of Tahiti: "There is a general impression of sadness and pensiveness which covers even the very landscape. The blues and violets and greens fall into chords that are rarely gay, even though the landscape forms are those that we might call *riant*, if we were talking French."<sup>13</sup> The artist's frequently expressed dismay at the loss of traditional and romanticized ways of life seems here to be projected on the Tahitian landscape, which, in the National Gallery's picture, is monumental, even heroic in scale.<sup>14</sup> Yet the monumentalization of so much emptiness (a quality heightened by the square format) cannot fail to strike a somber note. This solemnity is also evident in the treatment of the two figures. Both are small, stiff, and spatially isolated—although a connection of sorts is formed by the common trajectories of the spear and the projecting spit of land supporting the background figure. This distant person, arms pulled in tightly to the chest, seems curiously impassive in pose and anonymous in expression, as though in possession of a key to the past which is no longer available to others. Such an enigma might explain the many dichotomous characteristics of La Farge's canvas. Bold and grandiose, it functions as an idealized, but unresolved, summation of his South Sea experience, one that appears purposefully inconclusive.

JD

#### Notes

1. See "La Farge Sale, \$17,738," *New York Times*, 31 March 1911.
2. Letter of 27 June 1968 from Robert Laurent (in NGA curatorial files) provides provenance information.
3. Letter of 15 May 1992 from James L. Yarnall (in NGA curatorial files) provides information on exhibitions of and references to the painting.
4. The details of their year-long trip have been discussed, among other sources, in Bullard 1968 and, most thoroughly, in Yarnall 1988, from which much of the following data has been drawn. See *Adams* 1982, vol. 3, for considerable primary information.
5. Ariitaimai's accounts of her family and culture were later published in *Adams* 1901 and in La Farge 1902, 14,389–14,398. See Yarnall 1988, 74.
6. La Farge 1912, 329 (edited and published posthumously by his secretary, Grace E. Barnes), mentions his interest in the legends that relate to the mountains at

Tautira. An earlier article based upon his diary entries (La Farge 1901, 69–83), also focuses on Teva lore. In a letter to Elizabeth Cameron (19 April 1891), Henry Adams described Tautira as "so remote that existence became a dream" (*Adams* 1982, 459).

7. This lengthy title was apparently first used when the painting was exhibited in 1909.

8. The watercolor (*Entrance to the Vai-Te-Piha River, Cook's Anchorage*, c. 1891) is reproduced in color and discussed along with the photograph in Yarnall 1991, 55, 95, 115. Letter of 22 April 1993 from Elizabeth Childs (in NGA curatorial files) assigns the photograph to Spitz. The practice of working watercolors up from photographic sources was one which La Farge had also employed after his trip to Japan.

9. This probable chain of events leading to the completion and exhibition of *The Entrance to the Tautira River, Tahiti. Fisherman Spearing a Fish* is convincingly proposed and discussed in a series of letters, 1986–1992, from James L. Yarnall (in NGA curatorial files). Yarnall is probably mistaken, however, in his assertion that the painting was offered for sale to William Macbeth in 1908 (Yarnall 1988, 106n. 130).

10. Letter of 15 May 1992 from James Yarnall (in NGA curatorial files).

11. "La Farge's Work Put on Exhibition," *New York Times*, 2 March 1909; and "La Farge Art Studies An Interesting Exhibit," *Boston Daily Advertiser*, 20 March 1909, as quoted in Yarnall 1988, 79.

12. Adams to Cameron, 4 March 1891, in *Adams* 1982, 424. That the ground is not completely covered probably led La Farge's secretary, Grace E. Barnes, to term the work "unfinished" in the catalogue she prepared for the La Farge estate sale (30 March 1911, American Art Galleries). The painting's exhibition in 1909 with its high valuation by La Farge, however, would seem to belie this assumption.

13. La Farge 1901, 77–78.

14. Yarnall (1981, 179–180) sees La Farge's return to landscape painting in the 1890s as prompted by "the desire to preserve a disappearing landscape . . . , a topography intimately linked to the past."

#### References

- 1909 "La Farge's Work Put on Exhibition." *New York Times* (2 March).
- 1909 "Mr. John La Farge's Exhibition." *Boston Evening Transcript* (19 March).
- 1909 "La Farge Art Studies An Interesting Exhibit." *Boston Daily Advertiser* (20 March).
- 1911 R[oyal]. C[ortissoz]. "Paintings and Other Works Left by the Late John La Farge." *New-York Daily Tribune* (25 March 1911).
- 1921 Watson: repro. 30.
- 1936 Sayre: 6.
- 1936 "La Farge": repro. 34.
- 1951 Katz: fig. 63; the medium is misidentified as watercolor.
- 1968 Bullard: 2: 146–154, fig. 1.
- 1973 *Polynesia*: repro. viii.

1976 Yarnall: 48–50, fig. 17.  
1977 Mandel: 76.  
1981 Williams: 184–185, color repro. 160.  
1981 Yarnall: 394–398, 404, fig. 213.

1985 Adams: color repro. 60–61.  
1987 *La Farge*: no. 84.  
1988 Denslow and Padoch: color repro. 47.  
1988 Yarnall: 78–79, 106, fig. 29.

## James Reid Lambdin

1807–1889

JAMES REID LAMBDIN was born in Pittsburgh on 10 May 1807. His father's death in 1812 left the family in difficult financial straits, so at age twelve Lambdin left school to work in a bookstore. There he studied art instruction books and taught himself to draw. After seeing a reproduction of one of Gilbert Stuart's portraits of George Washington, Lambdin determined to pursue a career as a painter. In 1823 he went to Philadelphia, intending to study with Thomas Sully (1783–1872), but Sully demurred until after Lambdin had first completed six months of training with Edward Miles (1752–1828), a portrait and miniature painter and one-time court artist in England and Russia. Lambdin exhibited a portrait at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1824. Two years later he returned to Pittsburgh in 1826 and quickly established a reputation as a portrait painter.

In 1827 Lambdin established and ran the Museum of Natural History and Gallery of Painting in Pittsburgh, which included both artistic and scientific displays and was clearly inspired by the famous Peale Museum in Philadelphia. Lambdin married in 1828; his first son, George Cochran Lambdin (who later became a prominent genre and still-life painter) was born in 1830. Seeking new commissions, Lambdin moved to Louisville,

Kentucky, in 1832 and also made visits in subsequent years to Mobile, Natchez, New York, and Philadelphia.

Lambdin settled permanently in Philadelphia in 1837. He was appointed an officer of the Artists' Fund Society in 1838, and served as its vice-president in 1840–1843 and as president from 1845 to 1867. In 1845 he was named director of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and was chairman of the Committee on Instruction for many years. Lambdin also served in 1858, with John F. Kensett and sculptor Henry Kirke Brown (1814–1886), on the National Arts Commission, which was charged with overseeing commissions and acquisitions for the Capitol. From 1861 to 1866 Lambdin was professor of fine arts at the University of Pennsylvania.

Lambdin was a prolific painter and among his sitters were some of America's most prominent citizens, including John Quincy Adams, James A. Garfield, Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Jackson, John Marshall, and Henry Clay. He died in Philadelphia on 31 January 1889.

FK

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Ehrich 1918: 64–65.  
O'Connor 1938: 115–118.  
Jones and Weber 1981: 58.

## Attributed to James Reid Lambdin

1954.1.1 (1185)

### *Daniel Webster*

c. 1850

Oil on canvas, 91.7 × 73.8 (36 1/8 × 29 1/16)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

#### Inscriptions

At lower left: J R L / 1848

**Technical Notes:** The support is a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric that has been lined. There appears to be a thin white ground layer. The background is thinly painted; the face and clothing are more thickly painted, particularly in the highlighted areas of the face and collar. There are scattered small losses in various areas and some craquelure. An old T-shape tear is located above the sitter's head. In 1948 the painting was relined, without removal of the surface coatings. The surface of the painting is covered with numerous layers of varnish, which are heavily discolored and cracked in some passages.

**Provenance:** Charles A. Gould [d. 1926], Buffalo; his estate; (sale, American Art Association and Anderson Galleries, New York, 30–31 October 1929, no. 79); Thomas B. Clarke [1848–1931], New York; his estate; sold as part of the Thomas B. Clarke collection, 29 January 1936, through (M. Knoedler & Co., New York), to The A.W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

DANIEL WEBSTER (1782–1852), incomparable orator and leading politician, was described by Ralph Waldo Emerson as “a natural Emperor of Man.”<sup>1</sup> Well known for his fiery speeches, which were widely available in published form, Webster was equally famous for his striking appearance. As the young Eastman Johnson noted after seeing him: “His countenance was more impressive than that of any other man. *That* everybody felt. There was no effort or affectation about him; he was utterly unconscious of his great physical impressiveness. He was like a rock or a mountain or a big tree, and his head was the crowning part of his appearance.”<sup>2</sup> Even the great English historian Thomas Carlyle was moved to exclaim after meeting him: “He is a magnificent specimen.”<sup>3</sup> Such was Webster's fame among his contemporaries that by 1850 no other American public figure, save Washington, had been so often painted, sculpted, and engraved.<sup>4</sup> Images of Webster almost always emphasized his dark

features, great forehead, penetrating black eyes, and stern expression (with his mouth most often shown in a slight frown), giving him a powerful, iconic presence.

Born in Salisbury, New Hampshire, in 1782, Webster was educated at Phillips Exeter Academy and Dartmouth College. Following his graduation from Dartmouth he began a career as a lawyer and rose rapidly in the profession. In 1812 he was elected to the House of Representatives and by 1818 he was generally regarded as the foremost constitutional lawyer in the country. In 1827 he was elected Senator and eventually became one of the leaders of the Whig party. He was appointed secretary of state by William Henry Harrison in 1841 and, following Harrison's death, also served under John Tyler. Re-elected to the Senate in 1845, Webster subsequently angered many New Englanders because he

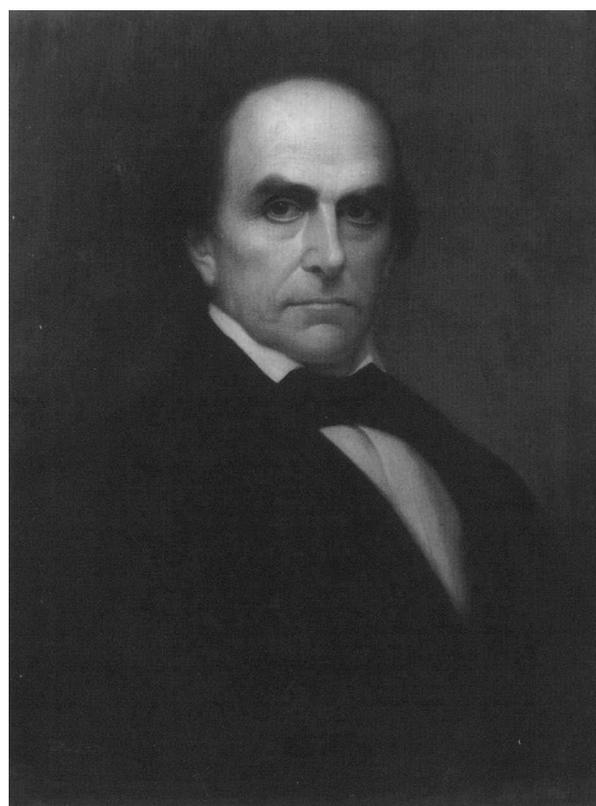
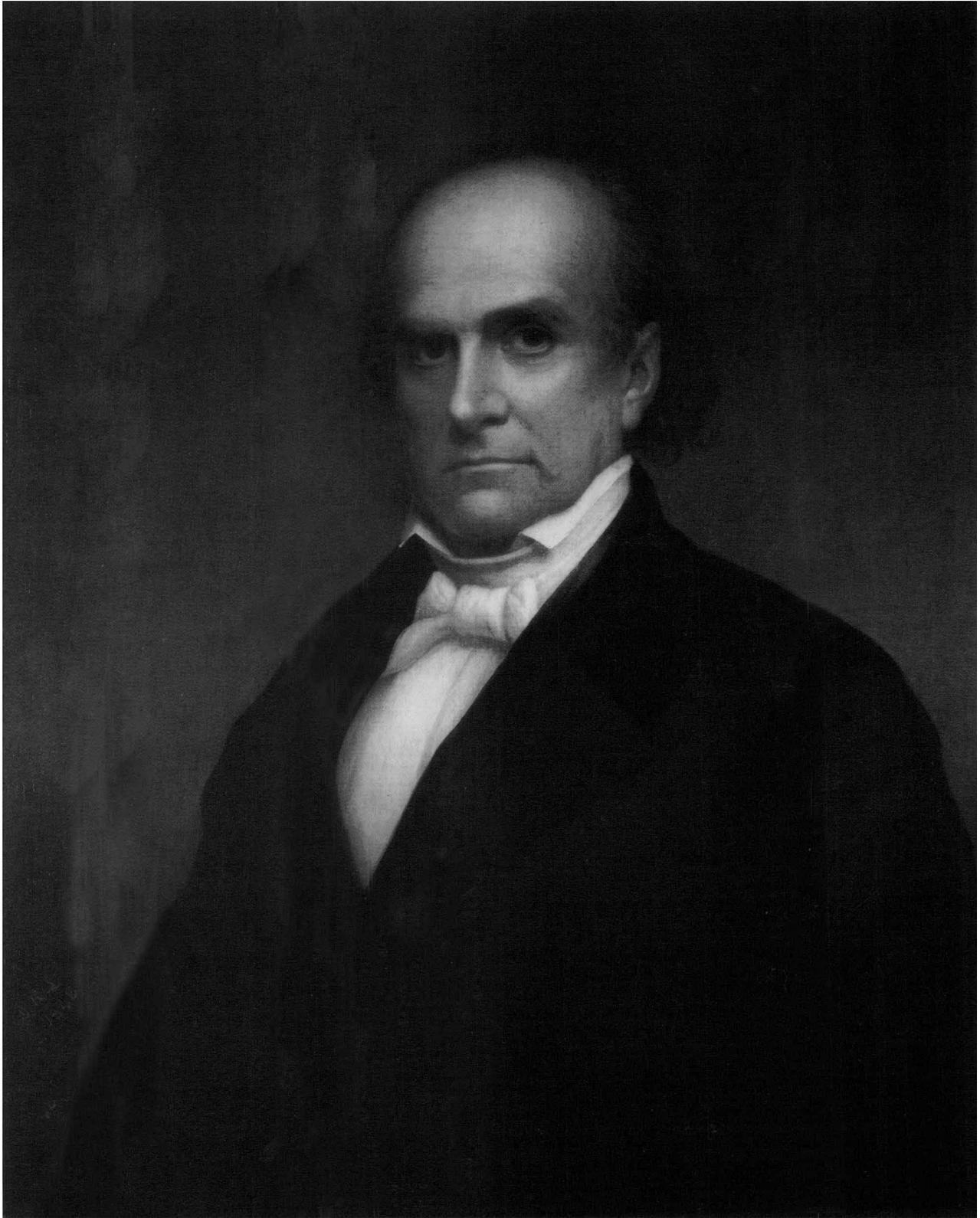


Fig. 1. James Lambdin, *Daniel Webster*, oil on canvas, 1849, Philadelphia, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1962.7



Attributed to James Reid Lambdin, *Daniel Webster*, 1954.1.1

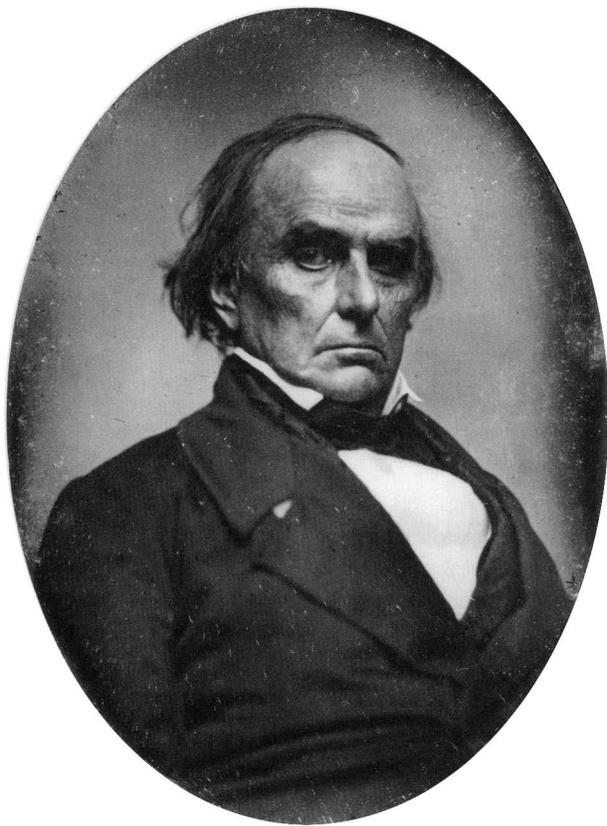


Fig. 2. John Whipple, *Daniel Webster*, daguerreotype, c. 1847–1848, Hanover, New Hampshire, Dartmouth College Archives

supported the Fugitive Slave Law as part of the Compromise of 1850. This effectively ended his chances for the presidency. In 1850 he served once more as secretary of state, under Millard Fillmore. He died in Marshfield, Massachusetts, in 1852 at age seventy.

Although unquestionably an image of Webster, this painting is perhaps less certainly by Lambdin. The initials “JRL” and the date “1848” that appear so prominently in red paint at the lower left are believed to be later additions, for they closely correspond to spurious inscriptions found on a number of other portraits from the Clarke collection and are not, in any event, characteristic of Lambdin’s usual means of signing and dating his works. Nevertheless, Lambdin did paint at least three portraits of Webster, only one of which is securely identified at present. In a letter of 1852 Lambdin identified the portrait now in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (fig. 1) as the original, explaining that “it was

commenced from a Daguerreotype,” and “copied twice by myself.”<sup>5</sup> The daguerreotype undoubtedly was that by John A. Whipple (fig. 2), which was widely distributed. The National Gallery portrait is clearly not, at least in any literal sense, a strict copy of the first painting, for it shows Webster facing in the opposite direction and wearing a white, rather than black, cravat. Reversing the Whipple image would bring it closer in appearance to the Gallery painting, but here too correspondence is inexact. Accordingly, if this painting is by Lambdin, it cannot certainly be associated with any of the three examples accounted for by the artist in 1852.

No other artist has been identified as a more likely creator of this portrait.<sup>6</sup> Certainly, its style does not suggest the work of any of the various painters who painted Webster from life, such as Chester Harding or George P. A. Healy.<sup>7</sup> Nor can we be absolutely confident of a date of circa 1850, even though Webster appears here as he does in documented works of the late 1840s such as the Whipple daguerreotype. The painting could conceivably have been based on an 1840s source, but actually created after Webster’s death, when public interest in him and in images of him swelled. Nonetheless, lacking further evidence and acknowledging that the rather dry handling of the portrait makes attribution on stylistic grounds difficult, it seems reasonable for the present to retain both the longstanding association with Lambdin and the mid-century dating.<sup>8</sup>

FK

#### Notes

1. Emerson as quoted in Barber and Voss 1982, 12.
2. Johnson as quoted in Baur 1940, 7.
3. Carlyle as quoted in Barber and Voss 1982, 13.
4. Barber and Voss 1982, 12, provide the estimate.
5. Letter of 27 December 1852 from Lambdin to Ferdinand J. Dreer, AAA microfilm P20, fr. 508.
6. This conclusion was shared by William H. Gerdtz (letter of 27 August 1992 in NGA curatorial files), who kindly reviewed the arguments for and against Lambdin’s authorship.
7. See Charles Henry Hart, “Life Portraits of Daniel Webster,” *McClure’s Magazine* 9, May 1897, 619–629.
8. Although the history of the painting prior to its appearance in the Gould estate sale remains unknown, it was listed as by Lambdin in the sale catalogue.

#### References

- 1938 O’Connor: 115–118, repro. 118.

# Fitz Hugh Lane

1804 – 1865

FITZ HUGH LANE was born Nathaniel Rogers Lane in the fishing port of Gloucester, Massachusetts, on 18 December 1804; his family subsequently changed his first and middle names. Paralyzed as a young child, probably by infantile polio, Lane was obliged to use crutches. He learned the rudiments of drawing and sketching while in his teens and in 1832 worked briefly with a lithographic firm in Gloucester. Later that year he moved to Boston for formal training and an apprenticeship with William S. Pendleton, owner of the city's most important lithographic firm. Lane remained with Pendleton until 1837, producing illustrations for sheet music and scenic views.

While in Boston, Lane became acquainted with the work of English-born artist Robert Salmon (1775–c. 1845), who was the most accomplished marine painter in the area. Salmon's paintings, with their meticulously detailed ships and crisply rendered effects of light and atmosphere, had a decisive influence on Lane's early style. By 1840 Lane had produced his first oils; two years later he was listed in a Boston almanac as a "Marine Painter." His *Scene at Sea* (location unknown) was exhibited at the Boston Athenaeum in 1841 and, after 1845, his works were regularly shown there. During the mid-1840s Lane continued to produce both oils and lithographs, concentrating on landscapes, harbor views, and ship portraits. In 1848 he sold a painting to the American Art-Union in New York, which would subsequently purchase several more of his works. That summer he visited Maine with his life-long friend, Gloucester merchant Joseph Stevens, Jr., whose family had a home in Castine. Lane would make many more visits to Maine during the rest of his life, and the distinctive scenery of the state became an increasingly important part of his artistic vocabulary.

In 1848 Lane moved permanently back to Gloucester, and with his sister and brother-in-law designed and constructed an impressive granite home overlooking the harbor. Although he traveled in the 1850s to such locations as Baltimore, New York, and, possibly, Puerto Rico, the scenery of Gloucester and Cape Ann would remain, with

that of coastal Maine, at the very center of his artistic production.

Lane's inconsistency in dating his works makes determining a strict stylistic evolution difficult, but he seems to have reached a new maturity in the early 1850s, as is evident in such works as *Entrance of Some Sound from Southwest Harbor* (1852, private collection). In an important series of images of Boston harbor, presumably from the mid-1850s (for example, *Boston Harbor at Sunset*, Jo Ann and Julian Ganz, Jr.), Lane perfected a style characterized by carefully balanced, calmly ordered compositions and radiant effects of light and atmosphere. Some modern historians have seen these paintings as part of a luminist style said to have been employed by many other American artists of the 1850s and 1860s. Lane's art seems to have been primarily personal in nature, and there is little evidence he took notice of other painters' works or was much involved in larger artistic circles.

During the 1860s Lane produced what are perhaps his most poignant paintings, again focusing on familiar scenes around Gloucester and in Maine. He left little in the way of written or otherwise recorded statements about his art, but works such as *Owl's Head, Penobscot Bay, Maine* (1862, MFA) and *Brace's Rock* (1864, private collection) are markedly different from works of just a few years earlier. Highly reductive in format, refined in execution, and intense in effect, these works suggest some new expressive intent on Lane's part, the nature of which has been the subject of much modern speculation.

In 1864 and 1865 Lane was in poor health and, following a bad fall in August 1865, apparently suffered a heart attack or stroke; he died on the 13th of that month. Although one Boston paper characterized his passing as "a national loss," Lane's reputation during his lifetime was primarily local; following his death he and his works were largely forgotten outside Gloucester. With the revival of interest in nineteenth-century American painting during the 1940s, and, particularly with the large number of fine works by Lane presented

to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, by Maxim Karolik in 1948, he has been gradually reinstated as a key figure.

FK

### Bibliography

Wilmerding 1971.  
*Lane* 1974.  
Wilmerding, *Lane*, 1988.

1994.100.1

## *New York Harbor*

1852  
Oil on canvas, 59.7 × 88.9 (23 1/2 × 35)  
Gift of Frances Elizabeth Smith

### Inscriptions

At lower right: "F H Lane. / 1852"

**Technical Notes:** The support is a twill fabric with selvages on the left and right edges; it is unlined and is probably on the same four-member mortise-and-tenon stretcher on which it was painted. A thin white ground layer was apparently applied while the fabric was on a different stretcher, because the ground only covers parts of the tacking margins. Underdrawing in a dry medium is visible in normal light in several areas, some of which show changes. The blue flag flying from the large ship at the center right was originally slightly lower on the mast; several flags were underdrawn on the smaller ship at the right, but not subsequently painted. The riggings of the various vessels have imprecise underdrawing, but the painted lines were possibly executed with the aid of a straight edge. Some of the waves also have underdrawing. The paint layers were applied very thinly, with a low impasto, to create highlights in the waves. The paint surface is in very good condition, with no evidence of significant losses or abrasion. The varnish has not discolored.

**Provenance:** Lewis Gouverneur Morris, New York, New York;<sup>1</sup> his daughter, Frances Elizabeth Smith [1916–1994], Newport, Rhode Island, and Palm Beach, Florida; her estate.

**Exhibited:** *Paintings by Fitz Hugh Lane*. NGA; MFA, 1988, no. 37.

RELATIVELY early in his career, at a time when he excelled at scenes of bustling harbors along America's northeast coast, Lane painted *New York Harbor*. Although New York would never rival the Massachusetts ports of Gloucester and Boston for Lane's attention, he did make it the subject of one of his largest and most complex early works, *New York*

*Harbor* (1851, MFA).<sup>2</sup> In the National Gallery painting the view is from a different part of the harbor, looking to the east and to the north. The tall spire in the background center is that of Richard Upjohn's Trinity Church (1839–1846) on Broadway, one of the key monuments of American Gothic Revival architecture. At the far right, near the very tip of the Battery, one can see the circular walls of the famous Castle Garden. Details such as these, small though they are in Lane's overall composition, played a crucial role in identifying the particular site, for he used a very similar format in portraying other harbors. *New York Harbor*, for example, is virtually identical, even down to the type and placement of the vessels and the arrangement of their sails, to the similarly sized *Boston Harbor*, also of 1852 (United States Department of State, Washington).<sup>3</sup> In the latter painting, it is the distinctive dome of the Massachusetts State House visible in the center background that makes the location clear.

Lane based his early harbor views on the example of the English-born artist Robert Salmon, who had relocated to Boston during the years 1828–1842. Salmon, working in the well-established conventions of Anglo-Dutch marine painting, favored in works such as *Boston Harbor from Castle Island* (1839, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond) crisp detail in the depiction of the ships, alternating bands of light and dark water, large vessels in the center of the composition surrounded by smaller ones, and breezy effects. In many of his works of the late 1840s and early 1850s, Lane employed the same formula, but with a perhaps even greater concern for accuracy in the depiction of the characteristics of specific types of ships. *New York Harbor*, like other works by Lane from this period, presents a remarkable variety of vessels, large and small, and wind- and steam-powered. Indeed, as has been pointed out, Lane's paintings provide some of the most complete documentation of American shipping in the era before the widespread use of photography.<sup>4</sup>

FK

### Notes

1. Information from telephone conversation with Alletta M. Cooper, daughter of Frances Elizabeth Smith, 5 May 1996 (memorandum, in NGA curatorial files).

2. See Wilmerding, *Lane*, 1988, 72, no. 38 (incorrectly dated 1860).

3. Reproduced in Wilmerding, *Lane*, 1988, 53, fig. 3.



Fitz Hugh Lane, *New York Harbor*, 1994.100.1

4. See Erik A. R. Ronnberg, Jr., "Imagery and Types of Vessels," in Wilmerding, *Lane*, 1988, 61-104.

#### References

- 1964 Wilmerding: 59, no. 63.  
1988 Wilmerding, *Lane*: 99, 162.

1992.51.8

### *Becalmed off Halfway Rock*

1860

Oil on canvas, 70.4 × 120.5 (27<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 47<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>)

Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art

#### Inscriptions

At lower right: F.H.Lane. 1860.

**Technical Notes:** The support is a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric that has been lined. The ground is moderately thick and creamy white. The paint was thinly applied in dry transparent washes as background tones, with opaque details applied locally over them. Infrared reflectography reveals black underdrawing (possibly brushed) to which the outlines of the painted forms precisely conform, except in the center island, where underdrawing extends above the painted edge. Infrared reflectography also showed there was originally a sailing vessel in the distance at the far right edge, similar to the one still visible on the left; the mainsail of the small boat at the very right was painted over this distant sailboat, and a pentimento is slightly visible in normal light. The upper right quadrant has suffered some abrasion. In 1985 the painting was relined, discolored varnish was removed, and losses were inpainted. Extensive inpainting covers much of the right third of the sky, which had been severely abraded.

**Provenance:** Private collection, Boston; Mr. and Mrs. Harrison G. Reynolds, Beverly Farms, Massachusetts, c. 1940; Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy B. Middendorf, Oyster Bay, New York; (Middendorf Gallery, Washington, D.C.); sold 1985 to Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, Upperville, Virginia.

**Exhibited:** *American Luminism*, Coe Kerr Gallery, New York, 1978, no. 4, as *Sailboats Becalmed off Halfway Rock*, erroneously dated 1863. *Paintings by Fitz Hugh Lane*, NGA; MFA, 1988, no. 41. *NGA* 1991, 150.

DURING the last decade of his life Fitz Hugh Lane created his most memorable paintings, which are characterized by refined, elegant compositions and a crystalline depiction of light and atmosphere. His subject matter had not changed—the beaches, harbors, ships, boats, and watermen of maritime New

England remained the principal focus—but a more meditative mood of stillness and quiet predominated. These qualities are clearly evident in *Becalmed off Halfway Rock*, a splendid example from this culminating phase of Lane's career.

Halfway (or Half Way) Rock, named for its location between Cape Ann and Boston, was undoubtedly well known to Lane, for it was near his native Gloucester. Rising some forty feet above the sea, the rock is three miles offshore of the harbors of Salem, Beverly, and Marblehead. Halfway Rock was (and is) frequently used as a marker in sailing races, and in Lane's day outbound fishermen often tossed pennies on it to buy good luck and safe return.<sup>1</sup> Lane first portrayed the site in a large work believed to date from the early 1850s, *Half Way Rock* (collection of George Lewis).<sup>2</sup> This vigorously painted scene with a rough sea and cloud-filled sky is set nearer to the rock, making it appear larger and clearly showing the stone beacon atop it. Lane moved even closer in *Moonlight Fishing Scene (Half Way Rock)* (1854, location unknown), which shows two small sailing vessels anchored within a few yards of the rock.<sup>3</sup>

In the National Gallery painting the rock is more distant and serves as the focal point of the composition, with the becalmed vessels lying seaward to either side. Although the arrangement of the ships and boats convincingly suggests they have merely chanced to drift together on the tide, Lane carefully positioned each to give the painting perfect equilibrium. Stillness pervades the scene, and other than the motion of a small lobster dory being rowed, all is calm.

*Becalmed off Halfway Rock* is clearly related in composition to the series of views of Boston harbor Lane executed in the mid-to-late 1850s, most notably *Boston Harbor at Sunset* (Jo Ann and Julian Ganz, Jr.) and *Boston Harbor at Sunset* (MFA). It shares with those paintings the same basic elements: several full-rigged sailing vessels lying in calm water, a small boat moving from the foreground diagonally towards the center, a distant coastline, and a radiant sunset sky. Yet it is also markedly more lateral in effect, with the sails and masts of the various boats barely reaching beyond the center of the canvas and the vessels less dominating in space than their counterparts in the Boston harbor pictures. *Becalmed off Halfway Rock* thus sums up one of Lane's most proven successful compositional types—a symmetrically balanced grouping of ships and boats in still water—but in its greater sense of spaciousness



Fitz Hugh Lane, *Becalmed off Halfway Rock*, 1992.51.8

and spareness hints at the more distilled visions he came to create during his very last years (see 1980.29.1).

Although modern eyes are perhaps most impressed by the masterful compositions and remarkable clarity of Lane's paintings, to his contemporaries it was the accurate depiction of watercraft that ensured his success. He knew, according to one source, "the name and place of every rope on a vessel," and his paintings "delighted sailors by their perfect truth."<sup>4</sup> Recent research has indeed shown that Lane had a remarkable understanding of ship construction and handling and was sensitive to subtle details of hull design and rigging.<sup>5</sup> *Becalmed off Halfway Rock* presents a veritable panoply of precisely identifiable craft.<sup>6</sup> The vessel seen broadside at the left is a topsail schooner laden with a cargo of lumber, presumably en route from Maine to Boston. On the right a large merchant brig lies in the middle distance and in the foreground are a "pinky" (a double-ended schooner) and a small fishing sloop. The latter, to judge from the demeanor of its occupants, is being sailed simply for pleasure, but the pinky, carrying fish barrels and towing net-setting dories, is clearly fitted for fishing. Lane thus not only presents the viewer with several different types of vessels, but also surveys the variety of functions and purposes, ranging from the commercial to the pleasurable, for which they can be used. We know unfortunately little about Lane's patrons, but surely what they appreciated and desired most was the way his scrupulous attention to the facts of maritime life served as the framework for elegant and artistically pleasing images.

*Becalmed off Halfway Rock* also subtly reminds us that Lane lived in rapidly changing times; while he faithfully chronicled the great age of sail in his paintings, he was also a witness to its passing. The majestic sailing ships he so lovingly portrayed were, even in his day, fast being outmoded by steam-powered vessels that moved with or without the wind.<sup>7</sup> Here the dependence of work, commerce, and pleasure on something as unpredictable as the breeze is made perfectly, albeit beautifully, obvious.

FK

#### Notes

1. *Massachusetts* 1937, 274. Young boys were known to row out to the rock and harvest the pennies, but if caught they faced stiff fines.
2. See Wilmerding 1971, 64, fig. 61.
3. Wilmerding 1971, 64, fig. 62.
4. Clarence Cook as quoted in Gerds 1985, 49.

5. See Ronnberg 1988, 61–104.

6. Ronnberg 1988, 85, 89–93.

7. Although Lane often included steam-powered vessels in his works of the 1850s, they rarely appear in his paintings after 1860.

#### References

- 1988 Wilmerding, *Lane*: 89, 92, 162, no. 41.  
1991 Cikovsky and Kelly: 569, color pl. 2.

1980.29.1 (2777)

### *Lumber Schooners at Evening on Penobscot Bay*

1863

Oil on canvas, 62.5 × 96.8 (24<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 38<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>)

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Francis W. Hatch, Sr.

#### Inscriptions

At lower right: F. H. Lane / 1863

**Technical Notes:** The support is a tight, plain-weave fabric that has been lined. The original tacking margins have been retained. A thick layer of pale pink priming was applied by the artist. Infrared reflectography reveals little evidence of distinct underdrawing, although the lower and large yard of the foreground ship was originally positioned slightly lower. The paint layer was thinly applied, with virtually no impasted areas other than in the clouds at left. The surface is slightly abraded, most noticeably in the sea and along the top and bottom edges. The varnish has not discolored, however, numerous areas of inpainting scattered throughout have discolored.

**Provenance:** (Harvey Additon, Boston), until c. 1940; Mr. and Mrs. Francis Whiting Hatch, Sr., Boston, and Castine, Maine.<sup>1</sup>

**Exhibited:** *Maine and Its Artists, 1710–1963*, Colby College Art Museum, Waterville, Maine; MFA; WMAA, 1963–64, no. 81. *Fitz Hugh Lane: The First Major Exhibition*, De Cordova Museum, Lincoln, Massachusetts; Colby College Art Museum, Waterville, Maine, 1966, no. 48. *American Paintings of Ports and Harbors, 1774–1968*, Cummer Gallery of Art, Jacksonville; Norfolk Museum of Arts and Sciences, 1969, no. 19. *Fitz Hugh Lane, 1804–1865*, William A. Farnsworth Library and Art Museum, Rockland, Maine, 1974, no. 43. NGA 1980, III. *A New World: American Paintings, 1760–1900*, MFA; CGA; Grand Palais, Paris, 1983–1984, no. 34. *Paintings by Fitz Hugh Lane*, NGA; MFA, 1988, no. 61.

*Lumber Schooners at Evening on Penobscot Bay* is generally held to be among Lane's late masterworks and has been called one of his "most poetic twilight pictures."<sup>2</sup> Without question, this image of topsail schooners on a quiet expanse of water set against an



Fitz Hugh Lane, *Lumber Schooners at Evening on Penobscot Bay*, 1980.29.1

undramatic, but undeniably affecting sunset is evocative.<sup>3</sup> The poignant sense of loneliness, of time stilled, and of nature's complex beauty abstracted into a few simple shapes, suggests a host of possible associative meanings, ranging from a reverence for God and His creations to a transcendentalist's response to the physical facts of the material world, to a wistfulness over the inescapable passing of time. But whatever Lane's late paintings may or may not mean, in them he distilled the essentials from long-familiar subjects with such refinement as to make the ordinary into the exceptional.

Lane's affection for Maine scenery dates from his first visit to the state in 1848, which resulted in at least two paintings, *Twilight on the Kennebec* (1849, private collection) and *View on the Penobscot* (location unknown).<sup>4</sup> In these he had chosen subjects that very nearly marked the eastern and western boundaries of the area that would receive so much of his attention over the next fifteen years. Between the two rivers were sites such as Owl's Head, Camden, Castine, and Penobscot Bay; if one expands the area slightly further eastward to take in Mount Desert and its vicinity, the entire range of Lane's known travels in Maine is embraced.

Penobscot River runs some 350 miles from its sources in the north-central part of the state to its terminus in one of Maine's most majestic and scenic bays. Because it provided access far into the interior, from the earliest days of European settlement the river played an essential role in Maine's history. And perhaps no part of that role was more important than the one it played in the lumber industry.

Maine's vast resources of white pine and spruce were early exploited for shipbuilding and lumber exports. The lumber industry expanded at a prodigious rate throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, leading Henry David Thoreau to remark that its very mission seemed to be "to drive the forest all out of the country, from every solitary beaver-swamp and mountainside, as soon as possible."<sup>5</sup> Indeed, Maine, as one nineteenth-century observer put it, "was made for lumbering work."<sup>6</sup> It had the timber as well as the rivers and streams by which to reach it and float it out, waterpower to drive sawmills to process it, and good harbors for ships to transport the finished products. Even the climate played an indispensable role, for in the winter the marshy ground of the forests would freeze, allowing heavy sleds to pull the logs to the streams, and spring floods would provide sufficient water to float the great logs out.<sup>7</sup>

Lane hardly could have missed seeing the many vessels loaded with lumber that plied Maine's coast bound for Boston and other ports, and, indeed, they appear regularly in his art. Most often they are shown in ordinary circumstances and in the company of other ships of varying kinds. But occasionally Lane chose different moments, as in *Entrance of Some Sound from Southwest Harbor* (1852, private collection), which shows lumber being loaded onto a large brig, and in *Lumber Schooner in a Storm* (1863, private collection), where a close-reefed topsail schooner struggles against the elements. Lumber could be dangerous cargo, both because of its weight and its tendency to shift in heavy seas, but transporting it was generally fairly routine business. Certainly that is the mood in *Lumber Schooners at Evening on Penobscot Bay*, where the calm water and quiet sunset allude to the peaceful close of an uneventful day. The ships have lowered their sails to stop for the night, and other than the few men securing tackle on the near schooner, there is no discernible activity.

In comparison to works of a decade earlier, which fairly bustle with activity (such as *Gloucester Harbor*, 1852, Cape Ann Historical Association, Gloucester), *Lumber Schooners* reveals a reductive tendency in Lane's vision, an urge to pare the elements of his compositions to a minimum. This move toward a simpler, more abstracted style first appears in works of 1862, including *Ipswich Bay* and *Owl's Head, Penobscot Bay, Maine* (both MFA) and culminates in the series of small, but powerful canvases of Brace's Rock, near Gloucester, that Lane executed in 1864 (for example, *Brace's Rock*, MFA). Given *Lumber Schooners'* strong kinship to such works, it raised questions about the traditional reading of its date as "1860"; close examination revealed that the final digit is, in fact, a "3."<sup>8</sup> Placing the painting three years later in Lane's career and just two years from his death thus makes Wilmerding's characterization of it as "a culminating achievement" even more apt.<sup>9</sup>

FK

#### Notes

1. According to Francis Hatch, Jr. (letter of 9 September 1982 in NGA curatorial files), his father purchased the painting from Harvey Additon's store on La-Grange Street in Boston about "forty years ago." Hatch adds: "By coincidence it was the same Additon who found many of the paintings in Maxim Karolik's collection."

2. Wilmerding 1971, 76. The high regard in which the painting is held by modern eyes is indicated by its in-

clusion as one of four works by Lane in the important 1983 exhibition, *A New World: Masterpieces of American Painting, 1760–1910*.

3. For a discussion of the characteristics of topsail schooners and their place in New England maritime history, see Ronnberg 1988, 85. Ronnberg notes: “In Lane’s time the topsail schooner rig was fading from the scene”; however, it is unknown whether Lane’s inclusion of them in this and other paintings was consciously meant to strike a nostalgic note.

4. Both works were exhibited at the American Art-Union in New York in 1849; see Cowdrey 1953, 221.

5. Thoreau, “Ktaadn,” *Union Magazine*, 1848.

6. Winthrop 1863, 24. On mid-century lumbering in Maine, see Springer 1851.

7. Wood 1935, 26.

8. The 1860 dating has been used consistently since the picture first came to light in the 1940s. Although the area of the signature and date are somewhat abraded, examination with a stereomicroscope strongly supports the 1863 reading. This conclusion is further strengthened by comparison with the final digit—clearly a “0”—

in the Gallery’s *Becalmed off Halfway Rock* (1992.51.8).

9. Wilmerding 1988, 104. Wilmerding (letter of 26 July 1993 in NGA curatorial files) concurs with the revised date.

#### References

- 1963–1964 Miller: repro. 160.  
1964 Wilmerding: 63, no. 105.  
1966 Lane: no. 48.  
1971 Wilmerding: 76, repro. no. 77.  
1974 Lane, Farnsworth: no. 43.  
1980 Wilmerding, “Luminist”: 848, color repro. 848.  
1980 Wilmerding: 90, no. 26, color repro. 91.  
1981 Williams: 120–21; color repro. 98–99.  
1982 JAMA: 1553, color repro. cover.  
1984 Walker: 549, color repro. 549.  
1987 Wilmerding: 118, color repro. 117.  
1988 Wilmerding: 104, no. 29, color repro. 105.  
1988 Kelly, “Lane”: 122, color repro. 119.  
1988 Wilmerding, Lane: 151, no. 61.  
1991 Skolnick: 126, color repro. 40.

## Thomas Bayley Lawson

1807–1888

THOMAS BAYLEY LAWSON was born in Newburyport, Massachusetts, on 13 January 1807. After serving as an apprentice in a local dry goods store, he opened his own shop in 1828, which proved unsuccessful. Little is known regarding Lawson’s early artistic training or even what led him to pursue a career as a painter. His first portrait was apparently a copy after a work by Thomas Sully (1783–1872). He moved to New York in 1831 and enrolled in drawing classes at the National Academy of Design, which he attended twice a week for six months. In April 1832 Lawson relocated to Philadelphia but in October moved back to Newburyport.

Lawson established an active business in Newburyport, painting portraits and miniatures as well as copies after portraits by other well-known artists. In 1837–1838 he made a nine-month trip to Mobile, Alabama, and Pensacola, Florida, where he obtained many commissions and earned some \$2,000. He returned to Newburyport in August 1838 and was married in December. Four years later he moved to Lowell, a prosperous mill town

at the junction of the Merrimack and Concord Rivers, where he remained for the rest of his life.

In 1844 a group of Lowell citizens who were members of the Whig Party financed a trip for Lawson to Washington to paint the famous orator and politician Daniel Webster. The resulting portrait became the artist’s most famous work and he created more than twenty replicas of it. In the following years Lawson’s portrait business thrived, and he painted the leading businessmen and politicians of Lowell and prominent citizens of other New England towns and cities. Apparently extremely well read and personally engaging, Lawson enjoyed considerable prominence in his community. He died in Lowell on 4 June 1888.

FK

#### Bibliography

- “Thomas B. Lawson: Death of a Venerable Artist, at His Home in Lowell.” *Newburyport Daily Herald* (6 June 1888).  
Currier 1906: 352–353.  
Coburn 1947.

1947.17.68 (976)

*William Morris Hunt*

c. 1879

Oil on canvas, 45.7 × 35.8 (18 × 14 1/8)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Inscriptions**

At lower left: TBLawson / 1879

**Technical Notes:** The support is a finely woven, light-weight, plain-weave fabric that remains unlined. The ground layer is moderately thick, smooth, and grayish white. The paint was applied painstakingly and thinly with smoothly blended brushstrokes throughout. There is some impasto in the highlighted areas and the strokes defining the watch chain are particularly small and high. There is only scattered inpainting, mostly in the face and in the beard, which appear to cover abrasion. The varnish is thick, dull, and has discolored.

**Provenance:** The artist's son, Walter U. Lawson [d. 1923], New York, by 1890;<sup>1</sup> sold 28 April 1921 to Thomas B. Clarke [1848–1931], New York; his estate; sold as part of the Clarke collection 29 January 1936, through (M. Knoedler & Co., New York), to The A.W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

**Exhibited:** NPG, on long-term loan, 1967–1980.

AT THE TIME of his death by drowning on 8 September 1879, Boston muralist, genre, portrait, and landscape painter William Morris Hunt (b. 1824) was considered one of America's leading artists and had a particularly loyal following in New England.<sup>2</sup> He was also well known for his innovative teaching methods and theories about art, which were made available in published form immediately following his death.<sup>3</sup> In November 1879 the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, opened a memorial exhibition of more than three hundred of Hunt's oils, charcoal drawings, and pastels, which was seen by 60,000 people before its end in January 1880. The catalogue for the exhibition went through several editions, each of which had a photographic portrait of the artist as its frontispiece. This painting is based on the photograph from the first edition (fig. 1), a photograph that probably was taken during the last year of Hunt's life.<sup>4</sup> It is Lawson's only known depiction of a fellow artist.

Hunt was a striking figure; he was described by one contemporary as "Not unlike an Arab sheik in appearance, tall and sinewy, with a fine head, long gray beard, and brilliant eyes."<sup>5</sup> In the image that served as the source for Lawson's painting he is

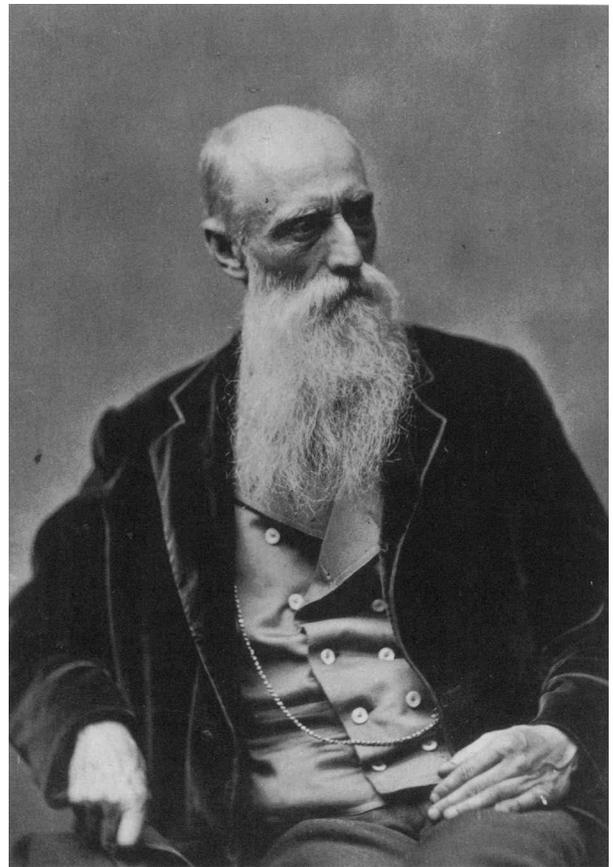
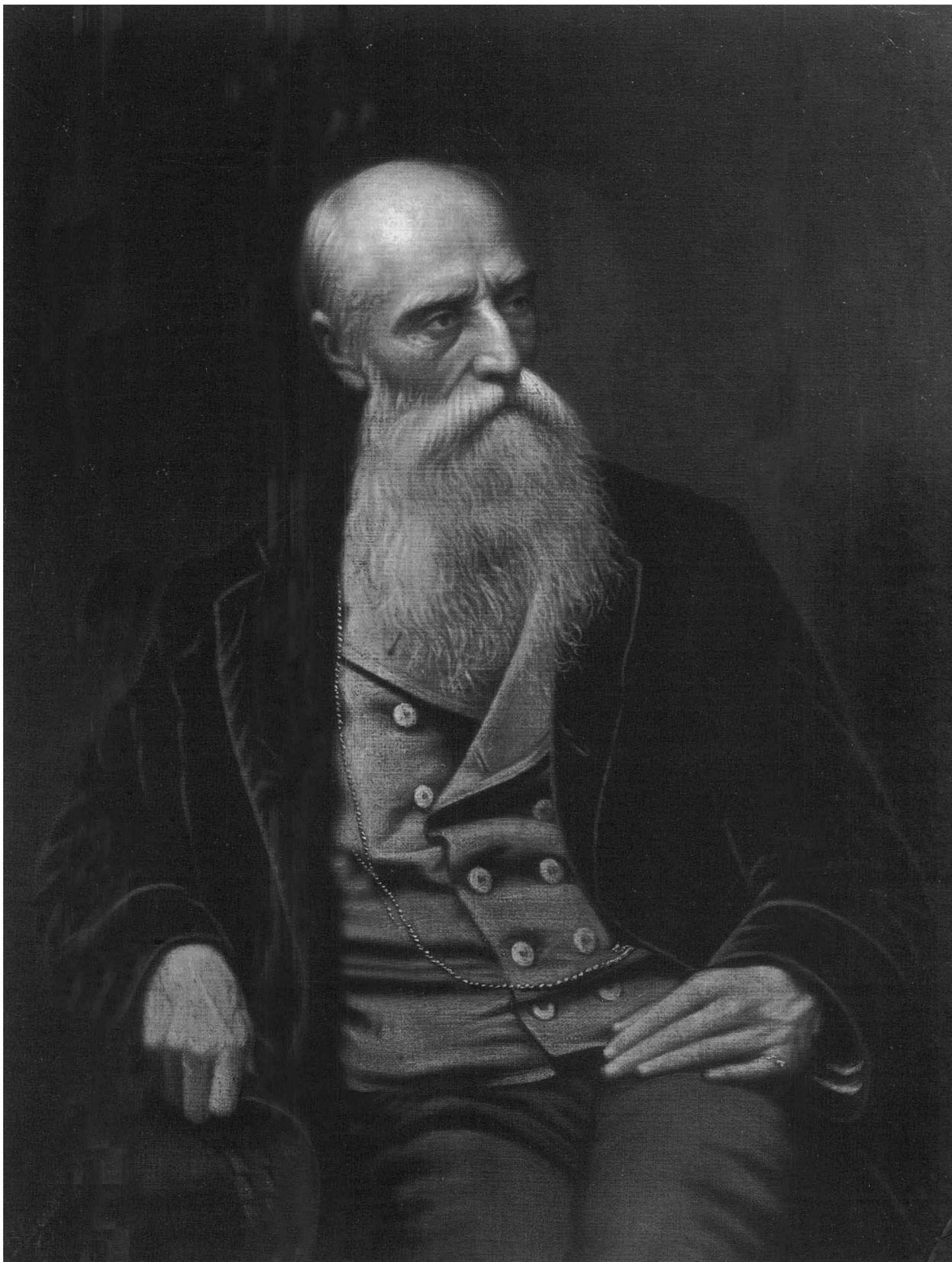


Fig. 1. photograph of William Morris Hunt, 1879, Boston Athenaeum

shown seated, wearing a partially unbuttoned, double-breasted waistcoat under a velvet jacket. A long gold watch chain drapes across his front, and a gold ring is on the little finger of his left hand. He holds a hat by its brim in his other hand. His gaze goes off to his left, and he appears lost in thought.

In his painting Lawson followed the photograph faithfully, replicating the most minute details. Accordingly, the painting retains some of the hard-edged appearance and sharp lighting effects of the photograph.<sup>6</sup> In some passages, however, Lawson's brushwork created a softer appearance, perhaps most noticeably in Hunt's beard, which seems less wiry and more silken. Lawson also diminished the stark shadows around Hunt's brow and cheeks. Although it is possible Lawson made such adjustments in order to make his work look more like a painting and less like a photograph, he cannot be said to have fully succeeded. Indeed, even allowing for the obscuring effects of the present discolored varnish, the painting strikes many observers as remarkably un-



Thomas Bayley Lawson, *William Morris Hunt*, 1947-17.68

painterly—flat and dull, with none of the luminosity of an oil. It has even been mistaken by some for a chromolithograph.<sup>7</sup>

There is no reason to doubt this painting is by Lawson, but the signature and date on its surface are almost certainly spurious. Several facts strongly support this conclusion: precisely the same red paint was used in dubious inscriptions on several other paintings with Clarke provenances; the writing is not like Lawson's; and the name and date fit so awkwardly into their allotted space as to suggest they were not originally included.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, it still seems reasonable to date the painting to the year or so following Hunt's death, when interest in him and his works was at a peak.

FK

#### Notes

1. Letter of 3 May 1921 from Walter U. Lawson (in NGA curatorial files): "[since 1890] it has been continuously in my possession."

2. On Hunt, see most recently Webster 1991.

3. Knowlton 1880.

4. *Hunt* 1879. A slightly different photograph of Hunt appeared in the third edition of the catalogue, but it was clearly taken at the same time, for it shows the artist seated in the same chair and wearing the same clothes. Comparison of these photographs with Hunt's *Self Portrait* of 1879 (MFA) suggest they were probably done in the same year.

5. Shannon 1923, 21.

6. According to the artist's son, Walter U. Lawson (letter of 3 May 1921 in NGA curatorial files), Lawson began the painting from a photograph sent to him by Hunt, but also had the advantage of having the artist sit for him twice; however, there is no evidence for this assertion, which has been doubted by Hunt's grandson, H. N. Slater (letter of 19 September 1957 in NGA curatorial files).

7. Although Hunt was himself at one time known for basing portraits on photographs, by the early 1870s he had pointedly disavowed this practice; see Webster 1991, 67. Hunt is also reported to have said, "and don't make portraits of people who have died, either" (as quoted in Webster 1991, 67). Thus, in portraying Hunt, Lawson violated two of his expressed beliefs about portrait painting.

8. For comparison, see Lawson's signature on the verso of his undated *Daniel Webster* (HSP; photograph in NGA curatorial files).

## *Abbreviations for Frequently Cited Institutions*

AAA	Archives of American Art
AIC	Art Institute of Chicago
CGA	Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington
FARL	Frick Art Reference Library, New York
HSP	Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
LACMA	Los Angeles County Museum of Art
MFA	Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
MMA	Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
NAD	National Academy of Design, New York
NGA	National Gallery of Art, Washington
NMAA	National Museum of American Art, Washington
NMAH	National Museum of American History, Washington
NPG	National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington
NYHS	New-York Historical Society
NYPL	New York Public Library
PAFA	Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia
PMA	Philadelphia Museum of Art
SI	Smithsonian Institution, Washington
WMAA	Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
YUAG	Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven

## *Abbreviations for Frequently Cited Periodicals*

<i>AA</i>	Art in America
<i>AAJ</i>	American Art Journal
<i>AB</i>	The Art Bulletin
<i>AM</i>	Arts Magazine
<i>AQ</i>	The Art Quarterly
<i>ArtN</i>	Art News

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## Concordance of Old-New Titles

Titles changed since publication by the National Gallery of Art of *American Paintings: An Illustrated Catalogue* (Washington, 1992).

<i>Artist</i>	<i>Accession Number</i>	<i>Old Title</i>	<i>New Title</i>
Francis Alexander	1947.17.18	Sarah Blake Sturgis (?)	Sarah Blake Sturgis
Ezra Ames	1947.17.20	Maria Gansevoort Melville	Maria Gansevoort Melvill (Mrs. Allan Melvill)
Attributed to Joseph Alexander Ames	1947.17.21	George Southward	George Southward (?)
Francis Bicknell Carpenter	1961.10.1	Mrs. Henry C. Bowen	Lucy Tappan Bowen (Mrs. Henry C. Bowen)
Alvan Clark	1947.17.30	Barnabus Clark	The Artist's Brother
Alvan Clark	1950.8.2	Lovice Corbett Whittemore	Lovice Corbett Whittemore (Mrs. Thomas Whittemore)
Thomas Cole	1967.8.1	The Notch of the White Mountains (Crawford Notch)	A View of the Mountain Pass Called the Notch of the White Mountains (Crawford Notch)
Thomas Eakins	1957.2.2	Mrs. Louis Husson	Annie C. Lochrey Husson (Mrs. Louis Husson)
Thomas Eakins	1976.27.1	Harriet Husson Carville	Harriet Husson Carville (Mrs. James G. Carville)
Jacob Eichholtz	1953.5.12	Mr. Leman	Jacob (?) Leman
Jacob Eichholtz	1947.9.1	Mrs. Robert Coleman	Ann Old Coleman (Mrs. Robert Coleman)
Jacob Eichholtz	1947.17.45	Phoebe Cassidy Freeman	Phoebe Cassidy Freeman (Mrs. Clarkson Freeman)
George Fuller	1953.9.2	Mrs. Stephen Higginson	Agnes Gordon Cochran Higginson (Mrs. Stephen Higginson)
George Fuller	1948.1.1	Agnes Gordon Higginson, Wife of George Fuller	Agnes Gordon Higginson Fuller (Mrs. George Fuller)
George P. A. Healy	1970.34.1	Roxanna Atwater Wentworth	Roxana Atwater Wentworth
Charles Cromwell Ingham	1947.17.73	Coralie Livingston (?)	Cora Livingston
John Frederick Kensett	1968.7.1	Landing at Sabbath Day Point, Lake George	Landing at Sabbath Day Point

## Concordance of New-Old Accession Numbers

1940.1.7	493	Chester Harding, <i>John Randolph</i>
1942.8.3	556	Frank Duveneck, <i>Leslie Pease Barnum</i>
1942.8.4	557	Frank Duveneck, <i>William Gedney Bunce</i>
1942.8.6	559	Matthew Harris Jouett, <i>Augustus Fielding Hawkins</i>
1942.10.1	595	Charles Loring Elliott, <i>Captain Warren Delano</i>
1943.1.2	703	William Merritt Chase, <i>A Friendly Call</i>
1943.9.1	751	Childe Hassam, <i>Allies Day, May 1917</i>
1943.13.1	760	Winslow Homer, <i>Breezing Up (A Fair Wind)</i>
1943.14.1	1942	John Wesley Jarvis, <i>Commodore John Rodgers</i>
1944.1.1	764	Chester Harding, <i>Amos Lawrence</i>
1945.4.1	779	George Inness, <i>The Lackawanna Valley</i>
1945.11.1	833	Francis Alexander, <i>Aaron Baldwin</i>
1946.16.1	889	Thomas Eakins, <i>Archbishop Diomedea Falconio</i>
1947.9.1	903	Jacob Eichholtz, <i>Ann Old Coleman (Mrs. Robert Coleman)</i>
1947.9.2	904	Jacob Eichholtz, <i>Robert Coleman</i>
1947.11.1	906	Winslow Homer, <i>Hound and Hunter</i>
1947.17.2	910	Asher Brown Durand, <i>Gouverneur Kemble</i>
1947.17.3	911	Jacob Eichholtz, <i>William Clark Frazer</i>
1947.17.4	912	Jacob Eichholtz, <i>James P. Smith</i>
1947.17.6	914	Charles Loring Elliott, <i>William Sidney Mount</i>
1947.17.7	915	Daniel Huntington, <i>Henry Theodore Tuckerman</i>
1947.17.8	916	Henry Inman, <i>George Pope Morris</i>
1947.17.18	926	Francis Alexander, <i>Sarah Blake Sturgis</i>
1947.17.20	928	Ezra Ames, <i>Maria Gansevoort Melvill (Mrs. Allan Melvill)</i>
1947.17.21	929	Attributed to Joseph Alexander Ames, <i>George Southward (?)</i>
1947.17.30	938	Alvan Clark, <i>The Artist's Brother</i>
1947.17.45	953	Jacob Eichholtz, <i>Phoebe Cassidy Freeman (Mrs. Clarkson Freeman)</i>
1947.17.50	958	James Frothingham, <i>Ebenezer Newhall</i>
1947.17.54	962	Chester Harding, <i>Self-Portrait</i>
1947.17.56	964	Daniel Huntington, <i>Dr. James Hall</i>
1947.17.57	965	Daniel Huntington, <i>Dr. John Edwards Holbrook</i>
1947.17.62	970	David Johnson, <i>Edwin Forrest</i>
1947.17.63	971	Eastman Johnson, <i>Joseph Wesley Harper, Jr.</i>
1947.17.68	976	Thomas Bayley Lawson, <i>William Morris Hunt</i>
1947.17.73	981	Charles Cromwell Ingham, <i>Cora Livingston</i>
1947.17.110	1018	Jacob Eichholtz, <i>Julianna Hazlehurst</i>
1948.1.1	1022	George Fuller, <i>Agnes Gordon Higginson Fuller (Mrs. George Fuller)</i>
1950.8.1	1054	Alvan Clark, <i>Thomas Whittemore</i>
1950.8.2	1055	Alvan Clark, <i>Lovice Corbett Whittemore (Mrs. Thomas Whittemore)</i>
1950.15.1	1058	John Wesley Jarvis, <i>Thomas Paine</i>
1951.8.1	1067	Winslow Homer, <i>Right and Left</i>
1951.9.1	1068	John Woodhouse Audubon, <i>Black-Footed Ferret</i>
1951.9.2	1069	Attributed to John Woodhouse Audubon, <i>A Young Bull</i>
1951.9.3	1070	John James Audubon, <i>Farmyard Fowls</i>
1951.9.4	1072	Studio of John James Audubon, <i>Long-Tailed Weasel</i>
1951.9.9	1077	John Woodhouse Audubon, <i>Long-Tailed Red Fox</i>
1953.1.1	1172	John Frederick Kensett, <i>Beacon Rock, Newport Harbor</i>
1953.5.11	1207	Jacob Eichholtz, <i>Mr. Kline</i>
1953.5.12	1208	Jacob Eichholtz, <i>Jacob (?) Leman</i>
1953.5.13	1209	Jacob Eichholtz, <i>Joseph Leman</i>
1953.5.14	1210	Jacob Eichholtz, <i>Miss Leman</i>
1953.7.1	1180	Thomas Eakins, <i>The Biglin Brothers Racing</i>
1953.9.1	1182	George Fuller, <i>Violet</i>
1953.9.2	1183	George Fuller, <i>Agnes Gordon Cochran Higginson (Mrs. Stephen Higginson)</i>
1953.10.1	1181	William Stanley Haseltine, <i>Marina Piccola, Capri</i>
1954.1.1	1185	Attributed to James Reid Lambdin, <i>Daniel Webster</i>
1954.1.5	1189	Jacob Eichholtz, <i>Henry Eichholtz Leman</i>
1954.4.2	1341	Ralph Albert Blakelock, <i>The Artist's Garden</i>

1956.15.1	1470	Chester Harding, <i>Charles Carroll of Carrollton</i>
1957.2.1	1473	Thomas Eakins, <i>Louis Husson</i>
1957.2.2	1474	Thomas Eakins, <i>Annie C. Lochrey Husson (Mrs. Louis Husson)</i>
1957.5.1	1477	William Michael Harnett, <i>My Gems</i>
1959.6.1	1534	Jacob Eichholtz, <i>The Ragan Sisters</i>
1961.10.1	1652	Francis Bicknell Carpenter, <i>Lucy Tappan Bowen (Mrs. Henry C. Bowen)</i>
1962.2.1	1659	George Inness, <i>Lake Albano, Sunset</i>
1963.9.1	1906	Jasper Francis Cropsey, <i>Autmun - On the Hudson River</i>
1963.9.2	1907	Thomas Doughty, <i>Fanciful Landscape</i>
1963.10.93	1757	Emil Carlsen, <i>Still Life with Fish</i>
1963.10.147	1811	Frederick Carl Frieseke, <i>The Basket of Flowers</i>
1963.10.156	1820	Childe Hassam, <i>Nude Seated</i>
1963.10.157	1821	Eastman Johnson, <i>The Early Scholar</i>
1964.4.1	1913	Winslow Homer, <i>Sunset</i>
1965.2.1	1941	Martin Johnson Heade, <i>Rio de Janeiro Bay</i>
1965.14.1	1949	Frederic Edwin Church, <i>Morning in the Tropics</i>
1966.6.1	2312	John La Farge, <i>The Entrance to the Tautira River, Tahiti. Fisherman Spearing a Fish</i>
1967.8.1	2328	Thomas Cole, <i>A View of the Mountain Pass Called the Notch of the White Mountains (Crawford Notch)</i>
1968.7.1	2346	John Frederick Kensett, <i>Landing at Sabbath Day Point</i>
1969.5.1	2357	Frederick Carl Frieseke, <i>Memories</i>
1970.17.100	2472	Childe Hassam, <i>Oyster Sloop, Cos Cob</i>
1970.34.1	2539	George Peter Alexander Healy, <i>Roxana Atwater Wentworth</i>
1971.16.1	2550	Thomas Cole, <i>The Voyage of Life: Childhood</i>
1971.16.2	2551	Thomas Cole, <i>The Voyage of Life: Youth</i>
1971.16.3	2552	Thomas Cole, <i>The Voyage of Life: Manhood</i>
1971.16.4	2553	Thomas Cole, <i>The Voyage of Life: Old Age</i>
1973.16.1	2654	George Inness, <i>View of the Tiber near Perugia</i>
1976.27.1	2693	Thomas Eakins, <i>Harriet Husson Carville (Mrs. James G. Carville)</i>
1977.4.1	2734	Frank Weston Benson, <i>Portrait in White</i>
1978.6.1	2715	John William Casilear, <i>View on Lake George</i>
1978.6.2	2716	Asher Brown Durand, <i>Forest in the Morning Light</i>
1978.6.3	2717	Asher Brown Durand, <i>A Pastoral Scene</i>
1978.6.4	2718	Francis William Edmonds, <i>The Bashful Cousin</i>
1978.6.5	2719	John Frederick Kensett, <i>Beach at Beverly</i>
1978.12.1	2721	Jasper Francis Cropsey, <i>The Spirit of War</i>
1978.60.1	2733	Thomas Wilmer Dewing, <i>Lady with a Lute</i>
1978.72.1	2731	Eastman Johnson, <i>The Brown Family</i>
1980.29.1	2777	Fitz Hugh Lane, <i>Lumber Schooners at Evening on Penobscot Bay</i>
1982.73.1	2864	Martin Johnson Heade, <i>Cattleya Orchid and Three Brazilian Hummingbirds</i>
1982.76.5	2871	Thomas Eakins, <i>Baby at Play</i>
1985.64.15		Thomas Eakins, <i>Study for "Negro Boy Dancing": The Boy</i>
1985.64.16		Thomas Eakins, <i>Study for "Negro Boy Dancing": The Banjo Player</i>
1985.64.21		Winslow Homer, <i>The Red School House</i>
1985.64.22		Winslow Homer, <i>Autumn</i>
1989.13.1		William Stanley Haseltine, <i>Natural Arch at Capri</i>
1989.24.		Thomas Cole, <i>Sunrise in the Catskills</i>
1990.50.1		Albert Bierstadt, <i>Lake Lucerne</i>
1991.33.1		Thomas Eakins, <i>Rear Admiral George W. Melville</i>
1991.34.1		Thomas Eakins, <i>The Chaperone</i>
1991.96.1		Asher Brown Durand, <i>Pastoral Landscape</i>
1991.142.1		Jasper Francis Cropsey, <i>Warwick Castle, England</i>
1992.51.8		Fitz Hugh Lane, <i>Becalmed off Halfway Rock</i>
1992.66.1		Frank Weston Benson, <i>Margaret ("Gretchen") Strong</i>
1993.15.1		William Michael Harnett, <i>The Old Violin</i>
1993.55.1		Thomas Cole, <i>Italian Coast Scene with Ruined Tower</i>
1994.59.1		George Henry Durrie, <i>Winter in the Country</i>
1994.59.2		Winslow Homer, <i>The Dinner Horn</i>
1994.59.3		Joseph Decker, <i>Grapes</i>
1994.59.4		Joseph Decker, <i>Green Plums</i>
1995.47.1		William Merritt Chase, <i>Nude</i>
1996.14.1		Martin Johnson Heade, <i>Giant Magnolias on a Blue Velvet Cloth</i>