

# AMERICAN PAINTINGS

of the Nineteenth Century

PART II

National Gallery of Art  
Washington







THE COLLECTIONS OF THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART  
SYSTEMATIC CATALOGUE

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American Paintings  
of the Nineteenth Century

PART II





Robert Wilson Torchia

*with*

Deborah Chotner

Ellen G. Miles

AMERICAN  
PAINTINGS

of the Nineteenth Century

PART II

THE COLLECTIONS OF THE  
NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART  
SYSTEMATIC CATALOGUE

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## FOREWORD

One of the consequences of publishing a two-volume systematic catalogue of the National Gallery's nineteenth-century American paintings—a collection of almost two hundred and fifty works at present—of course, is that it requires finding a logical way of dividing the collection. It would have been possible to make the division based on the artists' birthdates, but we opted for a more straightforward alphabetical arrangement. Thus, *American Paintings of the Nineteenth Century, Part I* covered those artists whose last names began with the letters A-L, while the present volume takes up the second half of the alphabet. Owing to the accidents of history—the accidents, that is, of the actual history of nineteenth-century American painting and the National Gallery's particular history of collecting—two of the collection's greatest areas of depth and strength are divided almost precisely between the two volumes: Virtually all of the important landscapes are in volume I, and virtually all of the major portraits are in volume II. We were fortunate that Robert Wilson Torchia, a specialist in American portrait painting of the period, agreed to serve as the principal author of this volume. His industry and scholarship are clearly evident, whether he is writing about well-known masterpieces such as Thomas Sully's *Lady with a Harp: Eliza Ridgely*, Albert Pinkham Ryder's *Siegfried and the Rhine Maidens*,

and James McNeill Whistler's *Symphony in White, No. 1: The White Girl*, or describing those works by less familiar artists such as John Neagle and Robert Street. He has also skillfully untangled the complex of misattributions, misidentifications, and inaccurate provenances surrounding many of the portraits originally from the Thomas B. Clarke collection.

Other scholars also contributed in substantive ways to this volume. Ellen G. Miles, author of *American Paintings of the Eighteenth Century*, also from this series and published in 1995, wrote the entries on Rembrandt Peale. Curators from the Gallery's department of American and British painting also contributed entries: Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr., Franklin Kelly, Deborah Chotner, and Nancy Anderson.

The three catalogues of the National Gallery's eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American paintings would not have been possible without a generous grant from the Henry Luce Foundation. During the many years it has taken to complete this project, the Luce Foundation has remained steadfast in its support and commitment. We owe it our gratitude and our appreciation, and are pleased to be able to conclude this phase of the Gallery's overall systematic catalogue project with such splendid and handsome results.

Earl A. Powell III  
*Director*







## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I thank Nicolai Cikovsky Jr., Franklin Kelly, Nancy Anderson, and Deborah Chotner who generously shared their immense knowledge on American art. A number of people in various departments at the National Gallery have been particularly helpful: Alan Shestack, deputy director, has shown continued support of the systematic catalogue. In the editors office, Katherine Whann coordinated every stage of the catalogue's production with exceptional competence and Janet Blyberg patiently located all of the illustrations. Anne Halpern of curatorial records and files found or confirmed exhibition histories and clarified complicated provenances with great thoroughness; Elizabeth Walmsley of paintings conservation examined the paintings and scrupulously reviewed and edited the technical notes. During various stages of the project Mark Burnett, Jenny Carson, and Chris Evison provided valuable research assistance. Lys Ann Shore capably edited the manuscript, while Klaus Gemming produced the elegant design. Additionally I thank Frances Smyth, Mary Yakush, and Chris Vogel of the editors office; Ann Hoenigswald, Catherine A. Metzger, and Michael Swicklik of paintings conservation; Neal Turtell and the entire library staff; Ira Bartfield and Bob Grove in the department of imaging and visual services; Maygene Daniels of archives; and Charles Brock, Eric Denker, Melissa McCracken, and Nancy Yeide.

Essential assistance was received from institutions and individuals outside the National Gallery. Carrie Reborá, of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Marc Simpson provided knowledgeable and constructive criticism of the text. Resources at the Archives of American Art, the Library of Congress, the National Museum of American Art/National Portrait Gallery Library,

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Robert Wilson Torchia  
December 1997





## INTRODUCTION AND NOTES TO THE READER

This is the second of two volumes devoted to the National Gallery of Art's collection of nineteenth-century American paintings. Arranged alphabetically by artist and chronologically by date of execution, this volume includes works by Gari Melchers through Alexander Helwig Wyant.

This part of the collection is particularly strong in early nineteenth-century portraiture, of which the nineteen by Thomas Sully form an outstanding group. A number of half-length portraits, most notably *Andrew Jackson*, came through the Andrew W. Mellon bequest during the 1940s. During that decade the Gallery also acquired Sully's two important full-length portraits, *Captain Charles Stewart* and *Lady with a Harp: Eliza Ridgely* through funds supplied by Maude Monell Vetlesen; the imposing *Governor Charles Ridgely of Maryland* from the sitter's descendants; and two family groups, *The David Children* from the Chester Dale collection, and *The Coleman Sisters*, a gift of William C. Freeman. A third family portrait, *The Vanderkemp Children*, was donated by Countess Mona Bismarck in 1966. Of the seven portraits by Sully's son-in-law John Neagle, four came with the Mellon bequest, and three, including *Colonel Augustus Pleasonton*, came from private donors in 1957. John Vanderlyn is represented by his portraits of *Zachariah Schoonmaker*, *John Sudam*, and *Mary Ellis Bell (Mrs. Isaac Bell)*. Other donations include the pendant portraits by Samuel F. B. Morse, *Eliphalet Terry* and *Lydia Coit Terry*, and Robert Street's *George Washington Deal* and *Elizabeth Price Thomas*, and the mysterious John Wesley Paradise's *Elizabeth Oakes Smith*, from the Chester Dale collection. Perhaps the most important later addition was Rembrandt Peale's *Rubens Peale with a Geranium*, purchased through the Patron's Permanent Fund in 1985.

Among the later nineteenth- and early twentieth-century portraitists John Singer Sargent is particularly well represented. His portrait of *Peter A. B. Widener* came with the large Widener bequest in 1942, and *Nonchaloir (Repose)* was a gift from the noted collector Curt H. Reisinger in 1948. Over the next two decades the Gallery received donations ranging from the austere *Eleanora O'Donnell Iselin (Mrs. Adrian Iselin)* to the glamorous society

portraits exemplified by *Miss Mathilde Townsend*, both gifts from the sitters' descendants. Sargent's genre subjects are represented by *Street in Venice*, purchased with Avalon Foundation funds,<sup>1</sup> and *Valdemosa, Majorca: Thistles and Herbage on a Hillside*, a gift of Virginia Bailey Brown and the Avalon Fund in 1991. The eight paintings by James McNeill Whistler are representative of the different stages of his long career. Five were acquired in the 1940s, including *Symphony in White, No. 1: The White Girl*, formerly of the Harris Whittemore Collection, to which *George W. Vanderbilt and Brown and Gold: Self-Portrait* were added in 1959, both gifts of Edith Stuyvesant Gerry, and *Wapping*, from the John Hay Whitney Collection, in 1982. Other little known but noteworthy works from this period are Douglas Volk's *Abraham Lincoln* from the Mellon bequest, and Irving R. Wiles' *Miss Julia Marlowe*, a gift from the sitter.

In addition to portraits, this portion of the collection contains such well-known paintings as John Quidor's *Return of Rip Van Winkle*, and Albert Pinkham Ryder's *Siegfried and the Rhine Maidens*, also from the Mellon bequest. Different aspects of American landscape painting are represented by Alexander Helwig Wyant's *Peaceful Valley*, Henry Ward Ranger's *Spring Woods*, and John Twachtman's *Winter Harmony*, all pictures that were acquired during the early 1960s. Still life is represented by James Peale's *Still Life with Chinese Export Basket*, a gift of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas M. Evans in 1990, and John Frederick Peto's trompe l'oeil *The Old Violin*, purchased with Avalon Foundation funds in 1974.

A significant number of the paintings included in this volume under the heading "Unknown American Artists" are portraits that were amassed by the wealthy dry goods merchant and art collector Thomas B. Clarke (1848–1931). The Clarke collection was presented to the new National Gallery of Art in 1936 by the A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh, who purchased it through Knoedler & Company, New York. Early in his career Clarke had been the foremost patron of American artists of his generation,<sup>2</sup> but his interest in art ultimately became en-

trepreneurial. After 1918 he began to amass systematically portraits of distinguished Americans that had been painted by American artists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It has long been known that a significant number of Clarke's portraits had inflated attributions and identifications, as well as falsified provenances. The National Gallery's first director John Walker<sup>3</sup> stated that Andrew Mellon was well aware of this fact, but nonetheless purchased the collection because it contained a number of acknowledged masterpieces. Richard H. Saunders<sup>4</sup> has presented convincing evidence that Clarke, operating through his company Art House, emerged during the early 1920s as the *eminence grise* and financial supporter behind a group of art forgers who flooded the market with spurious paintings.

Clarke purchased numerous paintings from the New York dealer Augustus W. Oberwalder and his wife Rose, who changed their name to De Forest in the wake of anti-German sentiment during World War I. When the De Forest pictures are analyzed as a group, certain recurrent patterns of deception emerge. They attributed poor quality, heavily restored, and possibly European portraits to such well-known artists as Henry Inman, John Wesley Jarvis, Morse, Sully, and lesser figures such as Robert Fulton, Neagle, Eliab Metcalf, and Junius Brutus Stearns. The provenances of these paintings were often distorted so cleverly that subsequent researchers required the skill and patience of a professional genealogist to disprove them; Rose de Forest was, in fact, a genealogist who frequented the Frick Art Reference Library and the New York Public Library. The De Forests frequently included false certificates of provenance, photographs of inscriptions that had supposedly been taken prior to restoration treatment, and false signatures.

Although some of the De Forest attributions and provenances seem highly improbable in historical hindsight, in Clarke's time the level of scholarship in the field of American art was unsophisticated, and his collection was regarded as authentic by an enthusiastic and mostly unsuspecting public. Clarke exhibited his paintings at the exclusive Union League Club in New York, and 110 were shown at the opening exhibition at the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1928.<sup>5</sup> The entire Clarke collection was first subjected to intense

scrutiny by Harry MacNeill Bland, Alan Burroughs, John Hill Morgan, and William Sawitzky. It was more systematically investigated by Anna Wells Rutledge and James W. Lane, who made numerous reattributions in their typescript report "110 Paintings in the Clarke Collection," in 1952. William P. Campbell, the National Gallery's assistant chief curator from 1951 until 1976, continued the investigative process. The task of authenticating these paintings has never been a simple one. Suspicion ran so high against those with a De Forest provenance that Sully's late but authentic portrait of the actor John Philip Kemble was reattributed in 1966, only to be reinstated in 1982. On the other hand, a painting long accepted as Asher B. Durand's portrait of the engraver and inventor Christian Gobrecht [1947.17.37, p. 296] was not conclusively disproved until 1992.

It is the policy of the National Gallery not to deaccession any of its holdings, and these paintings thus remain in the collection. Although the entries devoted to them are a continuation of (and perhaps not the last word in) a long and controversial past, they also document a neglected aspect of the early history of American art collecting. It has been necessary to provide a chronological review of the changing status of each image, citing the unpublished opinions of past authorities, and culminating in the thorough researches of Rutledge and Lane, Campbell, and others. In some instances new material has emerged that confirms past doubts. It has also been necessary to indulge in critical and qualitative judgments that one seldom encounters in modern art historical literature, especially collection catalogues of this type. The author has tried to eliminate instances in the text where this approach disrupted the entries devoted to indubitably authentic paintings.

The methodological approach to the paintings in this volume is multifaceted. In addition to the standard cataloguer's task of defining how a given painting fits into a stage of the artist's development, of listing related works, and summarizing previous scholarly literature, every effort has been made to interpret the images within their full social and historical context. The entries were prepared with the objective of being concise, cogent, and informative. Certain of them, such as the ones devoted to Peale's *Rubens Peale with a Geranium* and

Sully's *Eliza Ridgely*, seem disproportionately longer than others, but that is because the images led to particularly rich areas of investigation. Other entries, such as those on Neagle's *Thomas Dyott* and Volk's *Lincoln*, take an almost antiquarian approach to paintings that are clearly not major works of art, but they too merit discussion. It is our hope that this catalogue, by devoting extensive analysis to the work of portraitists such as Neagle, Paradise, Street, Sully, Volk, Waldo, and Wiles will contribute to a fuller understanding of a side of nineteenth-century American painting that is almost entirely neglected in current scholarship.

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 Na-

tional 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."

2. For a discussion of Clarke as a collector, see H. Barbara Weinberg, "Thomas B. Clarke: Foremost Patron of American Art from 1872 to 1899," *American Art Journal* 8 (May 1976), 52-70.

3. John Walker, *Self-Portrait with Donors* (Boston, 1974), 131.

4. Richard H. Saunders, "The Eighteenth-Century Portrait in American Culture of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," in Ellen G. Miles, ed., *The Portrait in Eighteenth Century America* (Newark, Delaware, 1993), 138-152.

5. The provenances and other important information about many of Clarke's paintings are recorded in an annotated copy of Philadelphia 1928 (in the National Gallery library).





# CATALOGUE



# Gari Melchers

1860–1932

DURING MUCH of his early career, Gari Melchers maintained a studio in the Dutch village of Egmond aan Zee. Above its door were inscribed the words “Waar en Klaar” (True and Clear), an apt summary of his aesthetic principles. Although his painting gradually changed in both palette and brushwork, a fundamentally naturalistic approach remained at its heart and brought him success throughout his life.

Melchers was born Julius Garibaldi (after the Italian patriot) Melchers in Detroit on 11 August 1860, the son of German immigrant Julius Theodore Melchers and his wife Marie Bangetor. The senior Melchers was himself an artist, having been trained in Paris as a sculptor. He contributed decorations to the Crystal Palace in London, created carved figures for City Hall in Detroit, and became a sought-after maker of cigar store Indians.

Gari, one of his father’s drawing students, showed talent at an early age and was encouraged to study abroad. Rather than send the impressionable young man to Paris, the popular destination for American students, his parents enrolled him in the more conservative academy at Düsseldorf. Beginning in 1877, Melchers spent four industrious and productive years developing his skill at rendering detailed, tightly finished drawings and paintings.

Melchers next studied at the Académie Julian in Paris. His exposure to French art of the 1880s may have helped to lighten the darker palette that was part of his Düsseldorf training. Particularly influential to Melchers were painters such as Jules Bastien-Lepage (1848–1884), who bathed figures in strong, overall light. From both French and German masters, Melchers absorbed the then current predilection for depicting the nobility of common folk—in his case, sailors and fishermen as well as peasants.

Melchers took up residence in Holland, joining his American colleague George Hitchcock (1850–1913) at Egmond in 1884. Some of Melchers’ best known images deal with religious aspects of the villagers’ lives, as demonstrated in the var-

ious attitudes of the churchgoers in *The Sermon* (1886, NMAA), a painting that won an honorable mention at the Paris Salon, or in his various representations of the Mother and Child theme. More explicit expressions of piety were his paintings that dealt literally with episodes in the life of Christ, often set in contemporary Dutch interiors.

Although Melchers lived for more than twenty years in a small town on the edge of the North Sea, he exhibited his work worldwide, gaining numerous honors and medals. He was commissioned to execute murals for the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago and the Missouri state capitol. He also won a commission for the Library of Congress, for which he chose the subject of “the arts of war.”

On the eve of U.S. involvement in World War I, Melchers was forced to leave a teaching position at the Weimar Academy, which he had held since 1909. Upon returning to America in 1914, Melchers divided his time between a New York studio and his colonial-era house in the Virginia countryside near Fredericksburg.<sup>1</sup> Several portrait commissions came his way, including one from Andrew W. Mellon (1930, NGA Special Collection).

Through the connections of his wife, Corinne Lawton Mackall of Savannah, Georgia, Melchers was asked to serve as an advisor to the Telfair Academy, assisting with the acquisition of numerous works. He also served as chairman of the Smithsonian Institution commission on the formation of a national art museum (now the National Museum of American Art) and was active on the boards of the Corcoran Gallery and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

Affable and down-to-earth, Melchers was loved by colleagues and country neighbors alike. While the latter often knew little about his work, the former celebrated his achievements in several one-man exhibitions. Though eclectic in his awareness of symbolism, postimpressionism, the *juste milieu* school, German religious painters, and artists as diverse as Hans Holbein and Mary Cassatt, he did not imitate their efforts. Rather, he as-

simulated and transformed many aspects of their art into his own distinct and essentially conservative style.

Melchers died at his home, Belmont, in Fal-mouth, Virginia, on 30 November 1932.

DC

#### Notes

1. The house, Belmont, is maintained as a museum and is furnished with Corinne and Gari Melchers' eclectic collection of furniture, paintings, and decorative arts. The adjacent studio contains works by the artist.

#### Bibliography

Lewis-Hind 1928.

Dreiss 1984.

Stott 1986.

Lesko 1990.

1957.4.2 (1479)

### *The Sisters*

c. 1895

Oil on canvas, 150 × 100.4 (59 1/16 × 39 1/2)

Gift of Curt H. Reisinger

#### Inscriptions

At lower right: Gari Melchers.

**Technical Notes:** The medium- to coarse-weight, plain-weave fabric support has been lined. The tacking margins have been removed, but cusping indicates the dimensions are unchanged. There is a thin, grayish white ground layer over which the paint has been fluidly and relatively thickly applied. In general, the paint is built up in a series of loose, broad, impasted brushstrokes placed one over the other. Some inpainted losses are visible. The largest of these is an L-shaped tear, about 5 cm long, in the lower right part of the background. Many of the wider cracks, particularly those in the faces of the figures, have also been inpainted. The condition of the paint layer is generally good, although the impasto has been somewhat flattened by a past lining. The varnish is somewhat glossy and has become very slightly discolored.

**Provenance:** Hugo Reisinger [1856–1914], New York, by 1908; his wife, Edmée Busch Reisinger [later Mrs. Charles Greenough, d. 1955, New York]; their son, Curt H. Reisinger [d. 1964], New York.

**Exhibited:** *Salon de la Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts*, Paris, 1895, no. 869, as *La poupée*. *8th Annual Exhibition of Oil Paintings and Sculpture by American Artists*, AIC, 1895, no. 221, as *The doll*. *65th Annual Exhibition*, PAFA, 1895–1896, no. 227, as *The Doll*. *Internationale Kunst-Ausstellung*, Berlin, 1896, no. 1459. *2nd Annual Exhibition*, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, 1897–1898, no. 149. Possibly *Jubeljahr*

*Kunst-Ausstellung*, Vienna, 1898. *Exposition Triennale de Gand*, Ghent, Belgium, 1899. *Fine Arts Exhibit of the United States of America*, Exposition Universelle, Paris, 1900, no. 178. *13th Annual Exhibition of Oil Paintings and Sculptures by American Artists*, AIC, 1900, no. 160, as *The doll*. Possibly *Internationale Kunst-Ausstellung*, Dresden, 1901, no. 466. Karlsruhe, 1902 [no information available]. Possibly *5th Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte*, Venice, 1903, no. 21 in Sala D. *Universal Exposition* [commemorating the Louisiana Purchase of 1803], St. Louis, 1904, no. 507. *Exposition Universelle et Internationale*, Liège, Belgium, 1905, no. 49, as *Les deux Soeurs*. *Erste Internationale Mitglieder-Ausstellung*, Königliche Akademie der Künste, Berlin, 1907, no. 16. *Gari Melchers*, Cottier and Company, New York, January–February 1908, no. 6. *Pictures by Gari Melchers*, Saint Botolph Club, Boston, March 1908, no. 9. *Paintings by Gari Melchers*, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, March–April 1908, no. 3. *Paintings by Gari Melchers*, CGA, 1918, no. 9. *Loan Exhibition of Paintings by Gari Melchers*, Copley Society, Boston Art Club Galleries, 1919, no. 31. *Exhibition of Paintings by Gari Melchers*, BMA, 1923, no. 17. *Exhibition of Paintings by Gari Melchers*, Century Association, New York, February 1927. *Retrospective Exhibition of Paintings by Gari Melchers*, DIA, October 1927, no. 1. *Paintings and Drawings by Gari Melchers*, Anderson Galleries, New York, 1929, no. 18. *Exhibition of a Retrospective Collection of Paintings Representative of the Life Work of Gari Melchers, N.A.*, Buffalo Fine Arts Academy/Albright Art Gallery, 1930, no. 12. *Paintings by Gari Melchers, N.A., Thomas J. Mitchell and Thirty Cleveland Artists*, Memorial Art Gallery of Rochester, New York, 1930, no. 6. *Exhibition of Paintings by Gari Melchers*, American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, 1932–1933, no. 15. *A Memorial Exhibition of the Work of Gari Melchers*, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, 1934, no. 66. *Gari Melchers: A Memorial Exhibition of His Work*, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, 1938, no. 93. *Gari Melchers: A Retrospective Exhibition*, Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, Florida; Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences, Savannah; NAD; DIA; Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, 1990–1991, no. 26.

DESPITE artful contrivances of composition and palette, this image of two little girls appeals most particularly because of the subjects' very artlessness. They stand hand in hand, graceless and believable. The older sister slouches slightly, her gangly arms appearing to have outgrown the sleeves of her dress. Her hair falls in disordered wisps around her head as she gazes down protectively at her sibling. The younger sister stares straight at the viewer, clutching her doll tightly.<sup>1</sup> One stocking droops at the ankle. These figures, models from the Dutch village of Egmond, are the unaffected types that Melchers preferred for his works.

The painting's high horizon provides a flat landscape backdrop for the figures.<sup>2</sup> A similarly high line of earth and sky is seen in *In Holland* (1887, Bel-





Gari Melchers, *The Sisters*, 1957.4.2

mont, The Gari Melchers Memorial Gallery, Falmouth, Virginia). The two works also share a palette of intense, saturated hues. Annette Stott notes that Melchers was using bold colors as early as 1886, increasing their intensity in later years: "Turquoise, orange, lemon yellow, and pink became favorite hues, which he used in unusual and not always harmonious combination."<sup>3</sup> Certainly, the older sister's bright orange dress, contrasting starkly with her black stockings and the pale green hillside, is one of the best examples of the artist's dramatic use of color. Contrasting patterns—as seen in the black and magenta stripes of the smaller child's shirt and the green and magenta skirt—also provide a strong surface interest. The design of the skirt fabric is laid in with a vaguely floral motif suggested in wiry, agitated shapes that are almost a signature application of Melchers'.

The two sisters, posed together in the National Gallery painting, appear as separate individuals in two related paintings by Melchers: *The Doll* (private collection) and *The Butterfly* (gouache, Belmont, The Gari Melchers Memorial Gallery, Falmouth, Virginia).<sup>4</sup> The younger sister also appears to have served as the model for another work by Melchers, *The Family* (1895, Staatliches Museum, Berlin). Another, smaller version of *The Sisters* (about 30 by 25 inches) also existed at one time.<sup>5</sup>

*The Sisters* was part of the collection of a wealthy businessman, Hugo Reisinger (1856–1914), by 1909. Reisinger, a cofounder and benefactor of the Busch-Reisinger Museum at Harvard University, was an avid collector not only of German art but of works by modern American painters, such as James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903), John Twachtman (1853–1902), and Childe Hassam (1859–1935).<sup>6</sup> It is not known under what circumstances Reisinger acquired the National Gallery painting, but it is not surprising that it appealed to him. In choice of subject and treatment, this painting resembles the work of German painters, such as Fritz von Uhde (1849–1911), at least one of whose works was owned by Reisinger.<sup>7</sup> Melchers' work at this time was international in flavor and similar to that of a number of European figure and genre painters of the period, so that he was often presumed to be a Dutch artist.

The exact date of execution of *The Sisters* is unknown but is likely to be around 1895, because the first exhibition of the painting listed in the artist's records was the Paris Salon of that year. As Belmont curator Joanna Catron writes, "since 1886 he [Melchers] had been in the habit of debuting major

Dutch pieces in the Paris Salon. . . . Also confirming our date of c. 1895 is the existence in our collection of a sketch for *The Sisters* executed on the very same page as a sketch for *Maternity* (1895, Palais de Tokyo, Paris). *The Sisters* stylistically does not support a dating earlier than 1890–1895."<sup>8</sup>

Exhibited widely beginning in 1895 and throughout the twentieth century, *The Sisters* is representative of Melchers' best work. Appealing in the immediacy and humanity of its young subjects, in the intense decorative qualities of vibrant pattern and color, and in its clever transformation of space, the painting stands as one of the artist's most successful efforts.

DC

## Notes

1. Jennifer Bienenstock discusses the tenor of the work as a whole, suggesting that "the calculated placement of the goats directly above the wide-eyed toddler (neither she nor her sister carries a staff to indicate that they are tending those goats!) is reflective of symbolic rather than artistic intentions. Melchers's conception of the goats as symbols of guilelessness was probably based on specifically Dutch Symbolist prototypes. . . . Thus, Melchers's *The Sisters* implies that the little girl is still in the paradisaical state, innocent and reliant on the protection of her older sister, like her animal equivalent" (Jennifer A. Martin Bienenstock, "Gari Melchers and the Belgian Art World: 1882–1908," in Lesko 1990, 93). Curiously, Melchers at some point changed the placement of the head of the larger goat in the National Gallery painting. In a photo (see Brinton 1909, 32) dated 1908 and copyrighted by the Detroit Publishing Company, the same animal is shown with its head raised, rather than grazing.

2. The high horizon and other elements suggest Melchers' interest in Japanese art. Bienenstock points out that the artist owned around forty woodblock prints by artists of the Ukiyo School and notes that "the vertical format of this painting, its insistent foreground, flat landscape background, unmodulated bold colors, brash two-dimensionality, and ambiguous foreground space all evince Melchers's intense interest in Japanese art" (Bienenstock in Lesko 1990, 94–95).

3. Annette Stott, "The Holland Years," in Lesko 1990, 63.

4. The figure in *The Butterfly* measures 45 1/2 in. and seems to have been copied, perhaps traced, directly from the same figure in *The Sisters* which measures 44 3/4 in. That the single figure was painted after the girl in the National Gallery painting is supported by the rather awkward composition, which uses the device of the butterfly to make sense of the downward gaze of the child. The most striking difference between the two works is the dress of the girl, which is bright orange in the oil painting and purple in the gouache.

5. Joanna Catron noted that such a painting appears in a photograph of the Grosse Berliner Kunst-

Austellung of 1900 (letter of 5 February 1996, in NGA curatorial files).

6. For a biography of Reisinger, see *DAB*, 15: 492. On his collecting, see Brinton 1909, 29–38.

7. For a nearly identical theme, see Von Uhde's *Big Sister* (a study for a large painting, Oskar Reinhart Foundation, Winterthur, Switzerland).

8. Letter of 15 June 1994 (in NGA curatorial files).

## References

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1990 Lesko: 92–95, 195–196.

## Willard Leroy Metcalf

1858–1925

WILLARD LEROY METCALF was born 1 July 1858 in Lowell, Massachusetts. His family moved to a farm in Maine in 1863, but eventually returned to Massachusetts, purchasing a home in Cambridgeport in 1872. Metcalf's parents, themselves artistically inclined, early recognized their son's talents and encouraged his proper training.<sup>1</sup>

As a youth Metcalf served an apprenticeship to a wood engraver and later became a student of George Loring Brown (1814–1889), a portrait and landscape painter of considerable reputation at the time. He also took evening classes in life drawing at the Lowell Institute and was the first student to receive a scholarship to the school of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, which he attended in 1877–1878.

The careful draftsmanship that Metcalf learned as a student in Boston served him well when he was commissioned to illustrate a series of stories about the Zuñi Indians of the Southwest. This necessitated trips to New Mexico and Arizona. The results of his travels appeared in *Harper's Magazine* and *Century Magazine* in 1882 and 1883. For the next twenty years he continued to earn a portion of his living as an illustrator of books and magazines.

From 1883 until 1889 Metcalf lived in France, where he studied at the Académie Julian under Gustave Boulanger (1824–1890) and Jules-Joseph Lefebvre (1836–1911). He traveled through Brittany and Normandy beginning in 1884, sketching and painting near the villages of Pont-Aven and Grez-sur-Loing. Within a few years, he began to frequent Giverny with several American colleagues, including Theodore Robinson (1852–1896). Visiting North Africa during the winter of

1887, Metcalf discovered the subject that inspired him to paint *Marché de Koussé-Koussé à Tunis* (location unknown), which received an honorable mention at the Paris Salon the following year.

Upon returning to the United States, Metcalf lived briefly in Boston, then settled in New York City. In addition to painting and illustrating, he taught for a short time at the Art Students League and for ten years at the Cooper Union. On the advice of Childe Hassam, Metcalf visited Gloucester, Massachusetts, in 1895. One of the paintings produced at that time, *Gloucester Harbor* (Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, Massachusetts), was awarded the prestigious Webb Prize when it was included in a group of Metcalf's works shown at the Society of American Artists the following year.

By this time (1896), in addition to his experiences in France, Metcalf had had considerable exposure to the light-filled, loosely brushed landscapes of Hassam, John Twachtman, and Julian Alden Weir (1852–1919) and was beginning to move away from his more academic style. These three artists, along with Metcalf and six others, withdrew from the Society of American Artists in 1897 in order to exhibit together as a group that later became known as The Ten.

In 1904, disenchanted with his personal and professional life, Metcalf retreated from the city and went to stay with his parents in Clark's Cove, Maine, near Boothbay and the Damariscotta River. This highly productive visit proved a turning point in the artist's career. He seemed to develop a greater sensitivity to the natural world around this time and began producing the lush New England landscapes for which he became best known. Although not as poetic or ethereal as those of his



friend Twachtman, Metcalf's paintings of the woods and fields effectively captured the beauty and serenity of his surroundings during every season and under varied climatic conditions. Despite his use of the divided brushstrokes and bright palette of the impressionists, his images continued to emphasize three-dimensional form and fidelity to the natural subject.

By the end of 1904 Metcalf once more had a studio in New York City, from which he traveled to several locations in the Northeast. A favorite working area was Old Lyme, Connecticut, with its thriving artist's colony. Many of the painters gathered there at the boardinghouse of Miss Florence Griswold, depicted in Metcalf's *May Night* (1906, CGA), a painting that won him a gold medal when it was first exhibited at the Corcoran Gallery. The hills of Cornish, New Hampshire, were another preferred subject, a location first visited by the artist in 1909 and to which he returned several times in the next decade. Metcalf continued to receive numerous awards as a mature artist, including a gold medal at the Panama Pacific Exposition in 1915.

Metcalf married late in life, wedding his companion of several years, Marguerite Beaufort Haile, in 1903. The couple were divorced in 1909. In 1911 he married Henriette Alice McCrea, and from that union came a daughter Rosalind and a son Addison. Metcalf was divorced for the second time in 1920. He was also involved for many years with the actress Pauline French. Although he was plagued by poor health, excessive drink, and personal failure toward the end of his life, he produced some of his strongest works in these years.<sup>2</sup> Metcalf died on 8 March 1925 in New York City.

DC

#### Notes

1. His father, Greenleaf, was a musician, serving in that capacity first in the regimental band of Massachusetts volunteers and later in the navy during the Civil War. As a violinist he performed with the Harvard Concert Series and briefly with the Boston Symphony. Both of Metcalf's parents were spiritualists and believed that among the otherworldly messages they received was one from the painter Correggio concerning their son's future success as an artist. See De Veer and Boyle 1987, 7–18.

2. See "The Life" in De Veer and Boyle 1987.

#### Bibliography

De Veer and Boyle 1987.

1976.50.2 (2699)

### *Midsummer Twilight*

c. 1890

Oil on canvas, 81.6 × 90.2 (32 1/8 × 35 1/2)

Gift of Admiral Neill Phillips in memory of Grace Hendrick Phillips

#### Inscriptions

At lower left: W. L. METCALF.

**Technical Notes:** The painting has been lined and its original tacking margins removed, leaving cusping only along the bottom edge. The support is a medium-weight plain-weave fabric. There is a thin white ground. Paint appears to have been applied directly and opaquely, wet-into-wet and wet-over-dry. The roofs and walls of the houses are painted thickly and with much more impasto than the foreground foliage, which is painted thinly overall, allowing small sections of the ground to be visible, and is only highlighted with impasto. Numerous tiny losses, particularly in the green foliage, were inpainted, and the painting was revarnished, during conservation in 1984.

**Provenance:** Purchased before 1900 by Henry Keney Pomroy [1854–1925], New York and Simsbury, Connecticut; by inheritance to his niece, Grace Hendrick Eustis Phillips [Mrs. Neill Phillips]; her husband, Admiral Neill Phillips, Upperville, Virginia.

**Exhibited:** *Twelfth Exhibition*, Society of American Artists, New York, 1890, no. 128. *Fine Arts Exhibit of the United States of America*, Exposition Universelle, Paris, 1900, no. 193, as *Summer Twilight*. *Exhibition of Fine Arts*, Pan-American Exposition, Buffalo, New York, 1901, no. 765. *71st Annual Exhibition*, PAFA, 1902, no. 322. *Americans in Brittany and Normandy 1860–1890*, PAFA; Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth; Phoenix Museum of Art; NMAA, 1982–1983, no. 84.

A SINGLE ENTRY in Metcalf's record of bird's egg collecting indicates that he passed through Giverny, France, as early as 1885. He first made a stay of several weeks there the following year. In the summers of 1886, 1887, and 1888 Metcalf was settled in Giverny in the company of various other artists, such as Theodore Robinson, John Leslie Breck (1860–1899), Louis Ritter (1854–1897), and Theodore Wendel (1859–1932). Although Metcalf knew the French master Claude Monet (1840–1926), and even joined members of his family for botanical walks, the presence of the older artist appears not to have been the deciding attraction of the area. Rather, it was the simplicity of the town, the quiet beauty of the surrounding countryside and the river Epte, the proximity of the village to Paris, and



Willard Leroy Metcalf, *Midsummer Twilight*, 1976.50.2

its affordable accommodations that appealed to the group of American painters who worked there.

Metcalf's Giverny subjects—virtually all landscapes, for he declined to paint genre scenes there—include subdued Barbizon-type scenes and brighter impressionist elements.<sup>1</sup> At Giverny the artist seems to have become more acutely observant of the effects of natural sunlight and its accompanying shadows. *Midsummer Twilight* captures the distinctive appearance of the light of late afternoon on the red-tiled rooftops and white plaster walls of several Giverny farmhouses. Painted from the road just above the buildings, the composition is dramatically defined by the stone-lined edge of the thoroughfare and the arrangement of rooftops that cuts diagonally across the canvas.

Taken from a nearly identical vantage point is Theodore Robinson's *From the Hill, Giverny* (1889, Terra Museum of American Art, Chicago). That work also includes a road cutting diagonally across the composition and the roofs of the valley farmhouses seen from above, but its format is more typically horizontal. *Midsummer Twilight* is nearly square, using proportions that Metcalf would favor almost exclusively in his later paintings.

With its solid, blocklike buildings and patchwork of carefully laid-out fields, all anchored by the insistent diagonal of the composition, Metcalf's scene appears in one sense well ordered and almost immutable, even while it is forcefully of the moment. His observation of the transitory effects of the wan-

ing daylight are most strongly seen in the purple and blue-gray shadows that contrast sharply with the light-bathed, warm-colored roofs and walls of the farm buildings.

Surprisingly, this vivid, site-specific impression seems to have been painted in America. Metcalf returned to the United States in December 1888, but this image was not included in important exhibitions in Boston and New York in 1889, even though it was the artist's habit to exhibit recently completed works. The painting was first shown in 1890. While it cannot be proven that the National Gallery painting was executed after the fact from studies made in France, there is precedent for such a practice in Metcalf's career.<sup>2</sup>

DC

#### Notes

1. Metcalf's best known nonlandscape painting of this period is *The Ten Cent Breakfast* (1887, Denver Art Museum), a group portrait of four young men, including Robert Louis Stevenson, in an interior.

2. For example, a work by Metcalf called *Summer Twilight* (1890, Bentley-Sellars Collection) seems to be a larger version of a river/marsh scene that was executed in Grez-sur-Loing, c. 1885. We are grateful to Elizabeth de Veer for generously sharing her expertise on Metcalf and assisting with the dating of the National Gallery's painting.

#### References

1987 De Veer and Boyle: 44, 62, 63, 199, 200, 218.

## Thomas Moran

1837–1926

THOMAS MORAN was born 12 February 1837 in Bolton, England, not far from Manchester, the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution. Several generations of the Moran family had worked as handloom weavers in Bolton until the introduction of power looms radically changed the industry. In 1842, seeking public education for his children and economic opportunity in a new land, Thomas Moran, Sr., journeyed to America. Two years later his wife and children joined him, and the reunited family settled in Kensington, a suburb of Philadelphia, where they became part of a

well-established community of immigrant textile workers.

While still a teenager, Thomas became an apprentice at the Philadelphia engraving firm of Scattergood and Telfer. He withdrew from his apprenticeship prematurely and began working in the studio of his older brother, Edward, who had begun to establish himself as a marine painter. By serving, in effect, a second apprenticeship, Moran benefited not only from the advice of his brother but also from that of James Hamilton (1819–1878), a well-known Philadelphia painter who



had befriended Edward. Described by contemporaries as the “American Turner,” Hamilton may have sparked Thomas Moran’s lifelong interest in the work of English artist J.M.W. Turner (1775–1851).

In 1862, after several years of studying Turner’s work in reproduction, Thomas and Edward journeyed to London, where they spent several months studying and copying Turner’s work at the National Gallery. A decade later, when Thomas journeyed west to join Ferdinand Vandever Hayden’s expedition to Yellowstone, the watercolors he produced on site bore clear evidence of his debt to Turner.

Moran’s trip to Yellowstone in 1871 proved to be the turning point of his career. The previous year he had been asked by *Scribner’s Magazine* to rework sketches made in Yellowstone by a member of an earlier expedition party. Intrigued by the geysers and mudpots of Yellowstone, he borrowed money to make the trip himself. Numerous paintings and commissions resulted from this journey. Moran received considerable attention following the sale to Congress of his enormous (7 by 12 foot) *Grand Cañon of the Yellowstone* (1872, Department of the Interior, on loan to NMAA), shortly after passage of the bill that set Yellowstone aside as America’s first National Park.

In 1873, following up on his earlier success, Moran joined John Wesley Powell’s expedition to the Colorado River and the Grand Canyon. Shortly after his return he set to work on a second canvas equal in size to his earlier Yellowstone painting. In 1874 Congress purchased *Chasm of the Colorado* (1873–1874, Department of the Interior, on loan to NMAA), which became the second of Moran’s western landscapes to hang in the Capitol.

That same year Moran traveled to Denver and then north to see the Mountain of the Holy Cross, a massive mountain with a “cross” of snow on its side. The resulting painting became Moran’s chief contribution to the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876. Iconic in its union of wilderness and religion, *Mountain of the Holy Cross* became one of Moran’s best known works.

His reputation established, Moran continued to travel widely during the following decades. He returned to Europe several times, again following trails blazed by Turner. In 1883 he journeyed to

Mexico. In later years he returned to the Grand Canyon and traveled more extensively in Arizona and New Mexico, producing a number of striking works of the pueblos at Acoma and Laguna. Extraordinarily productive both as a painter and an etcher, Moran continued to work well into his eighties. At his death in August 1926, he was memorialized as the “dean of American landscape painters.”

NANCY ANDERSON

#### Bibliography

Wilkins 1966.  
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Morand and Friese 1986.  
Kinsey 1992.  
Morand 1996.  
Moran 1997.

1967.9.1 (2330)

### *The Much Resounding Sea*

1884  
Oil on canvas, 63.9 × 158.2 (25<sup>3/16</sup> × 62<sup>5/16</sup>)  
Gift of the Avalon Foundation

#### Inscriptions

Monogram at lower left: TMoran. / 1884.

**Technical Notes:** The support is a medium-weight twill-weave fabric prepared with a tan ground layer. Although there is no cusping along the trimmed edges, the painting does not appear to have been cut down. The waves are underpainted with a dark reddish brown paint. In the sky, the paint was applied with a wet-into-wet technique. The white surf was built up with low impasto, the texture of which may have been reduced during a past lining. Two small vertical tears are in the lower left corner (one approximately 7 cm and the other approximately 3 cm in length). The painting was lined during restoration in 1967. The varnish is slightly yellowed.

**Provenance:** Frederic R. Coudert, New York and Oyster Bay, Long Island, by 1912; purchased c. 1965 at auction on Long Island by Mrs. Myrtle Gascoigne, Newcastle, Maine; purchased April 1967 by her children, Nancy Gascoigne [Mrs. John T.] Richards, Alexandria, Virginia, Mrs. Robert D. Halverson, Glen Cove, Long Island, New York, and Robert W. Gascoigne, Bounton, New Jersey.

**Exhibited:** *In Memoria*, Ailsa Mellon Bruce, NGA, 1969, no cat. *The Beckoning Land*, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, 1971, no. 70. *The American Seascape from John Smibert to John Marin*, Mansfield Art Center, Ohio, 1988, no. 36. *At the Water’s Edge: Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Cen-*

ture *American Beach Scenes*, Tampa Museum of Art, Florida; Center for the Arts, Vero Beach; Virginia Beach Center for the Arts; Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock, 1989–1990, unnumbered (shown only in Tampa).

MUCH ACCLAIMED as a painter of western American landscapes, Thomas Moran was also an accomplished marine painter. His interest in the subject may have been inspired by his older brother Edward, who enjoyed considerable success as a marine painter and with whom Thomas studied as a young man. As a lifelong admirer of the English artist J.M.W. Turner, Moran was also undoubtedly influenced by Turner's numerous marine paintings and engravings. *The Much Resounding Sea*, however, may have had a more immediate source: In 1884, the year the painting was completed, Moran built the home and studio in East Hampton, Long Island, New York, in which he lived and worked for the next quarter-century.<sup>1</sup>

Moran and his wife Mary first visited East Hampton in 1878 and then returned during successive summers with their children, enjoying the sleepy village and sandy beaches. Both husband and wife produced etchings based on the surf-and-dune landscape of the East Hampton shore.<sup>2</sup> Thomas also completed a number of large-scale paintings that reflect close study of the sea in all its moods. In several of these works shipwrecks and the rescue efforts of those on shore provide narrative details. However, aside from some debris washed ashore, shown at the lower edge of the canvas, *The Much Resounding Sea* contains no narrative elements. Instead, the painting is a study of roiling waves tossed by the storm that can be seen moving rapidly out of the picture at the left. Although the

configuration of shore and surf reflects Moran's daily walks along the beach, the title of the painting suggests a literary source as well.

As a young painter just beginning to make his mark, Moran produced and exhibited works that testify to his interest in the English Romantic poets.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, over the years he painted many works based on literary subjects, both European and American. Despite its lack of overt narrative, *The Much Resounding Sea* may be another of these pictures, for the title phrase appears several times in the most popular nineteenth-century translation of Homer's *Iliad*. Originally published in London in 1851, the translation of Reverend Theodore Alois Buckley was reissued regularly by Harper Brothers in New York beginning in 1856.<sup>4</sup> Because of the wide availability of Buckley's translation and the familiarity of Moran's contemporaries with the classics, the phrase "much resounding sea" would have had a resonance for Moran's audience that is lost on most modern viewers.

Additionally, the painting bears an interesting relationship to an etching by Moran so admired by the English critic John Ruskin that he recommended Moran give up painting for etching. Ruskin's comments were prompted by a visit he paid the Moran family in London in 1882. On that occasion Ruskin saw Moran's etching *The Breaking Wave* (also called *The Resounding Sea*, fig. 1), declared it "the finest drawing of water in motion that has come out of America," and bought the image for his museum in Sheffield.<sup>5</sup> *The Much Resounding Sea*, a compositional echo of *The Breaking Wave*, was completed two years after Moran's meeting with Ruskin. Thus, uncharacteristically, the oil version of an image actually followed the etched image. This may

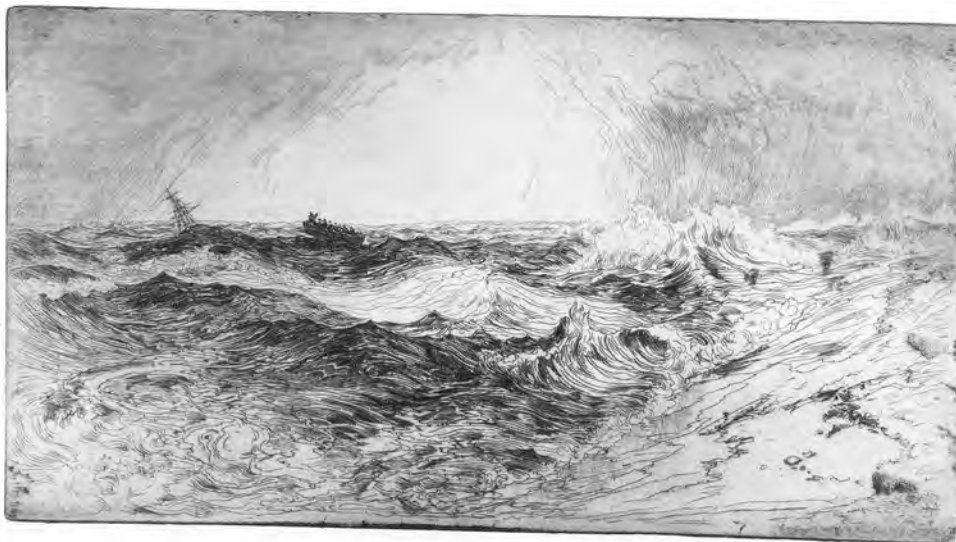


Fig. 1. Thomas Moran, *The Breaking Wave (The Resounding Sea)*, etching, 1880, Tulsa, Oklahoma, Gilcrease Museum, 1426.419b



Thomas Moran, *The Much Resounding Sea*, 1967.9.1



reflect not only Moran's pleasure in Ruskin's response but also his wish to translate the composition that had won such praise into a major painting.

NANCY ANDERSON

#### Notes

1. Moran exhibited two marine paintings at the National Academy of Design in New York in 1884: *A Gathering Storm, East Hampton, L.I.* and *A Norther in the Gulf of Mexico*. It has been suggested that *The Much Resounding Sea* is actually one of these pictures. Descriptions of compositional elements in the two paintings exhibited at the Academy, published in the *Boston Evening Transcript* (5 April 1884) and the *New York Herald* (13 April 1884), confirm that *The Much Resounding Sea* was not one of these paintings.

2. Several of Moran's East Hampton prints are reproduced in Morand and Friese 1986. In its composition *The Resounding Sea* (p. 100) is more closely related to the painting *The Much Resounding Sea* than is the etching with the same title (p. 136).

3. In 1857, for example, Moran exhibited *Among the Ruins—There He Lingered*, a painting based on Percy Bysshe Shelley's poem "Alastor," and in 1859 he exhibited *Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came*, based on Robert Browning's well-known poem.

4. In Buckley's translation the phrase appears in Book 2, line 209 and Book 13, line 798. In Book 6 the phrase "the much-resounding ocean" appears at line 347.

5. The episode is discussed in Wilkins 1966, 161–163.

#### References

- 1966 Wilkins.  
1971 *Beckoning Land*: 29, 90.  
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1997 Moran.

## Samuel F. B. Morse

1791–1872

THE ARTIST and inventor Samuel Finley Breese Morse was born on 27 April 1791 at Charlestown, Massachusetts, the eldest son of Reverend Jedidiah Morse and Elizabeth Ann Breese. He was profoundly influenced by the Calvinist millennialism and evangelism of his father. While attending Yale University he began to paint portraits in the naive style popular in Connecticut. After graduation he moved to Boston and became the private pupil and friend of Washington Allston (1779–1843), who introduced him to a traditional program of academic study of art, comprising drawing, anatomy, and art theory.

In 1811, with Allston's encouragement, Morse went to London, where he met Benjamin West (1738–1820), befriended Charles Robert Leslie, and was accepted as a student at the Royal Academy of Art. Morse's first major painting, *The Dying Hercules* (1812–1813, YUAG), was a fairly competent attempt at the neoclassical history painting that was in vogue among Academy painters.

The young painter returned to the United States in 1815 with expectations of establishing himself as a professional artist. The unsophisticated cultural atmosphere thwarted his aspirations,

however, and Morse had to earn a meager living as an itinerant portraitist, traveling throughout New England, to New York, and to Charleston. He suffered a major disappointment when his *House of Representatives* (1822–1823, CGA), envisioned as a touring picture for public entertainment, proved a critical and financial failure.

Morse's perseverance was finally rewarded in 1824, when he won the most prestigious commission of the decade: The city of New York asked him to paint a full-length portrait, *The Marquis de Lafayette* (1825–1826, City of New York), on the occasion of the French hero's triumphal tour of America. The successful completion of this important portrait gained Morse the recognition and professional eminence he had sought for a decade. It was the apex of his career as an artist.

An educated, eloquent, and tireless crusader on behalf of artists' rights, Morse used his new prestige to promote cultural nationalism. He led a group of young artists who in 1826 established the progressive National Academy of Design as an alternative to John Trumbull's conservative American Academy of the Fine Arts. Morse served as the organization's first president, an office he held

until 1845. The foundation of the National Academy, dedicated primarily to artistic instruction and camaraderie among artists, led directly to a flowering of American art as a new generation of painters and sculptors made their debut at its annual exhibitions. Also in 1826 Morse delivered a series of four important lectures at the New York Athenaeum in which he argued for the advancement of art in American society.<sup>1</sup>

In 1829 he embarked on a three-year grand tour of Europe, where he studied and copied works by the old masters in the museums and galleries of France and Italy. This period culminated in the large *Gallery of the Louvre* (1832–1833, Terra Museum of American Art, Chicago), a pictorial summary of European art with which Morse hoped to improve American culture after his return to New York in 1832. Despite its favorable reception among the intelligentsia, the painting failed before the general public. Morse suffered further rejection in 1837 when the Congressional Committee on Public Buildings decided not to commission him to paint a mural for the Capitol rotunda. This rejection may have resulted in part from Morse's reputation for radical politics. In the mid-1830s he became associated with the Native American party and wrote several widely read, vitriolic anti-Catholic diatribes whose xenophobic tone bordered on paranoia.

Disillusioned by failure, in 1837, at the age of forty-six, Morse ceased painting and devoted the last thirty-five years of his life to inventing and perfecting the electromagnetic telegraph. He died on 2 April 1872. Well before his death Morse's fame as inventor of the telegraph had eclipsed his early renown as a painter, and only after the retrospective exhibition of his work held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1932 did interest in his art revive.<sup>2</sup>

Morse's ideas and art appealed exclusively to the cultural elite. With the exception of the romantic *Lafayette* portrait, his most ambitious works failed before an unreceptive public. Many of the portraits he painted when he found himself unable to earn a living through painting historical subjects are of negligible quality. Although he did not have a major impact on the stylistic development of nineteenth-century American art, his achievements in art education and as a leader of artists paved the way for an entire generation. As a

founder and first president of the National Academy of Design, Morse did much to advance art in America. However, as Paul Staiti has shown, Morse's lofty aesthetic ideals, the product of his eighteenth-century patrician Calvinist upbringing, were hopelessly anachronistic in Jacksonian America and thus doomed to failure. RWT

#### Notes

1. *Lectures on the Affinity of Painting with the Other Fine Arts*, ed. Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr. (Columbia, Missouri, 1983).

2. See Wehle 1932.

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1981.46.1 (2848)

### *Eliphalet Terry*

c. 1824

Oil on canvas, 75.7 × 63.2 (29 <sup>13</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 24 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>)

Gift of Dr. Charles Terry Butler

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric was relined in 1984. Photographs show an inscription "Painted by / Saml.F.B. Morse" on the old lining fabric, and an excise duty stamp with illegible numbers stenciled on the back of the original support. The previous four-member mortise-and-tenon stretcher with outer keys in open slots may have been the original. The tacking margins were removed during a previous lining, but cusping suggests that the dimensions remain unaltered. The white or cream-colored ground layer is covered with an orange-red imprimatura. The artist applied paint smoothly and opaquely with low impasto confined mainly to the sitter's face and cravat. There are small, scattered paint and ground losses. Inpainting covers losses in the sitter's temple and cravat and along the background edges, and also covers flyspecks.

**Provenance:** The sitter's daughter, Mrs. Charles Collins [née Mart Hall Terry]; her daughter, Mrs. William Allen Butler [née Louise Terry Collins]; her son, Dr. Charles Terry Butler, Chappaqua, New York.

ELIPHALET TERRY JR. (1776–1849) was born in Enfield, Connecticut, the son of Judge Eliphalet Terry and his wife Mary Hall Terry; Judge Terry represented Enfield in the state legislature from 1779 until his death. In 1795 the young Terry moved



Samuel F. B. Morse, *Lydia Coit Terry (Mrs. Eliphalet Terry)*, 1981.46.2



Samuel F. B. Morse, *Eliphalet Terry*, 1981.46.1



to Hartford and began working for a grocery merchant named Church. When Church died, Terry and his brother Roderick purchased the firm, renaming it E. & R. Terry's Wholesale Grocery House. The business prospered and eventually became the largest concern of West Indian traders in Hartford. After making a fortune, Terry retired from the firm in 1830 and five years later succeeded his cousin Nathaniel Terry as president of the Hartford Fire Insurance Company. His forthright payment of company losses after the great conflagration of December 1835 in New York City enhanced the firm's reputation. Evidence suggests that Terry was an able executive: During the economic depression of the late 1830s, the Hartford Company's business increased, and by 1849, the year Terry resigned because of poor health, the company's premium income showed an increase of 131 percent over the corresponding figure for 1835.<sup>1</sup>

The detailed treatment of the sitter's face, in which the artist carefully delineated minute characteristics without any attempt at idealization, is a remnant of Morse's early linear style. This effect is relieved by the painterly treatment of the sitter's white cravat. Scholars who have studied Morse's oeuvre have unanimously admired this portrait of the wealthy Connecticut merchant. Larkin commented that it was "incisive" in comparison to its "more fluent" companion.<sup>2</sup> William Kloss perceptively observed that in this image Morse concentrated on "the shrewd character of the Yankee businessman, especially by the uneven placement of the eyes and the strong aquiline nose."<sup>3</sup> Paul Staiti admired the way Terry was "elegantly posed against a simple background."<sup>4</sup>

RWT

#### Notes

1. The biographical data are drawn from James Hammond Trumbull, ed., *Memorial History of Hartford County Connecticut, 1633-1884* (Boston, 1886), 500; *Commemorative Biographical Record of Hartford County, Connecticut* (Chicago, 1901), 1449; Charles W. Burpee, *History of the Hartford Fire Insurance Company, 1810-1910* (Hartford, 1910); and Hawthorne Daniel, *The Hartford of Hartford* (New York, 1960), 73, 84-85.

2. Larkin 1954, 77.

3. Kloss 1988, 91.

4. Staiti 1989, 113.

#### References

- 1932 Wehle: 43.  
 1954 Larkin: 77.  
 1988 Kloss: 91.  
 1989 Staiti: 113, fig. 71.

1981.46.2 (2849)

### *Lydia Coit Terry* *(Mrs. Eliphalet Terry)*

c. 1824

Oil on canvas, 75.8 × 63.0 (29<sup>13/16</sup> × 24<sup>13/16</sup>)

Gift of Dr. Charles Terry Butler

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric was relined during conservation in 1984. Photographs show an inscription "Painted by / Saml. F.B. Morse." on the old lining fabric, and an excise duty stamp with illegible numbers stenciled on the back of the original support. The previous four-member mortise-and-tenon stretcher with inner keys in open slots may have been the original. The tacking margins and a small portion of the lower left corner are missing, but cusping suggests that the dimensions remain unaltered. The white or cream-colored ground layer is covered with an orange-red imprimatura that is visible through thin areas of the paint. The paint was applied fluidly without much impasto; it is noticeably thicker in the face. The skin, hair, and black dress were painted first, followed by the ruffle and bonnet, and then the gray background was abutted to the figure. The red drapery was then painted over the background and black dress. A tear in the upper left corner, small losses along the edges, and abrasion in the right sleeve are inpainted.

**Provenance:** The sitter's daughter, Mrs. Charles Collins [née Mart Hall Terry]; her daughter, Mrs. William Allen Butler [née Louise Terry Collins]; her son, Dr. Charles Terry Butler, Chappaqua, New York.

THE PORTRAITS of Eliphalet Terry and Lydia Coit Terry were the first pair of pendants that Morse painted in the 1820s. This was a difficult time for the artist, when he was based in New Haven but forced into an itinerant way of life in order to support his family. The impressive Terry portraits are noteworthy because they were executed only months before Morse won the prestigious commission of the decade, the full-length *Marquis de Lafayette* for New York City Hall. Oliver Larkin dated the paintings to 1824 on the basis of a letter the artist wrote to his wife in September of that year, in which he mentioned that he had commenced work on two portraits in Hartford.<sup>1</sup>

Lydia Coit Terry (1788-1831) was one of three daughters born to Wheeler Coit, a wealthy merchant of Preston, Connecticut, and his second wife Sybel Tracy. In 1813 one of her sisters married Judge Thomas Day, a resident of Hartford who served as secretary of state for Connecticut between 1810 and 1835. Lydia most likely met her future hus-

band through the Days. She married Terry in 1817, several years after the death of his first wife Sarah Watson. The couple had five children, two of whom died at an early age. Their son Eliphalet Terry (1826–1896) became a noted landscape and animal painter.<sup>2</sup> Lydia died of complications following the delivery of a stillborn child in 1831.

The artist represented his matronly subject clad in a black dress and seated in a chair covered by a piece of red drapery that she uses to warm her hands. Lydia Terry faces right, the visual complement to her husband, who faces left. A vertical ridge in the wall behind her diminishes the stark effect of the spacious backgrounds when the portraits are viewed together. The most striking aspect of the painting is the white lace ruffle and matching bonnet that frame the sitter's head; the unusually ornate quality serves to attract the viewer's attention to her ruddy countenance. One of Lydia's descendants discovered a fragment of handmade lace in an envelope with an inscription saying that it was of the type she had worn when sitting for the portrait in 1824.<sup>3</sup> As Paul Staiti has perceptively written, "in her gentle smile and contained pose Mrs. Terry ra-

diates grace and contentedness that are made slightly bittersweet by the faint aura of melancholy in her puffy eyes and by the listless slump of her body."<sup>4</sup>

RWT

#### Notes

1. Larkin 1954, 77. Morse mentioned his impending professional visit to Hartford in three letters to his parents dated 10 August, 16 August, and 29 August 1824 (all in Morse Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress). In the last of these letters Morse noted that he had eight potential portrait commissions in the city and expressed moderate alarm at his father's report that Alvin Fisher had arrived there a month earlier and might have painted some of them. Wehle 1932, 43, erroneously dated the Terry portraits to 1825.

2. His career is summarized in Groce and Wallace 1957, 622; his cousin Luther Terry (1813–1869), with whom he studied in Rome, was a portraitist.

3. Nadea B. Middleton to Linda L. Ayres, 29 October 1984 (in NGA curatorial files).

4. Staiti 1989, 113, 116.

#### References

- 1932 Wehle: 43.  
1954 Larkin: 77.  
1988 Kloss: 90.  
1989 Staiti: 113, 116; fig. 70, pl. vi.

## John Neagle

1796–1865

JOHN NEAGLE was born on 4 November 1796, while his parents—Irish-born father Maurice Nagle and mother Susannah Taylor, the daughter of a New Jersey farmer—were visiting Boston from their home in Philadelphia. He was baptized as a Roman Catholic. Neagle attended grammar school in Philadelphia and briefly studied art with the drawing master and artist Pietro Ancora. He worked in the grocery and liquor store of his stepfather Lawrence Ennis until the age of fifteen, when he was apprenticed to a local coach decorator named Thomas Wilson. When Wilson began to take painting lessons from Bass Otis (1784–1861), Neagle was impressed with the likenesses he saw in that artist's studio and resolved to become a portraitist himself.

Neagle studied with Otis for about two months and then embarked on a rigorous independent study of art. By 1815 he had begun to paint small oil sketches that he sold for five dollars apiece. Otis introduced the young man to Thomas Sully (1783–1872), who soon became his mentor. It was around this time that the aspiring artist changed the spelling of his name from Nagle to Neagle, after seeing an illustration in Joel Barlow's *Columbiad* (Philadelphia, 1807) that had been engraved by James Neagle. Tired from the drudgery of decorating coaches and encouraged by the results of his early efforts, Neagle left Wilson and set up a modest portrait practice. In 1818 he sought greater professional opportunities in Lexington, Kentucky, but was frustrated by the presence there of

Matthew Harris Jouett. He proceeded to New Orleans, where his prospects as a portraitist were equally bleak, and immediately returned to Philadelphia, where he remained for the rest of his life.

Neagle began to exhibit at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1821, and his earliest portraits of Native Americans, actors, and clergymen show the distinctive characteristic of his mature style: they are forceful, penetrating likenesses that capture the essence of his sitters' personalities. Despite the excellence of his portraits of men, Neagle's images of women are often of remarkably inferior quality. Neagle's training with Sully predisposed him to learn the painterly British style of Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792), Henry Raeburn (1756–1823), and Thomas Lawrence (1769–1830) that was current among the most successful American portraitists of the day. When Neagle returned to Philadelphia in the summer of 1825, he briefly studied with Gilbert Stuart (1755–1828) and met Washington Allston. Stuart's influence on Neagle's development was decisive and reinforced his penchant for the painterly British style.

On 29 May 1826 Neagle married Sully's stepdaughter Mary Chester Sully. They departed immediately for New York City, where he executed portraits of noted actors and actresses that later appeared as engraved illustrations in a series of books titled *The Acting American Theatre*. There followed a period of intense artistic activity during which his artistic style matured rapidly. In 1827 Neagle painted the portrait that earned him a national reputation and for which he is best remembered today, the full-length *Pat Lyon at the Forge* (MFA); he painted a second version of it in 1829 (PAFA).<sup>1</sup> His culminating accomplishment of this period, the grand manner portrait *Dr. William Potts Dewees* (1833, University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, Philadelphia), demonstrates how well Neagle mastered the British style without ever having studied in England.

Throughout his long career Neagle painted Philadelphia's prominent doctors, lawyers, businessmen, and clergymen of various denominations. His portraits are often remarkable for the iconographic devices he used to explicate his subjects' professions or important experiences in their lives. Self-educated and conversant on a wide variety of intellectual pursuits, he moved freely in

the city's elite social circles. An active and sometimes outspoken exponent of artists' rights who spared no efforts to promote the fine arts in America, Neagle was elected first president of the Artists' Fund Society, an organization made up of artists who had seceded from the Pennsylvania Academy in 1835.

In the early autumn of 1842 a group of Philadelphia's prominent Whig citizens commissioned Neagle to paint a full-length portrait of Henry Clay (Union League of Philadelphia), a work that served as a political icon for the Germantown Clay Club during the statesman's bid for the presidency of the United States in 1844. The artist traveled to Clay's farm Ashland in Lexington, Kentucky, and remained in Kentucky until early 1843 painting prominent people.

The portrait of Clay was Neagle's last major work. Depressed by the death of his beloved wife in 1845, he gradually withdrew from society. With very few exceptions, his artistic creativity diminished and his activity as a professional portraitist tapered off. The rigid poses and fixed stares of his sitters in these later works reflect the influence of the popular daguerreotype. Neagle suffered a severe stroke in the late 1850s, after which his health steadily declined until his death on 17 September 1865. Neagle was second only to his mentor and father-in-law Sully as Philadelphia's leading portraitist and exponent of the British-influenced painterly style.

RWT

#### Notes

1. For this important painting, see Ransom R. Patrick, "John Neagle, Portrait Painter, and Pat Lyon, Blacksmith," *AB* 33 (September 1951): 187–192; and Bruce W. Chambers, "The Pythagorean Puzzle of Pat Lyon," *AB* 18 (June 1976): 225–233.

#### Bibliography

Fitzgerald 1868.  
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Torchia 1989.

1947.17.81 (989)

## *The Reverend John Albert Ryan*

1825/1829

Oil on canvas, 76.5 × 63.8 (30 1/8 × 25 1/8)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

### Inscriptions

At lower left: *J Neagle / 1829*

**Technical Notes:** The fine 3 × 1 twill-weave fabric support is unlined and remains on its original four-member mortise-and-tenon stretcher. An inscription written in ink on the reverse of the fabric reads: "Original portrait of the Revd John Ryan / painted by John Neagle 1829. / Philadelphia." Of great interest is a pencil inscription on the left half of the bottom stretcher member consisting of Neagle's notes about his preparation of the fabric: "1 Coat Starch / 3 of Whiting & [Oil(?)] / 1 soak with water / & Sponge merely to / wet the Surface / to prevent the / following from / soaking in too / Much & clogging[?] / Into the C[anvas(?)] I / gave a Seal of / thin turpentine wh[ite] / lead while it washed [worked(?)] / Note. The Sponge / has rubbed off / some of the preparation / Would it not be / better to dip it / into a tub of water / with the face down?"<sup>1</sup> Pigment and medium analysis, the latter using gas chromatography, confirmed that this recipe was used for the ground layer.<sup>2</sup> The artist brushed on the white ground thinly, so that the twill pattern of the fabric weave is visible. There is no evidence of underdrawing. The paint was applied fluidly with minimal brushwork and no impasto. The modeling consists of a midtone base modified by darker and lighter tints of the same color. Craquelure with a pronounced vertical orientation has developed throughout the paint surface. Minimal inpainting is confined to scattered paint losses mostly around the edges, and two areas of the sitter's right chin adjacent to the collar. The surface is coated with a glossy varnish that has become yellowed.

**Provenance:** (C. K. Johnson, Greenwich, Connecticut); purchased 1 May 1923 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:** *Eighteenth Annual Exhibition*, PAFA, 1829, no. 95.<sup>3</sup> *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. 11. *Exhibition of Portraits by John Neagle*, PAFA, 1925, no. 29. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered.

DURING THE 1820s Neagle painted the portraits of four Irish-born Roman Catholic prelates who were involved in a complex, bitter, and sometimes violent struggle for power at St. Mary's, the cathedral

church of the diocese and the parish of Philadelphia's elite: They were *The Reverend William Hogan* (1823, HSP), *The Reverend William Vincent Harold* (c. 1824, location unknown), *The Right Reverend Henry Conwell* (1825, St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, Overbrook, Philadelphia), and the National Gallery's *Reverend John Albert Ryan*. Philadelphia's mostly Protestant public took a keen interest in the strife at St. Mary's, so the state of discord among these clergymen was common knowledge when Neagle exhibited their likenesses at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Neagle himself was the godson of Archbishop Cheverus of Boston, a devout Catholic of Irish descent, and a parishioner of St. Mary's, so that he not only knew these men but also (with the exception of Hogan) was under their spiritual jurisdiction.<sup>4</sup>

The basis of the dispute was the issue of "trusteeism," the insistence of some democratically minded lay leaders of the congregation at St. Mary's to act independently of clerical supervision, even to the point of hiring and firing their pastors. Ryan played a secondary role in the controversy as the steadfast supporter and chief polemicist for his lifelong friend, companion, and fellow Dominican W. V. Harold, whose fortunes he shared. He was a somewhat shadowy figure, whose activities can only be partially reconstructed by searching through histories of the early American Catholic Church.<sup>5</sup>

Ryan was born in 1774 at Limerick, Ireland. He entered the Dominican Order at an early age and studied philosophy and theology at the College of Corpo Santo, Lisbon, Portugal, under the Irish Dominicans. After his ordination to the priesthood, he distinguished himself as an orator and theologian, attaining the degree of master of sacred theology. Thereafter he divided his priestly labors between Lisbon and Ireland. In a sermon delivered on St. Patrick's Day, 1810, in the cathedral at Cork, Ryan created a disturbance by denouncing Anglicanism, which he condemned as "a fallen church." In the furor that followed, he was obliged to take refuge in Dublin, from where he sailed to New York late in the summer of 1811. According to one source Ryan went directly to Baltimore, "not with a view to entering the mission, but to see his sister, then in business in Baltimore."<sup>6</sup> John Carroll, the archbishop of that city, described Ryan as "a pleasant, good looking man" who possessed "uncommon talents for the pulpit and that kind of eloquence so much sought after in Ireland, which consists principally in imagery and splendid metaphors." Evidently this



assessment was accurate, because Baltimore's Irish Catholics were impressed by Ryan's sermons and successfully petitioned Carroll to grant him an appointment. The archbishop noted that Ryan "seemed quite content and good natured"<sup>7</sup> until hostilities broke out in Philadelphia between his confrere W. V. Harold, the vicar general of the diocese and copastor of St. Mary's, and Bishop Egan.

After extensive renovations at St. Mary's were completed in 1812, some of the trustees sought to relieve the church's debts by recommending the dismissal of one pastor and a reduction in salary for the others. W. V. Harold and his uncle James Harold resented this action because they believed that such decisions were the sole province of episcopal authorities. Aided by Ryan who had come from Baltimore, they began to agitate against the offending trustees, with the result that the congregation at St. Mary's was divided into two groups, one supporting the priests and the other the lay trustees. A substantial number of trustees, however, began to advocate the Harolds' cause. To effect a compromise, Bishop Egan removed James Harold, whose conduct certain trustees had considered especially overbearing. The Harolds, whose extremism and independence had by now alienated the bishop, resigned in protest and returned to Ireland, accompanied by Ryan, in 1813. Shortly thereafter W. V. Harold and Ryan went to Lisbon, from whence they wrote letters to Rome that were critical of their former superiors at Philadelphia and Baltimore. Worn out by the struggle, Egan died in 1814.

This episode left the Philadelphia church in such a state of disruption that a new bishop, Henry Conwell, was not appointed until 1820. W. V. Harold, with Ryan's help, had been lobbying Rome for that office, but his past antagonism toward Egan was held against him. It was perhaps at Conwell's invitation that he returned to Philadelphia as vicar general in 1821. In that capacity he served his superior effectively in the struggle against the scandal-ridden and schismatic priest William Hogan who, supported by radical trustees, had taken over St. Mary's and continued to preach there even after being excommunicated.<sup>8</sup> W. V. Harold lost little time in summoning his faithful ally to Philadelphia; in a letter of 1823 Bishop Conwell wrote that "our force is doubled by the fact that Mr. Ryan has come here from Lisbon, Portugal, for our assistance . . . he is a good priest, a Dominican, and a fine theologian."<sup>9</sup>

Hostilities soon erupted once again between the bishop and his clergy. In October 1826 Conwell

tried to eliminate the trustee problem once and for all at St. Mary's (which had been under interdict and without a pastor for five years) by making a pact conceding to their demand for the right to have a say in pastoral appointments. Even though Harold was made copastor of St. Mary's through this agreement, he and Ryan denounced its concessions to the practice of trusteeism, and incurred their superior's displeasure by so doing. Early in 1827 Conwell, feeling betrayed, dismissed Harold from his post as vicar general on the ground of disobedience, and later revoked his right to preach; presumably Ryan was treated in a similar manner. In an amazing reversal of sentiment, the trustees now supported Harold against the bishop, even though Harold had so recently been their implacable enemy through his firm support of episcopal authority. Rejecting substitute pastors, they petitioned the authorities in Rome to reinstate Harold and further asked that Ryan be appointed a copastor. One historian noted that at this juncture the Dominicans enjoyed popular support from Protestants and Catholics alike, and concluded that the two men were "probably the two most favored and probably the most capable priests in the diocese,"<sup>10</sup> their only shortcoming being failure to observe the protocol of church discipline. On 17 October 1827 Conwell capitulated and published a statement in the local newspapers to the effect that both Harold's and Ryan's priestly functions were reinstated and that they were officially installed as the pastors of St. Mary's.

The bishop's ill-fated pact was rejected by the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, and he was ordered back to Rome to account for his conduct. Early in 1828 both that office and the general of the Dominican Order informed Conwell of the pope's desire to have Harold and Ryan leave the diocese and move to Cincinnati. The priests refused to "go forth from Philadelphia branded with the reproach of exile," claiming that "this sentence of removal, which no foreign prince is allowed to pass on to an American citizen, greatly disturbed the minds of men, and the enemies of the Holy See made a great outcry."<sup>11</sup> The papal authorities remained adamant, so the two Dominican priests took the unprecedented step of making an appeal to the U.S. State Department, claiming that their rights as American citizens were being violated by a foreign power. After investigating these allegations, the government, finding no evidence of improper conduct, refused to become involved in



John Neagle, *The Reverend John Albert Ryan*, 1947.17.81

internal Catholic affairs. Having exhausted all their attempts to remain in Philadelphia, Harold and Ryan returned to Ireland in 1829. Ryan died in a Dominican convent at Cork on 24 May 1852.

Although this portrait is dated 1829 on both its obverse and reverse and was exhibited at the Pennsylvania Academy that year, several references in Neagle's diary for 1825, beginning on 8 October when he "painted on Mr. Ryan," indicate that it was executed late in 1825 after that of Bishop Conwell. In an entry of 18 November the artist recorded that a "Mr. Ryan Sat," just two days before he attended church and "Heard an eloquent discourse from Mr. Harrold [*sic*], D.D. on the importance of Baptism, as a Saving Ordinance." The portrait was finished on 28 November, but on 1 January 1826 Neagle wrote, "Hung up Mr. Ryan's portrait in good light—the picture having been sent home the evening before."<sup>12</sup> He made no further references to it. The style of the Ryan portrait is in accord with its having been painted at this time; several of Neagle's works from these years have similar chronological discrepancies.<sup>13</sup> From what is known of Ryan's activities, he would more probably have had his portrait painted in 1825, before he incurred the bishop's wrath, than on the eve of his forced return to Ireland in 1829.

This important portrait is an excellent example of Neagle's work from the mid- to late 1820s. The artist's delineation of Ryan's character is a sympathetic one, as the affable priest forthrightly meets the viewer's gaze. In an era when phrenology was a popular science, viewers of the portrait would have interpreted Ryan's protruding brow as an indication of prodigious intellectual capacity. Only the sitter's firmly set mouth and penetrating blue eyes reveal his intractability.

RWT

#### Notes

1. In his "Commonplace Book," HSP, 1–4, 14–19, Neagle recorded the results of similar experiments with different ground recipes during the mid- to late 1820s and noted his preference for absorbent grounds, which Thomas Sully had told him were favored by British artists.

2. Suzanne Quillen Lomax and Michael Palmer, NGA Scientific Research Department, *Analysis Report*, 23 March 1993.

3. The sitter's first name was mistakenly given in the catalogue as "Jonathan."

4. For Neagle's portraits of Hogan and Conwell, see Torchia 1989, 120–121, 128–129.

5. The following account of the schisms at St. Mary's and biographical material on Ryan are drawn

from Joseph Kirlin, *Catholicity in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1909), 195–263; Arthur J. Ennis, "The New Diocese of Philadelphia," in James F. Connelly, ed., *History of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1976), 68–112; Martin I. J. Griffin, *History of the Right Reverend Michael Egan, D.D., First Bishop of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1893); Griffin, "The Life of Bishop Conwell," *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia* 24–29 (1913–1918); Peter Guilday, *The Life and Times of John Carroll, Archbishop of Baltimore, 1735–1815* (New York, 1922); and Francis E. Tourscher, *The Hogan Schism and Trustee Troubles in St. Mary's Church, Philadelphia, 1820–1829* (Philadelphia, 1930).

6. Guilday 1922, 821.

7. Archbishop Carroll, letter, cited by Griffin 1893, 82–83.

8. For a detailed account of the Hogan schism, see Tourscher 1930.

9. Henry Conwell, letter, 13 September 1823, cited in Griffin 1913–1918, 26: 249.

10. Tourscher 1930, 164.

11. W. V. Harold and John Ryan, letter, 30 June 1828, cited in Griffin 1913–1918, 28: 334–339. According to Griffin, Harold and Ryan aired their grievances before the general public by publishing this letter, along with others supporting their cause, in a pamphlet.

12. "Blotter Book," HSP.

13. Neagle's use of a twill-weave support here further points to a date of 1825 because it reflects the influence of Gilbert Stuart, with whom he had studied during the summer of that year. In his manuscript "Commonplace Book," HSP, 1, Neagle noted Stuart's preference for such fabrics and mentioned that the older artist had given him one on which he painted his *Gilbert Stuart* (1825, HSP).

#### References

1925 PAFA: no. 29, 48.

1947.17.77 (985)

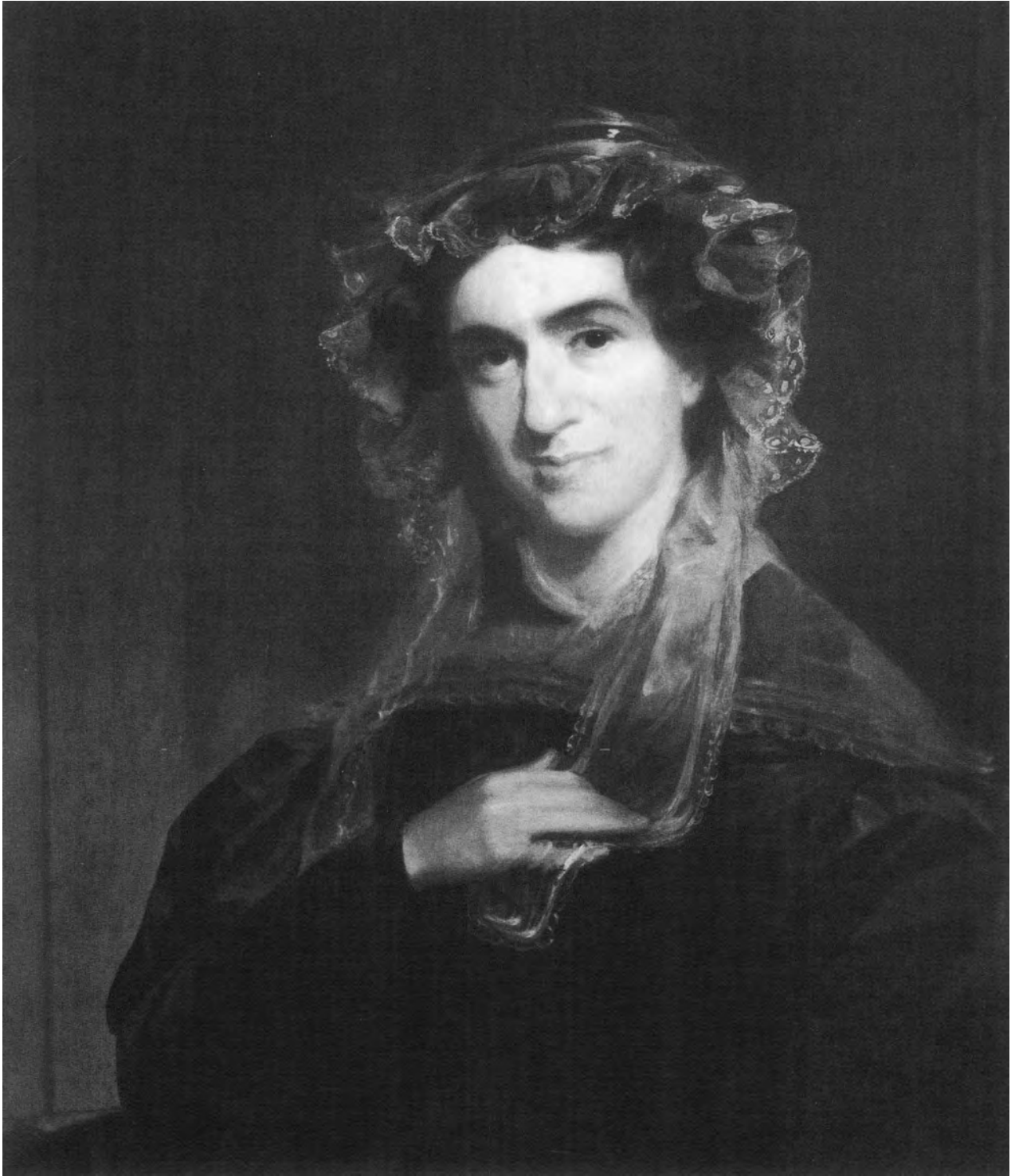
*Amy Taylor Dickson*  
(*Mrs. John Dickson*)

c. 1835

Oil on canvas, 76.8 × 63.8 (30 1/4 × 25 1/8)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support has been lined. The reverse of the lining fabric bears what is presumably a copy of the artist's original inscription: "Painted by / John Neagle. / Phila. / 1834." The tacking margins have been removed. X-radiography reveals cusping on all four edges of the support, indicating that the original dimensions have not been altered. Paint was thinly applied over a white ground layer, with little use of impasto; glazes are visible throughout, particularly in the face. No evidence of underdrawing or design changes was detected. The paint surface is abraded, and inpainting is present in the sitter's



John Neagle, *Amy Taylor Dickson (Mrs. John Dickson)*, 1947.17.77



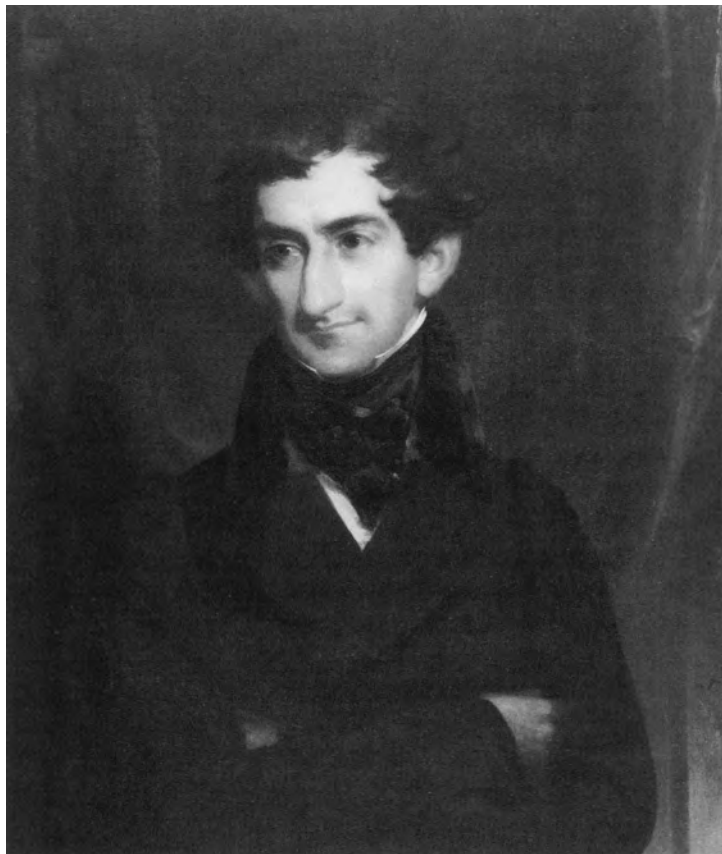
face and hand, and scattered in the background. The surface coating has become discolored.

**Provenance:** The sitter's son, Levi Dickson, Jr. [d. 1883], Philadelphia; his sister, Susan Allen Dickson, Philadelphia; the artist's son, Garrett Cross Neagle, Philadelphia; Gilbert S. Parker, Philadelphia; Anna P. Bly; (William Macbeth, New York); Frank Bulkeley Smith, Worcester, Massachusetts; (sale, American Art Association, 23 April 1920, no. 149); 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 Portraits*, PAFA, 1887–1888, no. 126. *Exhibition of Paintings by Early American Portrait Painters*, Union League Club, New York, November 1921, no. 4. *Exhibition of Portraits by John Neagle*, PAFA, 1925, no. 31.<sup>1</sup> Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered.

AMY TAYLOR DICKSON (1783–1836) was born in Burlington County, New Jersey, one of the four children of Aaron Taylor and Abigail Nutt; her sister Susannah Taylor was Neagle's mother. In 1800

Fig. 1. John Neagle, *Levi Dickson*, oil on canvas, 1834, Philadelphia, The Museum of American Art of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Gift of Mrs. John Frederick Lewis (The John Frederick Lewis Memorial Collection), 1933.10.49



she married John Dickson, a Scottish immigrant who had settled in Philadelphia, where he became a successful merchant. Amy Dickson never remarried after her husband's death in 1820, and both were buried in the family plot at the Third Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia. Their son Levi Dickson (1805–1872) was Neagle's cousin and close friend.

Seated and inclined slightly to the right, Mrs. Dickson looks at the viewer with a slight smile as she raises a diminutive right hand to adjust the lace bands that dangle from her bonnet. The painterly treatment of the transparent white lace against the black dress provides a decorative element that enlivens an otherwise drab painting. Neagle made little effort to idealize his aunt's plain features, although she appears younger than her fifty-one years. The artist's draftsmanship of her upper torso is notably weak.

The poor quality of this portrait has led most scholars to reject it from Neagle's oeuvre: William Sawitzky thought it "too mediocre for the talented and vigorous Neagle"; John Hill Morgan guardedly accepted the attribution to Neagle but in 1920 advised the Brooklyn Museum not to acquire it because of the poorly drawn hand; Alan Burroughs noted that it "was rather carelessly modeled"; and Anna Rutledge and James Lane (who had difficulty accepting the sitter's age) concluded that it was "probably not authentic as to subject and only possibly authentic as to artist."<sup>2</sup> William Campbell, who examined the portrait next to Neagle's *Thomas Dyott* [1947.17.78, p. 29], decided that it was "by Neagle, but considerably worn and with a fair amount of new paint."<sup>3</sup> In fact, the portrait is in fairly good condition, so its failings cannot be attributed to an inferior state of preservation. In stark contrast to these opinions, Ransom Patrick wrote that *Amy Taylor Dickson* "is a very directly and skillfully painted portrait" and went on to praise the "convincing likeness, a tenderly and simply rendered face with warm sympathetic eyes and a lightly painted, gentle, animated mouth."<sup>4</sup>

An entry in Neagle's account book confirms that on 26 December 1834 he received seventy dollars for a portrait of "Mrs. Dickson" and ninety dollars for one of her son Levi (fig. 1).<sup>5</sup> Although these two portraits were ordered together, they were not designed as pendants: Both subjects are oriented toward their right rather than toward each other; Levi Dickson seems to stand while his mother is seated; and the backgrounds are dissimilar. The

portrait of Levi Dickson is of significantly higher artistic quality than *Amy Taylor Dickson*, a disparity that underscores Neagle's extreme difficulty with female portraiture. The artist's sympathetic, introspective, and straightforward rendering of his aunt's features possesses a certain charm. These qualities help justify the otherwise incomprehensible opinion expressed by the artist's son Garrett that this was "one of his father's finest female portraits."<sup>6</sup> Shortly after his aunt's death, Neagle made preparations for a posthumous portrait of her, but whether he ever painted it is unknown.<sup>7</sup>

RWT

#### Notes

1. It is listed in the catalogue as belonging to "Mr. A. T. Bay, New York," who was really Clarke's secretary Alice T. Bay.

2. Rutledge and Lane 1952, 137-138.

3. William P. Campbell, memo of 9 February 1966 (in NGA curatorial files). He also had suspicions about the identity of the sitter and in a memo of 21 July 1966 recommended that the portrait's title be changed to "Portrait of a Lady."

4. Patrick 1959, 93-94.

5. Cash book, MS, HSP. This date is confirmed by an inscription on the back of the portrait that was probably copied from the original one: "Painted by John Neagle, Phila., 1834."

6. This opinion was cited in the Frank Bulkeley Smith Sale Catalogue, American Art Association, New York (23 April 1920), no. 149.

7. In the "Blotter Book," MS, HSP, under an entry of 11 November 1836, Neagle recorded that before her burial he "took a cast in the morning (13th) of Aunt Dickson's face—Margaret had earlier that morning expressed a desire of a good likeness of her mother."

#### References

- 1925 PAFA: no. 31, 50.  
1959 Patrick: 93-94.

1947.17.78 (986)

*Thomas W. Dyott*

c. 1836

Oil on canvas, 75.5 × 63.5 (29<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 25)  
Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric was relined in 1957-1958. A photograph of the old lining fabric shows an inscription said to have been copied from the reverse of the original fabric: "Dr T W Dyott. / painted by John Nagle 1836." The original tacking margins have been removed. Neagle applied paint sparingly over a moderately thick, off-white

ground that conceals the weave of the fabric support. Underdrawing, probably in pencil, was used to situate the sitter's eyes, nose, and cleft above upper lip. The artist applied washes of pale, medium, and dark brown paint to block out the major areas of light and shadow in the background and to achieve a dark underlayer for the coat. The sitter's face is the only area of the portrait that was executed with any degree of finish. There is minimal brushworking and no impasto. Small, scattered paint losses, especially in the right lapel, and wide paint cracks in the left background have been inpainted, and the dark contours of the coat have been reinforced. The matte varnish is only slightly grayed.

**Provenance:** Ferdinand J. Dreer [1812-1902], Philadelphia; (his estate sale, Stan V. Henkels, Philadelphia, 6 June 1913, no. 93, as *Dr. F. W. Dyott*); 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. 23. *Exhibition of Portraits by John Neagle*, PAFA, 1925, no. 122.<sup>1</sup> Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered. *Inaugural Exhibition: American Portraits*, Art Museum, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, 1969, no cat.

"DR." THOMAS W. DYOTT (1771-1861) has justly been called "one of the most interesting characters in the annals of our early glass-making," whose "effrontery and enterprise had made him the patent-medicine king of his day."<sup>2</sup> A former drug-gist's apprentice and clerk in London, he emigrated to America in the 1790s and settled at Philadelphia. Nearly destitute, the industrious young man supported himself by polishing boots during the day with blacking that he made at night. In 1807 he opened the Patent Medicine Warehouse and ultimately became the largest manufacturer and dealer of patent medicines of his era. Dyott, who claimed to be the "grandson of the late celebrated Dr. Robertson of Edinburgh," regularly advertised his numerous concoctions in the *United States Gazette*. Although he had no formal medical training, in 1810 he followed the custom in his profession of appropriating the title *Dr.* and using the initials *M.D.* after his name.

In 1815 Dyott sought to diversify his business interests by manufacturing bottles for his solutions, but was discouraged by his observation that "the workmen were *more immoral* and *intemperate* in their habits, than most classes of artisans."<sup>3</sup> He attributed this problem to two factors: first, furnaces for glassblowing were kept burning only during the six

warmest months of the year, a practice that left workers idle and without income for long periods of time; second, glassblowers were usually immigrants from Europe where attitudes toward drinking were permissive. Dyott realized that to improve his business he would have to reform the industry. His philanthropy was motivated by no small degree of self-interest: Although he regarded liquor as one of the “destructive obstacles to continued and persevering labor,”<sup>4</sup> his elixirs contained a significant amount of alcohol.



Fig. 1. After John Neagle, *Thomas W. Dyott*, Manual Labor Bank deposit certificate to J. Ridgeway, dated 2 February 1836, Philadelphia, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Society Miscellaneous Collection

Dyott entered the wholesale bottle business and developed a national distributorship called the American Glass Warehouse, where he sold “Every description of hollow ware and large size Window Glass, made to order at the shortest Notice, and on the most reasonable terms.”<sup>5</sup> Many of his flasks bore the portraits of famous patriots, politicians, and celebrities, and he was unique among glass manufacturers of the time for including his own features on bottles.<sup>6</sup> In 1833 he purchased the Kensington Glass Works, an extensive enterprise that comprised some fifty factory buildings erected on 400 acres next to the Delaware River. He renamed the works Dyottville, or Temperanceville, and set about establishing a utopian self-sustaining community with its own stores, schools, churches, and recreational facilities. He revolutionized American glass production by instituting a variety of labor and technical improvements: Production took place year-round; consumption of alcohol by employees was forbidden; master artisans trained more than one hundred apprentices; the grade of bottle glass was improved; and the introduction of

new molds created a rich variety of sizes, shapes, and colors of bottles.

Dyott’s philanthropy proved to be his undoing. In 1836 he opened his Manual Labor Bank, an enterprise founded on the best of intentions: Dyott hoped to inculcate the virtue of saving money among his employees by offering them an unusually high rate of interest for deposits.<sup>7</sup> He had no experience in banking, and the unchartered institution was funded solely through his personal credit. After the bank failed during the economic crisis of 1837, Dyott was tried for and convicted of fraudulent insolvency. He was sentenced to a term of one to seven years of hard labor in solitary confinement at Eastern State Penitentiary, but was pardoned after a brief period of incarceration. Despite this reversal of fortune, the indefatigable Dyott returned to producing his patent medicines, recovered his wealth, and died in 1861 at the age of ninety.

Previously there was no documentary confirmation of the sitter identification for this portrait, and the attribution to Neagle was made strictly on the basis of formal analysis. Mantle Fielding included the painting in his Neagle retrospective of 1925 at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and Virgil Barker illustrated it in his review of the exhibition, implying his acceptance of the painting as a work of Neagle.<sup>8</sup> Anna Rutledge and James Lane agreed with William Sawitzky, who had noted that the artist’s name was misspelled in the inscription on the painting’s reverse, described “the modeling of the features and of the hair as weak and flat,” and concluded that the portrait was only “possibly by Neagle.”<sup>9</sup> Despite these objections the attribution and sitter identification are now confirmed: On 27 January 1836 the artist recorded in his ledger that Dyott paid him one hundred dollars for the portrait,<sup>10</sup> and the pharmacist-turned-banker used Neagle’s likeness of him as an illustration on his Manual Labor Bank deposit certificates (fig. 1). Even Sawitzky’s astute observation about Dyott’s hair is explained by the fact that the sitter probably wore a wig in his portrait; in “The Case of Dr. Dyott,” an anonymous poet wrote, “He’s a great deal of head, but not very much hair / So little, alas! that a wig he must wear.”<sup>11</sup>

When Dyott commissioned Neagle to paint his portrait in 1836, he was, to quote his defense attorney at the trial, “in a situation of great affluence and prosperity.”<sup>12</sup> Dyottville was thriving, and he expected that the recently established Manual Labor Bank would succeed. Dyott probably ordered the



John Neagle, *Thomas W. Dyott*, 1947.17.78



portrait specifically for the purpose of having it engraved for use on his banknotes. The visual evidence supports this hypothesis: The sitter's well-modeled and strongly illuminated head, with its silvery hair, prominent nose, and cleft chin, stands out in relief against an empty, monochromatic background. One source noted that because of his immense financial success the apothecary "adopted an extravagant manner of living and a fantastic form of dress, and considered himself quite a personage."<sup>13</sup> Here, however, he appears conservative and without such affectation. Peering forcefully through his spectacles and returning the viewer's gaze, Dyott seems benign, an appearance likely to inspire confidence in those who invested in the Manual Labor Bank. This memorable character study of a well-known Philadelphia eccentric is one of Neagle's finest achievements of the 1830s.

RWT

#### Notes

1. The catalogue entry gives the lender's name as "Mr. C. B. Thomas," a rearrangement of Thomas B. Clarke.
2. Rhea Mansfield Knittle, *Early American Glass* (New York, 1927), 146.
3. Thomas W. Dyott, *An Exposition of the System of Moral and Mental Labor Established at the Glass Factory at Dyottville* (Philadelphia, 1833), 41.
4. Dyott 1833, 8.
5. *United States Gazette and True American*, 11 February 1822.
6. For an account of Dyott's bottle production and illustrations of his glassware, see George S. McKearin and Helen McKearin, *American Glass* (New York, 1941), 468-470.
7. See Thomas W. Dyott, *Exposition and Terms of the Manual Labor Bank, and Six Per Cent. SAVINGS FUND* (Philadelphia, 1836).
8. Virgil Barker, "John Neagle," *The Arts* 8, no. 1 (July 1925): 23.
9. Rutledge and Lane 1952, 139.
10. Cash book, MS, HSP. According to the same source, Dyott paid the artist ten dollars for a frame on 13 January 1837.
11. Unidentified newspaper clipping, Stauffer Collection, HSP.
12. *The Highly Interesting and Important Trial of Dr. T. W. Dyott, the Banker, for Fraudulent Insolvency* (Philadelphia, 1839), 24.
13. *DAB*, 3: 587.

#### References

- 1925 PAFA: 149.

1957.9.1 (1486)

### *Colonel Augustus James Pleasonton*

1846

Oil on canvas, 91.8 × 74.2 (36 1/8 × 29 3/16)

Gift of Eugene S. Pleasonton

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight twill-weave fabric support has been lined. The original bottom tacking margin was unfolded and incorporated into the present image, but the original tacking fold is not parallel with the stretcher; the other three tacking margins have been removed. The moderately thick white ground layer was applied before the fabric was stretched. The twill weave texture of the support remains visible through the paint layers. The paint was applied in multiple layers, generally wet-over-dry, except in such details as the red pin-stripes on the jacket, which were painted wet-into-wet. The highlights in the uniform were emphasized by high impasto. No evidence of underdrawing was found in the face and uniform, but a "dry" painted outline delineates the right edge of the collar and continues along the shoulder. Inpainting is found over the remnant of the original tacking margin at the bottom of the painting, highlights in the hair along the top edge of the forehead, the shadow under the nose, and scattered places in the sky. Areas of the chin and jaw are reinforced. The varnish has become severely yellowed. Glossy streaks over the face are the result of a treatment in 1973, during which a bulge over the right eye was corrected.

**Provenance:** The sitter's son, Alfred Pleasonton, Philadelphia; deposited by him at PAFA; Francis S. Pleasonton, brother of the previous owner; his son, Eugene S. Pleasonton [d. 1972], New York and Worton, Maryland, by 1923.

**Exhibited:** *Exhibition of Paintings, Statues and Casts, at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts*, Philadelphia, 1847, no. 67. *Exhibition of Portraits by John Neagle*, PAFA, 1925, no. 121. *The Sword in America, 1000-1953*, CGA; DIA, 1954-1955, no cat.

BORN IN Washington, D.C., Colonel Augustus James Pleasonton (1808-1894) enjoyed a varied career as a soldier, railroad executive, and author on pseudoscientific subjects. After graduating from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1826, Pleasonton was assigned to duty as a second lieutenant in the First Artillery. He resigned from the army in 1830, studied law, and was admitted to the Philadelphia Bar Association in 1832. In 1833 he enlisted in the Pennsylvania State Militia and served at the rank of brigade major until his promotion to colonel in 1835. During the political disturbances in Harrisburg in 1838 and 1839, Pleasonton was assistant adjutant general and pay-



John Neagle, *Colonel Augustus James Pleasonton*, 1957-9.1



Fig. 1. James Barton Longacre after Thomas Sully, *General Andrew Jackson*, stipple engraving, proof before letters, c. 1820, Washington, National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, NPG.79.239

master general of the state of Pennsylvania. From 1839 to 1840 he was president of the Harrisburg, Portsmouth, Mountjoy and Lancaster Rail Road Company. In 1844 the colonel was severely wounded by a musket ball while commanding his regiment in a conflict with armed rioters during the anti-Catholic Know-Nothing disturbances in Southwark, Philadelphia County.<sup>1</sup> He resigned from the militia in 1845 because of "Domestic considerations" and became president of the Cumberland Valley Rail Road. At the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, he was appointed brigadier general of the Pennsylvania militia and in that capacity organized and commanded a home guard of ten thousand troops for the defense of Philadelphia. Late in life Pleasonton became interested in the effects of colored rays on organic matter. His experiments led him to conclude that blue rays of the sun were particularly salubrious, as the title of his book on the subject suggests: *Influence of the Blue Ray of the Sun-*

*light and of the Blue Color of the Sky in Developing Animal and Vegetable Life, in Arresting Disease* (Philadelphia, 1876). These theories captivated the public's imagination and engendered the "blue-glass craze" that culminated in the late 1870s.<sup>2</sup>

According to Pleasonton family tradition, this portrait was commissioned by Joseph Dugan (see 1945.17.1, p. 137), guardian of the colonel's wife Clementine, sometime before his death in 1845.<sup>3</sup> As a devout Catholic, Dugan certainly would have appreciated Pleasonton's role in defending St. Philip's Church from destruction by an anti-Catholic mob during the Southwark riots in 1844, so he may have commissioned the portrait as a token of appreciation. Since Pleasonton appears clad in the dress uniform of an artillery officer and is known to have resigned from the militia on 8 June 1845, the portrait was probably commissioned and commenced before that date.

Neagle imbued the colonel with an aura of martial prowess by representing him as a hero, debonairly leaning on a cannon amid the smoke and haze of battle. The artist gave meticulous attention to details. Pleasonton's coat is an accurate representation of the dress uniform worn by regular army officers between 1832 and 1850. His paired eagle belt buckle, however, was appropriate only for militia officers, and was not standard issue for army regulars.<sup>4</sup> The coiled wire below the cannon is the end of a "worm," a device used to extract jammed cannonballs. The saber is typical of those used between 1840 and 1851 by mounted artillery and infantry officers.<sup>5</sup>

Neagle revived a romantic formula for military portraiture when he painted the colonel in 1846. He was inspired by images that had been painted earlier in the century by his father-in-law Thomas Sully and John Wesley Jarvis; indeed, Pleasonton's pose is a variation of the one Sully used in his portrait of the victorious General Andrew Jackson (New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Clermont State Historic Site), painted in 1819. Neagle would have known that work directly or through his friend James Barton Longacre's stipple engraving (fig. 1). Although the image is somewhat compromised by certain anatomical inaccuracies, evident in the disproportionately small torso and awkward right arm, Neagle's forceful delineation of Pleasonton's character, combined with the painterly contrast of textures, qualify this portrait as one of his finest late works.

RWT

## Notes

1. Some of Pleasonton's letters to his commanding officer General George Cadwalader, along with Cadwalader's report on the riot, are preserved in the Cadwalader Collection, Military Papers, HSP.

2. The biographical data are drawn from George W. Cullum, *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy*, 2 vols. (New York, 1868), 1: 297; and *Appleton's* 1888, 5:39-40. Pleasonton's younger brother Alfred (1824-1897), also a graduate of West Point, was a distinguished cavalry officer who played a major role in repelling the Confederate advance on Gettysburg.

3. Mrs. Eugene S. Pleasonton to William P. Campbell, 25 July 1973 (in NGA curatorial files).

4. Donald Kloster, transcript of telephone conversation, 11 July 1973 (in NGA curatorial files).

5. Harold L. Peterson, *The American Sword, 1775-1945* (New Hope, Pennsylvania, 1954), 118-119.

## References

1925 PAFA: no. 121, 148.

1957.3.1 (1475)

## George Dodd

1852

Oil on canvas, 76.1 × 63.7 (29 <sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 25 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)  
Gift of Albert M. Friend, Jr.

**Technical Notes:** The unlined, medium-weight plain-weave fabric support remains mounted on its original four-member mortise-and-tenon stretcher. The reverse bears the stencil mark of the Philadelphia colorman William E. Rogers<sup>1</sup> ("W. E. ROGERS / 16 / ARCADE / PHILAD") and an inscription that may have been written by the artist: "George Dodd / painted by Neagle / 25th Feb<sup>y</sup> 1852 / Philad<sup>a</sup>." The paint was applied quickly over a buff-colored ground layer that was prepared by Rogers (the top and bottom tacking margins are only partially primed); Neagle used a warm brown underlayer for the sitter's head, which he left exposed for the shadows. The sitter's face was painted more fully than the rest of the portrait, and stands out against the formulaic treatment of his attire. Infrared reflectography reveals no evidence of underdrawing. There are minor areas of inpainting in the sitter's coat and along the edges of the painting. The matte varnish has become discolored.

**Provenance:** The sitter's daughter, Julia Dodd; her daughter, Mrs. Albert M. Friend; her son, Albert M. Friend, Jr., Princeton, New Jersey.

BORN IN RYEGATE, England, George Dodd settled at Philadelphia, where he became a carriage maker who also sold fine paints to local artists,

including Thomas Sully and Neagle. Ransom Patrick, probably quoting family tradition, said that the artist painted both this picture and its pendant of Dodd's wife Julia [1957.3.2, p. 36] as a barter transaction: "In exchange for paint, Neagle executed the two portraits for Mr. Dodd's new house on 5th Street, in which Dodd had caused to be constructed a huge ballroom on the main floor, replete with a crystal chandelier and two fireplaces over which the paintings were hung."<sup>2</sup> In his checklist of Neagle's pictures, Patrick noted that Dodd did not display these portraits next to each other, but had them hung separately above fireplaces at opposite ends of the ballroom.<sup>3</sup> The different backgrounds of the paintings, and the fact that Dodd is portrayed standing while his wife is shown seated, support this statement.

Executed early in 1852, the bust of George Dodd is a rare example of Neagle's late work. The carriage maker is set in a three-quarter pose, with his face and prominent forehead accented by a strong light that originates from an unseen source in the right foreground and casts his shadow in the lower left background. Set before an olive-brown interior, he wears a black coat over a white shirt and black bow tie. His hair and sideburns are dark brown, his eyes blue-gray, his cheeks ruddy, his expression confident and serene. Nevertheless, the formal, self-conscious manner that Neagle employed in this instance contrasts sharply with his earlier work as exemplified in the spontaneous and lifelike *Reverend John Albert Ryan* [1947.17.81, p. 21]. This effect is likely due to the influence of the increasingly popular daguerreotype, which had a strong influence on Neagle's late work. A discerning critic of the day complained of "a stiffness and forced dignity of look and posture" and "idealization too apparent" in the artist's late portraiture.<sup>4</sup> Nonetheless Patrick was correct to point out that despite Neagle's suffering from the infirmities of advancing age, this painting is evidence that he "could still paint a very passable portrait."<sup>5</sup>

RWT

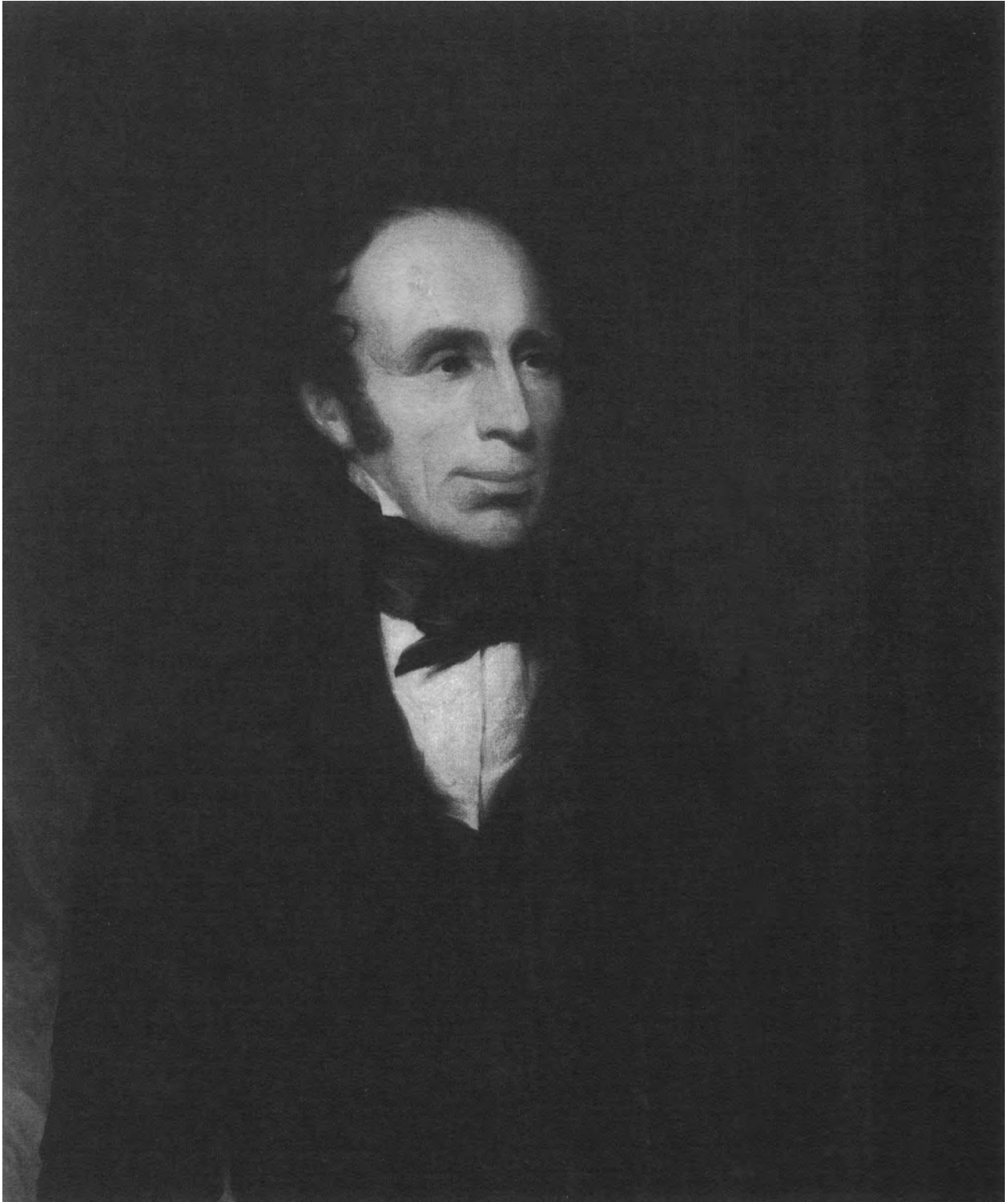
## Notes

1. Katlan 1992, 428-430.

2. Patrick 1959, 126. Patrick was familiar with the Dodd portraits because their former owner Albert M. Friend was a professor of art and archaeology at Princeton University, where he was a doctoral student.

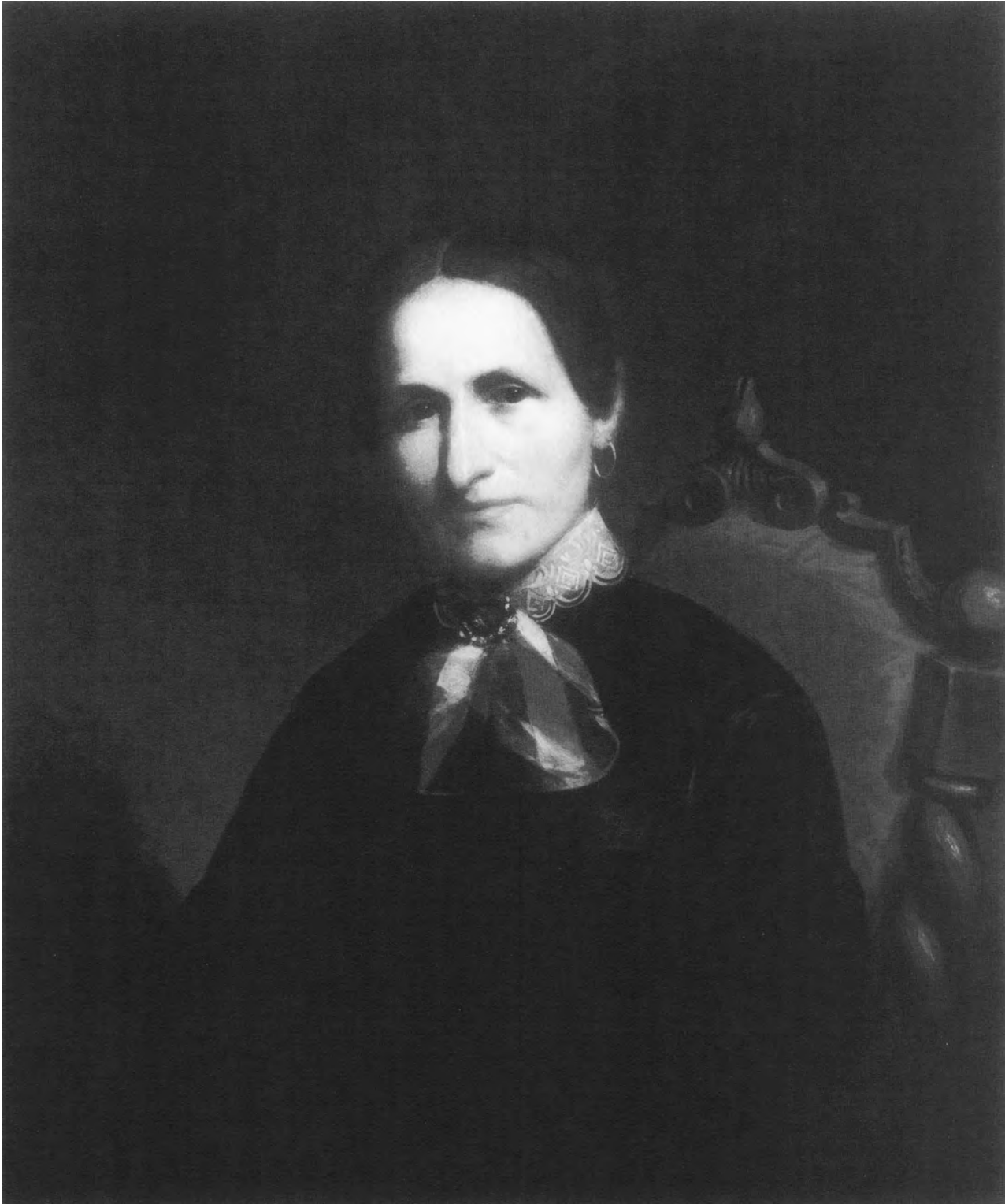
3. The pendants are listed in Patrick's checklist as nos. 100 and 101 (copy in NGA curatorial files).

4. Unspecified issue of the *North American*, cited from



John Neagle, *George Dodd*, 1957.3.1





John Neagle, *Julia Dodd (Mrs. George Dodd)*, 1957.3.2

another article in an unidentified newspaper of 1858 preserved in Neagle's "Scrapbook," vol. 2, HSP.

5. Patrick 1959, 178.

#### References

1959 Patrick: 126.

1957.3.2 (1476)

### *Julia Dodd* (*Mrs. George Dodd*)

1852

Oil on canvas, 76.4 × 63.1 (30 × 24 7/8)  
Gift of Albert M. Friend, Jr.

#### Inscriptions

On reverse: portrait of / Mrs Dodd / finished Feby. 26th  
1852. / Philada.

**Technical Notes:** Like its companion *George Dodd*, this portrait was painted on a medium-weight plain-weave support that bears the stencil mark of the Philadelphia colorman William E. Rogers; the slightly different thread count of the two fabrics on which the portraits were painted indicates that they were not cut from the same bolt. The support is unlined and remains mounted on its original four-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher. Neagle may have written the inscription on the reverse. With the exception of impasted highlights, the paint was applied thinly over a grayish white ground that was probably prepared by Rogers. No evidence of underdrawing was found with infrared reflectography. The paint layer is generally in good condition, but abrasion and small losses in the sitter's face and the bow at her neck are apparently the result of the chalkiness of the paint. A 3.5 cm tear in the top left corner is patched on the reverse. The varnish has become moderately yellowed and has large areas of milky discolorations.

**Provenance:** The sitter's daughter, Julia Dodd; her daughter, Mrs. Albert M. Friend; her son, Albert M. Friend, Jr., Princeton, New Jersey.

**Exhibited:** *Two Centuries of American Portraits*, University of Kentucky Art Gallery, Lexington; Paducah Art Gallery, Kentucky; J. B. Speed Museum of Art, Louisville, Kentucky, 1970, no cat.

WHEN the Dodd pendants were offered to the National Gallery by the sitters' descendants in 1957, William Campbell suspected that this portrait of George Dodd's wife Julia was not painted by Neagle: Conservators had determined that in both artistic quality and technique it was vastly inferior to its companion.<sup>1</sup> The most recent examination, however, proves that although *Mrs. George Dodd* is in an extremely poor state of preservation, it was executed in a technique similar to that of *George Dodd* [1957.3.1, p. 33]. In response to Campbell's queries, Ransom Patrick noted that the former owner of the two portraits disliked *Mrs. George Dodd* and relegated it to storage in his attic. In the early 1950s it was cleaned and he "came to like it a great deal more." Patrick ascribed the supposed inferiority of this portrait to "Neagle's uncertainty in painting portraits of women in general." He further speculated that the uneven quality of the artist's late work was caused by debilitating arthritis.<sup>2</sup>

Seated in a red-upholstered Elizabethan revival chair, Julia Dodd leans slightly forward and, unlike her husband in his portrait, makes eye contact with the viewer. Her black dress is enlivened by the decorative elements of a jeweled pin attached to her lace collar and a blue-and-white-striped scarf tied around her neck. Although her pose is more natural than her husband's self-conscious stance, her hunched shoulders and tentative expression are unconvincing. Neagle's images of women were invariably weak, but the extremely poor condition of this painting prevents an accurate estimate of its original level of artistic competence.

RWT

#### Notes

1. William P. Campbell, memorandum, 1 May 1957 (in NGA curatorial files).

2. Ransom R. Patrick to William Campbell, 6 May 1957 (in NGA curatorial files).

#### References

1959 Patrick: 126.

# Attributed to John Neagle

1947.17.82 (990)

## *Portrait of a Lady*

c. 1825/1830

Oil on canvas, 76 × 63 (29 <sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 24 <sup>13</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support is unlined and mounted on its original four-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher. The reverse of the fabric bears the remnant of the colorman's stencil mark: "Saml. Scarlet./ Philada."<sup>1</sup> The thin white ground layer, applied after the fabric was stretched, allows the weave pattern to remain visible through the paint layers. Infrared reflectography reveals the artist's sketched outlines, in a dry medium, of the sitter's eyes, nose, chin, and headwear. X-radiography reveals that this portrait was painted over a fully or nearly complete portrait of a man that was probably painted by the same artist; it is in an inverted position in relation to the final image (fig. 1). Paint was applied mainly wet-into-wet over the sitter's face, with soft-blended transitions in the flesh tones. The highlights of the eyes and lace headwear were applied in thick impasto. For highlights in the headwear the artist scumbled a coarsely ground white paint. The sitter's black dress and the brown background were applied thinly; considerable overpainting to hide abrasion appears in these areas. Consequently, the present exaggerated contrast between the well-preserved head and the overpainted dark areas is not representative of the artist's original intentions. The varnish has become discolored.

**Provenance:** (C. K. Johnson, Greenwich, Connecticut); purchased 1 May 1923 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 Portraits by Early American Portrait Painters*, Union League Club, New York, February 1924, no. 3, as *Miss Ryan* by John Neagle. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered, as *Miss Ryan* by John Neagle.

ONCE tentatively identified as *Miss Ryan*, this portrait was first considered to be the pendant of Neagle's *Reverend John Albert Ryan* [1947.17.81, p. 21], with which it shares a provenance. William Sawitzky, as well as Anna Rutledge and James Lane, guardedly supported the attribution to Neagle but was suspicious about the sitter's identification. In the early twentieth century both por-

traits were identified as *Mr. and Mrs. John Ryan*, but when it became apparent that the "husband" was a Roman Catholic priest, the "wife" became "Miss Ryan," perhaps his sister from Baltimore.<sup>2</sup>

A comparison of the two portraits demonstrates that they are not pendants, and thus there is no reason to infer that the subject of this portrait was related to John Ryan. His head is noticeably larger than hers. The torsion of his body and lean of his head are very slightly oriented to his right, indicating that a pendant, if there were one, would hang on that side. The woman makes no reciprocal gesture to span the void between the two pictures, but sits squarely facing the viewer. If these two portraits had been originally envisioned as pendants, the window through which a landscape is visible would be placed not at the woman's right, but at her left as a mediating device with the companion portrait; in its present position it serves no compositional function appropriate for pendant portraiture.

Results of the technical examinations are equally conclusive: The artist employed underdrawing in this portrait but not in that of Ryan; he did not apply the unusual recipe for the ground that he had used in Ryan's picture and inscribed on its stretcher; this painting was executed on a plain weave fabric while Ryan's was painted on twill weave; and the coarsely ground white pigment characteristic of this portrait was not used in that of Ryan. Finally, Neagle made no reference to a pendant for his portrait of Ryan in his "Blotter Book," though both portraits were exhibited at the Eighteenth Annual Exhibition of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1829.

In 1966, on the basis of X-radiography, William Campbell concluded that the artist's technique here was "markedly different" from those of his *Thomas W. Dyott* [1947.17.78, p. 27] of 1836 and his *Julia Dodd (Mrs. George Dodd)* [1957.3.2, p. 36] of 1852. Shortly thereafter he revoked the attribution to Neagle, but retained the "Miss Ryan" identification with a question mark added to it.<sup>3</sup> Campbell's comparisons, however, were ill conceived because both his points of reference, especially *Julia Dodd*, were painted much later than this portrait, and the artist's style changed markedly from one decade to another. Neagle, perhaps more than most artists in his circle, continually experimented with a



Fig. 1. X-radiograph of 1947.17.82



wide range of techniques and technical innovations that influenced the appearance of his paintings.

Although this portrait's original appearance has been altered by considerable abrasion and inpainting, it was probably painted by Neagle during the mid- to late 1820s. The thoroughly unaffected, unidealized, and direct presentation of the sitter's physiognomy and personality is typical of the artist's work at that time. Her amiable but forceful expression imparts an almost masculine quality to her countenance. Neagle rarely attained the exaggerated femininity typical of the images of women painted by his father-in-law Thomas Sully, and female portraiture, especially of younger subjects, was always a struggle for him.

Further evidence supporting a reattribution to Neagle includes the thick impasto treatment of the bonnet, the well-modeled head, and the poor draftsmanship of the torso. The sitter's head is very similar in execution to Ryan's—another reason why the relationship between the two portraits was once considered plausible. This painting greatly resembles Neagle's *Mrs. William Swain and Her Daughter Eliza* (fig. 2), which is dated 1827 but documented in the artist's "Blotter Book" as having been in progress on 5 November 1825. The stencil mark of the Philadelphia colorman Samuel Scarlet, whom Neagle later called "A Jerry Sneak,"<sup>4</sup> on the reverse of the fabric support further supports the reattribution.

RWT

#### Notes

1. See Katlan 1992, 431–432, figs. 191 and 192.
2. Rutledge and Lane 1952, 143. Evidently Ransom Patrick, the authority on Neagle, agreed with the attribution and sitter's identification, because he included *Miss Ryan* in his checklist of the artist's paintings (in NGA curatorial files). Although Ryan's sister is mentioned in Peter Guilday, *The Life and Times of John Carroll, Archbishop of Baltimore, 1735–1815* (New York, 1922), 821, no such person is listed in the Baltimore City directories during these years.
3. See Campbell's written notes discussing the X-radiographs, 5 May 1966, and his memorandum recommending the deattribution, 8 November 1968 (in NGA curatorial files).
4. Anna W. Rutledge, "Dunlap Notes," *AA* 1 (February 1951): 43.

Fig. 2. John Neagle, *Mrs. Swain and Her Daughter Eliza*, oil on canvas, 1825–1827, Philadelphia, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1891.4



Attributed to John Neagle, *Portrait of a Lady*, 1947.17.82



# John Wesley Paradise

1809–1862

LITTLE IS KNOWN about the engraver John Wesley Paradise, who was born in Hunterdon County, New Jersey, the son of the portraitist and founding member of the National Academy of Design, John Paradise (1783–1833). The family was of English ancestry; John Wesley's great-grandfather had emigrated to Maryland.<sup>1</sup>

After a period of study with Asher B. Durand (1796–1886), in 1828 Paradise began to exhibit engraved portraits at the National Academy of Design, of which he was an associate member from 1833 until his death.<sup>2</sup> Paradise remained in New York, where he eventually became an engraver of banknotes. Although he was described as an engraver and portrait painter in *The New-York Historical Society's Dictionary of Artists*, all the sources cited there allude only to his career as an engraver.<sup>3</sup> He died on 17 August 1862.

RWT

## Notes

1. Dunlap 1834, 2: 204–205.
2. According to the *National Academy of Design Exhibition Record 1826–1860* (New York, 1963), 64, he exhibited six engravings after portraits by other artists.
3. Groce and Wallace 1957, 486.

## Bibliography

Groce and Wallace 1957: 486.

1963.10.188 (1852)

## *Elizabeth Oakes Prince Smith* (Mrs. Seba Smith)

c. 1845  
Oil on canvas, 86.6 × 65.1 (34 1/8 × 25 5/8)  
Chester Dale Collection

## Inscriptions

At lower left: Elizabeth. O. Smith / John. W. Paradis f.

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support has been lined with a similar fabric and remounted on a nonoriginal stretcher. The tacking margins have been removed, but the presence of cusping along all four margins indicates that the painting's dimensions were not altered. The artist applied paint over

a medium-thick off-white ground. Vertical striations on the surface of the ground—perhaps caused by the use of a coarse, stiff brush—are visible through the thinly painted flesh areas and background. The artist used both opaque and translucent paints in a variety of techniques, ranging from well-executed thin glazes and scumbles in the flesh tones to a less adept handling in parts of the dress and background. The paint texture is generally smooth, although brushmarks are evident in the dress, hair, and background, and low impasto in the jewelry and overpainted roses. X-radiography and infrared reflectography reveal the presence of bold graphic underdrawing in the face and hands. The artist revised the final composition by painting out a vase of roses that originally sat on the table by the sitter's arm. The support has been torn in several places, and extensive overpainting was applied to conceal the damage. The varnish is discolored.

**Provenance:** (Weston, New York); Albert Rosenthal [1863–1939], Philadelphia; Cornelius Michaelsen, New York; (his sale, Rains Galleries, New York, 8 May 1935, no. 87);<sup>1</sup> Chester Dale [1883–1962], New York.

**Exhibited:** *One Hundredth Anniversary of the Founding of the National Academy of Design*, CGA; Grand Central Art Galleries, New York, 1925–1926, no. 19. *An Exhibition of American Paintings from the Chester Dale Collection*, Union League Club, New York, 1937, no. 20. *Early New Jersey Artists, 18th and 19th Centuries*, Newark Museum, 1957, no. 73.

THE POET, essayist, and novelist Elizabeth Oakes Prince (1806–1893) was born in North Yarmouth, Maine. In 1823 she married Seba Smith, then editor of the *Eastern Argus*. After her husband's literary and business interests failed, the couple moved to New York City, where Mrs. Oakes Smith, as she was known, began to write for such publications as *Southern Literary Messenger*, *Ladies' Companion*, *Godey's Lady's Book*, and *Graham's American Monthly Magazine*. She became an active participant in the cultural life of the city, and in her autobiography described her friendship with such literary figures as Edgar Allan Poe, Horace Greeley, and William Cullen Bryant. An art enthusiast who was deeply impressed by Thomas Cole's (1801–1848) *Course of Empire* series (1836, NYHS), she wrote sonnets about the works, which the artist called "the highest compliment I ever received."<sup>2</sup> During the early 1850s Smith began giving public lectures advocating social reforms, such as women's suffrage. Around 1860 the Smith family moved to



John Wesley Paradise, *Elizabeth Oakes Prince Smith (Mrs. Seba Smith)*, 1963.10.188



Fig. 1. Benjamin F. Pease after James B. Read, *Elizabeth Oakes Smith*, engraving, The Free Library of Philadelphia, Print and Picture Collection

Patchogue, Long Island; after her husband's death in 1868, Elizabeth went to live with the eldest of her five sons in Hollywood, North Carolina, where she died.

When this three-quarter-length portrait was exhibited at the National Academy of Design's centennial exhibition in 1925 and 1926, it was hailed as "a great masterpiece of portraiture."<sup>3</sup> Smith is represented sitting erect in an upholstered chair before a table on which she rests her right forearm. She holds in her right hand an ornamental red fan decorated with a Chinese figure, while with her left she fondles a necklace. She looks directly at the viewer. The artist skillfully rendered many contrasting textures and the perspective. No iconographic devices were included in the composition as allusions to Smith's literary career.

William Campbell substantiated the sitter identification by comparing the subject of this portrait

to known engravings of Smith. Her appearance in the painting resembles that of two engravings after a portrait of her by James B. Read (location unknown): one by Benjamin F. Pease (fig. 1) and a reduced version by C. Wise. Campbell accepted the artist's signature as authentic and noted that the style of Smith's attire also supported the putative date of the early to mid-1840s. However, his attempt to certify the portrait's authenticity was frustrated by the lack of any comparative painted portraits by Paradise and by the absence of any documentary information about his activity as a painter. According to early sources, Paradise was exclusively a graphic artist who made engravings from other artists' portraits, which he exhibited at the National Academy of Design between 1828 and 1849.<sup>4</sup> Smith did not mention the portrait in her autobiography, but the date of c. 1845 coincides with a time when both she and Paradise are known to have been in New York. The National Gallery's conservation department has determined that the signature is authentic, and the artist's meticulous style, no doubt the result of his training as an engraver, precludes an attribution to any other painter active in mid-nineteenth-century New York. Nevertheless, it is peculiar that there are no other extant portraits documented to have been painted by Paradise.<sup>5</sup> Despite this single reservation, the circumstantial evidence supports the attribution.

RWT

#### Notes

1. *Important American Prints* 1935, no. 87, 29.
2. *Selections from the Autobiography of Elizabeth Oakes Smith*, ed. Mary Alice Wyman (Lewiston, Maine, 1924), 86–87; for additional biographical information on the sitter's life, see *DAB*, 17: 260–261.
3. *Important American Prints* 1935, 29.
4. William P. Campbell, undated memorandum (in NGA curatorial files).
5. According to records in the Vertical Clippings File, NMAA, on 4 November 1936 a New York art dealer wrote to the National Museum of American Art offering to sell a portrait of a Captain F. H. Jay that bore the date and signature "John Wesley Paradise, N.A., 1854." The museum did not purchase the portrait (location unknown).

#### References

- 1957 Newark Museum: 12, fig. 73.  
1965 *Dale Collection*: 35.

# James Peale

1749–1831

JAMES PEALE'S CAREER was overshadowed by that of his famous older brother, Charles Willson Peale (1741–1827).<sup>1</sup> Born in Chestertown, Maryland, the son of an English immigrant schoolteacher, James Peale became a journeyman in Charles Willson Peale's Annapolis saddlery in 1762, and several years later he began an apprenticeship as a cabinetmaker. After his older brother returned from London in 1769 as a fully trained artist, James became his assistant and pupil. During the American Revolution he served in the Continental Army as a first lieutenant in General Smallwood's Maryland regiment, retiring with the rank of captain in 1779.

James settled in Philadelphia and lived in his brother's household until 1782, when he married Mary Claypoole, the sister of the engraver and portraitist James Claypoole, Jr. Three of their daughters became noted artists.

By the mid-1780s James had established himself as an accomplished painter of miniature portraits, a field that Charles ceded to him by agreement in 1786.<sup>2</sup> A surviving sketchbook indicates that by the late 1780s he had become interested in landscape subjects; his early examples of this genre are topographical and reveal familiarity with British artistic conventions. When his eyesight weakened around 1810 he abandoned miniature painting and began to specialize in large portraits and still lifes. James exhibited still lifes at the Pennsylvania Academy between 1824 and 1830. Late in life he resumed his interest in landscape painting, and these works reveal a heightened romanticism. He died in Philadelphia on 24 May 1831.

Until the early 1790s James' oeuvre bore the unmistakable imprint of Charles, but thereafter he developed a more fluent, painterly, and colorful style. James Peale is recognized today as the most skilled miniature painter of his era, one of the founders of the American still life tradition, and an important pioneer in landscape painting before the emergence of the Hudson River School.

RWT

## Notes

1. Dunlap 1834, 1:227, mentioned only that "his principal work was miniature, but he painted portraits in oil we believe as late as 1812. We never saw any of them, and their reputation was never high."

2. Charles Willson Peale outlined the arrangement in a letter to Christopher Richmond, 22 October 1786; see Miller, Hart, and Appel 1983, 458.

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Sellers, Charles Coleman. "James Peale and Charles Willson Peale," in Elam 1967: 24–28.

Sellers, Charles Coleman. "James Peale: A Light in Shadow, 1749–1831," in Holland et al. 1975: 29–33. Gerds 1981: 60–62.

Simmons, Linda Crocker. "James Peale: Out of the Shadows," in Miller 1996: 202–219.

1990.7.1

## *Fruit Still Life with Chinese Export Basket*

1824

Oil on wood panel, 37.8 × 45.6 (14<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 17<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas M. Evans, in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art

## Inscriptions

Across center reverse: *Painted by James Peale Sen / 1824.*

**Technical Notes:** The support consists of a pine wood-panel 2.0 cm thick with a horizontal grain. Two inscriptions appear in the center of the reverse: the first, written in ink, reads *Painted by James Peale Sen / 1824*, and a barely discernible second one, written in pencil directly below it, reads *Brother Chas Willson Peale / Grandfather Harry Peale*. At the top left corner *RS 3036* is written in the same ink as the first inscription. Paint was applied in layers over a white ground layer mostly wet-over-dry. There is no evidence of underdrawing, but X-radiography and infrared reflectography reveal numerous adjustments in paint, such as enlarging the size of the fruit, directly on the panel, the only guidelines being the incised lines used to define the placement of the table. This evidence suggests that the artist worked without a detailed sketch for the composition. There is minimal evidence of brushwork, with only very low impasto in the highlights. The painting is in very good condition, although there are small areas of inpainted losses in the table top and background. A 6 cm check is at the lower left edge of the panel. The varnish has not discolored.

**Provenance:** Private collection, New Jersey; (Frank S. Schwartz & Son, Philadelphia), by 1987; sold 1 February 1988 to the Jeanne Rowe Mathison Family Trust.

**Exhibited:** *Raphaelle Peale Still Lifes*, NGA; PAFA, 1988–1989, no. 58. *NGA* 1991, unnumbered.

DURING THE 1820s James Peale concentrated almost exclusively on still life subjects, many of which he exhibited at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts between 1824 and 1830. This simply composed and carefully balanced example consists of a white Chinese porcelain fruit basket containing three yellow and green apples, surmounted by a bunch of green grapes with stems and leaves, that

rests on a shelf or table. Next to it lie another yellow apple and two more bunches of grapes. The deliberately asymmetrical composition is illuminated by a warm natural light coming from the left. The complex arrangement of the organic shapes and mottled surfaces of the skillfully delineated fruits, especially the pitted and partially decayed yellow apples, forms a strong contrast with the elegant simplicity of the basket. Further, the gleaming, detailed surface of the porcelain contrasts with the mottled surface of the apples, leading the viewer to reflect on the differences between manmade objects and nature. As Nancy Anderson has recently noted, the painting reflects the European still life tradition of the *memento mori*, which addressed the transitory aspect of the material world. She further remarked that it “contains a note of whimsy, for the grape tendril that twists toward the upper edge of the picture forms the artist’s initials.”<sup>1</sup>

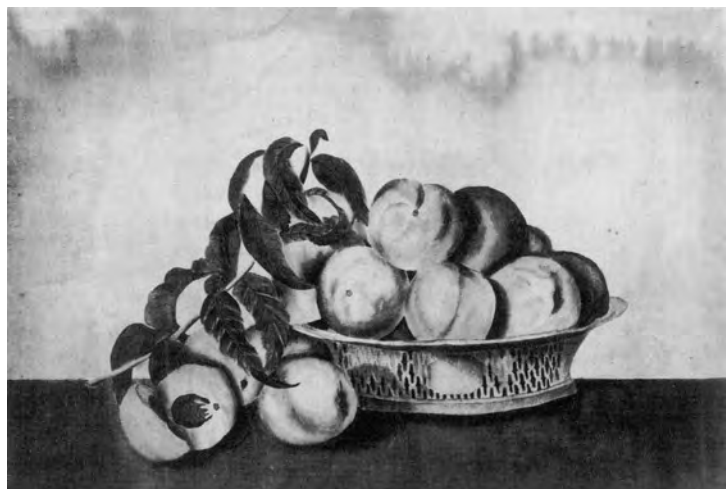
James Peale’s interest in such subjects was probably stimulated by his nephew Raphaelle (1774–1825), who made a career of painting carefully arranged fruit-and-vegetable tabletop still lifes. John Baur has convincingly demonstrated that both painters were influenced by seventeenth-century Dutch still lifes.<sup>2</sup> James Peale’s work differs from that of Raphaelle by its more visible brushwork and the variegated surfaces that betray his fascination with the effects of time and age on objects. This painting is very similar to Raphaelle’s *Peaches and Unripe Grapes* (1815, collection of Kathryn and Robert Steinberg) and certainly reflects the younger artist’s influence. Related works by James include a nearly identical composition, *Apples and Grapes in a Pierced Bowl* (fig. 1); the complex and monumental *Still Life No. 2* (1821, PAFA); and the undated *Still Life* (FAMSF). The National Gallery also owns *Peaches—Still Life* (fig. 2), a theorem, or stencil, painting that closely resembles James Peale’s composition. All these still lifes feature a Chinese export fruit basket.

The grapes are of the native American genus *Vitis Lambrusca*, from which wine was made. Their presence may allude to the budding U.S. grape-growing and winemaking industry. A newspaper report in 1822 stated that the vines of one grower, a Major Adlum, looked promising and “will be able to furnish wines which will bear a fair comparison with some of the most delicious and approved Wines of Europe. The successful introduction of this culture will be of great importance to this country, whether we regard the product as an article of

Fig. 1. James Peale, *Apples and Grapes in a Pierced Bowl*, oil on panel, c. 1820, private collection



Fig. 2. Unknown American artist, *Peaches—Still Life*, watercolor on velveteen (theorem painting), c. 1840, Washington, National Gallery of Art, 1953.5.105







James Peale, *Fruit Still Life with Chinese Export Basket*, 1990.7.1

Merchandize or as a partial substitute for the corroding distilled liquors now so generally used among us.”<sup>3</sup>

The reticulated fruit basket represented here is typical of a type manufactured in China specifically for export to America. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Philadelphia merchants played a major role in the China trade, and such items became extremely popular; in 1820 a Philadelphian noted how Chinese porcelain had “displaced the English Ware hitherto in use, & became exclusively employed by the higher and middle ranks, even the poorest families could boast at least a limited proportion of China Ware.”<sup>4</sup> The ubiquity of Chinese export porcelain in still lifes by members of the Peale family coincided with a period in Philadelphia history when many people were fascinated by Chinese culture. A historian of the Philadelphia China trade summarized the situation: “Chinese crafts, motifs, and ideas were esteemed by traders, men of letters, and a broad public for their aesthetic worth as well as for their utility. The creativity and skill of the Chinese were acknowledged as being superior to those of early Americans in areas of agriculture, architecture, landscaping, and fine arts, as well as in the manufacture of textiles, ceramics, and artisan reproductions.”<sup>5</sup> This trend culminated in the opening in 1838 of an immensely successful “Chinese Museum” by the merchant, entrepreneur, and Sinophile Nathan Dunn.<sup>6</sup>

This painting is significant not only as a rare

work of outstanding quality by an early pioneer of American still life painting, but also as a document of the social and economic history of Philadelphia.

RWT

#### Notes

1. Nancy Anderson, in *NGA* 1991, 138.
2. John I. H. Baur, “The Peales and the Development of the American Still Life,” *AQ* 3 (winter 1940): 82–84. James Peale must also have been familiar with the still lifes painted by his wife’s cousin Matthew Pratt.
3. “Cultivation of the Vine,” *Poulson’s Daily Advertiser*, 28 May 1822. See also Bernard McMahon, *The American Gardiner’s Calendar; Adapted to the Climates and Seasons of the United States*, 1st ed. (Philadelphia, 1806), 479–489 (“The Vineyard”).
4. Robert Waln, Jr., “China: Comprehending a View of the Origin, Arts, History . . .,” MS, 1820, Waln Papers, Library Company of Philadelphia, quoted in Jean McClure Mudge, *Chinese Export Porcelain for the American Trade 1785–1835* (New York, 1962), 124. For a detailed account of Philadelphia’s role in the China trade, see Jean Gordon Lee, *Philadelphians and the China Trade 1784–1844* [Exh. cat. PMA.] (Philadelphia, 1984).
5. Jonathan Goldstein, *Philadelphia and the China Trade 1682–1846: Commercial, Cultural, and Attitudinal Effects* (University Park, Pennsylvania, 1978), 81.
6. The Chinese Museum shared a building with Charles Willson Peale’s Philadelphia Museum Company, and the artist’s grandson Escol Sellers was Dunn’s influential supporter; see Sellers 1980, 273–275.

#### References

- 1987 Schwarz: 54, pl. 43.  
1989 Cikovsky: 77, pl. 58.  
1991 *NGA*: 138.

## Rembrandt Peale

1778–1860

REMBRANDT PEALE, the son of Philadelphia artist and museum proprietor Charles Willson Peale (1741–1827) and his first wife Rachel Brewer, was born in February 1778, probably on the twenty-second of the month. Rembrandt and his siblings, Rubens, Raphaele, Titian Ramsay, Sophonisba Angusciola, and Angelica Kauffmann, born during the most productive years of their father’s painting career, were named after European artists. Rembrandt was precocious, painting his first work, a self-portrait, at the age of thirteen. During his long career of almost seventy years as

a portrait and history painter, he made more than one thousand paintings. His most original work dates from the first three decades of the nineteenth century.

Although Philadelphia was his hometown, Rembrandt at various times visited and worked in most of the other major cities of the eastern United States. As a young artist he benefited from his father’s friendships and patronage. He studied the work of contemporary painters, including Gilbert Stuart and Robert Edge Pine (1720/1730–1788), as well as paintings by European artists that could

be found in local private collections. His father made it possible for him to paint life portraits of George Washington (1795, HSP) and Thomas Jefferson (1800, The White House; and 1805, NYHS).

Charles Willson Peale's ambitions also made Rembrandt a museum director at times. In 1795–1798, for example, when he went to Charleston, Baltimore, and New York City to paint portraits, he also exhibited more than sixty copies of his father's museum portraits, painted by himself and Raphaelle. For part of that time he managed the first Peale family museum established outside of Philadelphia, which opened in Baltimore in 1796. In 1801 he assisted his father in excavating the bones of prehistoric mammals in Newburgh, New York, and the following year he and Rubens took the skeleton assembled from these remains to England for exhibition. From 1813 to 1822 he reestablished and managed the Peale Museum in Baltimore. On some of his longer stays away from Philadelphia, Rembrandt was accompanied by his wife Eleanor Mae Short, daughter of the Peale family's housekeeper, whom he married in 1798. By 1801 they had two daughters, Rosalba Carrera and Angelica; their third, Augusta, was born in England in 1803. When the family moved to Baltimore, it included seven children; the two youngest, Michael Angelo and Emma, were born there.

Although his early marriage and need to support his growing family required him to concentrate on income-producing activity, Rembrandt benefited as an artist from several long stays in European capitals. He studied briefly at the Royal Academy while in London in 1802–1803. He traveled to France in 1808 and again in 1809–1810, painting portraits in Paris of French scientists, artists, and writers for his father's portrait collection. On his third visit to Europe, in 1828–1830, when he was accompanied by his son Michael Angelo, he copied old master paintings in Italy for American collectors. On his last European trip, in 1832–1833, he returned to England.

As a result of such experience, Rembrandt's style of painting changed when he was still a young artist from the tight, closely observed, eighteenth-century manner of his father, to a style strongly influenced by French neoclassicism and the work of Jacques-Louis David (1748–1825).

His first attempt at a grand manner history painting was *The Roman Daughter* (1811, NMAA). Even more ambitious was his enormous, multifigured painting *Court of Death* (1820, DIA), whose theme of individual choice in creating a happy and rational life expressed the tenets of the new and still controversial Unitarian sect. Next he turned his attention to creating a heroic portrait of Washington, the painting known from its inscription as the "Patriae Pater" portrait, Washington as father of his country (1824, U.S. Senate). Later, in the 1840s and 1850s, Rembrandt painted replicas of this portrait of Washington, capitalizing on the fact that he was then the only living artist who had painted the first president's portrait at life sittings. Beginning in 1854 he also lectured on Washington and his portraits, using as illustrations his own portraits of George and Martha Washington, as well as copies of portraits by his father and other artists.

While Rembrandt's ambitions and opportunities derived largely from his father's energy and drive, the results were his own. After Rembrandt's trips to England and Paris, his father turned to him to learn new techniques for painting. His creation of an idealized portrait of Washington was a response to the nationalism of the 1820s. His subject pictures of the 1830s and 1840s reflected the sentiments of the Victorian era. In 1840, four years after the death of Eleanor Peale, he married Harriet Cany, an artist.

Rembrandt also promoted his theories of art and its role in a democracy by publishing brochures, articles, and books. Some, like his *Description of the Court of Death; an Original Painting by Rembrandt Peale* (1820), were written to accompany exhibitions of his work, held in several U.S. cities. *Graphics; A Manual of Drawing and Writing for the Use of Schools and Families* (1835) was intended as a drawing and painting manual for mechanics and art students. He also wrote autobiographical accounts, poems, and accounts of his travels. From 1855 to 1857 he offered a personal history of American art in his "Reminiscences" and "Notes and Queries" published in *The Crayon*, a popular art periodical of the day. Peale died on 4 October 1860, after a heart attack. His second wife and several daughters survived him.

EGM

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1985.59.1

### *Rubens Peale with a Geranium*

1801

Oil on canvas, 71.4 × 61 (28 1/8 × 24)  
Patrons' Permanent Fund

#### Inscriptions

At lower right: Rem Peale / 1801

**Technical Notes:** The tacking margins of the medium-weight plain-weave fabric support have been trimmed. The painting has been lined with a heavier weight plain-weave fabric that appears to be a prepared artist's canvas; its white ground layer is visible on the reverse of the lining.<sup>1</sup> The ground layer is creamy white and of medium thickness. Infrared reflectography revealed limited underdrawing in the right hand and the flowerpot. The paint was applied as a smooth, thin, fluid-to-dry paste, generally wet-into-wet, with some low impasto in the highlights. X-radiography reveals slight changes in the sitter's neckwear. A small ruffle that was painted below the fabric around the sitter's neck has been covered with addition to that fabric, and by the black waistcoat. Infrared reflectography reveals changes in the geranium leaves and shows that the entire rim of the flowerpot was painted before it was covered by the lower leaf.

There is moderate abrasion, which reveals the ground in some areas. There are also scattered pinpoint old flake losses, and occasional other repaired losses, including one measuring approximately 1 cm by 0.5 cm in the right side of the lens that is on the viewer's right, and a slightly smaller loss outside and to the right of the frame around the same lens. The varnish is slightly discolored.

**Provenance:** The artist; James Claypoole Copper, Philadelphia;<sup>2</sup> Mary Jane Peale [1827–1902], Pottsville, Pennsylvania, the daughter of the sitter, Rubens Peale;<sup>3</sup> her nephew, Albert Charles Peale [1849–1914], Washington, D.C.;<sup>4</sup> his cousin, Jessie Sellers Colton [Mrs. Sabin Woolworth Colton, Jr., 1855–1932], Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania;<sup>5</sup> her daughter, Mildred Colton [Mrs. Robert P.] Esty [1883–1977], Ardmore, Pennsylvania;<sup>6</sup> sold to Lawrence A. Fleischman, Detroit, Michigan;<sup>7</sup> (Kennedy Galleries, New York); purchased by Pauline E. [Mrs. Norman B.] Woolworth;<sup>8</sup> (sale, Sotheby's, New York, 5 December 1985, no. 42).

**Exhibited:** *Exhibition of Portraits by Charles Willson Peale and James Peale and Rembrandt Peale*, PAFA, 1923, no. 73. *Pennsylvania Painters*, Pennsylvania State University, University Park; Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio, 1955–1956,

no. 11. *The Fabulous Peale Family*, Kennedy Galleries, New York, 1960, no. 74.<sup>9</sup> *American Art from American Collections*, MMA, 1963, no. 185. *The Peale Family and Peale's Baltimore Museum, 1814–1830*, PM, 1965, no. 16. *The Peale Family: Three Generations of American Artists*, DIA; MWPI, 1967, no. 139. *19th Century America: Paintings and Sculpture*, MMA, 1970, no. 2. *The American Painting Collection of Mrs. Norman B. Woolworth*, Coe Kerr Gallery, New York, 1970, no. 87. *The Eye of Thomas Jefferson*, NGA, 1976, no. 600. *Painters of the Humble Truth: Masterpieces of American Still Life*, Philbrook Art Center, Tulsa; Oakland Museum; BMA; NAD, 1981–1982, checklist no. 112. *A New World: Masterpieces of American Painting 1760–1910*, MFA; CGA; Grand Palais, Paris, 1983–1984, no. 11. *Raphaelle Peale Still Lifes*, NGA; PAFA, 1988–1989, no cat. no. *In Pursuit of Fame: Rembrandt Peale, 1778–1860*, NPG, 1992–1993, no cat. no. *The Peale Family: Creation of a Legacy, 1770–1870*, PMA; FAMSF; CGA, 1996–1997, no. 162.<sup>10</sup>

THIS PORTRAIT of seventeen-year-old Rubens Peale by his older brother Rembrandt Peale is among the finest portraits in the history of American art. Rembrandt Peale painted the portrait with exceptional care and precision, observing his brother so closely that the viewer feels emotionally as well as physically close to him. Rubens, seated at a table, leans slightly to his right and looks downward. He seems to be preoccupied and not looking through his silver-framed glasses. Next to him on the table is a tall, somewhat leggy geranium with green leaves and small red flowers, in a terra-cotta pot. Rubens' left hand, resting on the table, holds a second pair of glasses, while his right hand, crossing his left, rests on the rim of the flowerpot, two fingers touching the soil. Rembrandt's sensitivity toward his sibling seems to be mirrored in Rubens' care for the plant, characterized by this gentle, nurturing gesture. Rembrandt also emphasizes the sense of touch over sight, since Rubens is not looking at the plant. Rembrandt has also carefully represented the direction of light, which falls from the upper left onto Rubens and the plant, perhaps signaling the depiction of a specific time and place.

Rubens Peale (1784–1865) was the ninth of eleven children of artist and naturalist Charles Willson Peale and his first wife Rachel. Six of their eleven children did not survive to adulthood, and Rachel herself died in 1790, when Rubens was a child. He was the younger brother of Raphaelle, Rembrandt, and Angelica Kauffmann Peale, and the older brother of Sophonisba Anguisciola Peale. Rubens was small for his age, with poor eyesight, as he later described himself:

I was very delicate in health and our family physician [*sic*] Dr. Hutchins required that I should be kept out of the





Rembrandt Peale, *Rubens Peale with a Geranium*, 1985.59.1



sun as much as possible. . . . I was not permitted to play in the streets with the other boys. . . . I remember perfectly well of chasing my sister Sophonisba (now Mrs. Coleman Sellers) about the room with a paper mask on, and was so small that I ran under the tea table without touching it, or stooping in the least degree. . . . I made but little progress at school for my sight was so imperfect that I had to have a spelling book of clean print and white paper (at that date a very rare article) and seated as near the window as possible to see to read.<sup>11</sup>

Rubens' restricted life soon changed for the better: "One day when I returned from school I was informed that our family Phycian [*sic*] was dead, at this intelligence I was so much pleased that I danced about the room with joy. . . . I then went into the garden and took the watering pot and watered my flowers which I was forbid to do, and after that time I gradually increased in strength & health."<sup>12</sup>

From an early age, Rubens had remarkable success at raising both plants and animals. Once, when his favorite bird, a painted bunting, was missing, he learned that his father's friend, Timothy Matlack, had found the lost pet. Matlack refused to return it to Rubens until Rubens could convince him that it was his. "I told him that if the bird was mine, it would come to me to be corressed [*sic*], we entered the room together, at once the bird flew to me and lit on my sholder and wanted to feed out of my mouth and remained with me as long as we were in the room, he then acknowledged the bird belonged to me and give it up with much reluctance."<sup>13</sup>

Rembrandt Peale probably painted his brother's portrait sometime during the first six or seven months of 1801. At that time Rembrandt was eagerly seeking portrait commissions and also was attempting to get a patronage job in the administration of President Thomas Jefferson. Later, from midsummer until the end of that year, Rembrandt was preoccupied with his father's extraordinary project to exhume and restore two almost complete mastodon skeletons found in upstate New York. One of the skeletons was ready for viewing at the museum on Christmas eve, 1801.<sup>14</sup> Sometime within the next few years, Rembrandt gave the portrait to James Claypoole Copper, a member of the extended Peale family. Copper was the son of Norris Copper and Elizabeth Claypoole Copper; Elizabeth's sister Mary was the wife of Rembrandt's uncle, James Peale. In 1797 Copper's widowed mother married Timothy Matlack (see the entry for 1947-17.10, p. 72, for the Gallery's portrait of Matlack, which is attributed to Rembrandt Peale).<sup>15</sup> Rembrandt Peale painted Copper's portrait in

about 1806 (private collection).<sup>16</sup> Charles Willson Peale described him in 1809 to Rembrandt as "your friend Copper."<sup>17</sup> Copper managed Charles Willson Peale's estate after Peale's death in 1827.

Important information about the portrait comes from Rubens' daughter Mary Jane Peale, to whom Copper gave the painting in 1854, when she was twenty-seven years old. When she recorded the gift in her diary on 20 April, she gave the history of the painting as she knew it, explaining why the geranium was significant and also why Peale was shown with two pairs of glasses. Since Rubens and Rembrandt Peale, Mary Jane's father and uncle, were both living when Copper gave her the portrait, her comments carry considerable weight:

I called at Mr Coppers—he presented me with a very beautiful portrait of Father when about [age left blank] he is represented with a flower-pot in his hand containing a Waterloo geranium—when it was first introduced & considered very wonderful—a very fine specimen. It was first painted without spectacles & then to make it more perfect it was painted with spectacles on the eyes as he always wore them & then the others were left in order not to mar the picture. When it was painted Uncle Rembrant who painted the picture lived at the head of Mulberry Court. After the picture was finished it was placed in the window filling up the space of the lower sash—presently Father's pet Dog a large mastiff—came running in to hunt Father & seeing him (as he thought) rushed towards it & would have bounded on him had not the family prevented it. This pleased them all very much. Mr. Copper was a very dear friend of Uncle Rembrants & always admired this picture very much so when Uncle went to Europe he presented this picture to Mr. Copper as something very good—so now before Mr. Copper died he wished to present it to Father's daughter.<sup>18</sup>

Copper wrote Mary Jane on 28 April about the gift:

Dear Miss Peale It gives me much pleasure to acknowledge the receipt of a very pleasing note from the daughter of one of my old friends. I have necessarily delayed sending the portrait of your father until to day—I have looked at it many and many a time, with recollections of old times, of a mixed character, both of pleasure and regret, the natural result of the discontinuance of old habits and old associations. May your course through life, my dear young lady, leave you few causes of regret, and a great many thoughts of times well and happily spent. I request to be remembered most kindly to your good father & mother.<sup>19</sup>

At an unknown date Mary Jane Peale annotated the letter, repeating much of the information that she had written in her diary, but adding some important comments:

This letter was received by me from Mr. James C Copper. The Picture when painted was presented to him . . . He kept it during his life and when an old man sent for me, because he wanted to see if he liked me, and if he did he was going to give me the picture, so I suppose he liked me because he sent it. uncle Rembrandt put on it a new back & cleaned it for me. It was painted on account of the Geranium which was the first one in this country. It was first painted without the glasses on but in the hand—they thought it would look better with them on, and they were painted—but uncle Rembrandt who painted it thought it would spoil the painting of the hand to take the others out, so they did not. . . . The geranium is a little withered in the painting room.<sup>20</sup>

Mary Jane Peale repeated and refined these stories in the 1880s. When she included the information in her “List of Pictures I Own, 1884,” she referred to the plant as “the Scarlet Geranium which was the first brought to this country.” She said that the painting “always belonged to Mr Copper.”<sup>21</sup> The following year she repeated much of the information in her “List of Pictures I Own; 1885.”<sup>22</sup> And in 1901 she again described the painting, this time in a codicil to her will, in which she stated that Peale had painted the portrait for Copper.<sup>23</sup>

In the portrait, Rubens and the geranium command equal attention. The plant becomes a significant means of characterizing the young man. Despite being named after the seventeenth-century painter Peter Paul Rubens, Rubens Peale by 1801 had demonstrated his skills as a naturalist rather than as an artist. Singled out by his father as a future museum proprietor, Rubens Peale later managed the Peale museums in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New York. In retrospect, he remembered how in 1793, not yet ten years old, he was entrusted with the care of unusual plants: “My Father received from France a number of subjects of Natural History in exchange for those he had sent, consisting of Birds, Reptals, Insects & Seeds, amongst the latter was a paper of the Red Tomato & Okra. I planted them in potts, and had them growing, supposing them to be flowers, a french gentleman from St. Domingo recognized the Tomato as a favourite fruit of his. I gave the balance of these seeds to Mr. McMahon & Landreth, they soon introduced them in to the Phila. market.”<sup>24</sup> His concern for his plants is reflected in letters he wrote to his family after he and Rembrandt left Philadelphia for New York in March 1802. Writing to his father on 2 April, he commented, “I hope my Plants are not neglected.”<sup>25</sup> On 19 April, he wrote his sister Sophonisba: “I think it is about time to take out the plants but I cannot judge

for we left Summer in Philadelphia and brought winter along with us.”<sup>26</sup>

Mary Jane Peale’s comments about the geranium, when combined with information about the history of these plants in America, suggests that the painting may depict a new variety. In 1854 she described the plant as “a Waterloo geranium—when it was first introduced & considered very wonderful—a very fine specimen” and in 1884 as “the Scarlet Geranium which was the first brought to this country.” She also wrote that the portrait was “painted on account of the Geranium which was the first one in this country.” Is this a documented horticultural “first”?

Geraniums were first imported from South Africa to Europe in the early eighteenth century. The plants were introduced to North American horticulture in the mid-1700s. As tropical plants they required greenhouse, or hothouse, care in colder climates. In 1760 English horticulturalist Peter Collinson wrote to his friend John Bartram in Philadelphia: “I am pleased thou will build a green-house. I will send thee seeds of Geraniums to furnish it. They have a charming variety, and make a pretty show in a green-house; but contrive and make a stove in it, to give heat in severe weather.”<sup>27</sup> To distinguish this type of geranium from the other plants of the Geraniaceae family that were native to Europe or North America, French botanist Charles Louis L’Héritier de Brutelle established the genus *Pelargonium* in 1787.<sup>28</sup> Geraniums became increasingly popular in America in the early nineteenth century. Philadelphia horticulturalist Bernard McMahon listed *Pelargonium* geraniums in his *American Gardener’s Calendar; adapted to the Climates and Seasons of the United States* (1806), explaining that “the Genus of Geranium, as constituted by Linnaeus, having become unwieldy by modern discoveries, has been divided into three genera.” He described details of their hothouse care and included instructions for growing seeds and cuttings.<sup>29</sup> By 1808, Thomas Jefferson was growing *Pelargonium* geraniums in the White House.<sup>30</sup>

The plant in the portrait appears specifically to be a variety of *Pelargonium inquinans*, whose botanical features include velvety branches, softly textured leaves of five to seven lobes, scarlet flowers with five petals, and a long column of stamens. Its name *inquinans* (Latin for “staining”) is said to derive from the fact that its leaves turn a rusty or light brown color after they have been touched.<sup>31</sup> The plant in the painting appears to have the character-



Fig. 1. “Geranium Afric. arborescens,” from Johann Jakob Dillenius, *Hortus Elthamensis, seu, Plantarum rariorum* (London, 1732), Washington, Dumbarton Oaks, Studies in Landscape Architecture Photo Archive

istic brownish red tint on the edges of the lowest leaf.<sup>32</sup> This scarlet-flowered geranium was first grown in England in the early 1700s.<sup>33</sup> An engraving of the plant published in *Hortus Elthamensis* (London, 1732), an account by J. J. Dillenius of the gardens of Dr. James Sherard at Eltham, near London, is very similar to the plant in Peale’s painting (fig. 1).<sup>34</sup>

Philadelphian William Logan apparently ordered seeds of the plant among the vegetable and flower seeds that he acquired in 1768 from James Gordon’s nursery in London.<sup>35</sup> In 1806 Bernard McMahon listed *Pelargonium inquinans* in his *American Gardener’s Calendar*, giving the plant’s English name as “scarlet-flowered geranium.”<sup>36</sup> By this time, however, *P. inquinans* was already becoming rare, probably because it was the stock plant from which new varieties were produced. A London writer commented that *P. inquinans*, or “Staining-leaved Crane’s bill,” a “very old Geranium, once very common, is now a scarce plant. There are several fine scarlets under the title of the Nosegay Geraniums, that resemble this species, and are sometimes confounded with it, but upon comparison will be found to differ materially.”<sup>37</sup> Years later,

American horticulturalist Joseph Breck confirmed this, identifying *P. inquinans* as “probably the original of the Scarlet varieties.”<sup>38</sup>

Mary Jane Peale’s claim for the plant as “the first brought to this country” thus seems to refer not to the geranium in general but rather to a particular variety, perhaps of *P. inquinans*, that became known as the “Waterloo” geranium. In 1834 the “Waterloo geranium” was listed by horticulturalist Robert Buist among forty-nine varieties of the plant.<sup>39</sup> Presumably the naming of the plant postdates the Battle of Waterloo (1815) and somehow relates to it.

While the geranium in the painting serves to define Rubens’ interests, and perhaps was intended as the subject of the painting, the two pairs of eyeglasses are critical in characterizing Rubens’ physical state. His poor eyesight was already apparent in early childhood, when it was identified as near-sightedness. Rembrandt later described Rubens’ difficulties:

A younger brother was so near-sighted, that I have seen him drawing, with pencils of his own manufacture—small sticks burnt in the candle and dipped in its grease—looking sometimes with his left eye, and then turning to look with his right eye, the end of his nose was blackened with his greasy charcoal. He was slow in his progress at school. . . . At ten years of age, he only knew two letters, *o* and *i*, never having distinctly seen any others, because his master, holding the book at a distance to suit his own eye, his pupil could see nothing but a *blurred* line—and only learned by rote.<sup>40</sup>

One day, a chance use of lenses made for an elderly person showed that Rubens was farsighted, a rare condition for a child but one that normally occurs in the elderly.<sup>41</sup> Rubens described the correction to his eyesight in his “Memorandum’s”: “My sight has always been very bad and it was not until I was about 10 or 12 years of age, that I could procure any glasses that aided my sight. I had to put the book or paper so close to my face that my nose would frequently touch the book. It was always thought that I required concave glasses and every degree of concavity was tried in vain, at last I happened to take a large burning-glass and placed it to my eye and to my great astonishment I saw at a distance every thing distinctly.”<sup>42</sup> He wrote that after this discovery, “My father then went with me to Mr. Chs. [John] M’Alister’s store in Chesnut near 2d. st. He had no spectacles of so high a power, & he then set in a frame glasses of 4 1/2 inch focus, with these spectacles I could see to read and even to read the signs across the street. This surprised him very

much, he had never met with such a case before, (strange to say I still continue to use the glasses of the same focus ever since.) It was not until this discovery was made, that I could read a newspaper or other small print."<sup>43</sup>

This story was later confirmed by Rembrandt Peale:

No *concave* glasses afforded him the least relief; but at Mr. M<sup>r</sup> Allister's, the optician, my father being in consultation on his case, there lay on the counter several pairs of spectacles, which had just been tried by a lady ninety years old. Taking up one of these and putting it on, he exclaimed in wild ecstasy, that he could see across the street—"There's a man!—there's a woman!—there's a dog!" These glasses were double convex of four and a half inch focus, and enabled him rapidly to advance in his studies. He has continued to use them, of the same strength, to the present time, being seventy years old—putting them on the first thing in the morning, and taking them off the last thing at night. In London in 1802, he was present at a lecture on optics, by Professor Walker, who declared he had never known another instance of a shortsighted person requiring strong magnifying glasses.<sup>44</sup>

Rubens' need for magnification, rather than for concave glasses, was also noted by John Isaac Hawkins, an Englishman who had come to the United States in the 1790s and settled in Philadelphia by 1799. An engineer and prolific inventor, Hawkins worked closely with Charles Willson Peale, inventing the physiognotrace for his museum and the polygraph that Thomas Jefferson used to make copies of his correspondence.<sup>45</sup> Hawkins took an interest in the problem of Rubens' eyesight. In 1826, after he had returned to England, he described Rubens' case in a published paper that he illustrated with an engraving of a design for trifocals. "I knew twenty-five years ago a very extraordinary exception to the use of concave glasses for nearsighted eyes, in a young man in Philadelphia; he tried concaves without any benefit, but accidentally taking up a pair of strong magnifiers, he found that he could see well through them, and continued the use of strong magnifiers with great advantage."<sup>46</sup>

Evidence in the painting itself suggests that Mary Jane Peale was correct in stating that Rubens was first painted with only one pair of glasses, those in his hand. When Rembrandt added the second pair, she said, he did not remove the spectacles from Rubens' hand because he did not want to "spoil the painting." The artist has indicated clearly that the pair of glasses that Rubens holds has the strong magnifying lenses that he needed: The sidebar that is folded behind the glasses can be seen through the

lenses, which have enlarged the image. (Because the sidebar is folded at its center joint, the loop at the end of the sidebar can also be seen, between the two lenses.)<sup>47</sup> The power of these lenses is also indicated by the curve of their surface. A reflection of the studio window is visible in the lower corner of the lens that is farther from Rubens' hand. By contrast, the glasses that Rubens is wearing do not enlarge his eyes, which suggests that they are not of high magnification. In fact, they seem to be carefully placed so that they do not interrupt the outline of his eyes. Instead only the flesh of his cheeks is visible through them. Rembrandt's slightly later portrait of Rubens (NPG), painted in 1807, offers a helpful comparison. There, Rembrandt clearly represented Rubens wearing lenses with strong magnification. They quite noticeably enlarge the inner corner of Rubens' left eye and the outer area of his right eye (fig. 2).<sup>48</sup>

Since two early portraits of Rubens by his brother Raphaele Peale do not show him with glasses,<sup>49</sup> only one other early portrait provides helpful evidence on the question of which glasses are original

Fig. 2. Rembrandt Peale, *Rubens Peale*, oil on canvas, 1807, Washington, National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Museum Purchase and Gift of Mrs. James Burd Peale Green, NPG.86.212



to the painting. The portrait of Rubens that Charles Willson Peale included in his painting *Exhumation of the Mastodon* (1805–1808, PM) depicts Rubens wearing glasses that appear to be of the same shape as those he is holding in the Gallery's portrait.<sup>50</sup> This type of frame, with large lenses and a wide bridge, was commercially available by 1801.<sup>51</sup> In contrast, the glasses that Rubens wears, with a narrow bridge, were apparently less common.<sup>52</sup> They are similar in shape to glasses made for the Peales and their acquaintances by John McAllister, the man that Rubens credited with assembling his first successful pair of glasses. The spectacles that McAllister made for Thomas Jefferson in 1806 (Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation, Inc., Charlottesville) are similar in their narrow bridge, although the shape of the lenses is different.<sup>53</sup> The pair that Charles Willson Peale is wearing on his forehead in his self-portrait of about 1804 (PAFA) is also similar, as is the pair that Rubens wears in Rembrandt's 1807 portrait of him (fig. 2).

McAllister was a Scottish-born Philadelphia merchant and manufacturer who came to Philadelphia from New York in 1781. He opened a business selling canes and walking sticks, and by 1788 was a manufacturer of these and related merchandise. In 1796 he moved into a new shop at 48 Chestnut Street, near Second Street. He was not an optician and until 1815 did not make spectacles; instead he imported and sold the frames, using lenses made elsewhere. It is believed that he first sold spectacles in 1799; his first advertisement for them appeared in the *Philadelphia Gazette and Daily Advertiser* in October 1800, at the beginning of his three-year partnership with John Matthews.<sup>54</sup> With the exception of this partnership, McAllister's business was at 48 Chestnut Street until his death in 1830. The earliest written evidence that he supplied spectacles for Charles Willson Peale is from 1806, when he made glasses for Peale and his brother James that were specially designed for miniature painting.<sup>55</sup>

One modern explanation for the two pairs of glasses was offered by Dr. John R. Levene, an optometrist. Noting that the lenses of the spectacles in Rubens' hand are larger, and the bridge wider, than those of the pair he is wearing, Levene proposed that Rubens may have worn the pair in his hand lower down on his nose "for reading or close work purposes." When both were worn at the same time, the combination could have created the effect of bifocals.<sup>56</sup> Levene, however, was unaware of Mary Jane Peale's accounts.<sup>57</sup> Having read her

statements, art historian John Wilmerding more recently noted a lack of physical evidence in the painting that would support her idea that the second pair of glasses was added. X-radiography revealed no measurable changes in the paint surface or reworking of the area. Wilmerding added that "these spectacles seem so integral and central to the entire effect and meaning of the painting that they must have been part of the intention and composition from the start."<sup>58</sup>

Physical evidence is of limited help in solving the question. Close study of the painting did not reveal a reserved space for the glasses or for the reflected light on his cheeks, indicating that Peale did not set aside an area for the glasses when he painted the face. Examination of the surface of the painting revealed instead that the glasses were painted over the brushwork of the lower eyelids. However, this would be the case whether or not the glasses were intended to be there from the beginning, since they could have been painted at the final stage. Billie Follensbee has suggested that there is additional evidence that Mary Jane Peale's narrative is accurate: the nature of the reflected pools of light on Rubens' cheeks and the lack of distortion of his eyes as seen through the lenses. These pools of reflected light, which would indicate strong lenses, could easily have been added to a completed portrait. Repainting the eyes to indicate the magnification of the lenses would have been more difficult.<sup>59</sup> In showing only the flesh of Rubens' cheeks through the lenses, Rembrandt would not have had to alter the painting.

When would the glasses have been added? Presumably before Rembrandt Peale gave the painting to James Claypoole Copper. Mary Jane Peale wrote in 1854 that "Mr. Copper . . . always admired this picture very much so when Uncle went to Europe he presented this picture to Mr. Copper as something very good."<sup>60</sup> In her annotation of his letter, she modified this statement, saying that "The Picture when painted was presented to him."<sup>61</sup> If her comments are accurate, the gift could have been made before Rembrandt Peale's first voyage abroad in 1802, when he and Rubens took the mastodon skeleton, with other natural history objects and some portraits, to England for exhibition.<sup>62</sup> Rembrandt could also have given Copper the portrait before his trip to Europe in 1808, by which time he had painted his second portrait of Rubens, who in that portrait is seen wearing his glasses.<sup>63</sup>

The initial absence of the pair of spectacles rein-



forces Mary Jane Peale's comment that the painting was done primarily to represent the geranium. "The geranium," as she wrote in her annotation of Copper's letter, "is a little withered in the painting room." The sitter's glance away from the plant places the emphasis on his gesture, touching the rim of the pot, as if to test the moistness of the soil. He is not looking at the plant, and his gesture does not need the sense of sight to confirm the information it receives. One could imagine that Rubens Peale was eager to take the withered geranium out of his brother's painting room and return it to his own care.

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### Notes

1. Mary Jane Peale wrote that after the painting was given to her in 1854, her uncle Rembrandt Peale "put on it a new back & cleaned it for me"; undated annotation on letter from James Claypoole Copper to Mary Jane Peale, 28 April 1854, AAA.
2. The date of Copper's acquisition of the painting is unknown. Mary Jane Peale believed that he owned it almost from the time it was painted. In 1854 she wrote that "when Uncle [Rembrandt Peale] went to Europe," he gave the portrait to Copper. In an undated annotation to Copper's letter (28 April 1854, AAA), she wrote that "the Picture when Painted was presented to him." Later, in her will, she said that it was "painted for him by Mr. Rembrandt Peale." On Copper, see Graff 1893, 79, 101–102, which does not record his life dates. His parents were married in 1774.
3. For Mary Jane Peale's dates, see the genealogy of the Peale Family in Elam 1967, 10, and Miller 1992, 231. For information that she lived in Pottsville, see Hevner, "Rembrandt" 1986, 1012.
4. Mary Jane Peale bequeathed the portrait to her nephew Albert Charles Peale, the son of her brother Charles Willson Peale and Harriet Friel Peale; see her will dated 27 June 1901 and the second codicil dated 6 September 1901, Register of Wills, Courthouse, Pottsville, Pennsylvania. (The will is signed and dated 1900, but is referred to in codicils as dated 1901; that date is more likely, given the date of the codicils.) Albert Peale was one of the executors of Mary Jane Peale's estate. For his dates, see Charles Coleman Sellers, "Peale Genealogy," MS, Peale Papers Office, NPG; also *NCAB* 1893–, 21:255–256.
5. The painting belonged to Jessie Sellers Colton by 1923, when she lent it to the exhibition at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. A label formerly on the painting (in NGA curatorial files) gives her name and address, and states that she was the great-niece of Rubens Peale. For her dates, see Sellers, "Peale Genealogy."
6. Mrs. Esty owned the portrait when it was reproduced in Sellers 1947 (opp. 147, fig. 12) and lent it in 1955

to the exhibition at Pennsylvania State University. For her birth date see Sellers, "Peale Genealogy"; her date of death is recorded in Social Register Association 1978, 98.

7. Fleischman confirmed his ownership of the portrait in a letter of 19 December 1985 to the Gallery (in NGA curatorial files).

8. Mrs. Woolworth was the owner by 1963, when she lent the painting to the exhibition *American Art from American Collections* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

9. "Fabulous" 1960, 76–77, fig. 74, "loaned by a private collector."

10. This work has been identified in the past as having been exhibited at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1807 and at the Peale Museum in 1808. Peale included "No. 15 Rubens Peale by Rembrandt" in a sketch of the proposed arrangement for the academy in 1807 (Miller, Hart, and Ward 1988, 1047 and note 4; Hevner, "Rembrandt" 1986, 1011–1012). He wrote to Rembrandt in 1808 that he was exhibiting "Your Portrait of . . . Rubens" at the museum (Miller, Hart, and Ward 1988, 1096, 1098n.15; Hevner, "Rembrandt" 1986, 1012). More recently, however, Hevner noted that she believes that in both cases the portrait exhibited was probably the portrait of Rubens that Rembrandt painted in 1807 (NPG); note dated 20 December 1989 (in NPG curatorial files).

11. Rubens Peale, "Memorandum's of Rubens Peale and the events of his life &c," Peale-Sellers Papers, APS; see Miller 1980, fiche VIIIB/1A2–G9, 5–6 (pagination added by the editors). Peale's "Memorandum's" are a rough chronology of events, beginning with his childhood. While he occasionally gives specific dates, they appear to be approximate. For example, he wrote that he sailed to England "early in the year 1801," when in fact this voyage occurred in the summer of 1802. Family physician Dr. James Hutchinson was also professor of chemistry at the University of Pennsylvania and secretary of the American Philosophical Society; Miller, Hart, and Ward 1988, 19n.1.

12. Peale, "Memorandum's," 6–7.

13. Peale, "Memorandum's," 5.

14. For his activities in this period, see Miller, Hart, and Ward 1988, 350–379; and Miller 1992, 47–54.

15. Graff 1893, 79.

16. Miller, Hart, and Ward 1988, 1241n. 2.

17. Miller, Hart, and Ward 1988, 1235; the letter is dated 28 October 1809.

18. Diary of Mary Jane Peale, 1854, Peale-Sellers Papers, APS; partially quoted in Hevner 1987, 1996; and Follensbee 1997, 420.

19. Letter from James Claypoole Copper to Mary Jane Peale, 28 April 1854, AAA. The letter was written from 260 Marshall Street, which was Copper's Philadelphia residence; see *McElroy* 1854, 102.

20. Undated annotation by Mary Jane Peale on letter to her from James Claypoole Copper, 28 April 1854, AAA.

21. Mary Jane Peale, "List of Pictures I Own, 1884," n.p., no. 34, Peale-Sellers Papers, APS. She added that "I have left it to Albert, in my will." The portrait is also included in her "List of Pictures owned by Mary J. Peale & where they are," 1883, Peale-Sellers Papers, APS, as

“10. Father when nineteen with Geranium by Rem Peale,” located “at home.”

22. Mary Jane Peale, “List of Pictures I Own; 1885,” no. 24, Peale-Sellers Papers, APS (courtesy of Billie Follensbee, who located the document). The list has an annotation, “Rubens Peale,” in the left margin, which was crossed out. Below it was written “Albert Peale.” These notations seem to reflect Mary Jane Peale’s ideas about the recipient of the future bequest.

23. Will dated 27 June 1901, with second codicil dated 6 September 1901, Register of Wills, Court House, Pottsville, Pennsylvania. In the codicil she wrote: “*The portrait of Father with the Geranium, the first brought to this country, and painted on account of the plant which shews [sic] that it was in the studio being a little withered. It was at first painted without the spectacles and afterwards put on. given to me by Mr. Copper. painted for him by Mr. Rembrandt Peale.*” An undated draft of her will states: “I give to my niece Fannie Carrier the miniature of my Father by Miss Anna Peale afterwards Mrs. Duncan, unless Rubens would prefer it to the portrait of my Father with the Geranium given me by Mr. Copper for whom it was painted,” and “The picture of my Father painted by Uncle Rembrandt for Mr. Copper & given me by him I give to Albert” (Peale-Sellers Papers, APS). A “Last Will and Testament, 1883” that has occasionally been cited as in NGA curatorial files is in fact a partial photocopy of the 1901 will and codicil.

24. Peale, “Memorandum’s,” 11. David Landreth came to Philadelphia in 1781 and established the city’s first nursery and seed business in 1784. He was probably Bernard McMahon’s first employer after McMahon arrived in the United States from Ireland in 1796. McMahon established his own business in Philadelphia in 1802; Pennsylvania Horticultural Society 1976, 22.

25. Miller, Hart, and Ward 1988, 421–422.

26. Miller, Hart, and Ward 1988, 427.

27. Darlington 1849, 224–225, letter of 15 September 1760; Hedrick 1950, 88; Pennsylvania Horticultural Society 1976, 24.

28. For example, Thomas Jefferson asked John Bartram, Jr., to include two American geraniums, *Geranium maculatum* and *Geranium gibbosum*, in a group of American plants that were sent to him in Paris in 1786; see Jefferson to John Bartram, Jr., 27 January 1786 (Boyd 1954, 228–230). The first, known as wild geranium or spotted crane’s bill, has rose-purple flowers and deeply divided leaves, while the second is a shrubby plant with deep greenish yellow flowers. See Betts 1944, 109–110; Betts and Perkins 1971, 57; Bailey 1900–1902, 2: 640; Clark 1988, 92. On the history and botanical features of geraniums and pelargoniums, see Bailey 1900–1902, 3: 1257–1264; Van der Walt and Vorster 1977–1981; Everett 1981, 5: 1462–1465, 8: 2527; and Clark 1988, 15–21, 93.

29. McMahon 1806, 83, 160, 355, 419, 444, 615, 618.

30. Adams 1976, 346, no. 600, written by Charles Coleman Sellers; see also 351 for botanical notes on *Pelargonium*. In December 1808 Margaret Bayard Smith asked Jefferson if he would give her the geranium that he kept in the White House, when he left Washington; he did this at the end of his second term the following spring; see Betts 1944, 382–383.

31. Van der Walt and Vorster 1977–1981, 1: 23 and color repro. opp. 23.

32. Some writers believed that the name came about because the plant produced a red stain. Henry Andrews (1805, 2:n.p.) described the source as “the stems, which are beset with glands containing a red juice, which rubbed on paper stains it; from whence its specific title of *Inquinans*.”

33. Hobhouse 1992, 115; it was grown by Henry Compton (1632–1713), bishop of London, in his garden at Fulham Palace.

34. Dillenius 1732, 151–152, and pl. cxxv, opp. 151, titled *Geranium Afric. arborescens, Malvae folio pingui, flore coccineo Pein*. The plate is reproduced in Bailey 1900–1902, 3: 1257, fig. 1698; see also 3: 1261–1262. See also Clark 1988, 15.

35. Hobhouse 1992, 269, states that this order included *inquinans* but gives no source for this information.

36. McMahon 1806, 618.

37. Andrews 1805, 2:n.p.

38. Breck 1866, 310.

39. Buist 1834, 110. The only indication of its color is the fact that the list is arranged by color of the flowers, from lightest to darkest, with this variety as number thirty-two out of forty-nine.

40. Peale, “Painter’s Eyes” 1856, 164.

41. The first specialist to discuss Rubens’ eyesight in relation to this portrait was Dr. John R. Levene, a professor of optometry; see Levene 1977, 171–173. Ophthalmologist Charles E. Letocha, M.D., of York, Pennsylvania, identified Peale’s condition to the Gallery staff in a letter of 4 February 1986 and subsequent correspondence (in NGA curatorial files). See also Letocha 1987, 476 (reference courtesy of Billie J. A. Follensbee). The most recent study of this portrait in relation to Peale’s eyesight and need for glasses is Follensbee 1997.

42. Peale, “Memorandum’s,” 7. A burning-glass is a converging lens used to focus the sun’s rays on an object so as to produce heat or combustion.

43. Peale, “Memorandum’s,” 7–8.

44. Peale, “Painter’s Eyes,” 1856, 164–165.

45. On Hawkins, see Levene 1977, 166–189; and Miller, Hart, and Ward 1988.

46. Hawkins 1827, 391–392; he identified the “young man” as Rubens Peale. The reference is quoted in Levene 1977, 171, where Hawkins’ illustration, an engraving of his trifocals, is reproduced on 184, as figure 7.1.

47. The folded sidebar is commented on by Levene 1977, 172; and Wilmerding, “Young Masters” 1988, 86.

48. The portrait bears two inscribed dates, 1807 and 1821; the earlier date was not visible until the painting was cleaned in 1989 after it was acquired by the National Portrait Gallery. The painting was therefore incorrectly dated in Hevner, “Rembrandt” 1986, 1012, and is correctly dated in Hevner 1992, 260, fig. 124.

49. The first shows Rubens dressed as the mascot of McPherson’s Blues (c. 1795, private collection; illustrated in Miller, Hart, and Ward 1988, color pl. 2, opp. 344); the second is a profile watercolor (c. 1805, NMAA; Miles 1994, 112, repro.). Among later portraits, Anna Claypoole Peale’s miniature of 1822 (Bolton-Smith 1976, 255, no. 212, repro.) and Mary Jane Peale’s portrait of 1855 (Elam 1967, 138, no. 223, repro. 116) show him with glasses, while Rem-

brandt Peale's portrait of 1834 (Wadsworth Athenaeum) does not (Hevner 1985, 76–77, no. 23, repro.).

50. On this painting, see Miller 1981, 47–68.

51. Numerous examples can be found in collections that document the history of eyeglasses; see Poulet 1978, 1: 142–144, 148–150, 2: 217.

52. They appear less frequently in collections of eyeglasses. W. Poulet (1978, 1: 155) illustrates as B 1077 a similar pair of frames with extendable sidebars, c. 1800 (they are not exactly the same, since they have rectangular lenses).

53. On these glasses, see the letter of John McAllister to Thomas Jefferson, 14 November 1806, Thomas Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress (transcript in NGA curatorial files, provided by Dr. Charles E. Letocha); Miller, Hart, and Ward 1988, 1006–1008, and note 1. Jefferson's glasses are illustrated in Stein 1993, 430.

54. Information on McAllister is from Danzenbaker 1968, 1–4; correspondence of Dr. Charles E. Letocha, 4 February and 24 February 1986 (in NGA curatorial files); Letocha 1987, 476; and research notes compiled by Deborah Jean Warner, curator, Physical Sciences Collections, NMAH.

55. John McAllister to Thomas Jefferson, 14 November 1806, Thomas Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress (transcript in NGA curatorial files, provided by Charles Letocha). McAllister's bank books for 1796–1797, 1800–1801, and 1807–1809 (Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, Delaware) were checked for references to members of the Peale family, but none was found.

56. Levene 1977, 172.

57. Follensbee 1997, 58.

58. Wilmerding, "Young Masters" 1988, 85.

59. Follensbee 1997, 420–421.

60. Diary of Mary Jane Peale, 1854, Peale-Sellers Papers, APS.

61. Undated annotation by Mary Jane Peale on letter to her from James Claypoole Copper, 28 April 1854, AAA.

62. See Miller, Hart, and Ward 1988, 419–474, 485–603 (correspondence between Charles Willson Peale and his sons from January until their return in November 1803, interspersed with other Peale correspondence), 624n.2 (noting their return). See also Miller 1992, 57–71. Lillian Miller (1992, 58–59) suggests that Rembrandt took the painting to London in 1802, intending it as the pendant to his similarly sized self-portrait with the mammoth tooth, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1803. Carol Hevner (1992, 255, citing Graves 1905–1906, 6:87) indicates that the second portrait that Rembrandt exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1803 was a "Portrait in Chalk," which does not describe the portrait of Rubens.

63. See note 10 above for discussion of the possible exhibition of the portrait at the PAFA in 1807 and at the PM in 1808.

## References

- 1947 Sellers: fig. 12, opp. 147.  
1956 *Rendezvous*: 2 repro., 28, no. 82 (not exhibited).  
1965 Feld: 283, repro.  
1971 Gerdts and Burke: 36, repro. 34, figs. 2–12.

- 1976 Adams: 346, no. 600, repro.  
1976 Pennsylvania Horticultural Society: 24, repro. 27.  
1977 Levene: 171–172.  
1981 Gerdts: 3, color pl. 3, 62–63.  
1984 Foshay: 32–34, repro.  
1985 Hevner: 20, 21 fig. 5, 103n. 8.  
1986 Hevner, "Rembrandt": 1010–1013, color repro.  
1986 Hevner, "Rubens": 114–116, fig. 1 (color).  
1987 Hevner: 1996 and color repro., cover.  
1988 Miller, Hart, and Ward: 1047n. 4, 1096, 1098n. 15, 1241n. 2, color pl. 6, between 344 and 345.  
1988 Wilmerding, *American Masterpieces*: 66, no. 10; 67, color repro.  
1988 Wilmerding, "Young Masters": 72–93.  
1992 Hevner: 255.  
1992 Miller: 57–60, fig. 22, 160, color pl. 4, 243.  
1992 NGA: 256, repro.  
1996 Miller: 35 (repro), 51–52, 309.  
1997 Follensbee: 417–424, repro.

1947.17.85 (993)

## Richardson Stuart

c. 1815

Oil on canvas, 52.4 × 37.2 (20<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 14<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The painting is on a medium-weight, somewhat coarse, plain-weave fabric, which has slubs and irregularities. The picture is unlined and has its original tacking margins. The painting is on its original white pine, four-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher. The ground is thicker than the paint, and was applied before the fabric was stretched. Analysis of cross-sections shows that it consists of three layers. The first is a moderately thick layer of carbon black with iron oxide red. The second is a moderately thick layer of lead white with iron oxide red. The top is a thin layer of lead white, which appears from X-radiography to have been applied with a palette knife. The paint is thinly applied, with precision in the face and figure, and more broadly in the background, where glazes were used. X-radiography reveals that the clothing was changed slightly: a cravat with a bow and an open shirt collar were overpainted with the present stock and shirt frill, and the yellow vest was added.

There is a small tear in the canvas along the top right tacking fold. Cupped craquelure and traction crackle in the darker colors have been inpainted; this is especially visible in the jacket. The varnish is slightly discolored.

**Provenance:** Sarah Glen Douglas Stuart [Mrs. Richardson Stuart], Baltimore;<sup>1</sup> her brother, Jacob Davies Douglas [1788–1873], Alexandria, Virginia; his daughter, Rebecca Douglas Hazlett; her son, Douglas Hazlett;<sup>2</sup> (sale, Stan V. Henkels, Philadelphia, 5 Febru-

ary 1920, no. 25);<sup>3</sup> Thomas B. Clarke [1848–1931], New York;<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:** *Second Annual Exhibition in Peale's Baltimore Museum, of the Works of American Artists, including Sculpture, Painting, Architecture, Drawing, Engraving, etc. Likewise, a Selection from the Various Cabinets of Old Masters, in this City and its Vicinity*, PM, 1823, no. 127.<sup>5</sup> *Exhibition of Paintings by Early American Portrait Painters*, Union League Club, New York, November 1921, no. 3. *A Loan Exhibition of Paintings by Early American Portrait Painters*, Century Association, New York, 1926, no. 11. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered. *Rendezvous for Taste: Peale's Baltimore Museum, 1814 to 1830*, PM, 1956, no. 88. *The Peale Family: Three Generations of American Artists*, DIA; MWPI, 1967, no. 153.

THIS SMALL IMAGE of Richardson Stuart is a fine example of the portraits that Rembrandt Peale painted in Baltimore during the years 1814–1822, when he was proprietor of the Peale Museum there. Richardson Stuart (c. 1746–1822) was the owner of a nail factory in Baltimore for more than forty years.<sup>6</sup> From 1785 to 1788 he served as assistant manager and manager of the Potomack Company, which had been organized by George Washington and other investors to make the Potomac River navigable.<sup>7</sup> In the 1790s he served on the board of managers of the Mechanical Society in Baltimore, a political organization that represented the views of the city's skilled craftsmen and manufacturers. The society played an important role in the emerging Republican Party in Baltimore.<sup>8</sup> In 1801 he founded the Baltimore General Dispensary,<sup>9</sup> which was a major beneficiary of his will.

Perhaps Peale and Stuart came to know each other through Robert Cary Long, architect of Peale's Museum in 1813 and a stockholder in the museum.<sup>10</sup> Long was described in Stuart's will, of which he was an executor, as one of Stuart's "right trusty friends." Stuart undoubtedly also knew James Mosher, president of the Mechanics' Bank of Baltimore and a former officer in the Mechanical Society, who was also a stockholder in the museum.<sup>11</sup> Or the commission may have resulted from the advertisement that Peale placed in the *Federal Gazette and Baltimore Daily Advertiser* (6 January 1815) with a special offer: for one price the patron could have a portrait of himself or herself by Peale as well as admission to the museum.<sup>12</sup>

This small portrait is notable for the direct look and slight smile of the sitter as well as the careful ar-

ticulation of his face and white shirt frill and stock with small brushstrokes of light and shadow. The styles of Stuart's green coat and his graying hair can be dated to 1810–1815. X-radiography reveals that his clothing has been changed slightly: The stock and frilled shirt are painted over a cravat tied in a bow and a small shirt collar that was folded over the stock. The yellow waistcoat was added when these changes were made. Since the two styles of neckwear were contemporary fashions, the changes do not indicate the kind of updating of style that occasionally is found in the depiction of clothing in portraits.<sup>13</sup>

The modeling of the face is similar to that seen in other portraits that Peale painted in Baltimore, including the similarly sized images of Benjamin Henry Latrobe (c. 1815, MHS) and Maximilian Godefroy (c. 1815, Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University, on indefinite loan to MHS), as well as the larger portraits of Dr. Horace H. Hayden (c. 1816, Medical and Chirurgical Faculty of the State of Maryland, Baltimore) and General Samuel Smith (c. 1817, Baltimore City Life Museums).<sup>14</sup>

The portrait may reflect changes in Peale's technique. Around this time he was experimenting with a "new method" of painting, for which he used a large magnifying glass or mirror to help with the definition of the image.<sup>15</sup> He was also using a new combination of pigments and glazes that his father praised because it allowed him to make "any change in the drawing and colouring without losing a good effect in the dosin [design] of the work."<sup>16</sup> Charles Willson Peale pointed out these qualities in a letter to his daughter Angelica: "Rembrandt on his late visit gave me a system of Colouring which is simple and takes off the necessity of attention to colouring while drawing the face or Rather Head including the hair, Linnen, &c."<sup>17</sup> He also described this method in greater detail to Raphaëlle Peale: "The effects of this mode of colouring is beautiful in every kind of Complexion, and so easy that the mind is not troubled about colouring while making out all the parts of drawing, shading and rounding, making the hair, linnen &c &c."<sup>18</sup>

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#### Notes

1. Richardson Stuart's will, dated 18 October 1821, leaves to Sarah Glen, his second wife, his house in Baltimore "with the furniture Pictures and Plate" (Register of Wills, Baltimore, Maryland). Mrs. Stuart lent the por-



Rembrandt Peale, *Richardson Stuart*, 1947.17.85



trait to the PM in 1823; see *Peale's Baltimore Museum* 1823, 6, no. 127.

2. The provenance from Mrs. Stuart to Douglas Hazlett was provided by Hazlett to the Ehrich Galleries, New York, in a letter (location unknown), the contents of which were recorded by the FARL, New York. Ehrich Galleries' role, if any, in the sale by Hazlett is unknown. For Jacob Davies Douglas' birth and death, see Baird 1970, 202 (information courtesy of Sandra S. O'Keefe, librarian, Lloyd House, Alexandria, Virginia, 1991).

3. Henkels 1920, 7, illus. opp. 8. The catalogue stated that the portrait "has been in the family" since it was painted and "comes direct from the descendants."

4. Clarke's purchase is recorded in an annotated copy of *Clarke* 1928 (in NGA library), n.p., unnumbered.

5. This loan is also referred to in *Rendezvous* 1956, 35, no. 127.

6. According to the unpublished "J. Hall Pleasants Studies in American Painting," MHS, Richardson Stuart (sometimes spelled Stewart) was first described as a nail manufacturer in Baltimore documents in 1778. His factory was listed in city directories from 1796, the year the first Baltimore directory was published, until 1819 (the last directory published during his lifetime). He died "in his 76th year," according to Scharf 1881, 2: 808.

7. Jackson and Twohig 1978-1979, 4: 165, 171, 207, 270, 347; 5: 3, 47-48, 81, 335-336.

8. Steffen 1984, 136-137, 174, 181, 207.

9. Pleasants, "Studies," MHS.

10. Miller 1992, 116.

11. On Mosher, see Miller 1992, 116; and Steffen 1984, 198, 207, 230.

12. Miller, Hart, and Ward 1991, 296-298.

13. According to Colle 1972, 106, the pleated stock is of a "conservative size for the early 19th century."

14. For these portraits, see Miller 1992, 121-122, figs. 58-61, and 129, fig. 65; the portraits of Hayden, Latrobe, and Smith are also reproduced in color on 171-173, pls. 15-17.

15. Miller 1992, 123. Charles Willson Peale described his attempts to use this method in his letter to Rembrandt Peale, 21 October 1816, in Miller, Hart, and Ward 1991, 457.

16. Miller 1992, 123-124; Charles Willson Peale to Rembrandt Peale, 8 January 1818, in Miller, Hart, and Ward 1991, 557.

17. Charles Willson Peale to Angelica Peale Robinson, 24 November 1817, in Miller, Hart, and Ward 1991, 550.

18. Charles Willson Peale to Raphaelle Peale, 15 November 1817, in Miller, Hart, and Ward 1991, 549.

## References

- 1967 Elam: 109, no. 153, 110 repro.  
1970 NGA: 86, repro.  
1972 Colle: 106, repro.  
1980 NGA: 205, repro.  
1992 NGA: 256, repro.

1942.7.1 (596)

## George Washington

c. 1850

Oil on canvas, 91.5 × 73.3 (36 × 28 7/8)

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. George W. Davison

## Inscriptions

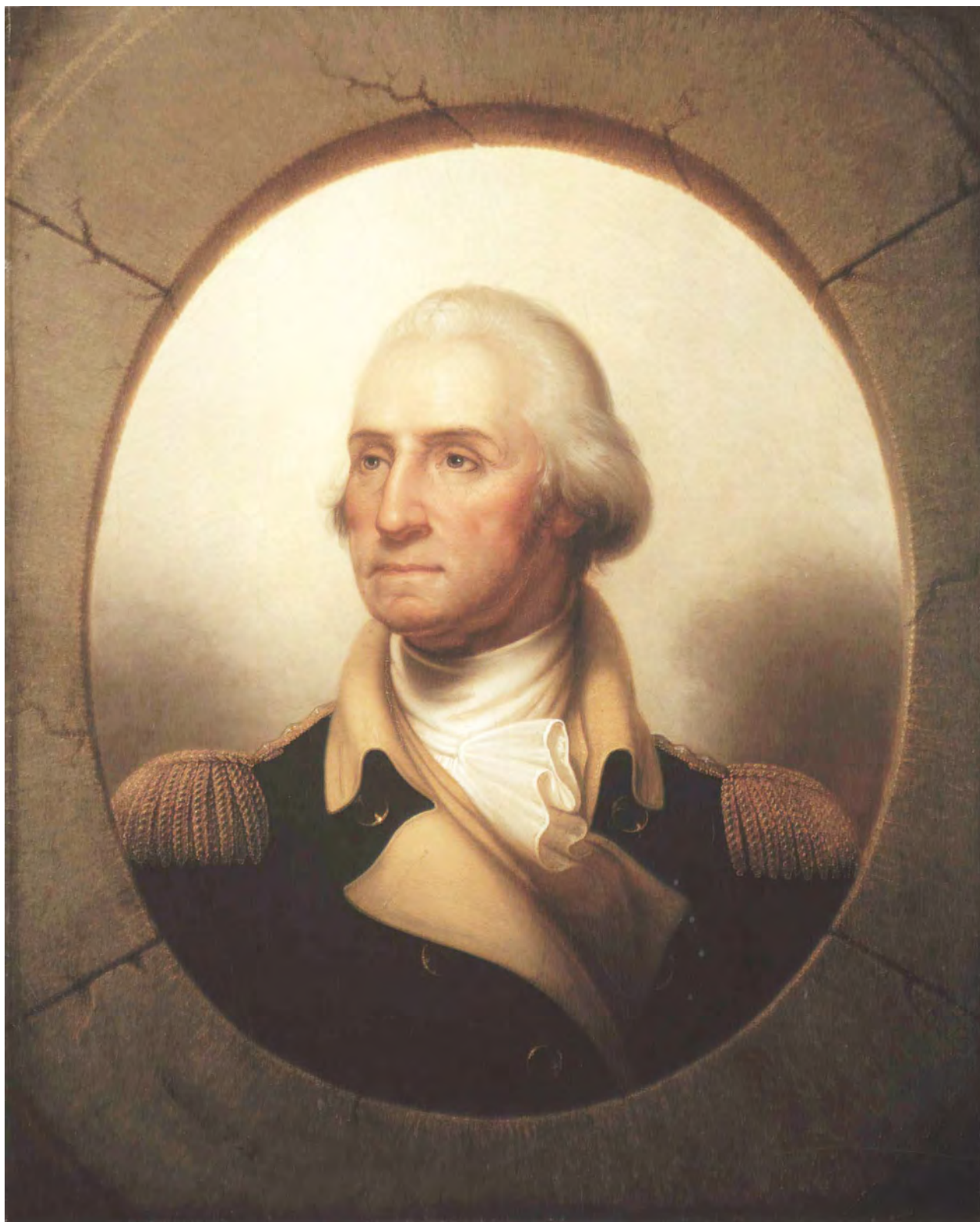
At lower left: Rembrandt Peal<sup>1</sup>

**Technical Notes:** The support is a fine- to moderate-weight, plain-weave fabric. The tacking margins have been removed and the painting has been lined. The white ground layer is now discolored. The paint is thinly applied with fluid strokes, and little impasto. Underdrawing in a liquid medium, probably both pen and brush, is detectable in the face with infrared reflectography (fig. 1). After the figure was blocked in, the background was worked up before work continued on the uniform. The blending of the paint of the background and figure suggests that the painting was rapidly executed.

The painting is in good condition. Small areas of inpainting in the face, the uniform, and the background have become discolored. There are drying cracks, cupping, and a pronounced craquelure pattern. Of the two surface coatings, one appears to have been done while the portrait was in a frame.

**Provenance:** Henry Ward Sill [1809-1857], New York;<sup>2</sup> probably his sister, Sarah Hubbard Sill [1822-1897], Middletown, Connecticut;<sup>3</sup> his daughter, Sophia Matilda Sill Burt [Mrs. Charles Richard Burt, 1842-1922], Hartford, Connecticut;<sup>4</sup> her niece, Harriet Sill Baldwin Davison [Mrs. George W. Davison, 1873-1953], Greenwich, Connecticut.<sup>5</sup>

IN 1795, when Rembrandt Peale was seventeen, he painted a portrait of George Washington (HSP) at a now legendary sitting in Philadelphia at which his father, Charles Willson Peale, also painted the first president. James and Raphaelle Peale joined them at a second sitting.<sup>6</sup> In 1823, more than a quarter-century later, Rembrandt Peale capitalized on the experience by creating his "Standard National Likeness" of Washington. Since the president had died in 1799, he based this painting on his own life image as well as his father's 1795 portrait of Washington and Jean-Antoine Houdon's sculpture. Rembrandt Peale completed his first version of the portrait in 1824. Known from its inscription as the "Patriae Pater" portrait (Washington as father of his country), the painting was purchased by the U.S. Congress in 1832, the year that marked the hundredth anniversary of Washington's birth. This portrait (fig. 2) and its replicas, which lack the inscription "Patriae Pater," are often given the nick-



Rembrandt Peale, *George Washington*, 1796.7.1

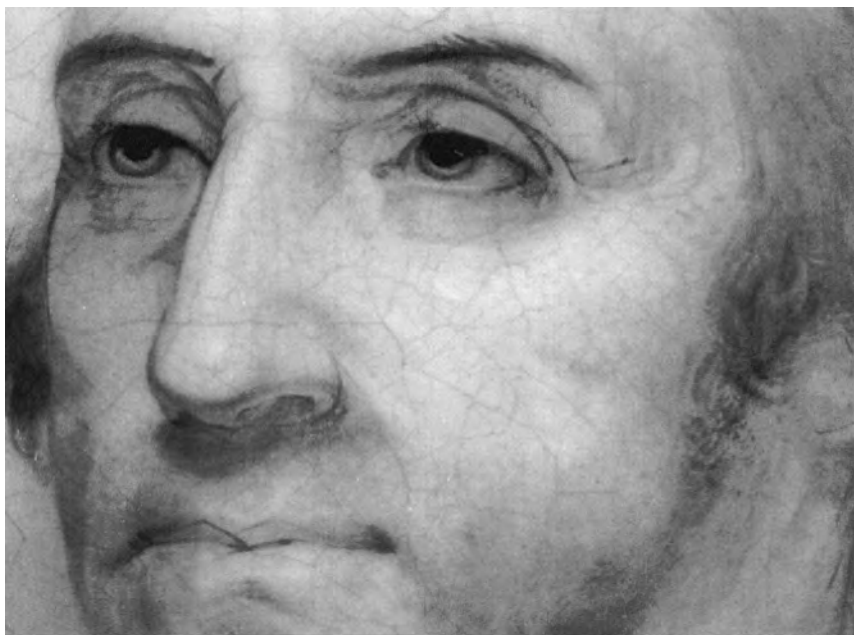
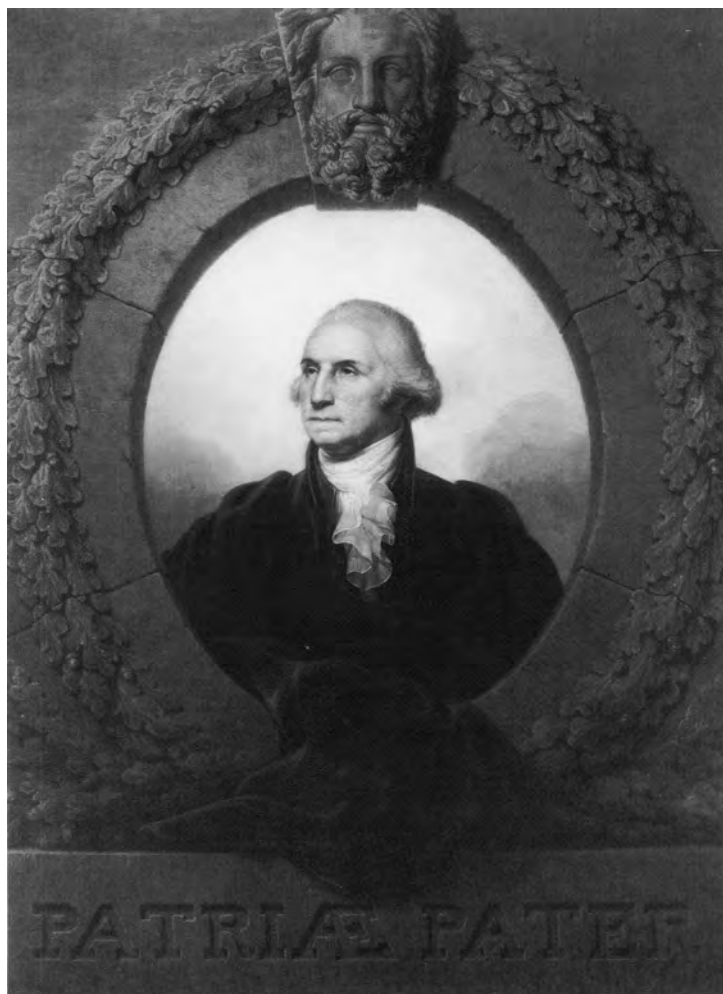


Fig. 1. detail of 1942.7.1: infrared reflectogram (1.5-2.0 microns)

Fig. 2. Rembrandt Peale, *George Washington as "Patriae Pater,"* oil on canvas, 1824, Washington, United States Senate Collection, photograph courtesy of the Architect of the Capitol



name "porthole portrait," a reference to the painted oval frame, a heroizing compositional device that resembles the cracked stone of Roman masonry.<sup>7</sup>

Among Peale's motivations in creating this image was the intention that it serve as the basis for an equestrian portrait, which he hoped Congress would purchase for the U.S. Capitol. Also the demand for likenesses of Washington was increasing with the approach of 1826, the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.<sup>8</sup> In a pamphlet about the portrait, succinctly titled *Washington*, Peale quoted testimonials by Washington's contemporaries about the accuracy of the likeness.<sup>9</sup> In a letter to the Mississippi State Legislature, dated 1 February 1826, one of several that he wrote to American governors and their legislatures, he offered to sell the state a copy of the painting: "If it be true that this Portrait is justly distinguished for its fidelity & expression of character it must be ascribed to the personal knowledge which the artist has of the living model."<sup>10</sup> The success of Gilbert Stuart's "Athenaeum" portrait of Washington also undoubtedly played a role.<sup>11</sup> Peale had visited Boston in 1821 and 1822, when Stuart was completing two sets of portraits of the first five presidents that included replicas of his portrait of Washington. One set was painted for Boston framemaker John Doggett.<sup>12</sup> In 1821 Doggett had exhibited Peale's painting *The Court of Death*; Peale later painted Doggett's portrait.<sup>13</sup>

The Gallery's example of the porthole portrait of Washington is one of more than seventy-five replicas of the composite portrait that Rembrandt Peale painted.<sup>14</sup> Like the other examples painted in the 1840s and 1850s, it is smaller and less complex. These later replicas were referred to at the time as the "George Washington Copy."<sup>15</sup> Most show Washington in his revolutionary war uniform with its blue coat, yellow collar and lapels, and gold buttons; some instead represent him in black senatorial robes. Many but not all of these portraits are signed. The earliest examples probably date from 1846, the year Peale reissued his *Washington* pamphlet with the offer to paint replicas of the porthole portrait showing Washington in uniform; the paintings were to be three feet high and would sell for \$100, unframed.<sup>16</sup> However, most of the copies were probably painted in the 1850s, at the time Peale gave a public lecture, "Washington and His Portraits" (see the entry for 1947.17.16, p. 64). Although the painting was not signed by Peale, John Hill Morgan agreed with the attribution of the Gallery's example when he saw it in 1935 at the Davisons' home; he described it in his notes on Peale's replicas as "a fine one in uniform."<sup>17</sup> Peale's wife Harriet Cany Peale is said to have been "Rembrandt's collaborator in many of these late portraits of Washington."<sup>18</sup>

Peale's image of Washington has been popular since that time. It became even more widely known in 1966, when stamp designer Bill Hyde used the Gallery's example as the model for the U.S. Post Office's five-cent stamp, used for first-class mail. The stamp was released on 22 February 1966, Washington's birthday.<sup>19</sup>

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## Notes

1. According to a note written by curator William P. Campbell on 15 September 1967, he and Frank Sullivan, a Gallery conservator, "examined the signature and felt strongly that it is a modern fabrication" (in NGA curatorial files). Current assessment by conservators agrees with this. The signature imitates the location of signatures found on many of the porthole portraits by Peale, but the writing does not appear to be Peale's. The spelling is, of course, wrong.

2. The provenance was supplied by George W. Davison, who sent the history of the painting to the Gallery at the time of the gift (document in NGA curatorial files, with letter dated 23 July 1942). He wrote that Sill, his wife's grandfather, purchased the portrait from Peale. On Sill, see *Descendants of John Sill* 1859, 49–50, which describes him as a merchant. Biographical information on Sill and his descendants was provided by Judith Ellen

Johnson, reference librarian and genealogist, Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford.

3. George Davison wrote in 1942 that after Sill's death the picture went to his "ancestral home" in Middletown, Connecticut. This undoubtedly occurred when Sill's three orphaned daughters, Hannah, Caroline, and Sophia, returned with their grandmother Clarissa Sill and their aunt Sarah Sill to Middletown. The U.S. Census, Middlesex County, Middletown, Connecticut, 1860, 233, lists Sill's mother, sister, and three daughters as living in Middletown. For Sarah Sill's birth date, see *Descendants of John Sill* 1859, 47; her death date was provided by the Middletown, Connecticut, Health Department to Judith Ellen Johnson.

4. Davison wrote in 1942 that Mrs. Burt took the portrait from Middletown to her home in Hartford in the 1890s. On Mrs. Burt, see *Descendants of John Sill* 1859, 50; Burt and Burt 1893, 570; "Sophia Matilda Sill Burt," Charles R. Hale Collection, Connecticut State Library, Hartford; and her obituary, *Hartford Daily Times*, 21 March 1922, 20 (clipping, Mary Morris Scrapbooks, 124:49, Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford).

5. On Mrs. Davison, see Baldwin 1881, 201; Baldwin 1889, 1025. Mrs. Davison's death date is included in Mr. Davison's obituary in the *New York Times*, 17 June 1953, 27.

6. Miller 1992, 32–33.

7. On this portrait, see Miller 1992, 142–144; and Hevner 1992, 279–280. Earlier sources include Morgan and Fielding 1931, 370–381; Eisen 1932, 2: 416–419; Hevner 1985, 66–67; and Verheyen 1989, 127–139.

8. Miller 1992, 142–145.

9. For descriptions of the pamphlet, see Hevner 1985, 116; the testimonials are listed in Miller 1992, 312.

10. Rembrandt Peale to the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Mississippi, 1 February 1826 (NGA Library; gift of Mr. and Mrs. George W. Davison, the donors of the portrait), transcribed by Anne Halpern. On similar letters to other legislatures written in 1826, see Miller 1992, 148–149.

11. On this rivalry, see Evans, "Washington," 1976, 259–260, no. 216, repro.

12. Of the two sets of five portraits, only the one painted for George Gibbs survives (NGA). Three of the portraits in Doggett's set were destroyed in a fire in 1851; those of James Madison and James Monroe are owned, respectively, by the Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts, and the MMA. On the history of these sets, see Ellen G. Miles, *American Paintings of the Eighteenth Century* in the Collections of the National Gallery of Art, Systematic Catalogue (Washington, 1995).

13. Miller 1992, 141, 149.

14. There is no exact count of all of the versions and replicas. In 1855 Peale wrote that he had made sixty-five copies from his 1795 portrait of Washington; see Peale 1855, 207. According to Schefflow 1986, 179, he painted his seventy-fifth copy in May 1859. Morgan and Fielding 1931, 371, record that Peale wrote to Charles Henry Hart that he had painted seventy-nine copies of his porthole portrait (date of letter not recorded). On the copies made in the 1840s and 1850s, see Hevner 1985, 88–89; Hevner 1992, 280; Miller 1992, 231–232.

15. Hevner 1985, 88.

16. Hevner 1985, 88, 105n.2, 116. A copy of this publication (in NGA Library) was given by the donors of the portrait to the National Gallery of Art at the time they gave the portrait itself. It apparently was acquired by the original owner when he bought the painting. This edition does not give sizes or prices of the portrait and appears to be the undated variant of the 1846 pamphlet.

17. Letter from John Hill Morgan to John Walker, chief curator, NGA, 11 March 1942 (in NGA curatorial files).

18. Hevner 1992, 280.

19. "George Washington" 1966, 34; McAlister 1966, 35–36, repro.; Lidman 1966, 30.

#### References

1931 Morgan and Fielding: 370–381 (does not include this example).

1932 Eisen: 2: 416–419 (does not discuss this example).

1966 "George Washington": 34.

1966 Lidman: 30.

1966 McAlister: 35–36, repro.

1970 NGA: 88, repro.

1974 Marzulla: 144.

1980 NGA: 206, repro.

1984 Walker: 374, color pl. 526.

1985 Hevner: 88–89 (does not discuss this example).

1992 Hevner: 280 (does not discuss this example).

1992 Miller: 231–232 (does not discuss this example).

1992 NGA: 256, repro.

1947.17.16 (924)

### *George Washington*

1859

Oil on canvas, 76.5 × 63.5 (30 1/8 × 25)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

#### Inscriptions

At lower right: Painted by Rembrandt Peale from Pine's Washington<sup>1</sup>

**Technical Notes:** The painting is executed on a very finely woven, twill-weave fabric. All tacking margins are intact, and the picture is unlined. The stretcher appears to be the original. An extra set of tack holes suggests that the painting was removed from the stretcher at one time. A continuous, thin, off-white ground layer covers the fabric. The paint was thinly applied, especially in the face, where a pencillike underdrawing shows through the paint. The paint of the area of the coat below the shoulders, and of the four corners, is modern. Dark paint from this modern addition also covers part of the tacking margins.

The painting is in very good condition, with only small, thinly scumbled inpainting around the border. The varnish is moderately discolored.

**Provenance:** Estate of the artist;<sup>2</sup> (M. Thomas & Sons, Philadelphia, 18 November 1862, no. 80);<sup>3</sup> Levi Taylor [d. 1871], Philadelphia;<sup>4</sup> his son, John Dickson Taylor [1825–1886], Philadelphia;<sup>5</sup> his daughter, Alice Taylor [Mrs. Harrison L.] Townsend, Philadelphia;<sup>6</sup> (sale, Stan V. Henkels, Philadelphia, 13 June 1922, no. 34);<sup>7</sup> Thomas B. Clarke [1848–1931], New York;<sup>8</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:** PAFA, 1862, no. 682.<sup>9</sup> *Exhibition of Portraits by Early American Portrait Painters*, Union League Club, New York, 1923, no. 9. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered. *Early American Portraits and Silver*, J. B. Speed Memorial Museum, Louisville, Kentucky, 1947, no cat.<sup>10</sup>

REMBRANDT PEALE painted this copy of Robert Edge Pine's *George Washington* (fig. 1) in 1859 to illustrate his lecture "Washington and His Portraits." Peale first gave the lecture on 24 April 1854 at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and repeated the performance numerous times over the

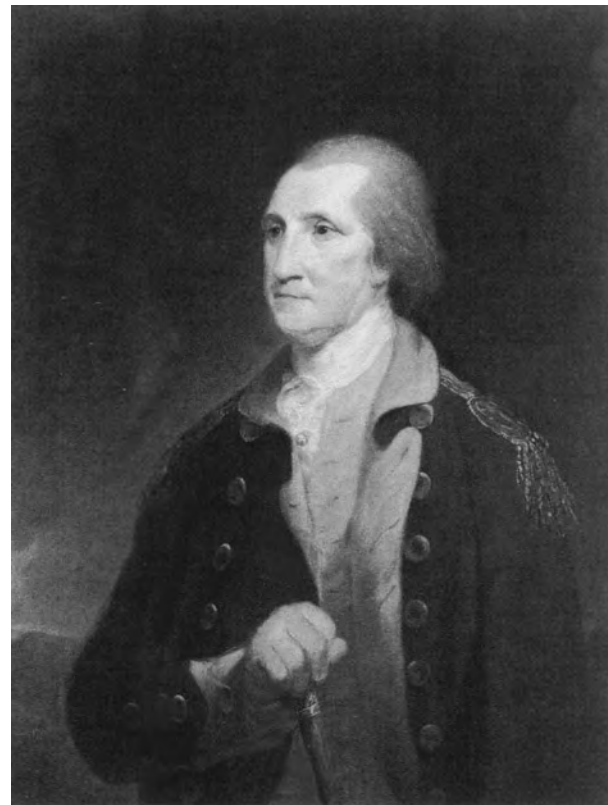
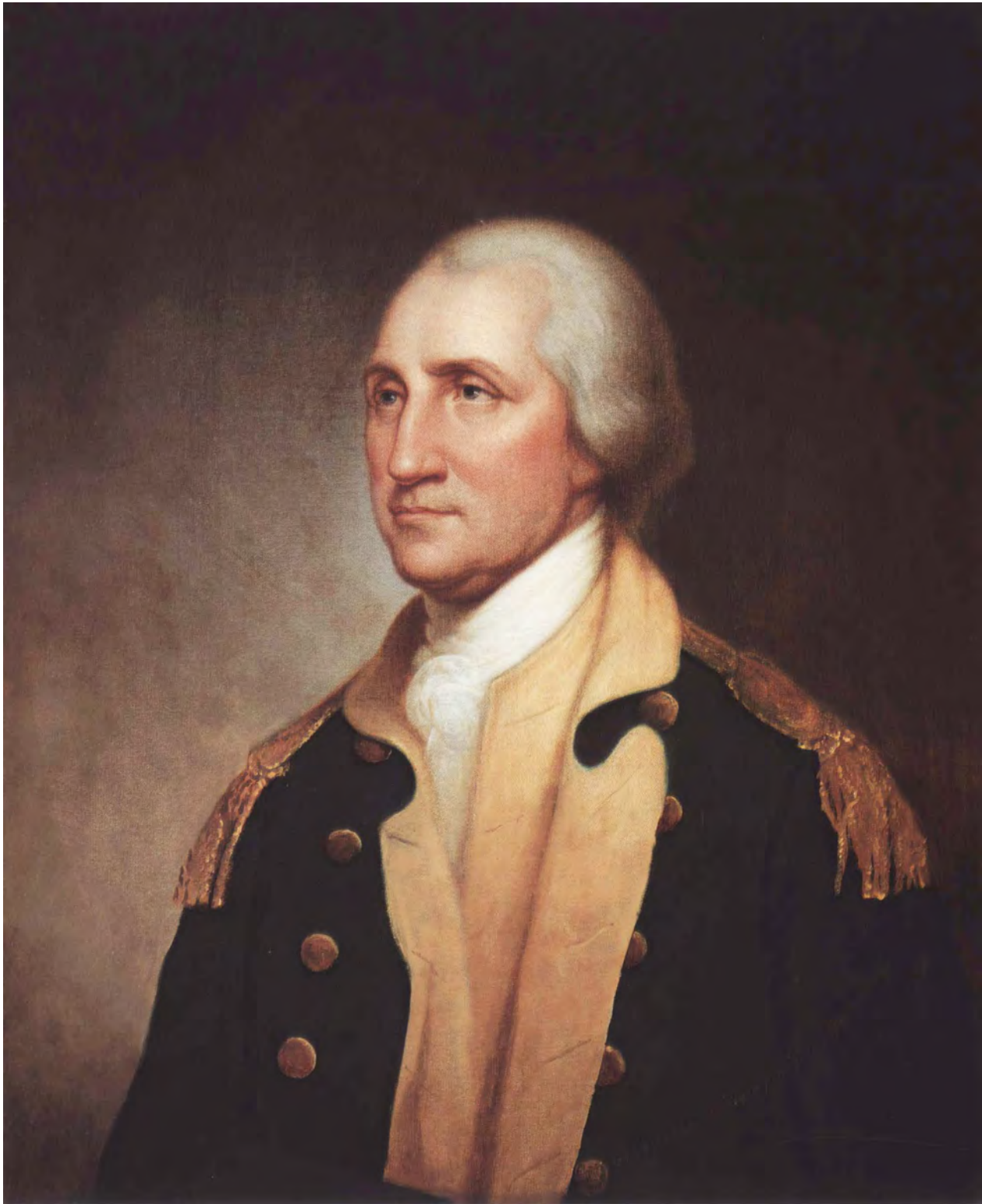


Fig. 1. Robert Edge Pine, *George Washington*, oil on canvas, 1785, Washington, National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, NPG.80.16





Rembrandt Peale, *George Washington*, 1947.17.16

next six years in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Baltimore, and Richmond. To illustrate his presentation, Peale would show portraits of George and Martha Washington: his own images as well as his copies from portraits by Charles Willson Peale, Gilbert Stuart, and Jean-Antoine Houdon (1741–1828).<sup>11</sup> A reviewer in *The Crayon* described his use of these paintings for a lecture at the New-York Historical Society on 16 June 1857: “At the close of the reading Mr. Peale exhibited various portraits of Washington, together with one of Mrs. Washington, all painted by himself; the pictures were brilliantly lighted, and so arranged as to be seen to great advantage. The remarks upon the portraits of Washington were interspersed with anecdotes, personal reminiscences, and historical facts, possessing marked interest, and they were listened to with unflagging attention for nearly two hours.”<sup>12</sup>

By the 1850s the image of George Washington had become a symbol of unity in an increasingly divided nation.<sup>13</sup> Peale’s lecture and the copies that he painted of his “Patriae Pater” portrait of Washington (see the entry for 1942.7.1, p. 60) were his response to this demand. His lectures capitalized on the fact that he was then the only living artist who had painted Washington from life. The reviewer of his lecture at the New-York Historical Society told how “the halo of Washington’s personality seemed also to reflect upon the artist, investing him with peculiar attractiveness. This feature of the occasion, as we gazed upon the brilliantly lighted head of the octogenarian, often rendered us oblivious to the sound and sense of his voice, our faculties being absorbed in contemplation of the man as a kind of historical picture in himself—an illuminated illustration of a hallowed past.”<sup>14</sup>

English artist Robert Edge Pine painted Washington’s portrait at Mount Vernon in the spring of 1785.<sup>15</sup> Pine had come to Philadelphia in 1784 to create history paintings of the events of the American Revolution. Intending to include portraits of the participants, he traveled throughout Maryland and Virginia in 1785 and 1786. Washington described the sittings in a letter of 16 May 1785 to Francis Hopkinson, which is often quoted as an eloquent comment on portrait painting from the viewpoint of a famous sitter:

In for a penny, in for a pound, is an old adage. I am so hackneyed to the touches of the Painters pencil, that I am *now* altogether at their beck, and sit like patience on a Monument whilst they are delineating the lines of my

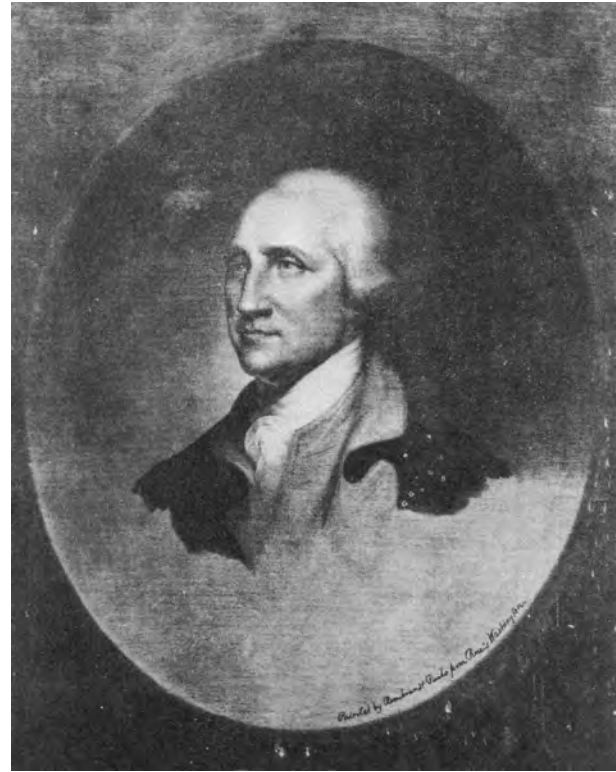


Fig. 2: photograph of 1947.17.16, c. 1922, reproduced in Stanislaus V. Henkels, *Antique Furniture, Old Silver and Porcelain, Relics of Martha Washington and Benj. Franklin*, auction catalogue (Philadelphia, 13 June 1922), no. 34, Washington, National Gallery of Art Library

face. It is a proof among many others, of what habit & custom can effect. At first I was as impatient at the request, and as restive under the operation, as a Colt is of the Saddle—The next time, I submitted very reluctantly, but with less flouncing. Now, no dray moves more readily to the Thill, than I do to the Painters Chair.<sup>16</sup>

Peale was very familiar with Pine’s portrait (fig. 1). His visit to the English artist’s painting room in Philadelphia had made a strong impression on him when he was a young man. In the brief biographical notice that he wrote about Pine for *The Crayon* in 1856, Peale remembered Pine’s studio: “When I entered Mr. Pine’s spacious saloon, I was astonished at its magnitude and the richness of the paintings which covered its walls.” Of Pine’s style of painting he noted that “his coloring was certainly good, but his execution *flimsy*.” He concluded by remembering that “a painting by Pine was purchased in Canada by Henry Brevoort, which I recognized as his portrait of Washington, which had produced no sensation in Philadelphia.”<sup>17</sup> Brevoort had pur-

chased the portrait in 1817. When Peale made his copy, the original was owned by Brevoort's son James Carson Brevoort of Brooklyn.<sup>18</sup> Peale arranged to see the portrait in the summer of 1859. On 1 August he informed Benson J. Lossing, popular author of books on American history, that he had visited Brevoort's home and "examined his *Pine Portrait of Washington* & took a *correct tracing* of it, which will enable me, with the aid of the Photograph to *dead Colour a Picture*."<sup>19</sup> He requested that Lossing lend him an "impression" of Pine's portrait. He apparently meant an engraving; in September he thanked Brevoort for "a better Photograph than Mr. Lossing's—together with Hall's Engraving of your Picture."<sup>20</sup>

In Peale's copy, as in Pine's original, Washington is seen in three-quarter profile, wearing his blue general's uniform with yellow lapels and a yellow waistcoat. The lines of Peale's initial drawing are visible in the features and face. However, a photograph published in 1922 (fig. 2) shows that Peale left the figure incomplete, with unpainted ground visible below it, and enclosed the entire image within a painted oval. Thus Peale's copy lacked the landscape setting and Washington's hands, seen in Pine's original. A comparison of the painting as it is today with the 1922 photograph indicates that a modern restorer overpainted the oval, extending the blue uniform to the lower corners of the rectangular canvas, and added the gold epaulets and buttons. The comparison also indicates that the restorer reduced the canvas slightly and replaced Peale's original inscription, which was in dark paint on the unpainted ground layer, using yellow paint to distinguish it from the blue color of the newly completed uniform.

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#### Notes

1. This inscription faithfully reproduces an identical one that undoubtedly was written by the artist, in almost the same place on the canvas. Portions of the earlier inscription can be seen with a stereomicroscope. The full original inscription is visible in the reproduction of the portrait as the frontispiece of Henkels 1922 (see fig. 2).

2. Thomas Sully and John Devereux, "List of pictures belonging to the Estate of the late Rembrandt Peale," 16 November 1860, Register of Wills, City of Philadelphia, no. 13, "Copy by R. Peale from Pine's portrait of Washington \$50" (Miller 1980, fiche VIA/14D3). The full inventory is in Miller 1980, fiche VIA/14D2-D8; see also Mahey 1969, 33-34.

3. *Peale Paintings* 1862, 6, lot 80. An annotated copy (HSP; Miller 1980, fiche VIA/14E1-F4) is inscribed with

the buyer's name, "Mr. Taylor" (Miller 1980, fiche VIA/14E6); see also Mahey 1969, 33-34.

4. According to information dated 13 June 1922, sent by Stan V. Henkels to Charles X. Harris (in NGA curatorial files), Levi Taylor was "of the firm of Taylor, Gillespie & Co," Philadelphia, and a bank director. He is listed in most Philadelphia directories for the years 1861-1871 at the same business or residence addresses as his son John D. Taylor. A certified copy of his will (Register of Wills, Philadelphia, W-607½-1880), which lists his wife Mary Hayward as his heir, was written on 21 September 1871 and admitted to probate on 18 November 1871 in the state of Florida, where Taylor owned real estate.

5. Taylor, a sugar refiner and member of the firm of Taylor, Gillespie & Company, served as treasurer of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company from 1878 to his death in 1886. See Watkins 1896, 1: 585, 657; Burgess and Kennedy 1949, 797. His birth date is included in information supplied by Henkels to Harris, 13 June 1922 (in NGA curatorial files), with the information that the portrait was bequeathed to him by his father.

6. According to the information sent by Harris, dated 13 June 1922 (in NGA curatorial files), Mrs. Townsend acquired the portrait at her father's death.

7. Henkels 1922, frontispiece and 6.

8. Charles X. Harris purchased the portrait for Clarke; see his telegram, 13 June 1922 (in NGA Clarke files). The seller of the portrait is also recorded in an annotated copy of *Clarke* 1928 (NGA Library).

9. The portrait was exhibited at the academy with sixty-three other works in Peale's collection before the auction on 18 November (referred to in note 3 above). These works are listed in a supplement to *Catalogue of the Thirty-Ninth Annual Exhibition of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts* (Philadelphia, 1862); see Mahey 1969, 34; Falk 1988, 168.

10. The title and date of the exhibition are given in *J. B. Speed Memorial Museum Bulletin* 8, no. 5 (May 1947): n.p.

11. On the lecture, see "The Washington Copies," in Hevner 1985, 88-89, 105; and Miller 1992, 231-232.

12. "Sketchings," *The Crayon* 4 (July 1857): 224; Schefflow 1986, 176.

13. Miller 1992, 231.

14. "Sketchings" 1857, 224.

15. Stewart 1979, 92-97.

16. Abbot 1992-, 2: 561-562.

17. Peale, "Desultory" 1856, 5. On Pine's impact on Peale, see Hevner 1985, 13, 21-22, 30; Miller 1992, 19, 21, 22, 108; and Hevner 1992, 245, 247, 272.

18. The painting (oil on canvas, 90.7 × 71.7 cm) was probably one of the four portraits of Washington in Pine's estate. After Brevoort purchased it, it was owned by his descendants until 1980, when it was acquired by the National Portrait Gallery; see Stewart 1979, 92-93, 95-96, no. 77, repro.

19. Peale to Benson J. Lossing, Philadelphia, 1 August 1859 (courtesy of the Library, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York); reproduced in Miller 1980, fiche VIA/13F2-F5.

20. Peale to J. Carson Brevoort, 26 September 1859, Philadelphia (Brooklyn Historical Society, Brooklyn,

New York), in Miller 1980, fiche VIA/13F11–F12. See Schefflow 1986, 179. Henry Bryan Hall was a well-known nineteenth-century American engraver.

#### References

- 1931 Morgan and Fielding: 384, no. 3.  
1969 Mahey: 33–34, no. 80, fig. 7.  
1970 NGA: 88, repro.  
1980 NGA: 206, repro.  
1986 Schefflow: 179.  
1992 NGA: 257, repro.

1955.2.1 (1360)

### *Thomas Sully*

1859

Oil on canvas board, 60.8 × 50.8 (23<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 20)  
Gift of Leland Harrison

#### Inscriptions

At center right: *R. Peale / 1859.*

**Technical Notes:** The painting is on a canvas board, probably commercially prepared, made from a fine fabric adhered to a pressed board support that is 0.4 cm thick. The fabric was embossed mechanically with a fine diamond pattern and wrapped around the board before the thin white ground layer was applied. It extends for 2–2.5 cm onto the back of the board. Two smooth strips

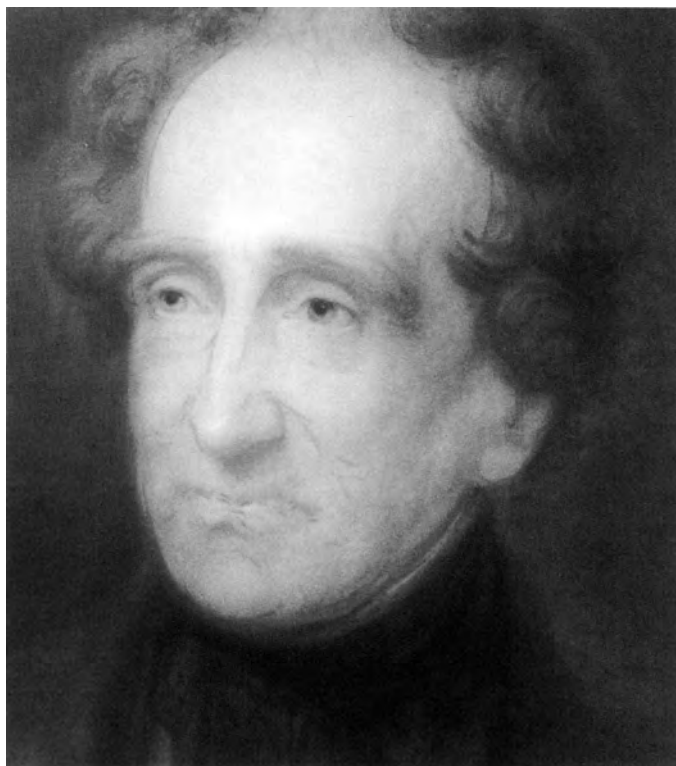
form an X across the back.<sup>1</sup> Infrared reflectography reveals a detailed underdrawing of the face and an outline of the coat, probably done in pencil (fig. 1). The finished image corresponds closely to this drawing. In addition to the white ground, there is a red layer of paint under the coat.

The paint was applied thinly. Extensive use of glazes resulted in a smoothly blended finish. Brushstrokes were well blended. The painting is in good condition. A minor amount of inpainting can be detected along the edges, and there is scattered inpainting in the head. The varnish retains some gloss and is only slightly discolored. The frame appears to be original.<sup>2</sup>

**Provenance:** Joseph Harrison, Jr. [1810–1874], Philadelphia;<sup>3</sup> his wife, Sarah Poulterer Harrison [Mrs. Joseph Harrison, Jr., 1817–1906], Philadelphia;<sup>4</sup> (her estate sale, M. Thomas and Sons, Philadelphia, 23–25 February 1910, no. 134).<sup>5</sup> Leland Harrison [1883–1951], Washington, D.C., great-grandson of Joseph Harrison;<sup>6</sup> gift of Anne Churchill Coleman Harrison [Mrs. Leland Harrison, d. 1966], Washington, D.C.,<sup>7</sup> in her husband's name.

**Exhibited:** *37th Annual Exhibition*, PAFA, 1860, no. 79. At the home of Joseph Harrison, Jr., Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia, 1864.<sup>8</sup> *Loan Exhibition of Historical Portraits*, PAFA, 1887–1888, no. 412. *Famous Americans*, Washington County Museum of Fine Arts, Hagerstown, Maryland, 1955, no cat. *National Gallery Loan Exhibition*, Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte, North Carolina, 1967, no. 4.<sup>9</sup> *Selected American Paintings from the National Gallery of Art*, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, 1974, no cat.

Fig. 1. detail of 1955.2.1: infrared reflectogram composite (1.5–2.0 microns)



IN JANUARY 1859 Philadelphia art collector Joseph Harrison, Jr., commissioned Rembrandt Peale and Thomas Sully to paint each other's portraits. Rembrandt Peale's brother Rubens wrote his son Charles on 30 January: "Mr. Harrison has engaged Rembrandt to paint a portrait of Mr Tho. Sully and Mr. Sully to paint a portrait of Rembrandt for him, this will be quite interesting, that the two oldest artists are to paint each others portrait."<sup>10</sup>

Two months later, on 25 March, Harrison held a reception in honor of the two painters. One account tells of two hundred guests, including "artists, men of science, literary men and noted amateurs, all mingling together." The reception was described as a celebration of the partnership of art and patronage: "It represents, at a glance, the entire field of art-encouragement; it shows the amateur and the artist in the healthiest and closest of relations." Sully and Peale were hailed as founders of American art who must have appreciated the "striking contrast to the times when they began their careers."<sup>11</sup>

Sully's portrait of Peale (location unknown) was





Rembrandt Peale, *Thomas Sully*, 1955.2.1





Fig. 2. Rembrandt Peale, *Thomas Sully*, oil on canvas, 1820/1822, Washington, National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Lent in memory of Isabel Biddle Henry, L/NPG.1.90

begun on 23 April and finished on 15 June.<sup>12</sup> At that time these “eminent Philadelphia artists” were again described as “engaged in painting each other’s portrait. Mr. Joseph Harrison, a wealthy and liberal gentleman of this city, originated this enterprise and has commissioned each of the venerable artists to do this service for the other.”<sup>13</sup> The portraits were exhibited in the annual exhibition at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in the spring of 1860.<sup>14</sup> At the time of the commission Peale, at eighty-one, and Sully, at seventy-five, were described repeatedly as “venerable” and were seen as pioneers of American art.<sup>15</sup> However, by this time Peale was primarily occupied with his lecture on portraits of George Washington, and Sully had seen his commissions and income drop off markedly.<sup>16</sup> In 1859 John Durand, editor of *The Crayon*, endorsed the idea of an exhibition of Sully’s work: “Few of the present generation are acquainted with the peculiar excellences or have any idea of the variety of subjects treated by Mr. Sully.”<sup>17</sup>

Harrison, a prominent Philadelphia art patron and collector, made his fortune as a mechanical en-

gineer when he and Thomas Winans of Baltimore contracted with the Russian government in 1843 to build locomotives and freight cars for the projected Moscow–St. Petersburg railroad.<sup>18</sup> After spending seven years in St. Petersburg, he lived in London and Paris, and traveled extensively in Europe. On his return to Philadelphia in 1852, he built a mansion on Rittenhouse Square to house his growing art collection.<sup>19</sup> Although he acquired European art, Harrison was one of the earliest collectors to show a serious interest in American art. Fully half of the paintings he owned were the work of American artists. Among them were more than twenty from the sale in 1854 of the contents of the Peale Museum in Philadelphia, including Charles Willson Peale’s *Artist in His Museum* (PAFA). He also owned John Vanderlyn’s (1775–1852) *Ariadne Asleep on the Island of Naxos* and Benjamin West’s *Penn’s Treaty with the Indians* (both PAFA), as well as Gilbert Stuart’s “Vaughan” portrait of George Washington (NGA) and George Catlin’s (1796–1872) personal collection of his own paintings of American Indians (NMAA). Harrison served on the board of directors of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts from 1855 to 1870.

Rembrandt Peale’s portrait of Sully and its pendant are the only American paintings that Harrison is known to have commissioned (with the exception of portraits of himself). A column in *The Round Table* described the paintings in 1864 when they were on exhibit in Harrison’s home and private gallery on Rittenhouse Square, which was open to the public at the time: “An interesting pair of portraits hangs over one of the arches, that of Rembrandt Peale by Sully, and of Sully by Peale; both painted in 1859, but a short time before the death of Mr. Peale.”<sup>20</sup>

Peale’s portrait of Sully reveals the affection that marked their long friendship and professional association. When Peale died, Sully was one of the appraisers of the paintings in his estate. Peale’s obituary in *The Crayon* mentioned the portrait “of his friend and brother artist, Sully” as one of the last that he painted.<sup>21</sup> Almost forty years earlier the two men had painted similarly sized portraits of each other in Baltimore, where Peale had established his own Peale Museum. Sully visited the city first in 1820.<sup>22</sup> He began his portrait of Peale “for the Museum” on 10 April and finished it on 26 April.<sup>23</sup> Peale described the portrait as “particularly gratifying to my wife, who only wished the Coat dyed blue.” He commented to Sully: “I hope you will

improve in your appearance before I have an opportunity of making a return in kind. Health, peace and Competence are the blessings I wish you for this purpose.”<sup>24</sup> Peale probably painted Sully during Sully’s second visit to Baltimore, November 1820–July 1821. This portrait retains its original Peale Museum frame (fig. 2).<sup>25</sup> The contrapposto pose of the earlier portrait is more dramatic than that of the Gallery’s later portrait. However, in the later image Peale highlighted Sully’s forehead in the dramatic manner that he used especially for heroic portraits.

EGM

## Notes

1. In his “Notes of the Painting Room” (16, MS, Harriet Sartain Collection, HSP, in Miller 1980, fiche VIB/14–17), Peale described similarly prepared pasteboards, covered with “fine Muslin pasted on both sides & painted in the manner of Canvas,” which he found successful “for Pictures of a moderate size” because they did not crack (information courtesy of Susanna Griswold, NGA Conservation Department).

2. It bears a nineteenth-century label from the frame shop of James S. Earle and Son, 6 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia. Thomas Sully was Earle’s partner in the gallery; see Fabian 1983, 20.

3. *Harrison* 1870, 4, no. 10; *Harrison* n.d., 2, no. 15. Both catalogues are indexed in Yarnall and Gerdts 1986, 4: 2736. On the back of the canvas board are labels from the Harrison collection and the 1887 exhibition at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.

4. Shinn 1880, 108.

5. *Harrison* 1910, 37. The sale was recorded in *American Art Annual* 8 (1911): 353, 377, where the portrait is listed as by Charles Willson Peale. An annotated copy of the auction catalogue (HSP) gives the price brought by the portrait, but not the buyer’s name. (Information courtesy of Carolyn Sue Nutty, who noted in conversation, 15 May 1996, that two prices are listed by each lot, perhaps reflecting the presale estimate and the sale price. For this painting the two prices were \$250 and \$50.)

6. *NCAB* 1893–, 38: 583–584; Levy 1979, 1: 255; Findling 1980, 210. *Who Was Who* 1960, 375, gives the year 1893 in error as his birth date.

7. Mrs. Harrison’s death date is noted in NGA donor files.

8. Harrison was one of the commissioners of the Great Central Fair, held in Philadelphia in June 1864 to benefit the U.S. Sanitary Commission, predecessor of the American Red Cross. He was also chairman of the Fine Arts Committee for the fair and opened his private gallery to the public; see “Philadelphia Art Notes” 1864, 59; and Nutty 1993, 1: 258–264.

9. Mint Museum of Art, *Quarterly* (fall 1967): n.p.

10. Rubens Peale to his son Charles Willson Peale, 30 January 1859, Mills Collection, APS, in Miller 1980, fiche VIIA/10G1–G7.

11. “Philadelphia,” *The Crayon* 6 (May 1859): 161. The *New York Times* reported that “nearly all the principal painters of New-York were invited” to a dinner at Harrison’s residence on 24 March in honor of Sully and Peale (“A Grand Artistic Dinner,” *New York Times*, 25 March 1859, 4).

12. *Harrison* 1870, 3, no. 6; *Harrison* 1910, 25, lot 77; Biddle and Fielding 1921, 244, no. 1352 (then owned by Mrs. Sabin W. Colton, Philadelphia).

13. “Personal” 1859, 8, quoting the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

14. *Catalogue of the Thirty-Seventh Annual Exhibition of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts* (Philadelphia, 1860), 9, nos. 79 and 82.

15. “Personal” 1859, 8; “Philadelphia” 1859, 161.

16. Fabian 1983, 17, 20–21.

17. “Sketchings: Domestic Art Gossip,” *The Crayon* 6 (October 1859): 319.

18. Scharf and Westcott 1884, 3: 2258–2259; *DAB* 4: 345–346; *Harrison* 1869; Wainwright 1972, 660–668; Nutty 1993, 105–109.

19. For descriptions of Harrison’s collection, see Shinn 1880, 1–3–108; Wainwright 1972, 660–668; Goodyear and Diskant 1974; Baekeland 1976, 128–132; and Nutty 1993, especially 303–306, tables 1–3, and the checklist in the appendix, 569–589. The Harrison mansion dominated Rittenhouse Square until it was torn down in the 1920s.

20. “Philadelphia Art Notes” 1864, 59.

21. “Obituary” 1860, 328.

22. Fabian 1983, 14; Miller 1992, 127, 136, who says that Sully shared Peale’s studio.

23. Biddle and Fielding 1921, 244, no. 1353. Sully described the portrait as a “head,” his smallest size. It is now owned by a descendant of Rembrandt Peale.

24. Peale to Sully, 4 July 1820, in Miller, Hart, and Ward 1991, 834–835; cited in Miller 1992, 297n.23.

25. Evans, “Sully” 1976, 252, no. 210, repro.

## References

- 1859 “Personal.” *New York Times* (18 June 1859): 8.  
 1860 “Obituary: Rembrandt Peale.” *The Crayon* 7 (November 1860): 328.  
 1864 “Philadelphia Art Notes.” *Round Table* 2 (9 July 1864): 59.  
 1870 *Harrison*: 4, no. 10.  
 n.d. [c. 1870.] *Harrison*: 2, no. 15.  
 1880 Shinn: 108.  
 1970 NGA: 88, repro.  
 1976 Baekeland: 130.  
 1976 Evans, “Sully”: 252.  
 1980 NGA: 205, repro.  
 1986 Schefflow: 179.  
 1992 NGA: 257, repro.  
 1993 Nutty: 1: 252–253, 578.

# Attributed to Rembrandt Peale

1947.17.10 (918)

*Timothy Matlack*

1802

Oil on canvas, 76.2 × 64.5 (30 × 25 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

## Inscriptions

On paper under sitter's right hand: *The P[ ] / 13<sup>1</sup>*

**Technical Notes:** The original support is a loosely woven, medium-weight plain-weave fabric that has been lined. Shallow cusping is visible on the left, right, and bottom edges, suggesting that the dimensions have not been altered. X-radiography reveals three holes along the lower edge corresponding to the thumb of the sitter's right hand and the ring finger and outer edge of the wrist of the sitter's left hand. These have been repaired with fabric inserts and inpainted.

The ground layer is white or light-colored, of average thickness, applied smoothly. The paint is applied in opaque layers of thin to average thickness, primarily in a wet-into-wet technique. There is no impasto, although some paint is slightly textured with brushstrokes. Semitranslucent brown glazes of moderate thickness are applied in the construction of the shadows of the coat. The background consists of a lower layer of dark brown paint covered by a slightly lighter, warm-colored paint. In X-radiographs the eyeglasses appear to have been shifted slightly and the section of the table in the lower right was painted over the coat. The inscription on the paper is not fully decipherable.

The painting is in good condition. There are losses along the bottom edge on the right side and near the left edge toward the top. There are random cracks in the ground and paint layers, and these disfigure the face somewhat because of inpainting. The paint surface suffers from moderate abrasion overall, particularly in the coat of the sitter. The varnish is moderately discolored.

**Provenance:** Martha Bryan Schott Whitney [Mrs. Elisha D. Whitney, d. 1889], great-granddaughter of the sitter.<sup>2</sup> James S. Whitney.<sup>3</sup> (C. K. Johnson, Greenwich, Connecticut); sold 1 February 1923 to Thomas B. Clarke [1848–1931], New York;<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:** On loan to HSP, 1872–c. 1907, as the work of Charles Willson Peale.<sup>5</sup> *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. 4, as by Charles Willson Peale. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered, as by Charles Willson

Peale. *Historical American Paintings*, Department of Fine Arts, Golden Gate International Exposition, San Francisco, 1939, no. 17, as by Charles Willson Peale. *The One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary Exhibition*, PAFA, 1955, no. 4, as by Charles Willson Peale. *The Peale Family: Three Generations of American Artists*, DIA; MWPI, 1967, no. 147, as by Rembrandt Peale.

TIMOTHY MATLACK (?1730–1829) was a lifelong friend of Charles Willson Peale. They were both active in radical politics in Philadelphia in the years immediately before the American Revolution. Although a Quaker, Matlack served in the Pennsylvania militia during the war. From 1777 to 1782 he was secretary of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania, and in 1780 he was elected to a term in the Continental Congress. In 1781 he was active in forming the Society of Free Quakers, whose members left the Society of Friends because of their involvement in the Revolution. Matlack was also related to Peale by his second marriage in 1797 to Elizabeth Claypoole Copper; Elizabeth was the widowed sister of Mary Claypoole Peale, the wife of Peale's brother James.<sup>6</sup>

This portrait shows Matlack seated at a table in a green Windsor chair, wearing a beige coat and vest. His face has strong features, and his thinning black hair is turning gray. He is engaged in writing a document that bears a partial inscription consisting of a phrase, "The P[ ]," and a number, "13." The portrait was attributed to Charles Willson Peale from at least 1872, when it was first published, until the 1960s.<sup>7</sup> In 1932 Frederic Sherman wrote that it was an exceptional example of Charles Willson Peale's work. "The beautifully rendered snuff-colored coat and waistcoat, the finely modeled head, the strongly marked features, and the skillfully interpreted expression . . . make it an unforgettable work."<sup>8</sup> The attribution is understandable, since two other portraits of Matlack are firmly documented as the work of Charles Willson Peale. The first (private collection) was probably painted around 1780.<sup>9</sup> The second (Independence National Historical Park, Philadelphia), painted in 1826, is a study of Matlack in old age. It was the last portrait that Peale painted.<sup>10</sup>

The reattribution of the Gallery's portrait of Matlack to Rembrandt Peale was first published in



Attributed to Rembrandt Peale, *Timothy Matlack*, 1947.17.10

1967 after considerable private correspondence among curators and other Peale experts.<sup>11</sup> The attribution seems accurate. The technique used in the portrait recalls Rembrandt Peale's early work, notably the bust-length portraits of Thomas Jefferson (1800, White House) and Joseph Priestly (1801, NYHS). The painting is unpolished, the colors muted. The objects on the table—inkwell, paper, glasses—are left unfinished. The painting also shares compositional characteristics with Rembrandt Peale's famous portrait of his brother, *Rubens Peale with a Geranium* [1985.59.1, p. 48], which, by contrast, is finely detailed and superbly finished. In both paintings the sitter is posed behind a table and holds a pair of glasses. Both are completed in a dry-brush technique, noted particularly in the eye and folds of the eyelids, the folds and buttons of the coat, and the fingers and fingernails.

Matlack's seated pose, at a desk with his hand poised to write, and the partial inscription on the paper, make it very probable that the painting commemorates the 1802 approval by the Pennsylvania legislature of Charles Willson Peale's request to house his museum in part of the old State House in Philadelphia (now called Independence Hall). The government of Pennsylvania sought a new use for the building after moving its operations from Philadelphia to Lancaster in 1799. Matlack, as clerk of the state Senate and master of the rolls for the state government, was solicited by Peale as early as 1800 for his support of this plan.<sup>12</sup> Peale's written proposal was received by the House of Representatives on 8 February 1802 and by the state Senate the following day. The Senate approved the request on 16 March, while the House approved a slightly amended version on 9 March. Committees, meeting in conference, agreed on the resolution, which was signed by the speaker of the House on 12 March and by the speaker of the Senate on 13 March.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the number 13 that is visible near Matlack's right hand as part of the notation on the paper would be the date on which the speaker of the Senate signed the authorization. Matlack, as clerk of the Senate, is depicted as he records the signing.<sup>14</sup>

The opportunity to paint the portrait would have occurred the next day in Philadelphia, when Matlack visited the city, presumably to tell Peale about the resolution. He returned to Lancaster on 15 March. Charles Willson Peale wrote to him that morning: "Behold when I went to the nest early this Morning the Bird was flown—The Girl told me that you were gone before day, I asked for and got

your spectacles, which will be put in hand early next week, <for> my Son Rembrandt <will> says he shall take his passage in the bordentown stage boat next Sunday morning—."<sup>15</sup> This message, made unclear by Peale's casual punctuation and habit of changing subjects abruptly, ties the return of Matlack's glasses to the news of Rembrandt Peale's departure for Bordentown, New Jersey. However, it seems unlikely that Rembrandt planned to take the glasses to Matlack in Lancaster, which lies to the west. Bordentown lies to the east, and Rembrandt was on his way to New York City and then to England. It is possible instead that Charles Willson Peale borrowed Matlack's spectacles so that Rembrandt could finish the foreground details of the portrait. X-radiography indicates that the spectacles Matlack holds in his hand have been slightly repositioned. Rembrandt's impending departure for Europe could explain the portrait's sketchy, unfinished quality.

EGM

#### Notes

1. The inscription has been examined through infrared reflectography. It appears always to have been complete.

2. *Historical Society* 1872, 8, no. 9. Mrs. Whitney deposited the portrait at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania on 11 November 1872. She was Matlack's great-granddaughter; her mother Rebecca Bryan Schott (Mrs. James Schott, 1787–1871) was the daughter of Matlack's daughter Martha Matlack Bryan (Mrs. Guy Bryan, 1770–1814) (information in NGA curatorial files).

3. The evidence of James S. Whitney's ownership of the portrait is an undated handwritten label on the back of the frame: "Timothy Matlack / Born Haddonfield NJ / in the year 1730, and Died near / Homesburg, Pa. April 15th 1829 / Deposited by James S. Whitney, and subject to his order." His relationship to Mrs. Whitney, the previous owner, is unknown. Neither her will (Philadelphia Register of Wills, W-1225-1889) nor that of her husband (Philadelphia Register of Wills, W-64-1888) mentions a James S. Whitney. Anna Rutledge and James Lane (1952, 144) suggested that James S. Whitney was her brother (probably an error for brother-in-law). They noted that he withdrew the portrait from the Historical Society of Pennsylvania sometime after 1907. The will of a James S. Whitney (d. 1921; Philadelphia Register of Wills, W-1045-1921) lists his address as 1627 Sumner Street and indicates that he had four children: Asa W., Thomas B., Anne Wakefield, and Emma S. Whitney. Thomas was given all the "books, pictures, furniture and other articles" not specifically given to other children; however, the inventory lists only "5 oil paintings," and these are probably the "five marine paintings by James Hamilton" specifically given to his daughters.

4. C. K. Johnson offered the portrait to Clarke in his letter of 27 January 1923 (in NGA Clarke files). The date



of purchase and name of the seller are recorded in an annotated copy of *Clarke* 1928 (NGA Library).

5. *Historical Society* 1872, 8, no. 9; Rutledge and Lane 1952, 144. On 21 March 1924 Mantle Fielding sent Clarke an index card from his research files, which noted that the portrait was, according to the society, "Returned to owner" (in NGA Clarke files).

6. On Matlack, see Graff 1893, 66, 79; *DAB* 6: 409–410 (where the uncertainty of his birth date is discussed); Miller, Hart, and Appel 1983, 227n.1, 282n.1; and Miller, Hart, and Ward 1988, 284n.1.

7. *Historical Society* 1872, 8, no. 9; Sellers 1952, 140, no. 538, fig. 103, dated c. 1779.

8. Sherman 1932, 58.

9. Sellers 1969, 71–72, no. SP 88. The portrait was lent anonymously to the City Art Museum, St. Louis, for the exhibition *American Art in St. Louis: Paintings, Watercolors and Drawings Privately Owned* (1969); see the museum's *Bulletin*, n.s. 5, no. 3 (September–October 1969): 9, 10, repro.

10. Sellers 1952, 140–141, no. 539, fig. 351.

11. See Elam 1967, 107, no. 147. The correspondence is preserved in NGA curatorial files. Sellers and more recent scholars have agreed with this reattribution; see Sellers 1969, 71 (under the entry for SP 88); and Miller 1992, 49.

12. Miller, Hart, and Ward 1988, 282–284, no. 113; the portrait is reproduced on 285, fig. 50.

13. Miller, Hart, and Ward 1988, 393–401.

14. On 22 March Matlack sent Peale an official copy of the resolution, "under seal of office, which authenticates the copy" (Miller, Hart, and Ward 1988, 417–418).

15. Miller, Hart, and Ward 1988, 413; the letter is on 413–415. As published by Miller, Hart, and Ward, the underlined words set in angle brackets are words that were crossed out in the original MS.

#### References

- 1872 *Historical Society*: 8, no. 9.  
1924 Cortissoz: 112, repro. 110.  
1932 Sherman: 58.  
1939 Sellers: repro. opp. 208.  
1952 Rutledge and Lane: 144–145.  
1952 Sellers: 140, cat. 538, and fig. 103.  
1967 Elam: 107, no. 147, repro. 61.  
1969 Sellers: 71, under SP88.  
1970 NGA: 88, repro.  
1980 NGA: 206, repro.  
1988 Miller, Hart, and Ward: 285, fig. 50.  
1992 Miller: 49.  
1992 NGA: 257, repro.

## John F. Peto

1854–1907

THE still life painter John Frederick Peto was born in Philadelphia on 21 May 1854. In 1878 he enrolled at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, where he exhibited between 1879 and 1888. There he met and befriended William Michael Harnett (1848–1892), whose trompe l'oeil still lifes had a decisive influence on his career. Peto opened a studio in 1880 and earned a meager living by painting rack pictures for Philadelphia's aesthetically unsophisticated business and professional men. He was reputed to have made photographic and painted portraits to support himself.

In 1887 Peto married Christine Pearl Smith of Lerado, Ohio. A talented musician, he soon began to perform as a cornetist for the Methodist Island Heights Camp Meeting Association in New Jersey, where he built a house in 1889. Peto painted in semi-seclusion and obscurity there until his death on 23 November 1907.

Peto was almost completely forgotten until 1949, when Alfred Frankenstein published an ar-

ticle in which he identified nineteen paintings from major private collections and museums that had been attributed to Harnett but had really been painted by Peto.<sup>1</sup> With the growth of interest in and research on American still life painting, Peto gradually emerged as a distinct artistic personality whose work could be differentiated from Harnett's by its looser brushwork, warm tonality, and aura of subtle melancholy created by his tendency to represent objects deteriorated by age.<sup>2</sup> He painted a wide variety of still life subjects, including letter racks, shelves of books, tabletops, and doors with hanging musical instruments.

RWT

#### Notes

1. Alfred Frankenstein, "Harnett, True and False," *AB* 31 (March 1949): 38–56; this article was quickly followed by Lloyd Goodrich, "Notes: Harnett and Peto, A Note on Style," *AB* 31 (March 1949): 57–58.

2. For historiographic accounts of Peto's rediscovery, see Olive Bragazzi, "The Story behind the Redis-

covery of William Harnett and John Peto by Edith Halpert and Alfred Frankenstein," *AAJ* 16, no. 2 (Spring 1984): 51–65; and Elizabeth Johns, "Harnett Enters Art History," in *William M. Harnett* [Exh. cat. MMA.] (New York, 1992), 103–106.

### Bibliography

Frankenstein 1950.  
Frankenstein 1969: 99–111.  
Gerds and Burke 1971: 143–144, 248–249.  
Wilmerding 1983.

1974.19.1 (2657)

## *The Old Violin*

c. 1890  
Oil on canvas, 77.2 × 58.1 (30 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 22 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>)  
Gift of the Avalon Foundation

### Inscriptions

At lower left: JOHN F. PETO.  
At upper left in simulated carving: JFP

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support has been lined. The painting's dimensions have been increased by opening and incorporating parts of the original tacking margins. Damage along the tacking margins indicates that the expansion occurred long after the painting was completed. The right tacking margin has original ground and paint layers, but the top and bottom tacking margins were painted by the restorer to extend the design. The original paint application was fairly complex. Over a thin white ground layer, a green underlayer for the door was applied overall. At least one more layer of green paint was applied where the door is visible. The violin was underpainted with a darker brown. Other than a 3.5 cm damage in the upper left corner and a smaller damage in the center of the picture, the painting is in fairly good condition. What appears to be abrasion caused by accidental damage to the surface of the sheet music was deliberately done by the artist to make the paper look old. Some of the traction crackle throughout the paint surface has been inpainted. The varnish is somewhat discolored.

**Provenance:** Private collection, Palm Beach, Florida;<sup>1</sup> (Hirschl & Adler Galleries, New York).

**Exhibited:** *Important Information Inside: The Art of John F. Peto and the Idea of Still-Life Painting in Nineteenth-Century America*, NGA; Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas, 1983, no. 132.

THIS TYPE of trompe l'oeil still life, which features a life-size violin vertically suspended on a wooden door, accompanied by sheet music, a bow, and various other items, was invented and popularized

by William Michael Harnett. Although such painstakingly literal transcriptions of material objects had long been derided by theoretically minded academicians and cognoscenti for being merely imitative, Harnett's painting captivated an artistically unsophisticated public because it was an exceptionally convincing form of deceptive realism. Harnett's *Old Violin* (1886, NGA) caused a sensation when it was exhibited at the Thirteenth Cincinnati Industrial Exposition in 1886 and again when it was shown at the Second Minneapolis Industrial Exposition the following year.<sup>2</sup> The image was made available to a wider audience in 1887, when its first owner Frank Tuchfarber supervised the manufacture and extensive distribution of a chromolithograph reproduction (fig. 1). In 1888 Harnett painted the similar but more complex *Still Life—Violin and Music* (fig. 2), which was also known as *Music and Good Luck*.<sup>3</sup>

Stimulated by Harnett's example, both Peto and Jefferson David Chalfant soon painted still lifes that were based on the older artist's prototypes.<sup>4</sup> Peto executed *The Old Violin*, the largest and most developed of his known versions of the subject, at about the time he moved from Philadelphia to the relative isolation of Island Heights, New Jersey.<sup>5</sup> The artist was attracted to the theme because music was an integral part of his life: He was an accomplished cornetist and also played the violin. A photograph from the 1870s represents Peto seated next to his friend Harnett posing with a violin, and another from the mid-1880s shows him in his studio with props that include a guitar, clarinet, horn, and violin. Well before Harnett painted his two famous violin still lifes, Peto had included one in a conventional tabletop composition, *Violin, Fan, and Books* (1880, private collection). John Wilmerding explained that the violin was a favorite theme of Peto's because "it possessed a formal shaping which appealed to his love of abstract design, but equally it served for him as a metaphor of a sister art, another aspect of creative power capable of artistic expression even as it is subject to the erosions of time's passage."<sup>6</sup>

Peto transformed Harnett's objective, symmetrical arrangement of a time-worn violin and accessories into a thoroughly dilapidated image that projects a brooding, melancholy quality intensified by the composition's frontality and shallow format. The sadly neglected instrument, which hangs on a diagonal axis, has a broken E string and a crack in the lower section of its top plate. Its discolored var-



John Frederick Peto, *The Old Violin*, 1974.19.1

nish coating is abraded, and thick deposits of rosin have accumulated beneath the strings on the bridge between the f holes. The sheet music is tattered and its surface appears worn. The lower left door hinge is split, the door itself is splintered, and its dark green paint is peeling. The door is cracked down the middle and bears only fragments of old newspaper clippings and cards, the rest of them either torn off or worn away with the passage of time. Peto's ragged score carries the heading "VIOLIN" and constitutes the violin part of an unknown polka of the period.

Opinions differ as to which of Harnett's paintings Peto followed, but the visual evidence suggests that he was familiar with both. The austere composition, the dark green background, and the distinctive squared corners of the instrument's purfling resemble elements of *The Old Violin*, but the placement of the door hinges and the strong shadow cast by the violin across the sheet music are prominent features of the later *Still Life—Violin and Music*.<sup>7</sup> In this painting Peto deviated from his usual technique by work-

ing in a detail-oriented manner and avoiding his penchant for cluttered compositions, thus retaining the monumentality of Harnett's prototypes. However, Peto shows less concern than Harnett for simulating three-dimensionality in flat forms, and the painting is noticeably more decorative and its colors more luminous than in either of Harnett's pictures.

Harnett, Chalfant, and Peto painted their still lifes at a time when many Americans were fascinated by the violin. This trend had its origin in the extraordinary popularity of the Norwegian virtuoso Ole Bull (1810–1880), who both toured and lived in the United States for extended periods of time.<sup>8</sup> Wealthy collectors avidly sought antique instruments, and Americans began to produce fine violins. A descendant of the lyre, which was an attribute of Apollo, the violin has traditionally been regarded as one of the most dignified and affective musical instruments, capable of stirring the deepest human emotions.<sup>9</sup> Earlier in the century, the artist, violinist, spiritualist, and inventor of the "hollow-

Fig. 1. After William Michael Harnett, *The Old Violin*, chromolithograph, F. Tuchfarber Co., Cincinnati, 1887, Forth Worth, ©Amon Carter Museum, 1972.170



Fig. 2. William Michael Harnett, *Still Life—Violin and Music*, oil on canvas, 1888, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Wolfe Fund, Catherine Lorillard Wolfe Collection, 63.85

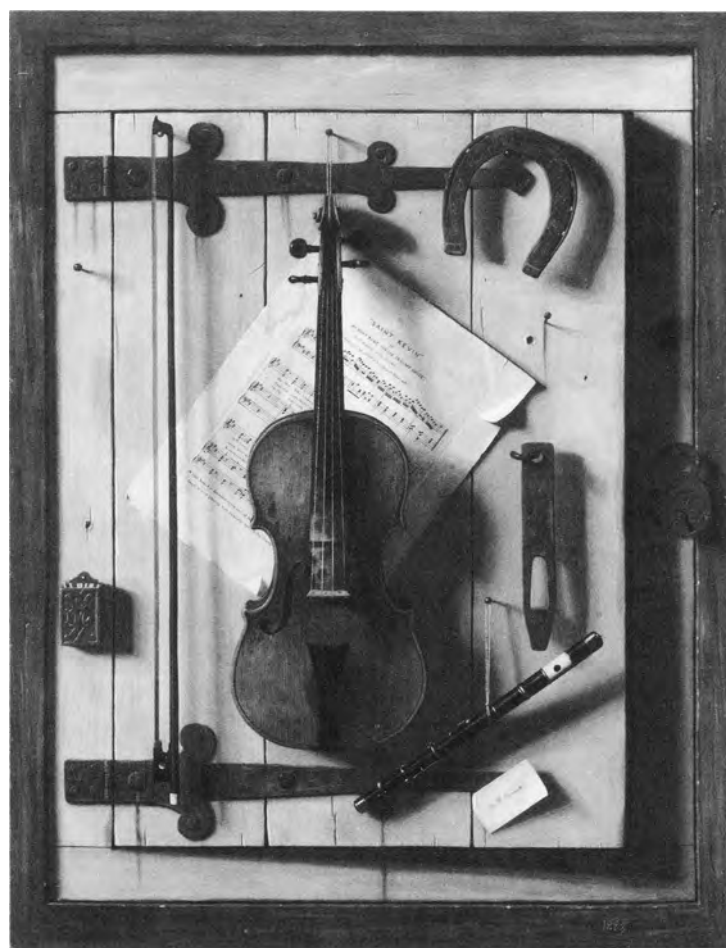






Fig. 3. William Sidney Mount, *The Power of Music*, oil on canvas, 1847, Cleveland Museum of Art, Leonard C. Hanna, Jr. Fund, 1991.110

backed” violin, William Sidney Mount (1807–1868), gave a manifestly rural American portrayal of this theme in his *Power of Music* (fig. 3). In “The Poor Musician’s Ode: To His Old Violin,” a poem printed in the shape of a violin that appeared in 1879 in an art magazine, a superannuated, destitute, and bereaved violinist transcended his material circumstances and elevated his spirit by playing his “time worn friend” (fig. 4).<sup>10</sup> In 1881 a writer for *Harper’s Magazine* observed how the “biography of the instrument is written on its face” through the damage wrought by time and fantasized how each crack, scratch, and imperfection on an old violin had occurred: “all the traces of an existence of three hundred years.”<sup>11</sup> The subject of the solitary violin thus had strong sentimental and nostalgic appeal to late nineteenth-century artists and viewers.

Perhaps to an even greater extent than Harnett’s two still lifes, Peto’s *Old Violin* made a powerful antimaterialist and transcendent statement that alluded to a rapidly vanishing agrarian lifestyle in an age of growing urbanization. Wilmerding has pointed out that Peto’s “devotion to formal purities,” his use of the printed word, his insistent two-dimensionality, and his decorative arrangement of design elements are all qualities that anticipate the still lifes of Georges Braque.<sup>12</sup>

RWT

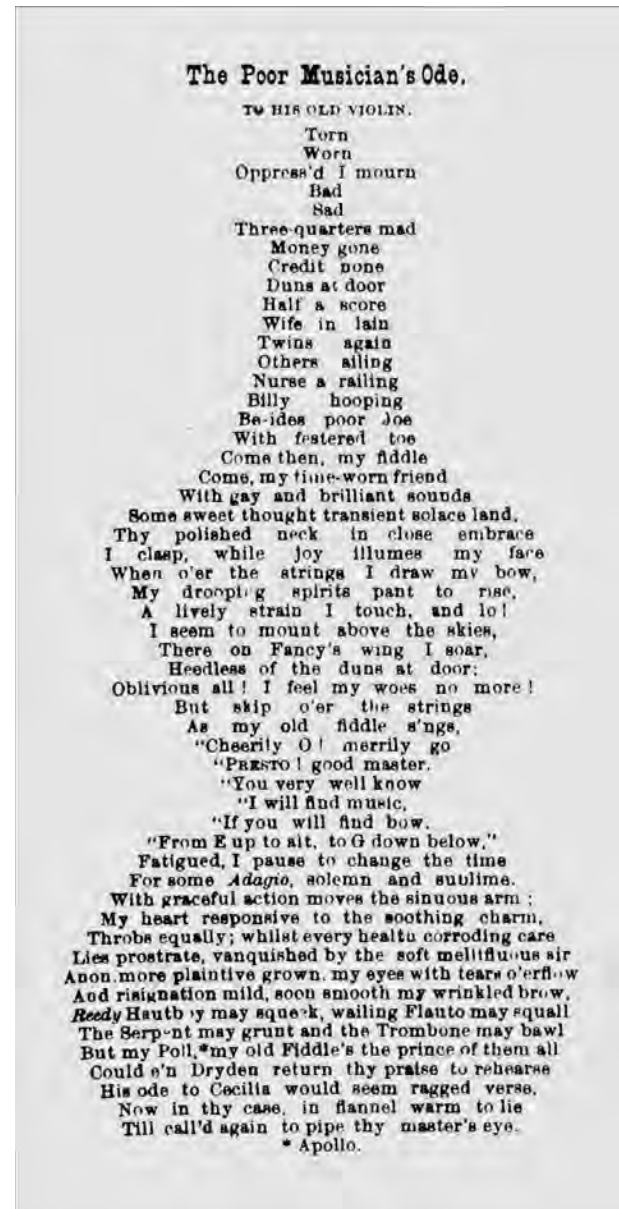
## Notes

1. According to a note from Hirschl & Adler, 15 January 1974 (in NGA curatorial files), the painting was owned by the unidentified private collector “from at least 1953 until 1973.”

2. For a brief summary of the critical reception to Harnett’s *Old Violin*, see William H. Gerdtz, “The Artist’s Public Face,” in Doreen Bolger, Marc Simpson, and John Wilmerding, eds., *William M. Harnett* [Exh. cat. MMA.] (New York, 1992), 94–95. See also Kelly 1996, 257–266.

3. For a discussion of Harnett’s violin subjects, see Frankenstein 1969, 71–78. *Still Life—Violin and Music* is discussed in Burke 1980, 56–58.

Fig. 4. Unknown author, “The Poor Musician’s Ode: To His Old Violin,” *American Art Journal* vol. 30 (8 March 1879), p. 294, Salt Lake City, Brigham Young University, Harold B. Lee Library, microfilm collections





4. For a discussion of Chalfant's violin subjects, see Gerds and Burke 1971, 145. Peto probably saw Chalfant's two responses to Harnett's paintings, *The Old Violin* (1888, Delaware Art Center, Wilmington) and *Violin and Bow* (1889, MMA), when they were exhibited at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1888 and 1889, respectively.

5. Related versions by Peto are *The Old Cremona* (c. 1889, MMA), *Violin* (c. 1890, collection of Mr. and Mrs. James W. Alsdorf, Chicago), and *Hanging Violin, Bow and Notebook* (c. 1890, Kennedy Galleries, New York). For a discussion of *The Old Cremona*, which was once attributed to Harnett and bears his forged signature, see Burke 1980, 173–174.

6. Wilmerding 1988, 112.

7. John Wilmerding (1983, 147–148) thought that Peto's source was *Still Life—Violin and Music*, while Alfred Frankenstein, as reported by William P. Campbell (cu-

ratorial report, 8 January 1974, in NGA curatorial files), suggested in conversation that the source was Tuchfarber's chromolithograph of *The Old Violin*.

8. For a summary of Bull's remarkable career, see *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie, 20 vols. (London, 1980), 3:445–448.

9. For a summary of the iconography of the violin, see Winternitz 1979.

10. *AAJ* 30 (8 March 1879): 294; reproduced in Marc Simpson, "Harnett and Music," in Bolger, Simpson, and Wilmerding 1992, 298.

11. "Some Great Violins," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 68 (January 1881): 240.

12. Wilmerding 1983, 149.

## References

- 1983 Wilmerding: 146–149, 238, pl. 132.  
1996 Kelly: 259, repro.

## John Quidor

1801–1881

THE literary genre painter John Quidor is an enigmatic figure whose career is extremely difficult to trace. Born on 26 January 1801 in Tappan, New Jersey, he moved to New York City with his family in 1811 at the age of ten. He was apprenticed to the portraitist John Wesley Jarvis (1780–1840) from 1818 until 1822, when he successfully sued his teacher for not complying with the terms of his contract.<sup>1</sup> Henry Inman (1801–1846) was one of his fellow pupils. In 1823 Quidor began to speculate in Illinois real estate, and he lived there sporadically throughout his life.

Quidor's name first appeared in the New York City directory in 1827, where he was listed as a portrait painter. Unable or unwilling to compete with Jarvis, Inman, and Samuel F. B. Morse in that field, and keen to capitalize on the popularity of contemporary literary fiction, Quidor specialized in genre scenes derived from the novels of James Fenimore Cooper and Washington Irving. He began to exhibit at the National Academy of Design in 1828, and he showed a painting at the Boston Athenaeum in 1833.

Charles Loring Elliott (1812–1868) and Thomas Bangs Thorpe became pupils of Quidor around 1830; the latter wrote the only contemporary description of Quidor's studio.<sup>2</sup> In 1834

William Dunlap mentioned that Quidor "had painted several fancy subjects with cleverness. . . . His principal employment in New-York, has been painting devices for fire-engines, and works of that description."<sup>3</sup> Between approximately 1843 and 1849 he is known to have painted a series of seven large biblical scenes (now lost) for a Methodist minister, in exchange for a farm in Adams County, Illinois, that he never obtained. He appears to have lived in the West during the late 1840s, returning to New York in 1851, where he resumed painting.

In 1868 Quidor retired to his eldest daughter's home in Jersey City Heights, New Jersey, where he died on 13 December 1881. Although Quidor failed to achieve professional success during his lifetime, after John I. H. Baur's 1942 retrospective exhibition of his work at the Brooklyn Museum, he came to be regarded as a major American literary painter.

Because of his vivid, imaginative, and idiosyncratic interpretations, Quidor has been regarded by most historians as a "visionary eccentric" who was the direct precursor of Albert Pinkham Ryder (1847–1917) and Ralph Albert Blakelock (1847–1919).<sup>4</sup> E. P. Richardson commented that "the dramatic energy of his drawing and his fan-

tastic invention are so unlike the tone of Irving's art that his pictures are more like independent inventions than literary illustrations."<sup>5</sup> This statement is typical of the traditional scholarly overemphasis on the artist's uniqueness.

Quidor actually represented his literary subjects with great fidelity to their original texts. His work bears a strong similarity to seventeenth-century Dutch or Flemish genre prints and the British caricature tradition of William Hogarth (1697–1764), James Gillray (1757–1815), George Cruikshank (1792–1878), and Thomas Rowlandson (1756–1827). Previously thought to have been a uniquely independent and innovative painter, Quidor is now known to have drawn heavily on engraved sources for the compositions of his early paintings; these influences were thoroughly assimilated into his later work.<sup>6</sup> His mature style is characterized by warm tonality, exuberant composition, and exaggerated linearism. During the mid-1850s his technique began to change, culminating in the thinly painted indistinct forms, restricted colors, and calligraphic brushwork typical of the artist's late work. RWT

#### Notes

1. For details on the lawsuit, see Ernest Rohdenburg, "The Misreported Quidor Court Case," *AAJ* 2 (Spring 1970): 74–80.
2. Col. T. B. Thorpe, "Reminiscences of C. L. Elliott," *Appleton's Journal* 7 (1872): 574.
3. Dunlap 1834, 2: 308.
4. Davidson 1978, 60.
5. Richardson 1949, 184.
6. Christopher Kent Wilson, "Engraved Sources for Quidor's Early Work," *AAJ* 8 (November 1976): 17–25.

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Baur 1965.  
Sokol 1970.  
Sokol 1973.

1942.8.10 (563)

### *The Return of Rip Van Winkle*

1849  
Oil on canvas, 101 × 126.5 (39<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 49<sup>13</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)  
Andrew W. Mellon Collection

#### Inscriptions

At lower center on rock: J. Quidor, / N.Y. / 18[4?]9

**Technical Notes:** The tightly woven medium-weight plain-weave fabric support was relined in 1949. The tacking margins have been removed. Quidor executed a detailed drawing of the composition, probably in pencil, on the white ground layer. The paint was applied fluidly, with successive thin transparent washes and occasional paste accents. In many places the sketch was employed as a design element and highlighted by the washes. In most passages brush-applied monochrome paint outlines areas filled with patches of color, a technique often used by sign painters. The delicate paint surface is in good condition. Minor losses concentrated on the painting's left side have been inpainted. The small gouge that disfigured the third digit of the date has led to considerable confusion about the painting's age. Because it was traditionally read as a 2, past scholars erroneously identified this picture as one that Quidor had exhibited at the National Academy of Design in 1829.<sup>1</sup> In 1987 Christopher Kent Wilson demonstrated that it should be read as a 4, thus dating the painting to 1849. He further noted that the stencil mark of the New York art supplier Edward Dechaux, "PREPARED / BY / ED<sup>WD</sup> DECHAUX / NEW YORK.," once visible on the reverse of the support before its relining, confirmed the later date because Dechaux did not establish his independent business until 1835.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, *The Return of Rip Van Winkle* is stylistically consonant with Quidor's later work.

**Provenance:** (Augustus W. Oberwalder [Augustus De Forest], New York); purchased 13 December 1920 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:** 37th Annual Exhibition, PAFA, 1850, no. 31.<sup>3</sup> *Exhibition of Paintings by Early American Portrait Painters*, Union League Club, New York, December 1921, no. 1. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered, *Life in America*, MMA, 1939, no. 113. *A Souvenir of Romanticism in America*, BMA, 1940, unnumbered. *John Quidor 1801–1881*, Brooklyn Museum, 1942, no. 3. *300th Anniversary*, Senate House State Historic Site, Kingston, New York, 1952, no cat. [Opening exhibition of new art gallery], Randolph-Macon Woman's College, Lynchburg, Virginia, 1952–1953, no cat. *Recent Rediscoveries in American Art*, Cincinnati Art Museum, 1955, no. 81. *Man: Glory, Jest, and Riddle, A Survey of the Human Form Through the Ages*, M. H. de Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco, 1964–1965, no. 212. *John Quidor*, WMAA; MWPI; Rochester Memorial Art Gallery; Albany Institute of History and Art, 1965–1966, no. 4. [Opening exhibition of American art], National Collection of Fine Arts (now NMAA), Washington, D.C., 1968, no cat. *Arts in the Young Republic*, Ackland Memorial Art Center, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1968. *19th-Century America: Paintings and Sculptures*, MMA, 1970, no. 40. *John Quidor*, Wichita Art Museum, 1973, no cat. *The Painter's America: Rural and Urban Life, 1810–1910*, WMAA; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Oakland Museum, 1974–1975, no. 16. *America As Art*, National Collection of Fine Arts (now NMAA), Washington, D.C., 1976, no. 98. *New Horizons: American Painting 1840–1910* (organized by Smithsonian Institution

Traveling Exhibition Service), State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow; State Russian Museum, Leningrad; State Art Museum of Belorussia, Minsk; State Museum of Russian Art, Kiev, 1987–1988, no. 28.

THIS PAINTING represents a famous incident in Washington Irving's story "Rip Van Winkle," in which Rip awakes after sleeping for twenty years and walks into his village, where he finds the people holding an election. Here he is in the midst of his confused reply to a "knowing, self-important old gentleman, in a sharp cocked hat" who has just demanded his identity: "'God knows,' exclaimed he, at his wit's end; 'I'm not myself—I'm somebody else—that's me yonder—no—that's somebody else got into my shoes—I was myself last night, but I fell asleep on the mountain, and they've changed my gun, and everything's changed, and I'm changed, and I can't tell what's my name, or who I am!'"<sup>4</sup>

In Quidor's painting Rip's bedraggled figure dominates the center of the composition, and he gestures toward the son with whom he has confused himself, who leans against a tree in the left background. He appears to have just realized the seriousness of his predicament, and his initial disorientation is replaced by defiance as he attempts to assert his identity before an incredulous audience. Far from being a harmless old man, the sinister Rip lifts the rusty musket in his left hand, an act that prompts some of the spectators to consider disarming him. Rip's interrogator appears exactly as Irving described him, "with one arm akimbo, the other resting on his cane, his keen eyes and sharp hat penetrating, as it were, into his very soul."<sup>5</sup> A crowd of heavily caricatured spectators has gathered at the right before a wooden building identified as "THE UNION HOTEL / BY / JONATHAN DOOLITTLE" and formed a semicircle around Rip; initially hostile because they suspected Rip was a Tory after he had proclaimed his allegiance to King George III, they now witness the confrontation with mixed reactions of curiosity, mirth, scorn, and astonishment. Among them stand Rip's daughter Judith Gardenier clutching her infant daughter, and the old woman who will eventually corroborate his unusual story. Rip is a living anachronism who has awakened in a new and revolutionary era, a fact that is emphasized by the presence of the American flag, the sign portrait "GENERAL WASHINGTON," the name of the hotel, the pamphlet in the foreground that bears the words "ELECTION / RIGHTS OF CITIZENS / LIBERTY / BUNKER'S HILL,"

and the words "seventy-six" visible on the paper in the pocket of the pipe-smoking orator at the right, whose harangue Rip has interrupted. The rustic setting is evocative of a Hudson Valley village, although the exaggerated mountainous background reflects Irving's romanticized description of the Catskills "seen way to the west of the river, swelling up to a noble height, and lording it over the surrounding country."<sup>6</sup>

John Wilmerding suggested that Quidor derived Rip's profile pose and gesture from Michelangelo's *God the Father* in the Sistine Chapel ceiling and that the passive and aloof figure of his son was inspired by the *Bound Slave* (c. 1514, Paris, Musée du Louvre). These are both images that Quidor would have known by reproductions or through quotations in prints or copies of seventeenth-century genre compositions by Adrian van Ostade and his contemporaries.<sup>7</sup> Christopher Wilson identified Quidor's composition as a modification of the English artist Richard Westall's engraved illustration *The Return of Rip Van Winkle* from the 1824 London edition of Irving's *Sketch Book* (fig. 1). He further suggested that Quidor's source for Rip's gesture was Richard Earlom's engraving of 1792 after Henry Fuseli's *King Lear Rejecting Cordelia* (executed for the Boydell Shakespeare Gallery; fig. 2), a thematically related subject in which the protagonist was a similarly confused old man whose madness induced him to spurn his daughter.<sup>8</sup>

Wilson proposed a previously unrecognized level of meaning for this painting when he noted that Quidor had framed Rip's head "against the backdrop of an old Dutch house which stands as a symbol of Rip's lineage and cultural heritage."<sup>9</sup> After New York's Dutch gabled buildings had been demolished and replaced by English-style structures, many historians and writers began to regret their loss and sought to preserve the few that remained. When the last Dutch house in New York was torn down, a writer for the *New-York Mirror* (15 November 1834) lamented that "the Dutchmen are extinct, and there is not even one brick left upon another to point out the scene of their past happiness and glory." In 1846 the historian John F. Watson spoke of them as "*connecting-links* with the tastes, feelings, and the notions of the olden time, which the rage of modern improvement is doing its best to drive into the ocean of oblivion."<sup>10</sup> This historical circumstance led Wilson to introduce the theme of cultural displacement into Quidor's image of Rip, which he interpreted as a transformation of "Amer-



John Quidor, *The Return of Rip Van Winkle*, 1942.8.10





Fig. 1. Henry Inman, *James Henry Hackett as Rip Van Winkle*, oil on canvas, c. 1831, location unknown, photograph courtesy of the Frick Art Reference Library, New York

ica's most popular mythic figure into a disturbing reminder and a symbol of America's cultural values."<sup>11</sup> Wilson did not mention, however, that the appearance of the house was dictated by Irving's description of Rip's old Dutch Catskill village, with its homes erected by the original settlers, "with latticed windows, gable fronts, surmounted with weathercocks, and built of small yellow bricks brought from Holland."<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, *The Return of Rip Van Winkle* should be viewed as a manifestation of intense popular interest in the early Dutch history and culture of the Hudson Valley—a phenomenon that developed in America during the first half of the nineteenth century and was precipitated by Irving's writings.<sup>13</sup>

Quidor's dramatic interpretation of this popular scene differed substantially from those of his predecessors, who stressed its comic aspects. Thus John Baur opined that "a good case can be made out for the painting in comparison with its literary source as a more penetrating study of the tragedy of Rip's position."<sup>14</sup> Wilmerding believed that the artist was "least interested in illustration of an incident, and conversely most intrigued by the inner psychological drama."<sup>15</sup> Because Quidor was an enigmatic figure, sometimes considered a visionary eccentric, historians have sought elusive biographical details through psychological readings of his paintings. Baur, Ruder, Abraham Davidson, and Wilmerding all believed that, in Wilmerding's words, "a figure



Fig. 2. Richard Earldom after Henry Fuseli, *King Lear Rejecting Cordelia* (Act I, Scene 1, Lear's Palace), engraving published by John and Josiah Boydell (London, 1 August 1792), London, Royal Academy of Arts





Fig. 3. After Richard Westall, illustration of *The Return of Rip Van Winkle*, engraving from Washington Irving, *The Sketch Book* (London, 1824), New Haven, Connecticut, Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University

like Rip Van Winkle may readily have come to embody for Quidor his own sense of personal and social alienation.”<sup>16</sup> Bryan Jay Wolf argued that Quidor took great creative license in portraying Irving’s Rip Van Winkle on canvas, imbuing the story with allegorical and didactic qualities not envisioned by Irving.<sup>17</sup> These speculative approaches have obscured the fact that Quidor was scrupulously faithful to Irving’s text. Even the peculiar slouching figure of Rip’s son, which has been singled out for special notice by all who have studied this painting, can be explained by a reading of the text: Irving described how young Rip was “equipped in his father’s cast-off galligaskins, which he had much ado to hold up with one hand, as a fine lady does her train in bad weather.”<sup>18</sup>

Rip’s histrionic quality in this work was probably determined by Quidor’s familiarity with popular theatrical productions based on Irving’s narrative; another example of such influence is *James Henry Hackett as Rip Van Winkle*, painted by Quidor’s

former fellow student Henry Inman (fig. 3).<sup>19</sup> Moreover, the artist appears to have adhered closely to Aristotelian aesthetic theory by isolating the story’s most dramatic moment of recognition and reversal, emphasizing its tragic rather than comic qualities, and fully developing its cathartic aspect—all within the framework of a triangular composition in which the action is delineated with strict classical economy of form. The profusion of episodic details and characters, all derived from Irving’s text, is kept visually subordinate so as not to detract from the primary narrative function of the image.

Wilson demonstrated that Quidor derived Rip’s gesture from an engraving of *King Lear* and noted that in the mid-nineteenth century Rip and Lear were compared. Quidor was probably familiar with theatrical performances and dramatic theory, and Virgil Barker once speculated that the artist’s distinctive calligraphic brushstroke may have been influenced by scene painting.<sup>20</sup> In this carefully orchestrated illustration, Quidor avoided the trivializing approach of other artists and accurately represented Irving’s story as a convincing and moving human tragedy.

RWT

#### Notes

1. This important early painting, which was praised by William Dunlap (1834, 2: 308) as displaying “merit of no ordinary kind” and received a favorable review in the *New York Mirror* (16 May 1829), remains unidentified. A quotation in the *Exhibition Catalogue of the National Academy of Design, Fourth Annual Exhibition* (New York, 1829) identifies its subject as the return of Rip Van Winkle. David Sokol (1973) suspected that the National Gallery’s picture had been painted at a later date, but discussed it in conjunction with the *New York Mirror* review.

2. Wilson 1987, 24–27. Conservators made a tracing of the stencil mark (in NGA curatorial files), but it lay forgotten until 1972, its significance unrecognized. Alexander Katlan (1987, 20) provides a detailed discussion of Dechaux’s firm and notes that this stencil mark, with the abbreviated form of the supplier’s first name, was of a type first used in the 1840s.

3. It was listed in the exhibition catalogue as “Rip Van Winkle as he appeared in the village after an absence of twenty years.” After the Pennsylvania Academy’s annual exhibition, Quidor attempted to sell the painting to the American Art Union for \$100, and it was deposited there on 16 October 1850. See *American Art Union, letters from artists*, vol. 6, no. 219, NYHS.

4. Washington Irving, “Rip Van Winkle,” in *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (New York, 1819), 86–87.

5. Irving 1819, 84.

6. Irving 1819, 59.

7. Wilmerding 1980, 68; Wilmerding 1976, 114. Quidor used the reversed figure of Rip’s son on the right

side of *Rip Van Winkle at Nicholas Vedder's Tavern* (1839, MFA) and in *Knickerbocker Kitchen* (1865, Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts); for a discussion of the former painting and another version of it owned by the New York Club, see *M. and M. Karolik Collection of American Paintings 1815-1865* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1949), 458, 460-461.

8. Wilson 1987, 36-38. Wilson had identified this source earlier in his "Engraved Sources for Quidor's Early Work," *AAJ* 8 (November 1976): 21-22.

9. Wilson 1987, 43.

10. John F. Watson, *New York City and State in the Olden Time* (Philadelphia, 1846), 239; quoted by Wilson 1987, 43.

11. Wilson 1987, 43.

12. Irving 1819, 60-61.

13. For a brief survey of the historical and literary aspects of this revival, see Alice P. Kenney, "Neglected Heritage: Hudson Valley Dutch Material Culture," *Winterthur Portfolio* 20 (spring 1985): 51-54.

14. Baur 1965, 8-9.

15. Wilmerding 1976, 114.

16. Wilmerding 1969, 297-298. See also Davidson 1978, 61.

17. Wolf 1982, 152-173.

18. Irving 1819, 65.

19. Ruth S. Williams ("Irving's Stories in Quidor's Paintings," *Antiques* 72 [November 1957]: 444) suggested that the artist was inspired by seeing a play based on Irving's story. The first American stage production of the Rip Van Winkle theme took place in Albany, New York, in 1828. For discussions of the plays based on Irving's story, see Montrose Jonas Moses, *Representative Plays by American Dramatists*, 3 vols. (New York, 1921), 3: 17-26; and George Clinton Densmore Odell, *Annals of the New York Stage*, 15 vols. (New York, 1928), vols. 3-8. There are two other versions of Inman's painting: one in a private collection, New York (illustrated in NPG 1987); the other in the collection of the Players Club, New York.

20. Barker 1950, 500.

## References

- 1939 MMA: 83, fig. 113.  
1942 Baur: 8-9, 48, pl. 3.  
1965 Baur: 24, pl. opp. 24.  
1967 Callow: 188.  
1976 Wilmerding: 114, pl. 132.  
1982 Wolf: 152-173, pl. 41.  
1983 Brown: 62, pl. 63.  
1987 Wilson: 23-45.  
1988 Wilmerding: 68, pl. 15.

## Henry Ward Ranger

1858-1916

THE LANDSCAPE PAINTER Henry Ward Ranger was born on 29 January 1858 in Syracuse, New York, the son of a commercial photographer. He attended Syracuse University from 1873 to 1875. Self-taught and with little or no formal instruction, he began to paint watercolors at a very early age. In the mid-1870s he opened a New York City studio, and he exhibited at the American Watercolor Society in 1881. Impressed by landscapes of the Barbizon School, especially a work by Camille Corot (1796-1875) he saw in New York, the young artist went to Paris. There he was attracted to the works of Jean-François Millet (1814-1875), Théodore Rousseau (1812-1867), and Adolphe Monticelli (1824-1886), though neither the detailed manner of Bastien-Lepage nor the new style called impressionism was of interest to him. Deeply respectful of the old masters, Ranger improved his technical ability by copying works of John Constable (1776-1837), Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), and Meindert Hobbema (1638-

1709) at the Louvre. He spent several formative years in the Netherlands studying with masters of the Hague School, including Joseph Israels (1824-1911), the Maris brothers, and Van Gogh's uncle, Anton Mauve (1838-1888)—all artists whom he admired for being "the lineal successors of the Barbizon School."<sup>1</sup> He spent time sketching with the group at North Laren, Holland.<sup>2</sup>

Ranger returned to the United States in 1888 and settled in New York City. He began to exhibit at the National Academy of Design in 1887 and at the Society of American Artists in 1890. In the summer of 1899 Ranger became one of the founders of the art colony at Old Lyme, Connecticut, that centered on the home of art patron Florence Griswold. Shortly after Childe Hassam came to Old Lyme in 1903 and became one of Griswold's favorite artists, Ranger began to paint in Noank, Connecticut. He was elected an associate member of the National Academy of Design in 1901 and rose to full membership in 1906. A na-

tonalist who was committed to American art and artists, Ranger bequeathed his entire estate to the Academy, stipulating that the income be used to purchase paintings by living American artists. He further directed that these pictures were to be lent to any public museum in the nation and stated that the Smithsonian Institution could acquire any work it desired, if it did so between ten and fifteen years after an artist's death.<sup>4</sup>

After his return from Europe Ranger devoted his career to depicting the New England landscape in a conventional, naturalistic manner. He specialized in painting forest interiors, usually verdant spring or golden autumn scenes, in which glimmering light filtered through the treetops. He was a conservative who valued traditional methods, technical ability, and craftsmanship. His work was noteworthy for its rich color harmonies and thickly applied and textured paint. Around the turn of the century he was influenced by the autumnal colors, soft forms, and poetic mood of George Inness' late landscapes. Although he never accepted pupils, Ranger was an influential figure who by 1906 was the acknowledged leader of the late tonalist movement. His autobiographical *Art-Talks with Ranger* (1914) became the movement's official statement of aesthetic purpose.

RWT

#### Notes

1. Bell 1914, 42.
2. H. W. Ranger, "Artist Life by the North Sea," *Century Magazine* 23 (March 1893): 753–759.
3. For a brief discussion of the Old Lyme art colony and the artists who were active there, see Steve Shipp, *American Art Colonies, 1850–1930. A Historical Guide to America's Original Art Colonies and Their Artists* (Westport, 1996): 71–81.
4. The details of the will are discussed by Charles Henry Phelps, *The Meaning of the Will of Henry Ward Ranger* (New York, 1929).

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- Bromhead 1906.  
Bell 1914.  
Daingerfield, "Ranger," 1918.

1963.10.202 (1866)

## *Spring Woods*

c. 1910

Oil on canvas, 71.2 × 91.4 (28 1/16 × 36 1/8)

Chester Dale Collection

#### Inscriptions

At lower left in rectangle, superimposed on triangle:

*RANGER*

In points of triangle: *N A D*

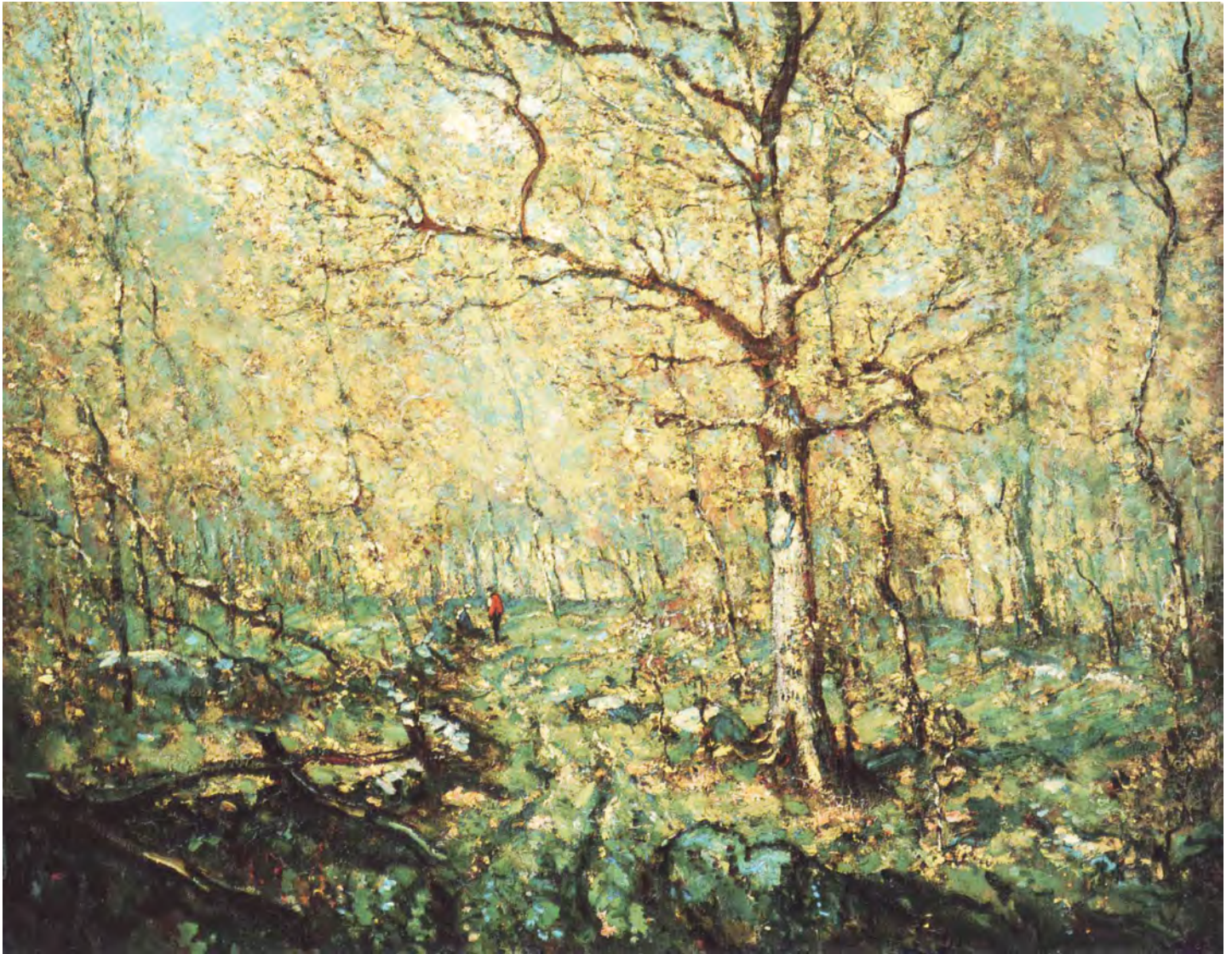
**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support has been lined and remounted on what may be its original five-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher. All the tacking margins have been removed. The artist applied paint thickly in layers. X-radiography suggests that the central tree was part of the original composition, while the remaining areas were painted at least twice, during which time the positions of the other trees were changed. The lower paint layers are visible through wide traction cracks, suggesting that they had not fully dried before the upper layers were applied. The painting is in good condition. The surface is coated with a thick layer of glossy and discolored varnish.

**Provenance:** George S. Palmer, New London, Connecticut; consigned by (Milch Galleries, New York) to (sale, American Art Galleries, New York, 23 January 1926, no. 74);<sup>1</sup> Chester Dale [1883–1962], New York.

**Exhibited:** *Exhibition of Paintings by American Impressionists and Other Artists of the Period 1880–1900*, Brooklyn Museum, 1932, no. 68. *An Exhibition of American Paintings from the Chester Dale Collection*, Union League Club, New York, 1937, no. 38. *Paintings from the Chester Dale Collection*, PMA, 1943–1951, unnumbered.

A REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLE of Ranger's late forest interior scenes, *Spring Woods* combines the major influences on his artistic development: The quiet, meditative mood of this meticulously composed and executed personification of spring in a bucolic setting is reminiscent of the Barbizon and Hague School landscapes that Ranger admired. The painting's idealized, poetic quality exemplifies his definition of "the great function of an artist in landscape or other art" as "the power to pass on an emotion."<sup>2</sup> Ranger's emphasis on the effects of sunlight filtering through the trees and falling across the forest floor is reminiscent of the landscapes of Narcisse Virgile Diaz de la Peña, but the romantic mood here is more intense. Ranger often coated his canvases with transparent yellow glazes because he thought it "the color most





Henry Ward Ranger, *Spring Woods*, 1963.10.202

suggestive of sunlight.”<sup>3</sup> Consistent with Ranger’s advocacy of using brushmarking to “best suggest the textures of the objects represented,”<sup>4</sup> heavy impasto imbues the gnarled old tree trunks and rough undergrowth with a palpable, nearly three-dimensional quality. The two diminutive human figures serve the practical function of providing the composition with a focal point and also enhance the general atmosphere of subtle romantic sublime. The touch of vermilion on one of them, which here provides a diversion from the predominantly yellow-green palette, was a device often used by Claude Lorrain and John Constable, masters whose work Ranger studied at the Louvre, and Camille Corot, whose work he had admired in New York before departing for study in Paris.

The topography and provenance of this painting suggest that it was probably painted near the artist’s home in Noank, near New London, Connecticut, on Long Island Sound.<sup>5</sup> Despite his adherence to European artistic conventions, Ranger was a cultural nationalist who believed that “the American artist’s mission should be to translate and emphasize the land we were born in and love the most,” and he regarded New England as “the oldest pastoral-landscape country in the Western world.”<sup>6</sup> In an attempt to assign a date to the painting, William Campbell compared *Spring Woods* with photographs of other landscapes by the artist in an exhibition catalogue<sup>7</sup> and found it similar to dated examples executed between 1913

and 1916.<sup>8</sup> The presence of the monogram signature, with its allusion to the National Academy of Design, indicates that Ranger painted this landscape after 1906, the year he was elected a full member of the organization. Certainly the reduced palette, dominated by dark and medium shades of yellow, agrees with Ranger’s own description of his late style.<sup>9</sup> *Spring Woods* was much better appreciated by American art connoisseurs in the early part of this century, and Helen Earle included it in her list of the artist’s best known works.<sup>10</sup>

RWT

#### Notes

1. The painting was listed in the sale catalogue, *European And American Paintings from the Collection of Mrs. I. N. Seligman . . . and the Estate of William H. Sharp . . . and Other Private Collectors* (American Art Galleries, New York, 1926), no. 74.
2. Bell 1914, 170.
3. Bell 1914, 108.
4. Bell 1914, 165.
5. This painting may have been the work listed as no. 3, *Spring Woods, Mason’s Island* that was exhibited at *Paintings by Henry W. Ranger*, Macbeth Gallery, 1909.
6. Bell 1914, 79.
7. *Works of the Late Henry Ward Ranger* [Exh. cat. American Art Galleries.] (New York, 1917).
8. William P. Campbell, curatorial reports of 27 and 28 January 1965 (in NGA curatorial files).
9. Bell 1914, 110–111.
10. Earle 1924, 261.

#### References

- 1924 Earle: 261.  
1965 Dale Collection: 45.

## Theodore Robinson

1852–1896

THEODORE ROBINSON was born 3 July 1852 in Irasburg, Vermont, and died 2 April 1896 in New York City after a final battle with the severe, chronic asthma that plagued him all his forty-four years. His letters show that he struggled constantly with his illness as well as with the complex challenges of his art. Nevertheless he managed to create a body of memorable work in his short lifetime.

Of all the American artists who might be called impressionists, Robinson enjoyed the clos-

est friendship with the great French master Claude Monet. Ironically, his own reserved, dry style shows less affinity for the exuberance of Monet than does the painting of some other American artists, such as Childe Hassam. Robinson’s contribution to the American art world came not only from his well-considered, studiously observed paintings, but also from his enthusiasm for French impressionism and his dissemination of aspects of it to his American colleagues. At least two of his



impressionist paintings won public honors: one received the Webb Prize in 1890 and another the Shaw Fund Prize in 1891.

Robinson was raised in Wisconsin, the son of a former minister who was also a sometime farmer. In 1870 he studied at the Art Institute of Chicago for a short time, until his asthma forced him briefly to seek relief in Colorado. He enrolled at the National Academy of Design in New York in 1874 and shortly thereafter helped organize the Art Students League. Two years later he traveled to Europe, studying in Paris first under Emile Auguste Carolus-Duran (1837–1917) and then under Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824–1904). He wrote home with joy when one of his paintings was accepted into the Salon of 1877. In Venice in 1879 Robinson met James McNeill Whistler, an experience that held importance to him his whole life. After returning to New York, Robinson gained his livelihood by teaching at Mrs. Sylvanevus Reed's School and assisting John La Farge (1835–1910) with decorative mural projects. From 1881 to 1884 Robinson worked as a decorative painter in the firm of Prentice Treadwell in Boston. He spent the summer of 1884 at Barbizon and visited Holland the next year.

From 1887 to 1892 Robinson lived mostly abroad, though he made several long visits to the United States. In these years he spent much of his time in the French village of Giverny. Robinson and several artist friends appear to have discovered the quietly beautiful setting while on a train trip in search of a propitious locale for their landscape efforts. According to some accounts, only after they had settled there did they discover it was the site of Monet's home. Monet generally tried to avoid the influx of young artists that eventually threatened to overrun his village, but he did socialize with a few, among them Robinson. The two men spent many hours dining and conversing. Although Robinson deeply admired Monet's work and enjoyed his company, he was never a pupil of Monet.

After 1892 Robinson sought to rejuvenate himself by addressing American subjects. He spent the early summer of 1893 in Greenwich, Connecticut, where he often worked beside his friend John Twachtman. Later that year Robinson taught art students at Napanoch, New York. The following year he returned to Connecticut, first to

Greenwich, then to nearby Cos Cob. Again he reluctantly turned to teaching to earn a living, this time at Evelyn College in Princeton, New Jersey. In 1895 he taught classes at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and his first one-man show was held that year. He spent the summer of 1895 at Townshend, Vermont. Intrigued by the challenge of depicting his native state, he intended to return the next summer to improve upon his initial efforts there, but he died during the winter in New York.

DC

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Johnston 1973.  
Clark 1979.

1990.70.1

#### *Drawbridge—Long Branch R. R.*

1894

Oil on canvas, 30.6 × 40.2 (12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 15<sup>13</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)

Gift (Partial and Promised) of Mrs. Daniel Fraad in memory of her husband and in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art

**Technical Notes:** The finely woven support is lined but appears to retain its original four-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher. There is a very thin cream-colored ground layer, applied by the artist. Paint was applied with a variety of techniques: In the water, low to medium impasted strokes were laid over a thin wash that was not homogeneously applied and may have been rubbed into the fabric in some areas. Around the bridge, the ground was used extensively as a middle tone. Lines of the boat and bridge were applied with thick impasto. In many areas ground or fabric lies exposed. Some of these appear to be part of the artist's intention, while others seem to be the result of age and wear on the delicate paint and ground layers. However, the painting is generally in very good condition. Several old losses are present in the sky: two small and one of moderate size. Some scattered staining is apparent, especially in and around the boat. The varnish is very glossy in appearance and has grayed slightly.

**Provenance:** (The artist's estate sale, American Art Galleries, New York, 24 March 1898, no. 75); J. B. Mabon, New York; (Davis Galleries, New York); sold 1962 to Rita and Daniel Fraad, New York.

**Exhibited:** *Theodore Robinson*, Macbeth Gallery, New York, 1895, no. 16. *Cotton States and International Exposition*, Atlanta, 1895, no. 524. *A Collection of Twenty-seven Pictures*



Theodore Robinson, *Drawbridge—Long Branch R. R.*, 1990.70.1

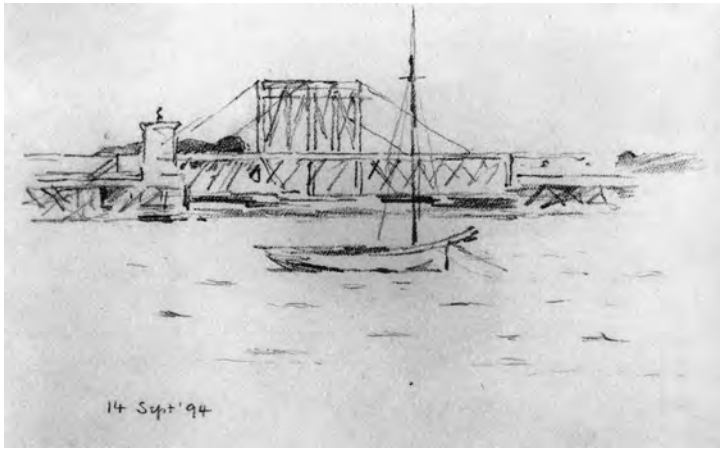


Fig. 1. Theodore Robinson, *The Long Branch R. R. Bridge*, *Sketchbook III*, pencil sketch, 1894, Chicago, © Terra Museum of American Art, Gift of Mr. Ira Spanierman, C1985.1.28

and *Studies by the Late Theodore Robinson*, St. Louis Museum of Fine Arts, 1896, no. 14. *Central Art Association Exhibit*, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1896, no. 29. *A Collection of Work by the Late Theodore Robinson*, Cincinnati Museum Association, 1897, no. 12. *American Painting: Selections from the Collection of Daniel and Rita Fraad*, Brooklyn Museum; Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, 1964, no. 19. *NGA 1991*, unnumbered. *Fine Art at the Cotton States and International Exposition*, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, 1995, no cat.

THIS PAINTING, for some time entitled *Drawbridge—Long Branch Rail Road, near Mianus*, is now thought to depict a subject on the New Jersey shore rather than Connecticut.<sup>1</sup> It is not known when the “Mianus” identification was added to the title (the work was entitled *Drawbridge—Long Branch R.R.* in Robinson’s estate sale in 1898 and in a 1946 catalogue), but the misidentification of the site is understandable, since this work is in much the same vein as Robinson’s Cos Cob subjects. After 1892 the artist began to live year-round in the United States and to explore American sites. In the summer of 1894 he stayed for several weeks at Cos Cob, a village on the Mianus River near Greenwich, Connecticut, where he painted some of his most successful works.

The bridge depicted in the National Gallery painting cannot be identified as any known in the Greenwich area at the time (nor can the Long Branch Railroad of its title be connected to Cos Cob/Mianus). The subject does, however, appear in a pencil sketch by Robinson, dated 14 September

1894 (fig. 1). The artist’s journal reveals that by that date he had left Connecticut, passed through New York City, and gone on to New Jersey to begin his teaching job at Evelyn College in Princeton. Although there is no entry for 14 September, Robinson’s journal records visits to friends nearby in New Jersey on 15 and 16 September.<sup>2</sup> At that time Robinson was living in Brielle, “at the mouth of the Manasquan River, where the stream joins the ocean.”<sup>3</sup> In this community and those neighboring are inlets, rivers, and bridges; the waterways are dotted with small craft. The New York & Long Branch Railroad, a spur of the Pennsylvania Railroad that was established in the popular vacation center of Long Branch by 1874, continued through several towns along the water. Although the exact location of Robinson’s view has yet to be determined, it seems likely that he would have had ample opportunity to find such a subject along the Jersey shore.

Robinson’s choice of the unremarkable iron structure as his motif indicates a willingness to embrace subjects outside the traditional realm of the picturesque.<sup>4</sup> The previous summer he had painted several images of the Delaware & Hudson Canal, at least one of which depicted a functioning canal lock.<sup>5</sup> American impressionists, like their French counterparts, were turning to fresh scenes of modern life, sometimes including industrial elements, rather than adhering to existing landscape formulas.

Robinson’s lack of artistic pretension extended to his style as well as his subjects. Reviewing Robinson’s one-man exhibition of 1895 at the Macbeth Gallery, the critic Royal Cortissoz remarked, “He has neither imagination nor sentiment, and the spectator must therefore be content with a purely visual report of nature. That report is given, however, with such taste and skill, with such directness and delicacy, that the absence of more subjective qualities is not suffered to spoil one’s pleasure in the work.”<sup>6</sup> Such an assessment might apply to *Drawbridge—Long Branch R. R.*, a work that was included in the Macbeth exhibition.

Both the *Drawbridge* sketch and painting show the bridge angled slightly away from the picture plane, placed high in the composition, and intersected vertically to the right of center by the mast of a sailboat. Altogether, this is a quiet, stable composition. The artist’s palette is also subdued, dominated by cool purple-grays and dusky blues. Robinson chose to depict the scene in even daylight, without

glinting sun or sparkling reflections on the water. His style, as exemplified in this painting, was incisively described by critic Eliot Clark: "His technique is the true signature of his personality; delicate but deliberate, spontaneous and animated yet consciously emphatic and precise."<sup>7</sup>

DC

#### Notes

1. Sona Johnston, authority on Robinson and author of a forthcoming catalogue raisonné on the artist, agreed with the new identification, which was first suggested by Susan Larkin. Notes of telephone conversation with Johnston, 17 July 1995; letter from Larkin, 27 June 1995 (both in NGA curatorial files).

2. Photocopies of Robinson's handwritten diaries are at the FARL. Sona Johnston generously provided information from her transcriptions of the relevant entries.

3. *New Jersey: A Guide to Its Present and Past*, Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration (New York, 1946), 595.

4. One of J. Alden Weir's best efforts, *The Red Bridge* (MMA), which depicts an iron bridge near Windham, Connecticut, was painted about 1895.

5. See Johnston 1973, no. 51.

6. *New York Tribune*, 3 February 1895, quoted in Baur 1946, 43.

7. Clark 1979, 59.

#### References

1946 Baur: no. 55.

1991 NGA: 242.

## Albert Pinkham Ryder

1847–1917

ALBERT PINKHAM RYDER was born on 19 March 1847 in New Bedford, Massachusetts, where he attended a public grammar school for boys and began to paint. Impaired vision, the result of a contaminated vaccination, prevented him from continuing his education. In 1870 the Ryder family moved to New York, where Albert applied to the National Academy of Design; his application was rejected, and he was admitted only after a period of study with the portraitist and engraver William E. Marshall, a former pupil of Thomas Couture. Although Ryder first exhibited at the Academy in 1873 and continued to exhibit there between 1881 and 1888, he was not elected an associate member until 1902 and did not become a full member until 1906.

Ryder quickly allied himself with some of the most progressive figures in American art. In 1875 he participated, along with John La Farge and William Morris Hunt (1824–1879), in an exhibition of works by artists who had been rejected by the conservative National Academy. The event was sponsored by the New York branch of the English firm of interior decorators Cottier & Company; its owner Daniel Cottier became Ryder's dealer and played an important role in promoting the artist's career. In 1877 Ryder visited the Netherlands and spent a month in London

with Cottier. That same year, along with Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848–1933), La Farge, George Inness (1825–1894), Olin Levi Warner (1844–1896), and J. Alden Weir, he became one of the founding members of the Society of American Artists. He exhibited with the group regularly until 1887. During the late 1870s Ryder painted screens, mirror frames, and furniture panels that link him to the decorative movement.

In 1880 Ryder took a studio in the Benedick Building on Washington Square East in Manhattan, where he lived and worked for the next decade. Perhaps influenced by his new friend, the symbolist painter Robert Loftin Newman (1827–1912), Ryder abandoned the Barbizon-style pastoral landscapes that had made his reputation in the 1870s and began to paint dramatic and emotionally charged subjects based on classical mythology, biblical incidents, poetry, plays, and Wagnerian opera. He occasionally wrote poetry to accompany his paintings. Other factors in this transformation were Ryder's visits to the major art museums of Europe and an excursion to North Africa with Cottier and Warner during the summer of 1882.

By the mid-1880s Ryder had gained the support of influential critics and attracted some important patrons. He made brief visits to London in

1887 and 1896. By about 1900, however, he was becoming increasingly reclusive and eccentric. He ceased producing new compositions and began to rework and repair existing paintings. Nonetheless, he won a silver medal at the Pan American Exposition at Buffalo in 1901 and was elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters in 1908. His work appealed to the new generation of American modernists, and ten of his pictures were included in the 1913 New York Armory Show. His health began to fail in 1915, and soon he moved to Elmhurst, Long Island, where he died on 28 March 1917.

One of the most enigmatic figures in the history of American art, Ryder was an imaginative and innovative painter who worked in the late nineteenth-century visionary tradition. Critics long considered him an isolated and uniquely American phenomenon and overemphasized his personal idiosyncrasies. More recently scholars have recognized that Ryder was keenly aware of European art and techniques.<sup>1</sup> His chronological development is impossible to trace because he never dated his works, rarely signed them, and obsessively reworked his compositions after they had been exhibited or sold. His unorthodox technical procedures, by which he strove to achieve rich, dark colors and enamellike surfaces through multiple layers of glazes and paints, left his works unusually susceptible to changes and deterioration, so it is difficult to determine their original appearance. Although he produced only 160 pictures, his works were widely forged, and some authentic ones were altered by others after his death. Ryder never had any pupils, but he exerted a powerful influence on his contemporary Ralph Blakelock and on a generation of younger artists, such as Arthur B. Davies (1862–1928), Marsden Hartley (1877–1943), Rockwell Kent (1882–1971), Walt Kuhn (1877–1949), and Kenneth Hayes Miller (1876–1934).

RWT

#### Notes

1. See Boime 1971.

#### Bibliography

Goodrich 1959.  
Broun 1989.  
Homer and Goodrich 1989.

1951.5.3 (1063)

### *Mending the Harness*

Mid- to late 1870s

Oil on canvas, 48.3 × 57.2 (19 × 22 1/2)

Gift of Sam A. Lewisohn

#### Inscriptions

At lower right: A. P. Ryder

**Technical Notes:** The heavy-weight plain-weave fabric support was relined sometime between 1938 and 1947. The tacking margins have been removed. The ground layer is cool white in color. The poor condition of the paint surface was caused by Ryder's unorthodox technique and choice of materials. The presumably oil-based paint medium has not been analyzed, but it appears to contain the resins, driers, and bitumen or candle wax that he employed to construct his pictures from numerous layers of underpainting, overpainting, scumbling, and glazing. The thick, multilayer construction indicates that Ryder reworked the painting, perhaps throughout the long period of time that he owned it. X-radiography reveals that Ryder painted out the figures of a man standing next to the cart raking hay, and a boy crouching in the foreground (fig. 1). Conservation files record that areas of flaking paints were consolidated in 1953. Heavy, thick, and discolored varnish is interbound with the paint layer.

**Provenance:** James Smith Inglis [d. 1907], New York. (The Cottier Gallery, New York.) Walter P. Fearon, New York.<sup>1</sup> (M. Knoedler & Co., New York), by October 1915; sold February 1917 to Adolph Lewisohn [d. 1938], New York; by inheritance to his son, Samuel A. Lewisohn.

**Exhibited:** *Second Exhibition of Oil Paintings by Contemporary American Artists*, CGA, 1908–1909, no. 32. *A Group of Twenty-four Paintings of the French, Spanish, German and American Schools*, The Cottier Gallery, New York, 1910, unnumbered. *Inaugural Exhibition*, Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio, 1912, no. 81. *Exhibition of American Painters*, M. Knoedler & Co., New York, 1917, no. 39. *Loan Exhibition of the Works of Albert P. Ryder*, MMA, 1918, no. 4. *Twelfth Annual Exhibition of Selected Paintings by American Artists*, Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York, 1918, no. 63. Venice Biennale, *XII Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte della Città di Venezia*, Venice, Italy, 1920, no. 41. *Sixth Loan Exhibition—Winslow Homer, Albert P. Ryder, Thomas Eakins*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1930, no. 71. *A Century of American Landscape Painting, 1800–1900*, WMAA, 1938, no. 56. *Albert P. Ryder Centenary Exhibition*, WMAA, 1947, no. 21. *The Lewisohn Collection*, MMA, 1951, no. 77. *Twenty-fifth Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary American Oil Paintings*, CGA; Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio, 1957, no. 29. *Albert Pinkham Ryder*, CGA, 1961, no. 1. *French, American, and Italian Review*, Oklahoma Art Center, Oklahoma City, 1963, no. 46. *Springfield Art Festival, The Romantic Spirit*, Drury College, Springfield, Missouri, 1968, no cat. *Albert Pinkham Ryder*, NMAA; Brooklyn Museum, 1990–1991, no. 36.





Albert Pinkham Ryder, *Mending the Harness*, 1951.5.3



Fig. 1. detail of 1951.5.3: X-radiograph, computer enhanced

PRAISED by Royal Cortissoz for its “homely charm,”<sup>2</sup> this painting is an important example of the small naturalistic landscapes, mostly rural scenes featuring human figures and domestic animals, that Ryder painted during the mid- to late 1870s. A former owner of this painting perceptively observed that these early landscapes are notable for their evocation of the “quiet mystical rhythm of nature. There is a religious solemnity, profound and moving, that grips us in these simple scenes of men with carts—of cows and horses.”<sup>3</sup> The subject of the horse-drawn cart had been popular among American and European artists beginning with John Constable’s *Hay Wain* (1821, National Gallery, London). Here the idealized theme of pastoral labor; the simple composition with its abbreviated forms; the idyllic, meditative mood; the predominantly green-gold tonality, and the stocky, peasant-like figure of the farmer all reflect the influence of artists associated with the Barbizon School, especially Jean-François Millet and Camille Corot. Works by the Barbizon painters and their American followers were avidly collected in America at this time, and Ryder’s dealers Daniel Cottier and James S. Inglis collected and sold them.<sup>4</sup>

Albert Boime linked Ryder to the French academic tradition when he suggested that the brush technique here recalls the work of Thomas Couture (1815–1879), and he speculated that Ryder had



Fig. 2. Albert Pinkham Ryder, *Mending the Harness*, oil sketch, Washington, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Gift of the Joseph H. Hirshhorn Foundation, 66.4434, photograph by Lee Stalworth

read the English translation of Couture's manual *Méthode et entretiens d'atelier*.<sup>5</sup> Ryder was probably also inspired by his familiarity with Hague School painters, such as Matthijs Maris (1839–1917), an artist whom he knew through Cottier and admired; he surely saw other works by members of the group during his 1877 trip to the Netherlands.

Probably painted from memory in New York and not directly from nature, the countryside in *Mending the Harness* is reminiscent of New England, where the artist spent his early summers. Such scenes appealed to the escapist aesthetic of the post-Civil War era, when viewers were drawn to nostalgic evocations of pre-industrial rural America.

This painting was probably the “yellow sunny landscape” that Ryder's friend Charles de Kay admired at the artist's studio in 1890: “The foreground contains a raw-boned white horse, a cart, and a laborer in blue overalls. The golden distance of plain, the rolling hills, and the slightly clouded sky are robust and broad.” De Kay went on to praise Ryder's skill in painting horses, noting that “perhaps he never achieves the smartness of drawing needed for a racer, but his cart-horses are often extremely true.”<sup>6</sup> Ryder was fascinated by horses, and at least eight of his early landscapes featured a single white horse similar to the one that appears here. According to his friend Charles Fitzpatrick, the Ryder family had owned a white horse named Charley, who “was indelibly impressed upon Ryder's mind from boyhood. . . . When he was a young man he would go with his colors and brushes among the stables and blacksmith shops.” Later in New York, a fellow student at the National Academy recollected that Ryder frequented city stables to study horses.<sup>7</sup>

Ryder's two small oil sketches, *Mending the Harness* (fig. 2) and *Boy Driving a Hay Wagon* (FAMSF) may be preparatory studies for the National Gallery painting. William I. Homer has suggested that the similarly foreshortened poses of the horses in *Mending the Harness* and *The White Horse* (c. 1879, Art Museum, Princeton University, New Jersey) indicate that both paintings were derived from the same lost drawing.<sup>8</sup> *Mending the Harness* is also closely related in subject and spirit to Ryder's *Wood Road* (Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts), the unfinished *Harvest* (NMAA), and *Plodding Homeward* (NMAA). Finally, Eleanor L. Jones noted that there were possible literary sources for these pastoral subjects, and suggested that Ryder derived the title of the last painting mentioned above from the

closing lines of Thomas Gray's “Elegy in a Country Churchyard”: “The ploughman plods his weary way, / And leaves the world to darkness and to me.”<sup>9</sup>

RWT

## Notes

1. James Inglis was the president of Cottier & Co., and it appears the company took possession of the painting after his death. It was included in the catalogue of what Broun 1989, 327, describes as an exhibition held 1–24 March 1910 at The Cottier Gallery (see exhibition history above). The catalogue describes the twenty-four paintings as “selected from the stock in their New York galleries,” and indicates that *Mending the Harness* was purchased from the artist by Inglis. Walter Fearon lent the painting to the 1912 inaugural exhibition at the Toledo (Ohio) Museum of Art.

2. Cortisoz 1923, 100.

3. Lewisohn 1937, 135.

4. On the American taste for Barbizon painting, see Birmingham 1975.

5. Boime 1971, 20.

6. Henry Eckford [Charles de Kay], “A Modern Colorist: Albert Pinkham Ryder,” *Century Magazine* 40 (June 1890): 257.

7. “Reminiscence of Ryder: Biographical Essay by Charles Fitzpatrick” (1917), Evergood papers, AAA, Roll D-181, frames 563–564; William H. Hyde, “Albert Pinkham Ryder as I Knew Him,” *The Arts* 16 (May 1930): 597.

8. Homer 1959, 26–27.

9. Broun 1989, 256.

## References

- 1920 Sherman: 71, 77, cat. no. 82.  
 1932 Price: cat. no. 96, repro.  
 1937 Lewisohn: 135, 138, pl. 65.  
 1959 Goodrich: 14–15, pl. 4.  
 1959 Homer: 26–27, repro.  
 1971 Boime: 18, 20–21, fig. 17.  
 1989 Broun: 254–256, pl. 9.  
 1989 Homer and Goodrich: 62.

1946.1.1 (886)

## *Siegfried and the Rhine Maidens*

1888/1891

Oil on canvas, 50.5 × 52 (19 7/8 × 20 1/2)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

## Inscriptions

At lower left: *A. P. Ryder.*

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support was relined in 1946. The tacking margins were removed at that time, but cusping indicates that the



original dimensions have not been altered. The white ground layer conceals the weave texture of the support. The artist first applied an underpainting that consists of simplified light and dark forms. This was followed by a complex, thick, multilayer application of alternating paint and glaze layers, with details such as the figures emerging in the upper layers. Interlayers of varnish were applied either locally or overall. The medium, which has not been analyzed, probably consists of the unorthodox oil-based mixture of resins, driers, bitumen, and candle wax that Ryder employed to achieve exceptional levels of transparency and luminosity. These admixtures could have caused the wide traction cracks that greatly disfigure the surface of the painting. During the 1946 treatment many of these cracks were inpainted, and the widest of them filled; this inpainting is now matte and discolored. The surface coating is yellowed, matte, and nearly opaque.

**Provenance:** Richard Haines Halsted [d. 1925], New York, by 1891.<sup>1</sup> Sir William Cornelius Van Horne [1843–1915], Montreal, Canada, by 1895;<sup>2</sup> his estate; (his estate sale, Parke-Bernet Galleries, New York, 24 January 1946, no. 18).<sup>3</sup>

**Exhibitions:** *Fifth Annual Loan Exhibition*, New York Athletic Club, 1891, possibly no cat. *Eighteenth Loan Exhibition of Paintings*, Art Association of Montreal, 1895, no. 70. *Exhibition of Fine Arts*, Pan-American Exposition, Buffalo, New York, 1901, no. 436. *71st Annual Exhibition*, PAFA, 1902, no. 16. *Twenty-fourth Annual Exhibition of the Society of American Artists*, New York, 1902, no. 237. *Society of American Collectors Comparative Exhibition of Native and Foreign Art*, American Fine Arts Society Galleries, New York, 1904, no. 145. *Ausstellung Amerikanischer Kunst*, Königliche Akademie der Kunst, Berlin, 1910, two catalogues, no. 163 and unnumbered. *Inaugural Loan Exhibition of Paintings*, Art Association of Montreal, 1912, no. 162. *Loan Exhibition of the Works of Albert P. Ryder*, MMA, 1918, no. 39. *The Sir William Van Horne Collection*, Art Association of Montreal, 1933, no. 162. *American Paintings from the 18th Century to the Present Day*, Tate Gallery, London, 1946, not in cat.<sup>4</sup> *Albert P. Ryder Centenary Exhibition*, WMAA, 1947, no. 38. *Painting in America, the Story of 450 Years*, DIA, 1957. *American Classics of the Nineteenth Century*, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, 1957–1958, no. 81 (traveling exhibition, five venues, shown only in Pittsburgh). *Albert Pinkham Ryder*, CGA, 1961, no. 51. *A New World: Masterpieces of American Painting 1760–1910*, MFA; CGA; Grand Palais, Paris, 1983–1984, no. 87. *Albert Pinkham Ryder*, NMAA; Brooklyn Museum, 1990–1991, no. 59 (shown only in Washington).

HAILED at its first public exhibition as one of Ryder's "recent triumphs in mystery and mastery of color,"<sup>5</sup> this painting represents the famous opening scene of the third act of Richard Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*, the last opera in his epic tetralogy, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. The action unfolds on the banks of the Rhine, where three river spirits, the Rhine

Maidens, accost the hero Siegfried who has become lost while hunting a bear. They demand that he return a ring made of the magic Rheingold that had been stolen from them by the dwarf Alberich; Siegfried had recently acquired it by slaying a dragon with his magic sword. At first inclined to comply with the Rhine Maidens' request, he refuses when they threaten him with the curse that the ring's possessor is doomed to die a violent death. Siegfried then departs for the castles of the Gibichungs, where he is eventually murdered. It is unclear whether Ryder represented the hero's initial encounter with the Rhine Maidens or the moment when he has spurned them and is about to depart.

Ryder painted *Siegfried and the Rhine Maidens* at a time when audiences at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City regarded Wagnerian opera with quasi-religious reverence.<sup>6</sup> Henry Adams described how a performance of *Die Götterdämmerung*, perhaps the one Ryder attended before painting this picture, sent "magnetic shocks through the audience. One could hardly listen to *Götterdämmerung* among the throngs of intense young enthusiasts without paroxysms of nervous excitement."<sup>7</sup> The opera's spectacular third act made a great impression on the musically literate public following the premiere on 25 January 1888, after which a reviewer commented that "from beginning to end [it] is indescribably beautiful. It is hardly too much to say that it surpasses everything else in the opera."<sup>8</sup> Ryder later recollected that he "had been to hear the opera and went home about twelve o'clock and began this picture. I worked for forty-eight hours without sleep or food, and the picture was the result."<sup>9</sup> As technical examination suggests, Ryder did not complete the picture during his initial period of inspiration; he continued to work on it in his characteristic manner until, and possibly even after, it had been acquired by its first owner.<sup>10</sup>

Unlike previous depictions of Wagnerian subjects, such as Henri Fantin-Latour's (1836–1904) well-known set of lithographs,<sup>11</sup> Ryder set his diminutive figures within a wildly undulating landscape that mirrors the movements of the Rhine Maidens and echoes the unfolding drama.<sup>12</sup> Diane C. Johnson has recently demonstrated that Ryder's composition was influenced by his memory of the Metropolitan Opera's adaptations of Josef Hoffmann's original set designs for the premiere of *Die Götterdämmerung* at Bayreuth, mediated by a familiarity with an engraving after Hoffmann's watercolor sketch "Siegfried and the Rhine Maidens" that



Albert Pinkham Ryder, *Siegfried and the Rhine Maidens*, 1946.1.1





Fig. 1. After Josef Hoffmann, "Götterdämmerung, Act III, Scene 1" (Siegfried and the Rhine Maidens), engraving from *Scribner's Magazine* vol. 2 (November 1887), p. 517, Washington, Library of Congress

was reproduced in *Scribner's Magazine* in 1887 (fig. 1).<sup>13</sup> She also noted that Ryder's use of an ostensibly moonlit sky to create an appropriately eerie ambience of impending doom suggests that he had seen Knut Eckwall's illustrations of the opera that had appeared in the Leipzig periodical *Illustrierten Zeitung* (September 1876).<sup>14</sup> Ryder heightened the dramatic effect of his interpretation by condensing the rectangular format of his sources into a nearly square composition and by exploiting the landscape for every expressive nuance. Ryder's scene differed from the Metropolitan Opera production in two major respects: First, he represented Siegfried mounted on a horse instead of on foot, an alteration that can be explained by his fascination with horses; second, although singers who performed the Rhine Maidens' roles were fully attired, here they are nude (as they appear in Hoffmann's engraving) to better communicate the alluring but ominous erotic undertones of the scene. Unlike Hoffmann's youthful and beardless Siegfried, Ryder's hero possesses the heavy beard and prominent eyes characteristic of the famous *heldentenor* Albert Niemann, who performed the role of Siegfried at the premiere and throughout the 1888 Metropolitan Opera season; the noted music critic Henry Krehbiel described him as a colossus with "eyes large and full of luminous light, that seems to dart from the tangle of matted hair that conceals the greater part of his face."<sup>15</sup>

Johnson theorized that Ryder was attracted to the implicit eroticism of the scene, a quality that

early viewers discerned in the painting. One pronounced *Siegfried and the Rhine Maidens* unique for "being at once so fantastic, voluptuous, and tranquil"; another observed how "one must see his Siegfried riding along the Rhine, meeting the Rhine daughters near a mighty oak, all bathed in a cold amour-glittering moonshine to realize how he can flood a picture with sensuous bewitching poetry."<sup>16</sup> Ryder transformed the central Rhine Maiden's gesture of entreaty in Hoffmann's version into a provocative, uninhibited gesture calculated to display her breasts;<sup>17</sup> there is something savage and disturbing about her movements, given the picture's nonclassical mythological context. Johnson related the theme of unfulfilled sexual desire in this scene to Ryder's poem "The Wind," which also deals with unconsummated erotic longings. While these ideas are certainly plausible, some Americans associated Siegfried's personality with the national character. In 1888 Krehbiel observed that "there is something peculiarly sympathetic to our people in the character of the chief personages of the drama." He continued that "Siegfried is a prototype . . . of the American people in being an unspoiled nature. He looks at the world through glowing eyes that have not grown accustomed to the false and meretricious."<sup>18</sup>

Despite Ryder's basic fidelity to Wagner's text, the intense romanticism and expressive power of this image have been interpreted by some historians as evidence that the artist was a solitary visionary whose works, to quote John Wilmerding, were "not

literal transcriptions of particular narratives or passages, but the evocations and resonances they inspired in his imagination."<sup>19</sup> Charles Caffin had written earlier that in *Siegfried* "the patterning of the tree forms, the massing of light and shade, and, most of all the coloring, have been arbitrarily assembled for the purpose of expressing the painter's own emotional conception."<sup>20</sup> Abraham Davidson commented that through his Wagnerian subjects Ryder was able to "frame his conception of man as part of the wider rhythms of nature, a nature that could be for him sometimes turbulent and menacing, sometimes calm and benign."<sup>21</sup> Barbara Novak went so far as to maintain that *Siegfried* was one of several paintings by Ryder in which "the subject, or even knowledge of it, is relatively unimportant"; in her view it belongs "to that small group of masterpieces that stamp themselves on our minds with instantaneous—indeed, almost violent—authority."<sup>22</sup> Frank Jewett Mather considered *Siegfried* one of Ryder's greatest works, commenting, "It has steely coruscations worthy of a Greco, and in mere pattern is consummate; it conveys most energetically its sense of doom, and is just a little melodramatic."<sup>23</sup>

Others have more accurately noted that Ryder was extraordinarily successful in evoking Wagner's musical drama through purely visual means. An early critic described how *Siegfried* was "in a sense, a stage brought down to inches; the life, the scene, the acting in a stage area eighty feet wide and proportionately high have been reduced by him to a miniature with nothing lost in the reduction. The action is kept, the story clear, an impression intensified, the art fascinating."<sup>24</sup> Elliott Daingerfield was among the first writers who alluded to "the beautiful musical quality" in this painting's "coloring and rhythm"; Frederic Fairchild Sherman found *Siegfried* "the most rhythmical and musical of his works."<sup>25</sup> Ryder captured the essential elements of the scene by stressing its sensuality, by dwelling on Siegfried's dual struggle with supernatural and natural forces, and by imparting a premonition of the dire consequences of the hero's act of free choice. The rhythmic composition constitutes the ideal visual counterpart to Wagnerian musical drama because it embodies the composer's fundamental concept of *gesamtkunstwerk*, in which all diverse formal elements are synthesized into a powerful work of art that exerts a compelling psychological impact on viewers. Ryder's sensitivity to these issues indicates that he, like his French symbolist contem-

poraries, found a powerful source of inspiration in the fin-de-siècle cultural phenomenon of international Wagnerism.<sup>26</sup>

RWT

## Notes

1. Halsted was a New York stockbroker and member of the Art Committee of the New York Athletic Club who collected Far Eastern and mostly European art; he also owned Ryder's *Jonah* (mid-1880s to 1890 or later, NMAA).

2. Van Horne was a Canadian railroad magnate, amateur artist, and art collector who also owned Ryder's *Constance* (mid-1880s to mid-1890s or later, MFA); for biographical information, see Walter Vaughan, *The Life and Work of Sir William Van Horne* (New York, 1920). For a summary of his relationship with Ryder, see Broun 1989, 70, 74.

3. *Siegfried* is listed in the sale catalogue, *Twenty Important Modern Paintings from the Collection of the Late Sir William Van Horne, K.C.M.G., Montreal* (New York, Parke-Bernet Galleries, 24 January 1946), cat. no. 18, 30. These paintings were sold on the instructions of Margaret Van Horne, the wife of Sir William Van Horne's grandson (also named William). She wrote to James Lane at the National Gallery of Art (letter of 11 December 1947, in NGA curatorial files) the following explanation of the disposition of the Van Horne collection: "When Sir William died in 1915, the Art Collection was left to his widow, his son and his daughter. . . . The Collection was not divided until February 1945. Until then, the entire Collection was in 'The Estate of the late Sir William Van Horne'. . . . 'Siegfried and the Rhine Maidens' fell into my share at the time of the division." Margaret Van Horne must have inherited her husband's share, who in turn had inherited it from his father, Sir William's son. When the painting was reproduced or lent after Sir William's death it was usually credited to the collection of his widow, Lady Van Horne.

4. According to John Walker (memorandum, 2 June 1946, in NGA curatorial files), *Siegfried* was found to be damaged when it was unpacked at the Tate Gallery and was subsequently withdrawn from the exhibition.

5. "Art Notes," *New York Times*, 7 April 1891.

6. For an excellent study of Wagnerian opera in New York during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Horowitz 1994. For a summary of Wagnerian opera at the Metropolitan Opera, see John Dizikes, *Opera in America: A Cultural History* (New York, 1993), 231–246. For a discussion of the impact of Wagner's music in America and Britain, see Anne Dzamba Sessa, "At Wagner's Shrine: British and American Wagnerians," in David C. Large and William Weber, eds., *Wagnerism in European Culture and Politics* (Ithaca, New York, 1984), 246–279.

7. Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams* (Boston, 1918), 404–405, quoted in Dizikes, *Opera in America*, 243.

8. *New York Times*, 26 January 1888, 5; quoted in Paul E. Eisler, *The Metropolitan Opera: The First Twenty-five Years 1883–1908* (New York, 1984), 151.

9. Daingerfield, "Ryder," 1918, 380. According to Broun 1989, 56, James Inglis, the manager of Daniel Cottier's New York gallery, had a box reserved at the Metropolitan Opera, which he frequented with a group of friends that included Ryder and the painting's future owner Van Horne. Lloyd Goodrich has identified a small oil sketch (Hudson Walker Collection) as a preparatory study for the landscape in *Siegfried*; it is illustrated by Henri Dorra, *The American Muse* (New York, 1961), 43.

10. The specific performance that Ryder attended is unknown. The opera was performed seven times between 25 January and February of the 1887–1888 season, and again the following season.

11. Fantin-Latour represented Wagnerian themes in a series of paintings, pastels, and lithographs between 1877 and 1893. Although there are some similarities between Fantin's and Ryder's treatment of the nude Rhine Maidens, it is not known if Ryder was familiar with the work of the French artist.

12. M. Victor Alper, "American Mythologies in Painting, Part 4," *AM* 46 (summer 1972): 53, commented that "the contorted limbs of trees in *Siegfried and the Rhine Maidens* are external elements of the hero's agony."

13. Johnson 1994, 25; the illustration appeared in William F. Apthorp, "Wagner and Scenic Art," *Scribner's Magazine* 2 (November 1887): 517.

14. Although art historians have invariably described Ryder's composition as moonlit, the light more probably emanates from the sun in accordance with the text of the opera; in the opening trio ("Frau Sonne sendet lichte Strahlen") of Act III, the Rhine Maidens beg the sun deity to help them regain their ring.

15. Henry Krehbiel, *Chapters of Opera* (New York, 1909; reprint, 1980), 171, quoted in Horowitz 1994, 119.

16. "Twenty-Fourth Annual Exhibition of the Society of American Artists," *International Studio* 16 (1902): lxxi; Hartman 1932, 1:318.

17. Gerds 1974, 130, commented that the nudity in *Siegfried* was "presented neither for sensual reasons nor as a study of human anatomy."

18. *New York Tribune*, 22 February 1888, quoted in Horowitz 1994, 147.

19. Wilmerding 1988, *American Masterpieces*, 118.

20. Caffin 1907, 216.

21. Davidson 1978, 141.

22. Novak 1979, 218.

23. Frank Jewett Mather, "Albert Pinkham Ryder," in *Estimates in Art* (New York, 1931), 173. The essay was first published in 1917.

24. Walter de S. Beck, "Albert Pinkam Ryder: An Appreciation," *International Studio* 70 (April 1920): 42.

25. Daingerfield, "Ryder," 1918, 380; Sherman 1920, 56. The French art historian Philippe Jullian, *Dreamers of Decadence: Symbolist Painters of the 1890s* (London, 1971), 66, mentioned Ryder's *Siegfried* within the context of Wagner's influence on symbolist art; he deviated from the usually positive critical commentary on the painting with his statement that the figures "can be dimly distinguished through the darkness created as much by this painter's morose character as by the poor quality of paints he used."

26. For a speculative attempt to interpret *Siegfried* as an example of how Ryder's choice of subjects reflected social anxiety engendered by Darwinian theory, see Johns 1979, 168–169.

## References

- 1907 Caffin: 216, repro.  
 1917 Sherman: 157.  
 1918 Daingerfield, "Ryder": 380, repro.  
 1920 Sherman: 56, 62, repro.  
 1923 Cortissoz: 99–100.  
 1932 Hartman: 1: 318.  
 1932 Price: no. 160.  
 1959 Goodrich: 18, 115, color pl. 62; details, pls. 61, 63, 64.  
 1974 Gerds: 130, fig. 7-5.  
 1979 Johns: 168–169, fig. 4.  
 1983 Stebbins, Troyen, and Fairbrother: 307–308, pl. 87.  
 1988 Wilmerding, *American Masterpieces*: 118, color repro.  
 1989 Broun: 288–290, pl. 86.  
 1989 Homer and Goodrich: 162, pl. 10.  
 1994 Johnson: 22–31.

## John Singer Sargent

1856–1925

BORN IN FLORENCE ON 12 January 1856 to expatriate American parents, John Singer Sargent received his first formal art instruction at Rome in 1868 and then sporadically attended the Accademia delle Belle Arti in Florence between 1870 and 1873. In 1874 he was accepted at the Paris atelier of the portraitist Carolus-Duran and attended

drawing classes at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. He began to exhibit at the Salon in 1877.

Over the next few years several experiences had a significant impact on Sargent's artistic development: During a trip to Spain in 1879 he copied paintings by Diego Velázquez (1599–1660) at the Prado; in 1880 he visited Belgium and Holland,

where he copied works by Frans Hals (c. 1580–1666); and in 1881 he met James McNeill Whistler in Venice. A scandal aroused by Sargent's daring portrait of Madame Pierre Gautreau at the Salon of 1884<sup>1</sup> precipitated his departure to London the following year. In 1887 he visited and worked with Claude Monet at Giverny, and made his first professional trip to the United States. Toward the end of his career Sargent was elected to the National Academy of Design, New York, and the Royal Academy of Art, London, and was made a member of the Legion of Honor in France. He died in London on 15 April 1925.

By the turn of the century Sargent was recognized as the most acclaimed international society portraitist of the era, and his clientele consisted of the most affluent, aristocratic, and fashionable people of his time. Noted for his technical virtuosity and painterly technique, he influenced an entire generation of American portraitists. Sargent resented the limitations of portraiture, however, and from the beginning of his exceptionally successful career took every opportunity to paint a wide range of genre subjects. Around 1906 he abandoned portraiture and worked primarily in watercolor, a medium in which he was extraordinarily gifted. Although an expatriate who lived in London, Sargent was committed to America's cultural development and executed important mural decorations for the Boston Public Library (1890–1919), the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (1916–1925), and Harvard University's Widener Library (1921–1922).

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#### Notes

1. See Trevor J. Fairbrother, "The Shock of John Singer Sargent's 'Madame Gautreau,'" *AM* 55 (January 1981): 90–97.

#### Bibliography

Downes 1925.  
Charteris 1927.  
Mount 1969.  
Ormond 1970.  
Ratcliff 1982.  
Hills et al. 1986.  
Fairbrother 1994.

1962.4.1 (1658)

### *Street in Venice*

1882

Oil on wood panel, 45.1 × 53.9 (17<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 21<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>)  
Gift of the Avalon Foundation

#### Inscriptions

At lower right: *John S. Sargent*

**Technical Notes:** The support is a mahogany panel 0.9 cm thick with horizontally oriented grain. The reverse of the panel has beveled edges and bears a label (apparently a deposit for fine art objects): "GIUSEPPE BIASUT[TI] / PRESSO LA REG[IA ACADEMIA] / N. 1024 V[enezia] / DEPOSITO OG[ETTI] / PER / PITTURA E DIS[EGNI]." X-radiography reveals that a bust portrait of Sargent's favorite Venetian model Gigia Viani lies beneath the present image. The paint was applied rapidly, wet-into-wet, and mostly in several overlying opaque layers with a range of moderate to high impasto. The entire paint surface has wide traction crackle, which in some areas was minimized by inpainting during conservation treatment in 1962. The surface coating is moderately yellowed.

**Provenance:** Purchased 30 January 1888 by Elizabeth Chanler, Boston, at St. Botolph Club Exhibition; given by her to Stanford White [1853–1906], New York, for professional services; his wife, Mrs. Bessie Smith White [d. 1950], New York; their son, Lawrence Grant White [d. 1956], St. James, Long Island, New York; his wife, Mrs. Laura Astor Chanler White, St. James, Long Island, New York.

**Exhibited:** *Société Internationale des Peintres et Sculpteurs, Première Exposition*, Galerie Georges Petit, Paris, 1882–1883, no. 99. *John Singer Sargent's Paintings*, St. Botolph Club, Boston, January 1888, no cat.<sup>2</sup> *63rd Annual Exhibition*, NAD, April–May 1888, no. 213, as *Venetian Street*. *New York Columbian Celebration of the Four Hundredth Anniversary of the Discovery of America. Catalogue of the Loan Exhibition*, NAD, October 1892, no. 3, as *Venice. Retrospective Exhibition*, Society of American Artists, New York, December 1892, no. 276, as *Venetian Scene*. *Sargent Loan Exhibition, Paintings and Sketches by John S. Sargent*, Copley Society of Boston, Copley Hall, 1899, no. 36. *Exhibition of Fine Arts*, Pan-American Exposition, Buffalo, 1901, no. 30. *Exhibition of Paintings and Drawings by John Singer Sargent for the Benefit of the American Ambulance Hospital in Paris*, Copley Gallery, Boston, 1917, no. 9, as *Venice. Retrospective Exhibition of Important Works of John Singer Sargent*, Grand Central Art Galleries, New York, 1924, no. 39. *Memorial Exhibition of the Works of the Late John Singer Sargent*, MFA, 1925, no. 71. *Memorial Exhibition of the Work of John Singer Sargent*, MMA, 1926, no. 13. *A Century of Centurion Art*, Century Club, New York, 1947, unnumbered checklist. *The American Tradition 1800–1900*, NAD, 1951, no. 125. *The Private World of John Singer Sargent*, CGA; Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio; Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts; MWPI, 1964–1965, no. 16. *In Memoria*, Ailsa Mellon Bruce, NGA, 1969, no cat. *Uncanny*

*Spectacle: The Public Career of the Young John Singer Sargent*, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts, 1997, no. 18.

SARGENT probably executed this painting between June and October 1882, during the second of his two extended visits to Venice in the early 1880s. Its suggestive subject, technique, and composition closely resemble those of two other pictures from this period, *Venetian Street* (fig. 1) and *A Street in Venice* (fig. 2). The artist captured a transitional moment when his model Gigia Viani is being observed by one of two men who stand conversing before a stone doorway, as she briskly walks down the Calle Larga dei Proverbi toward the Salizzada del Pistor, behind the church of SS. Apostoli off the Grand Canal. Gigia, her eyes half-closed, is self-absorbed and aloof, unaware that she is being watched.<sup>3</sup> She holds a black shawl around her elegant, elongated figure for warmth against an autumn chill that can almost be felt by the viewer. Both bearded men, who wear similar fur-lined cloaks and low-brimmed hats, are based on the same unidentified

model who appears in the two paintings mentioned above, as well as the pen and ink study *Man in a Fur Cape* (fig. 3). Their nonchalant attitude, and the leisurely appearance of the several people seated at a street corner in the middle ground, suggest that this incident occurs during the afternoon siesta.

Unlike the colorful and idealized Venetian scenes painted by his contemporaries, such as Robert Frederick Blum's (1857–1903) *Venetian Lace Makers* (1887, Cincinnati Art Museum),<sup>4</sup> Sargent's Venetian genre subjects take place in the dilapidated back alleys of working-class neighborhoods. Linda Ayres has noted that Sargent's unusual choice of setting may have been influenced by late nineteenth-century photographs of members of Venice's working class.<sup>5</sup> The theme of ambiguous sexual attraction in mysterious surroundings imbues the scene with a slightly sinister quality that Sargent intensified by silhouetting the three darkly attired main figures against a warm, luminous background and placing them against the sharp spatial recession of the street.

It has long been recognized that the painterly

Fig. 1. John Singer Sargent, *Venetian Street*, c. 1882, New York, Collection of Daniel and Rita Fraad, photograph by Chris Burke



Fig. 2. John Singer Sargent, *A Street in Venice*, oil on canvas, c. 1882, Williamstown, Massachusetts, ©Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, no. 575







John Singer Sargent, *Street in Venice*, 1962.4.1



Fig. 3. John Singer Sargent, *Man in a Fur Cape*, pen and ink, New York, Collection of Daniel and Rita Fraad, photograph by Chris Burke

brushwork of Sargent's early Venetian genre scenes reflects his recent exposure to works by Diego Velázquez and Frans Hals. The introspective mood and settings are related to the series of etchings, paintings, and pastel views of the city that James McNeill Whistler executed in Venice between September 1879 and November 1880. It has been suggested that the dramatic use of open space and the pronounced diagonal axis of *Street in Venice* reflect the influence of Edgar Degas (1834–1917).<sup>6</sup> Sargent's frequent use of dynamic, exaggerated perspective to create stagelike effects very likely demonstrates that he was also aware of the great Venetian masters of the Cinquecento, Paolo Veronese (1528–1588) and Tintoretto (c. 1518–1594).

When *Street in Venice* was first exhibited in Paris in

1882, a French critic wrote: "Here we do not see either the Grand Canal or Saint Mark's square; all that is banal and hackneyed. Mr. Sargent leads us to modest meeting places and dark, shallow rooms, all black, pierced through by a ray of sunlight. Where are Titian's beauties hiding themselves?"<sup>7</sup> After the painting was exhibited in Boston and New York, American critics judged it "masterly," and an "excellent picture."<sup>8</sup> Early art historians were even more enthusiastic, singling out the painting for special commentary and praise. Samuel Isham wrote that among the multitude of Venetian scenes, Sargent's *Street in Venice* "is Venice as none of the other representations are." He praised its monochromatic quality as "not only more true but infinitely more beautiful in color than the customary blaze of orange and red; and while there is not a trace of old carving or Gothic architecture, yet it somehow gives the grace and mystery of Venice as Ruskin's painfully elaborated drawings do not."<sup>9</sup> Royal Cortissoz observed that although Sargent's Venice is "a totally different world" from the one depicted by other American painters, it is nevertheless "one of the most interesting that I know . . . the vivid record of a Venice that every one can see and touch."<sup>10</sup>

The mysterious protagonists of Sargent's Venetian pictures have been identified as denizens of the demimonde, whose women "clearly exist outside polite society."<sup>11</sup> Ayres demonstrated that Sargent's vision of Venice has much in common with those of the American writers Francis Hopkinson Smith, Mark Twain, and William Dean Howells, all of whom described the aura of mystery and lassitude behind the city's popular tourist attractions and commented on the customs of its lower classes. In an observation especially pertinent to the National Gallery painting, Howells recollected how "in Venice a woman has to encounter upon the public street a rude license of glance . . . which falls little short of outrage."<sup>12</sup> Stephen Kern has rather questionably identified the woman as a prostitute.<sup>13</sup> In a provocative essay in which he challenged the tendency among academics to isolate Sargent's genre paintings as informal, private productions unrelated to his portraiture, Trevor Fairbrother noted that even if scholars succeeded in identifying these Venetians, the artist's images would retain their narrative ambivalence: "Their fascination lies in our not being sure whether the people being depicted know each other and whether their encounters are innocent or not."<sup>14</sup> The artist used his keen pow-

ers of observation and fluent technique to represent a spontaneous, intimate moment from everyday life whose intrinsic ambiguity defies specification.

*Street in Venice* is one of the finest of the numerous genre scenes that Sargent painted in Venice at the turning point of his career, directly after *El Jaleo* (1882, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston) was greeted with critical acclaim at the Salon of 1882. These superbly executed pictures were an early manifestation of what became a lifelong penchant for genre painting as a relief from the constraints of formal portraiture and constitute some of Sargent's greatest artistic accomplishments. In the words of William Downes, Sargent's Venetian pictures offer a "kind of a perfection that leaves little to be desired. Slight, sketchy, almost casual these scenes seem at first glance, yet as they are examined they impress and charm us more and more, and in the end convince us that no painter succeeds better than he in attaining, through the unity of form and color, the very aspect of life itself."<sup>15</sup>

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## Notes

1. A similar label appears on the reverse of Sargent's *A Street in Venice* (c. 1882, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown); it is presumed that Biasutti was an art supplier.

2. A typed MS prepared in connection with the St. Botolph Club exhibition, (Archives, Copley Society, Boston), listed *Street in Venice* as no. 8, "Small study of girl walking down street in Venice (two men behind)." According to a letter from Charles Merrill Mount to William Campbell (17 July 1962, in NGA curatorial files), the National Gallery painting was one among three of Sargent's Venetian scenes that were shipped to Boston in 1888 for the exhibition.

3. Many art historians have erroneously contended that both men are staring at Gizia, a misapprehension that has led them to interpret the scene as a hostile encounter in which she is subjected to sexually predatory male advances. See, for example, Ayres 1986, 56, who wrote that "*Street in Venice* depicts two bearded men in an alley as they pause to watch a young woman who clutches her shawl tightly around her as if to ward off their glances."

4. For a brief survey of American and European artists and their changing attitudes to Venice, see Erica E. Hirshler, "'Gondola Days': American Painters in Venice," in Stebbins 1992, 112–128.

5. Ayres 1986, 64, 66.

6. Warren Adelson, "John Singer Sargent and The

'New Painting,'" in *Sargent at Broadway: The Impressionist Years* [Exh. cat. Coe Kerr Gallery.] (New York, 1986), 33. Charles F. Stuckey, *Toulouse-Lautrec: Paintings* [Exh. cat. AIC.] (Chicago, 1979), 181, suggested that Sargent's source for the composition was a Japanese woodblock print by Hiroshige.

7. Arthur Baignères, "Première exposition de la Société des Peintres et Sculpteurs," *GBA* 27 (February 1883): 190. Despite Baignères' negative assessment, his article was illustrated with a woodcut reproduction of *Street in Venice*, 192, based on a signed drawing in violet ink by Sargent (private collection); this woodcut was later reproduced in *AAM* 19 (June 1888): 5. The drawing was listed in the sale catalogue *Estampes, dessins, pastels, aquarelles, gouaches, tableaux des 19e et 20e siècles* (Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 27 November 1989), no. 84, as having descended through the family of M. Gonse, "Réalisateur en Chef de la *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*."

8. "Catholicity in Art," *New York Herald*, 31 March 1888, 4; "An Exhibition of American Paintings," *AAM* 27 (November 1892): 138. For other early reviews, see *Boston Daily Advertiser*, 2 February 1888, in which the Venetian scenes were misidentified as Spanish subjects; Greta, "Art in Boston: The Sargent Portrait Exhibition, Etc.," *AAM* 18 (April 1888): 110; "Portraits at the Academy," *New York Times*, 8 April 1888, 10; "The Academy Exhibition," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* 66 (14 April 1888): 131; "The National Academy of Design," *AAM* 18 (May 1888): 130; Greta, "The Art Season in Boston," *AAM* 19 (June 1888): 5; *AAM* 28 (January 1893): 44.

9. Isham 1905, 437, quoted by Downes 1925, 144.

10. Cortissoz 1925, 118–119.

11. Ayres 1986, 59.

12. William Dean Howells, *Venetian Life*, 2 vols. (Boston, 1892), 2:189 (first published 1866).

13. Stephen Kern, *Eyes of Love: The Gaze in English and French Culture 1840–1900* (New York, 1996), 145. Lovell 1989, 83, had already implied as much.

14. Fairbrother 1990, 34.

15. Downes 1925, 30, 93.

## References

- 1925 Downes: 30, 143–144.  
1927 Charteris: 57, 163, 283.  
1956 McKibbin: 78.  
1966 Cairns and Walker: 496, pl.  
1969 Mount: 464.  
1970 Ormond: 30, 238, pl. 20.  
1980 Adelson: 32, fig. 14.  
1982 Ratcliff: 73, pl. 106.  
1984 Lovell: 97.  
1986 Adelson: 33, fig. 14.  
1986 Fairbrother: 48–49, fig. 12.  
1987 Ayres: 56, 61, fig. 35.  
1989 Lovell: 75–76, color pl. 6.  
1990 Fairbrother: 33–34, pl. 4.  
1997 Simpson et al.: 108, repro.

1964.13.1 (1925)

*Eleanora O'Donnell Iselin*  
(Mrs. Adrian Iselin)

1888

Oil on canvas, 153.7 × 93 (60 1/2 × 36 5/8)

Gift of Ernest Iselin

**Inscriptions**

At upper left: *John S. Sargent*

At upper right: *1888*

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support has been lined and a plywood board inserted between the lining and the stretcher; a pencil inscription on the stretcher indicates that this occurred in 1906. The tacking margins have been slightly trimmed in such a way as to increase the surface dimensions. The thin and evenly applied gray ground layer was preprimed. The paint was applied in thin, fluid layers with alternating technique: The flesh tones of the sitter's face and hands are smooth and thick, the more freely painted costume was executed with the bravura brushwork one associates with Sargent, and the background consists of a thin wash. Despite areas of traction crackle in the dark collar and above the cuffs, a very small loss under the sitter's right eye, and four small discolored areas of inpainting in the background to the figure's right, the paint surface is in very good condition. The moderately thick and evenly distributed surface coating is slightly yellowed.

**Provenance:** The sitter's husband, Adrian George Iselin [1818–1905], New York and New Rochelle; their daughter, Georgine Iselin [1857–1954], New York and New Rochelle; her grandnephew (the sitter's great-grandson), Ernest Iselin, New York.

**Exhibited:** *Exhibition of Portraits of Women*, NAD, 1894, no. 259. *Retrospective Exhibition of Important Works of John Singer Sargent*, Grand Central Art Galleries, New York, 1924, no. 33. *Memorial Exhibition of the Works of the Late John Singer Sargent*, MFA, 1925, no. 33. *Memorial Exhibition of the Work of John Singer Sargent*, MMA, 1926, no. 18. *Sargent, Whistler and Mary Cassatt*, AIC; MMA, 1954, no. 55. *Portraits USA, 1776–1976*, Museum of Art, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, 1976. *Post-Impressionism: Cross-Currents in European and American Painting, 1880–1906*, NGA, 1980, no. 267. *La Pintura de Los Estados Unidos de Museos de la Ciudad de Washington*, Museo del Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico City, 1980–1981, no. 21. *The Quest for Unity: American Art between World's Fairs 1876–1893*, DIA, 1983, no. 61. *John Singer Sargent*, WMAA; AIC, 1986–1987, unnumbered.

JUSTLY CONSIDERED one of Sargent's "most regal and intense portraits," this painting was commissioned by the sitter's daughters Georgine and Emi-

lie Iselin.<sup>1</sup> It was executed at New York during the early spring of 1888, toward the end of Sargent's first professional visit to America. Eleanora O'Donnell Iselin (1821–1897) was born in Baltimore, where her father Columbus O'Donnell, the son of an Irish immigrant sea captain and merchant, was "one of the city's wealthiest and most honored citizens."<sup>2</sup> In 1845 she married a wealthy banker and dry goods merchant of Swiss descent named Adrian Iselin (1818–1905). The Iselins were prominent members of New York society and active in the city's cultural life: Adrian was one of the founders of the Metropolitan Opera and a supporter of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the American Museum of Natural History; Eleanora contributed to charitable causes, such as establishing schools and churches in New Rochelle, where the family summered.<sup>3</sup>

Shown standing erect in nearly full length, the distinguished sixty-seven-year-old woman rests her right hand on the corner of a Louis XVI-style ormolu table, holds a fan in her left hand, and directs a penetrating stare at the viewer. Sargent's spontaneous and abbreviated painterly treatment of her black dress is strongly reminiscent of the work of Frans Hals, and the powerful composition, empty brown background, and restrained palette all reflect the influence of Diego Velázquez. The sitter's outstretched hand is a small but dominant aspect of the composition. Trevor Fairbrother remarked how its "appearance illustrates its owner's advanced years, but more importantly, the distinctive presence which Sargent gave it reflects the woman's pride and tenacity in confronting old age."<sup>4</sup> According to family tradition, when the artist arrived at the Iselin home for the sitting, Mrs. Iselin entered the drawing room, followed by a maid carrying an armful of ball gowns, and asked him which one he wanted her to wear. Sargent annoyed her by insisting on painting her exactly as she stood, without even removing her hand from the table.<sup>5</sup> With this anecdote in mind, Milton Brown wrote that "the artist's vision and wit were at their keenest when he painted Mrs. Adrian Iselin, who stood before him in a fit of pique and whom he posed, perhaps because he was annoyed, not in the customary fancy-portrait Paris finery but in somewhat less exalted toilette."<sup>6</sup>

Art critics and historians have consistently dwelled on Mrs. Iselin's austere and imperious appearance. William Downes quoted a reviewer who had commented that her black gown and watch





John Singer Sargent, *Eleanora O'Donnell Iselin (Mrs. Adrian Iselin)*, 1964.13.1



chain betokened “the unostentatious elegance of a bygone day, while the strength and reserve of the face under its smooth parting of gray hair bespeak self-discipline that, too, is a little out of fashion.”<sup>77</sup> Charles Mount speculated that Sargent “seems not to have enjoyed this picture, his bluff-faced model, with large ugly ears, apparently demanding the elimination of too many wrinkles and lines to suit him. He shows her as she stood, looking at him in a rather uncompromising way, decidedly on her guard and ready to admonish him for any unnecessary liberty taken with her features.”<sup>78</sup> John Wilmerding opined that “here we sense Sargent confronting the strong personal energy and character of Mrs. Iselin.”<sup>79</sup> John Walker wrote that “Sargent’s painting of Mrs. Iselin epitomizes the American mothers described in the novels of Henry James: ruthless guardians of their young, determined managers of financial and social advancement.”<sup>80</sup>

Richard Ormond interpreted the artist’s straightforward and unpretentious delineation of his subject as evidence of a subtle adjustment to his new American clientele. In Ormond’s view, Sargent’s images of American matrons were “more severe and directly realistic than his comparable paintings of French or English sitters” and thus were deliberately “characterized in terms of a particular national character.”<sup>81</sup> Fairbrother disagreed with Ormond because he found the subject’s austere persona to be thoroughly appropriate for her age. Moreover, the presence of the French table, coupled with the strong possibility that the black satin passementerie gown was designed and manufactured in France, led him to speculate that Americans who saw the portrait in the late 1880s “would have felt overriding European associations.”<sup>82</sup>

If Mrs. Iselin’s somewhat severe expression was a manifestation of annoyance at Sargent’s refusal to portray her in a more elaborate gown, he may have reciprocated by posing her in a manner clearly related to his *Madame X* (*Madame Pierre Gautreau*) (1884, MMA), introducing an element of subtle sarcasm by equating the old New York dowager with the young Parisian sex symbol. A reviewer of the 1894 exhibition at the National Academy of Design may have obliquely alluded to the Iselin portrait when he noted that Sargent was a “satirist, and when his subject does not quite please him, he practices vivisection on her with an unmerciful brush. Posterity will learn from him the awkwardness, the self-conscious grimaces, the nervous twitchings, the

irritability, the coldness, the stupidity, the affectations of this generation.”<sup>83</sup> The qualities of irritability and coldness can certainly be detected here. When late in life Sargent was asked if he remembered Mrs. Iselin, he diplomatically replied, “Of course! I cannot forget that dominating little finger.”<sup>84</sup> A photograph (1905, Museum of the City of New York) taken by the Pach brothers shows Sargent’s portrait hanging in the front parlor of the Iselin house at 23 Madison Avenue, New York City.

RWT

## Notes

1. Sweet 1954, 57; Ernest Iselin, letter of 22 February 1965 (in NGA curatorial files).
2. Mary Fisher, “First Families of Maryland,” *Baltimore Post*, 8 February 1933.
3. For genealogical and biographical information on the family, see Friedrich Weiss-Frey, *Heinrich Iselin of Rosenfeld and His Descendants*, trans. J. H. Iselin (New York, 1910; 2d ed., Basle, 1963), 110–111.
4. Fairbrother 1986, 117–118.
5. Ernest Iselin, letter of 22 February 1965 (in NGA curatorial files); a variation of the story appears in Sweet 1954, 57.
6. Brown 1983, 84.
7. Margaret Breuning of the *New York Evening Post*, quoted in Downes 1925, 131.
8. Mount 1969, 136.
9. Wilmerding 1988, 136.
10. Walker 1984, 566.
11. Ormond 1970, 41. Kathleen Pyne, in Huntington 1983, 132–133, stated that *Eleanora O’Donnell Iselin* exemplified how Sargent “deliberately attempted to delineate the American character of his sitters. These portraits also show that he had become more severe and directly realistic in his vision as well, perhaps in part under the impetus of his discovery of John Singleton Copley’s portraits, and in part due to traditional American tastes for less idealized likenesses than those of his European patrons.” She likened *Eleanora O’Donnell Iselin* to Gilbert Stuart’s *Mrs. Richard Yates* (c. 1793, NGA) because “both women are characteristic as alert Yankee types, whose forceful personalities command the respectful attention of the viewer.”
12. Fairbrother 1986, 126.
13. “Portraits of Women,” *AAM* 32 (January 1895).
14. Ernest Iselin, letter of 22 February 1965 (NGA curatorial files); Brown 1983, 84.

## References

- |      |                            |
|------|----------------------------|
| 1925 | Downes: 131.               |
| 1927 | Charteris: 260.            |
| 1954 | Sweet: 57.                 |
| 1956 | McKibbin: 103.             |
| 1969 | Mount: 136, 442.           |
| 1970 | Ormond: 41, 244, pl. ix.   |
| 1976 | Dickson: 70.               |
| 1982 | Ratcliff: 14, 116, fig. 8. |
| 1983 | Brown: 84, pl. 85.         |

- 1983 Pyne, Kathleen, in *Huntington*: 132–133, pl. 61.  
 1984 Walker: 566–567, color repro.  
 1986 Fairbrother: 117–119, 126, 188, 288, 289, fig. 30.  
 1986 Hills et al.: 154, pl. 104.  
 1988 Wilmerding, *American Masterpieces*: 136, color repro.  
 1994 Fairbrother: 70, pl. 71.

1962.6.1 (1660)

### *Miss Grace Woodhouse*

1890  
 Oil on canvas, 162.9 × 94 (64 1/8 × 37)  
 Gift of Olga Roosevelt Graves

#### Inscriptions

At upper left: *John S. Sargent*  
 At upper right: 1890

**Technical Notes:** The unlined, medium-weight, plain-weave fabric support remains mounted on its original six-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher. The preprimed gray-white ground layer was applied in a thick, uniform manner so as to conceal the fabric surface. The artist applied paint mainly wet-into-wet, very thickly in the drapery folds, flowers, and bows. The paint is noticeably thinner in the sitter's face. The paint layer is in generally good condition. Tears along the tacking fold were mended in 1985. The thin surface coating is visibly discolored.

**Provenance:** The sitter's father, Lorenzo Guernsey Woodhouse [1839–1903], New York; possibly his nephew (the sitter's cousin), Lorenzo E. Woodhouse, New York;<sup>1</sup> the sitter's daughter, Olga Roosevelt Bayne Graves [Mrs. Sidney C. Graves, 1891–1962], Washington, D.C.

**Exhibited:** *66th Annual Exhibition*, NAD, 1891, no. 230.<sup>2</sup> Museum of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, New York, 1909–1913.<sup>3</sup>

SARGENT painted this three-quarter-length portrait during his second professional visit to America. The ten-month period was an extremely prolific and lucrative time for the artist, during which he almost doubled the number of commissions received during the first trip, painted the famous *La Carmencita* (1890, Musée d'Orsay, Paris), and was commissioned to design murals for the Boston Public Library. This portrait represents Grace Guernsey Woodhouse (1867–1894). She was the daughter and only child of Lorenzo Guernsey Woodhouse, a Civil War veteran and partner in the Chicago-

based company Marshall Field, and his wife Emma Douglas Arrowsmith. Sargent executed it in New York, probably sometime after February and before 7 April 1890, when Miss Woodhouse married Robert Barnwell Roosevelt Jr. (1866–1922), a cousin of Theodore Roosevelt.<sup>4</sup> A few things are known about her brief life. She was born in New York City and moved as a young girl with her parents to Chicago. By 1885 the family had returned to New York, where her father was resident buyer for Marshall Field's New York office. Her only child, Olga, was three when Grace died at her summer home on Shelter Island of blood poisoning resulting from tonsillitis. She is buried at Woodlawn Cemetery, New York.<sup>5</sup>

When this portrait was exhibited at the National Academy of Design in 1891, a reviewer described it as “a hurriedly painted one of a pretty young débutante in pink, the crimson bulb of the orchids in her hands furnishing the high note of the composition. The lady seems worthy of more considerate treatment. So charming a subject might at least have been spared the mortification of the flesh—note the leaden-hued, unfinished right arm.”<sup>6</sup> Miss Woodhouse, whose elegantly elongated figure stands out in relief against an empty background, clasps her hands together and holds the flowers at her breast, thus modestly concealing her décolletage in a gesture that emphasizes her impossibly narrow waist. Sargent's superb painterly delineation of the dress, especially the fluently abbreviated bows and lace details around the shoulders, enlivens the stark composition and introduces some momentum to the sitter's static pose and pensive, impenetrable expression. The straightforward presentation of character and subdued quality of this early society portrait makes an instructive comparison with the later mannered and facile images, such as *Mrs. Joseph Chamberlain* [1958.2.1, p. 115] and *Mathilde Townsend* [1952.3.1, p. 120].

RWT

#### Notes

1. He lent the painting to the Museum of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences from 1909 to 1913; see note 3 below.

2. There is a National Academy of Design exhibition label affixed to the reverse of the painting. No. 230 in the 1891 exhibition catalogue was a “Portrait” by Sargent, and a review in the May 1891 *Art Amateur* describes this portrait well enough to identify it as the Gallery's painting.

3. According to information supplied by the former curator of the Brooklyn Museum, Axel von Saldern (let-



John Singer Sargent, *Miss Grace Woodhouse*, 1962.6.1

ter of 5 April 1965, in NGA curatorial files), the Woodhouse portrait was exhibited there under the title "Portrait of a Lady," lent by Lorenzo E. Woodhouse. It was listed as no. 311 in the museum's 1910 catalogue of paintings.

4. McKibbin 1956, 120, dates the portrait to 1889.

5. On the Woodhouse family, see Margaret Stocker, "The Woodhouse Family of Hunting Lane," in *East Hampton Invents the Culture of Summer: The Legacy of the Woodhouse Family of Hunting Lane* (East Hampton, New York, 1994), 2–15. For other details, see "Mrs. Robert B. Roosevelt, Jr., Dead," *New York Times*, 30 July 1894, 6; Charles Barney Whittesley, *The Roosevelt Genealogy* (Hartford, Connecticut, 1902), 68, 90; C. Douglas Woodhouse (the son of the sitter's cousin), letter of 30 January 1963 (in NGA curatorial files). Family tradition records Grace's death as being from diphtheria (William Campbell, notes from a conversation with the donor's husband, 15 January 1963, and letter from Mrs. Peter Toulmin, the sitter's great-granddaughter, 3 December 1996 (both in NGA curatorial files).

6. *AAM* 24 (May 1891): 142, 145.

#### References

- 1956 McKibbin: 120, as *Mrs. Robert Barnwell Roosevelt (Grace Woodhouse)*.  
1969 Mount: 450, as *Mrs. R. B. Roosevelt, Jr.*

1951.20.1 (1066)

### *Ellen Peabody Endicott* (*Mrs. William Crowninshield Endicott*)

1901

Oil on canvas, 162.9 × 114.3 (64 1/8 × 45)

Gift of Louise Thoron Endicott in memory of Mr. and Mrs. William Crowninshield Endicott

#### Inscriptions

At upper right: *John S. Sargent 1901*

**Technical Notes:** The very fine plain-weave fabric support has been lined. The original tacking margins have been removed. The white ground layer was thinly and evenly applied. The paint was applied fluidly and with great technical skill: The sitter's face was modeled with broad, impasted strokes; the costume and accessories were delineated with loose, expressive brushwork; and the background was painted very thinly with liquid paint. The painting is in generally excellent condition, despite scattered areas of discolored inpainting, including a small repaired tear over the sitter's head and abrasion throughout parts of the background and the sitter's collar. The surface coating is moderately discolored.

**Provenance:** The sitter's son, William C. Endicott, Jr. [1860–1936], Boston; his wife, Louise Thoron Endicott, Boston.

**Exhibited:** *134th Exhibition*, Royal Academy of Arts, London, 1902, no. 148. *Second Annual Exhibition of Contemporary Art*, Copley Society of Boston, Copley Hall, Boston, 1902, no. 95. *Loan Exhibition of Portraits by Living Painters*, Copley Society of Boston, Copley Hall, Boston, 1914, no. 16. *Opening Exhibition of the Robert Dawson Evans Memorial Galleries for Paintings*, MFA, 1915, unnumbered checklist. *Exhibition of Paintings by John Singer Sargent*, MFA, 1916, no cat. *Retrospective Exhibition of Important Works of John Singer Sargent*, Grand Central Art Galleries, New York, 1924, no. 12. *Memorial Exhibition of the Works of the Late John Singer Sargent*, MFA, 1925, no. 75. *Memorial Exhibition of the Work of John Singer Sargent*, MMA, 1926, no. 38. *Sargent, Whistler and Mary Cassatt*, AIC; MMA, 1954, no. 61. *A Centennial Exhibition, Sargent's Boston*, MFA, 1956, no. 32.<sup>1</sup>

ELLEN PEABODY Endicott (1833–1927) was descended from a prominent shipping family of Salem, Massachusetts. In 1859 she married the eminent jurist William Crowninshield Endicott (1826–1900), who served on the Supreme Court of Massachusetts and was President Grover Cleveland's secretary of war from 1885 to 1889. The couple were both descended from patrician Massachusetts families and inherited substantial wealth. According to one source Mrs. Endicott "was a well-known figure in Washington diplomatic and governmental circles."<sup>2</sup>

Painted at Sargent's Tite Street studio in London, this portrait shows Mrs. Endicott seated in a bergere chair next to a French empire table. Posed against a crimson curtain background, she wears a somber black dress that is enlivened by the skillfully painted large white lace collar. Her melancholy expression may be attributed to the recent death of her husband. An early reviewer described the portrait as "somewhat uncompromising, save in so far as the rendering of the black velvet dress is concerned."<sup>3</sup> William Downes quoted a perceptive *Boston Transcript* reviewer who opined that the portrait was "quite on par with Van Dyke" and concluded that "as a study of individual character and a masterly rendering of a fine type, it is unsurpassable."<sup>4</sup> Mrs. Endicott's elongated figure and dignified, aristocratic bearing are indeed reminiscent of the work of Sir Anthony Van Dyck, as are the subdued, rich palette and dramatic lighting, and the eloquently expressive gesture of her left hand.<sup>5</sup> A comparison between this image, which Charles Mount justly considered "one of Sargent's finest achievements,"<sup>6</sup> and Sargent's 1902 portrait of Mrs. Endicott's daughter, *Mary Crowninshield Endicott Chamberlain* [1958.2.1, p. 115], is instructive.



John Singer Sargent, *Ellen Peabody Endicott (Mrs. William Crowninshield Endicott)*, 1951.20.1



Both paintings reveal the artist's technical brilliance, but *Ellen Peabody Endicott* is a penetrating psychological study equal to *Eleanora O'Donnell Iselin* [1964.13.1, p. 108], one that in many respects looks forward to *Mrs. Asher Wertheimer* (1904, Tate Gallery), while *Mary Crowninshield Endicott Chamberlain* exemplifies his mannered society portraiture. An early photograph shows this painting hanging in the drawing room of the Endicott house at 163 Marlborough Street, Boston.<sup>7</sup>

RWT

#### Notes

1. Downes 1925, 200, incorrectly noted that the portrait had been exhibited at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in 1903.
2. Sweet 1954, 62; *DAB*, 6: 158–159.
3. *Art Journal* (1902): 210.
4. Downes 1925, 201.
5. There is a scholarly divergence of opinion regarding Van Dyck's influence on Sargent: Richard Ormond (1970, 65) regarded Joshua Reynolds as the predominant influence on Sargent's late portraiture and failed to detect the influence of Van Dyck; Trevor Fairbrother (1994, 92) wrote that both artists "were often echoed in Sargent's work after 1900, particularly when his portraits were to hang in ancestral homes."
6. Mount 1969, 240.
7. It is reproduced in McKibbin 1956, 46, fig. 29.

#### References

- 1925 Downes: 57, 200–201.  
 1927 Charteris: 268.  
 1954 Sweet: 62.  
 1956 McKibbin: 47, 94.  
 1969 Mount: 240, 437.  
 1970 Ormond: 66, 250, 253, pl. 85.

1958.2.1 (1498)

*Mary Crowninshield Endicott  
 Chamberlain  
 (Mrs. Joseph Chamberlain)*

1902  
 Oil on canvas, 150.5 × 83.8 (59 1/4 × 33)  
 Gift of the sitter, Mary Endicott Chamberlain Carnegie

#### Inscriptions

At upper left: *John S. Sargent*  
 At upper right: 1902

**Technical Notes:** The tightly woven, fine, plain-weave fabric support was relined in 1960. The tacking margins have been trimmed, but small sections are incorporated

into the surface of the painting, slightly expanding the dimensions at top and bottom. Paint was applied rapidly over a thin gray ground layer. The lively and varied brushwork, typical of Sargent's bravura technique, is broad and thickly impasted, becoming smoother and more fluid in the background. A small tear below the waist was mended in 1958. Other than minor discolored inpainting along the edges, the portrait is in excellent condition. The surface coating remains clear and evenly saturated.

**Provenance:** The sitter's mother, Mrs. William Crowninshield Endicott [1833–1927]; bequeathed 1927 to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, with life interest to her daughter (the sitter); released 1952 by Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, to the sitter, Mary Endicott Chamberlain Carnegie [1864–1957].

**Exhibited:** *Second Annual Exhibition of Contemporary Art*, Copley Society of Boston, Copley Hall, Boston, 1902, no. 121. *135th Exhibition*, Royal Academy of Arts, London, 1903, no. 166. *Exhibition of Paintings by John Singer Sargent*, MFA, 1916, no cat. *Retrospective Exhibition of Important Works of John Singer Sargent*, Grand Central Art Galleries, New York, 1924, no. 13. *Memorial Exhibition of the Work of John Singer Sargent*, MFA, 1925, no. 76. *Two Centuries of American Portraits*, University of Kentucky Art Gallery, Lexington; Paducah Art Gallery, Kentucky; J. B. Speed Museum of Art, Louisville, Kentucky, 1970, no cat.

MARY CROWNINSHIELD Endicott Chamberlain (1864–1957) was the only daughter of the eminent jurist William Crowninshield Endicott, who had served as secretary of war under Grover Cleveland from 1885 to 1889, and his wife Ellen, whose portrait Sargent had painted at Boston in 1901 [1951.20.1, p. 113]. In 1888 she became the third wife of the noted British statesman Joseph Chamberlain (1836–1914). After his death she married another Englishman, William Hartley Carnegie, dean of Westminster and chaplain of the House of Commons. According to Charles Mount, Sargent painted this portrait in London. Five of the artist's preparatory pencil studies for it survive in a sketchbook (Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts).

When this portrait was exhibited at the Royal Academy, London, in 1903, a reviewer described it as "the standing, three-quarter length, figure of a young, slight, fresh-complexioned woman, wearing evening dress."<sup>1</sup> Sargent represented his fashionably attired sitter, who looks somewhat younger than her thirty-eight years, holding a fan and standing before a neutral background. His skillful painterly rendition of her white silk dress and matching long white gloves impressed a London



John Singer Sargent, *Mary Crowninshield Endicott Chamberlain (Mrs. Joseph Chamberlain)*, 1958.2.1

*Times* reviewer, who remarked that neither Sargent “nor any other living man has ever done anything more brilliant or achieved a greater technical triumph than the painting of the dress in this picture. It is as though a few strokes had done it, but what strokes! instinct with what power, what light, what color!”<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Chamberlain’s self-consciously glamorous expression typifies Sargent’s formula for Anglo-American society portraiture. This image is devoid of the penetrating psychological intensity that distinguishes his portrait of her mother.

RWT

#### Notes

1. “The Royal Academy—I,” *Illustrated London News*, 30 May 1903, 828.

2. Quoted in Downes 1925, 206; the author listed the portrait under the title *Mrs. William Hartley Carnegie*.

#### References

- 1925 Downes: 205–206.  
1927 Charteris: 270.  
1956 McKibbin: 47, 88.  
1969 Mount: 434.

1942.9.101 (SP-5)

### *Peter A. B. Widener*

1902

Oil on canvas, 148.9 × 98.4 (58<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 38<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>)  
Widener Collection

#### Inscriptions

At upper right: *John S. Sargent 1902*

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support remains mounted on its original mortise-and-tenon stretcher. The tacking margins are intact. The artist applied paint thinly and with minimal texture over a commercially applied white or cream ground layer. The painting is in very good condition, other than the drying crackle in the face and right hand, and less pronounced cracks in the background. These were inpainted in 1942 at M. Knoedler & Co., Inc., the first and only occasion when the painting has been conserved. The surface is coated with a layer of varnish that is slightly discolored.

**Provenance:** The sitter; inheritance from Estate of Peter A. B. Widener by gift through power of appointment of Joseph E. Widener, Elkins Park, Pennsylvania.

**Exhibited:** 72nd Annual Exhibition, PAFA, 1903, no. 26.

THE FINANCIER, politician, and philanthropist Peter Arrell Brown Widener (1834–1915) gained an immense fortune through the acquisition and consolidation of public transportation systems in his native Philadelphia and other American cities, and he was active in many entrepreneurial enterprises.<sup>1</sup> He amassed an important collection of European art, oriental carpets, and Chinese porcelain that he kept in his mansion, Lynnewood Hall, Elkins Park, Philadelphia. Part of the collection, including this portrait, was given to the National Gallery by his son Joseph E. Widener in 1942.

Sargent painted two three-quarter-length portraits of Widener that have often been confused with each other in the scholarly literature. The National Gallery’s version was painted in London during the summer of 1902; the other (fig. 1) was executed at Lynnewood Hall in May 1903.<sup>2</sup> No documentation survives to explain why Sargent painted two similar portraits within such a short period of time. The Philadelphia Museum of Art version hung in the smoking room at Lynnewood Hall, while this painting hung over the mantelpiece in the Van Dyck room (fig. 2), where Widener exhibited his celebrated collection of portraits by the seventeenth-century Flemish artist. Edith Appleton Standen, the curator of Widener’s collection, later recollected hearing his son remark that Sargent “had not wanted his picture to be in such company but that he, Mr. Widener, considered that it held its own very well.”<sup>3</sup> Widener’s grandson wrote that the artist became a close friend of the family beginning with the time he painted the first picture.<sup>4</sup> The dark, monochrome palette, restrained technique, and straightforward presentation of the subject make this one of Sargent’s most conservative portraits. The artist represented Widener standing in a three-quarter view oriented toward his left, resting his left hand on the knob of a paneled door of dark wood. His diffident expression, unidealized features, and somewhat tentative bearing seem incompatible with the character of a self-made millionaire of the Gilded Age who was one of the wealthiest men in America.

The most striking aspect of this portrait is the strong chiaroscuro effect, with light dramatically illuminating the right side of Widener’s head, that is reminiscent of the Dutch and Flemish seventeenth-century paintings that Widener avidly collected. Sargent made significant alterations in the second painting, transforming the formal, unimaginative portrait into a more casual, personal image that al-

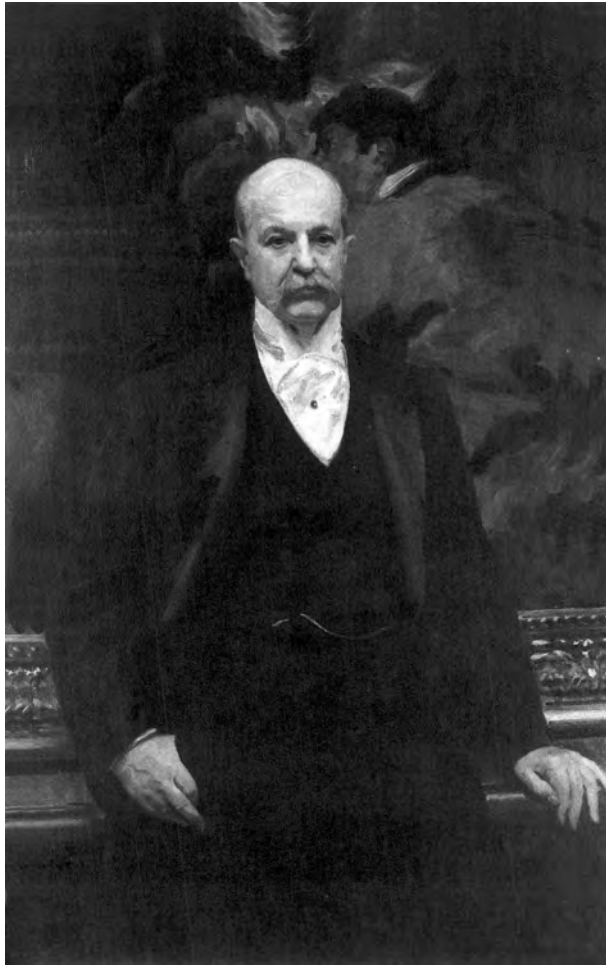


Fig. 1. John Singer Sargent, *Peter A. B. Widener*, oil on canvas, 1903, Collection of Peter A. B. Widener, Jr., on extended loan to Philadelphia Museum of Art, 20-1950-1

luded to the subject's interest in art. In that work, Widener stands before his favorite painting, *The Satyr and the Peasant* [1942.9.39], which was then attributed to Velázquez but is now known to have been painted by Johann Liss (c. 1597–before 1630),<sup>5</sup> and in a proprietary gesture rests his left hand on its decorative gilt frame. He appears more assertive because he turns forward and faces the viewer. Sargent replaced the somber ambience of the National Gallery painting with a colorful, active background painted with his customary technical brilliance. Although the second portrait is aesthetically superior to the first, Widener's grandson noted that family friends were surprised to see the entrepreneur “with a collar and white tie which no one had ever seen him wear.”<sup>6</sup> Charles Mount's comments about the second portrait of Widener are also relevant to this one: He considered it an example of Sargent's late tendency to vary his technique, when appropriate, in order to emphasize the definition of mass and weight, and thus “he could call forth huge strength, producing a shining bald head with all the solidity of its bony structure beneath.”<sup>7</sup>

RWT

#### Notes

1. For additional biographical details, see *DAB*, 20: 185–186.

2. Downes 1925, 208, only mentioned Sargent's second portrait of Widener, which he erroneously thought had been exhibited at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in January and February 1903, although (according to Mount 1969, 256) it was commenced early in May that year. Charteris 1927, 271, mentioned only the second version. In the first edition (1955) of his book Mount evidently confused the two portraits: He discussed the second in his text but listed only the National Gallery's version in his checklist. Both Mount 1969, 456, and McKibbin 1956, 131, incorrectly dated the National Gallery portrait to 1903. All the authorities date the second portrait to 1903, yet it is dated 1905.

3. Edith Appleton Standen Papers, MSS 7 (NGA Archives). According to the unknown author of “The Perfect Collection,” *Fortune* 6 (September 1932): 72, however, “Sargent thought highly of this picture and did not conceal his admiration. It was his particular request that it be hung in the same room as the masterly Van Dyke [*sic*] portraits.”

4. P.A.B. Widener, *Without Drums* (New York, 1940), 67.

5. For a discussion of Liss' *Satyr*, see John Oliver Hand, *German Paintings of the Fifteenth through Seventeenth Centuries*, The Collections of the National Gallery of Art, Systematic Catalogue (Washington, D.C., 1993), 121–126.



Fig. 2. photograph of Sargent's portrait of *Peter A. B. Widener* at Lynnewood Hall, Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, c. 1930, Washington, National Gallery of Art, Gallery Archives



John Singer Sargent, *Peter A. B. Widener*, 1942.9.101



6. Widener 1940, 69.

7. Mount 1969, 286. An engraving of the National Gallery's Widener portrait appeared in *Current Literature* (April 1903): 444; and as the frontispiece in *Pictures in the Collection of P.A.B. Widener at Lynnewood Hall, Elkins Park, Pennsylvania. Early German, Dutch & Flemish Schools* (Philadelphia, 1913).

#### References

- 1956 McKibbin: 131.  
1969 Mount: 456.

1952.3.1 (1108)

### *Miss Mathilde Townsend*

1907

Oil on canvas, 152.7 × 101.6 (60 1/8 × 40)  
Gift of the sitter, Mrs. Sumner Welles

#### Inscriptions

At upper left: *John S. Sargent*  
At upper right: 1907

**Technical Notes:** The tightly woven plain-weave fabric support consists of hemp and linen fibers. It is unlined and remains mounted on its original six-member stretcher. The light gray ground layer, which covers the tacking margins, is covered by a slightly darker gray imprimatura. Paint was applied in the fluid, painterly technique one associates with Sargent. High impasto appears in portions of the drapery, and the paint has been built up to thicknesses of almost 0.5 cm where the sitter clutches the pink sash. The background is much smoother, with the clouds described by free, loose strokes. X-radiography reveals minor changes: The sitter's face was originally fuller and her nose more prominent, and the position of her right eye was altered. Other than a small inpainted loss on the sitter's right shoulder, the paint surface is in very good condition. The surface coating, thin and uneven, has not discolored appreciably.

**Provenance:** The sitter's mother, Mary Scott [Mrs. Richard H.] Townsend; by inheritance to the sitter, Mathilde Townsend Gerry Welles [1888–1949]; bequeathed 1949 to NGA, with life interest to her husband, Sumner Welles [1892–1961].

**Exhibited:** *Second Exhibition, Oil Paintings by Contemporary Artists*, CGA, 1908–1909, no. 74. *104th Annual Exhibition*, PAFA, 1909, no. 417. Loan for display with permanent collection, Mobile Art Gallery, Alabama, 1974–1975. *The Grand American Avenue: 1850–1920*, Octagon Museum, Washington, D.C.; Historic New Orleans Collection, Louisiana; Chicago Architecture Foundation at Harold Washington Library Center; NYHS; 1994–1995, unnumbered (shown only in first three venues).

MATHILDE TOWNSEND (1888–1949) was the only child of Richard Townsend, president of the Erie & Pittsburgh Railroad, and his wife Mary Scott Townsend, daughter of the railroad executive and congressman William Lawrence Scott of Erie, Pennsylvania. After Townsend retired in 1892, the family moved to Washington, D.C., where they became prominent socialites. In 1899 the Townsends commissioned the architecture firm Carrere & Hastings to build a mansion at 2121 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., that was modeled after the Petit Trianon at Versailles.<sup>1</sup> They entertained foreign diplomats there with such regularity that President Theodore Roosevelt's daughter Alice considered placing a sign on the door to label it a boarding-house for foreigners.<sup>2</sup>

Sargent painted this portrait in London several years before Miss Townsend's marriage in 1910 to Peter Goelet Gerry, a senator from Rhode Island. One year after her divorce from Gerry in 1924, she became the second wife of the diplomat and author Benjamin Sumner Welles, who later served as secretary of state under President Franklin D. Roosevelt.<sup>3</sup> She was described at the time of her first marriage, a lavish event at which President William Howard Taft was present, as an "unspoiled beauty" and the wealthiest young woman in Washington. Later in life she established funds for awarding medals to people active in preventing cruelty to animals and providing veterinary services to those unable to afford them for their pets.<sup>4</sup> In 1924 she achieved notoriety for paying the jeweler Cartier \$400,000 for forty-two black pearls. She died in 1949 while vacationing in Lausanne, Switzerland, and her ashes were interred in the Townsend family mausoleum in Rock Creek Cemetery, Washington, D.C.

Sargent executed this painting around the time that he vowed to renounce portraiture. Shortly after he was awarded the Carol H. Beck Gold Medal of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1909 for this work, a reviewer for *The Studio* expressed admiration for its "inimitable skill and dash in the rendering of the peculiar charm of young American womanhood."<sup>5</sup> A more recent critic observed that here Sargent "revived the fluttering manner of Lawrence" and noted that "such exercises in sheer flattery inevitably rang false in the age of the dynamo."<sup>6</sup> Although there is much to admire in the artist's flamboyant technical proficiency, this formal society portrait represents an ideal rather than an individual. The self-consciously



John Singer Sargent, *Miss Mathilde Townsend*, 1907.3.1



Fig. 1. photograph of Sargent's portrait of *Mathilde Townsend*, hanging in the reception room of her parent's house, Hillyer Mansion, Washington, courtesy of the Historical Society of Washington, D.C., Cosmos Photograph Collection, no. 24

glamorous Miss Townsend is set against a cloudy sky, her white décolleté summer gown fluttering in the breeze. The overt sentimentality and artificiality of this type of portrait elicited criticism from some of Sargent's contemporaries. Charles Caffin probably had such an image in mind when he wrote that Sargent had given some American artists the idea "that masterfulness of technique may justify a lack of ability or inclination to penetrate the character of the sitter."<sup>7</sup> An early photograph shows this portrait hanging in the reception room of the Townsend family mansion (fig. 1).<sup>8</sup>

RWT

#### Notes

1. The couple lived there until the sitter's death in 1949; the following year it was sold to the Cosmos Club.
2. Frank and Larrabee 1983, 95.
3. Until 26 April 1965, when William Campbell recommended that the title be changed to its present form, the portrait was known as "Mrs. Sumner Welles" (memorandum, in NGA curatorial files).

4. Obituary, *New York Times*, 9 August 1949.
5. Quoted in Downes 1925, 229.
6. Michael Quick, "Achieving the Nation's Imperial Destiny: 1870–1920," in LACMA 1981, 70.
7. Caffin 1907, 253.
8. The photograph is reproduced in Cigliano and Landau 1994, 199, fig. 27.

#### References

- 1925 Downes: 229.  
 1927 Charteris: 274.  
 1956 McKibbin: 127.  
 1969 Mount: 454.  
 1981 LACMA: 70, fig. 15.  
 1983 Frank and Larrabee: 95–97, ill.  
 1994 Cigliano and Landau: 199.

1991.177.1

### *Valdemosa, Majorca: Thistles and Herbage on a Hillside*

1908

Oil on canvas, 55.8 × 71.1 (21<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 28)

Avalon Fund and Gift of Virginia Bailey Brown

**Technical Notes:** The fine plain-weave fabric support has been lined. The tacking margins have been removed. Cusping visible along all four edges indicates that the original dimensions of the painting have not been altered. The white ground layer may have been commercially applied. Subtle texturing of the paint surface was created by brushmarking and low impasto. Wet-into-wet colors were mixed with a brush and palette knife. Additional details were added after previous layers had dried. Examination of the edges indicates that this painting was executed in two major stages. After the first stage its edges were covered with paper tape, possibly to facilitate securing it to a board (there are marks from two large thumbtacks in the bottom corners). After further painting, Sargent removed the tape, leaving straight edges along some blocks of color. The paint surface is in very good condition and has no losses. The varnish has not discolored.

**Provenance:** Estate of the artist; (his estate sale, Christie, Manson & Woods, London, 24 and 27 July 1925, first day, no. 105); (M. Knoedler & Co., New York); sold 1958 to Thomas K. Ware; by inheritance 1963 to his wife, Lenore Caldwell Ware Woodcock, Huntington, New York;<sup>1</sup> (Sotheby Parke-Bernet, New York, 25 April 1980, no. 77); private collection, Brookline, Massachusetts; (Jeffrey R. Brown Fine Arts, North Amherst, Massachusetts), in 1981; Virginia Bailey Brown, North Amherst, Massachusetts.<sup>2</sup>

**Exhibited:** *Exhibition of Paintings by the Late John Singer Sargent, R.A.*, M. Knoedler & Co., New York, 1925, no. 5. *A Century of American Landscape Paintings, 1800–1900*,

Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, Massachusetts, 1938, no. 61. Extended loan, Heckscher Museum of Art, Huntington, Long Island, New York, 1967–1974. *American Impressionism*, Mead Art Museum, Amherst, Massachusetts, 1982. *John Singer Sargent Drawings*, Hood Museum of Art, Hanover, New Hampshire, 1983.

SARGENT produced his most important landscapes during two distinct phases. Those of the first phase (1870s and early 1880s) reflect the influence of Claude Monet, tempered by academic training under Carolus-Duran; those of the second group (from 1900 until the end of Sargent's life) are of a much different character. *Valdemoso, Majorca: Thistles and Herbage on a Hillside* falls into the latter group. Having finally freed himself from the restrictions and demands of painting formal portraits (he disparagingly called them "paughtraits"), the artist took annual trips to Switzerland, Italy, Austria, and Spain, where he painted numerous plein-air scenes of a rugged, often unpicturesque nature executed with a remarkable degree of painterly freedom. Many were close-up studies in which the subject consumed the entire picture surface, creating a sense of *horror vacui*. Sargent avoided conventional landscape compositions, dismissing them with the comment that "enormous views and huge skies do not tempt me."<sup>3</sup> The artist made this sketch during late September or November 1908, when he accompanied his sister Emily and her friend Eliza Wedgwood on a trip to Valdemoso, a small town in Majorca, in the Balearic Isles of Spain.

Here Sargent transformed a mundane microcosm of nature into an exuberant image, capturing the effect of the strong Spanish sunlight on tangled, intricate forms of vegetation. Instead of creating a painstakingly naturalistic image, the artist used brilliant color, strong contrasts, and intensity of execution—evident in the swirling brushstrokes and thick white impasto—to achieve an extraordinary degree of expressionistic freedom. Painted in oil, this work displays the same spontaneity and facility that characterize Sargent's Valdemoso watercolors, such as *Pomegranates* (1908, Brooklyn Museum) and *Majorca, Olive Trunk* (1908, private collection, New York). The picture appears to have been executed rapidly, but it was more likely the result of premeditation. Once, after observing Sargent at work, the artist Manierre Dawson commented, "Although nine-tenths of the work is very careful indeed, there is a look of bold virtuosity when the thing is done."<sup>4</sup>

Although Sargent selected such unusual subjects

as a means to experiment with his technique, evidence suggests that he was also interested in them for other professional and personal reasons. In his discussion of *Pomegranates*, Donelson F. Hoopes noted that Sargent included pomegranates in *The Messianic Era*, one of the six lunettes he designed to link the Judaic and Christian sections of his mural decorations at the Boston Public Library, because the fruit was symbolic of Christ's Resurrection and the unity of the Church.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, the thistle evolved into a symbol of earthly sorrow and sin because of God's curse against Adam in Genesis 3:17–18. Associated with the Crown of Thorns, it was one of the traditional symbols of the Passion of Christ. At this point in his life Sargent was quite familiar with Christian iconography. He had already designed and executed *The Dogma of Redemption* (including the Trinity, the Crucifix sculpture, and the frieze of angels) for the Boston Public Library mural project, and he was actively working on the lunettes (the entire project was completed between 1895 and 1916).<sup>6</sup> Although he is not known to have been particularly religious, Sargent was fascinated by the Crucifixion theme, and during his later summer holiday trips to the Swiss and Austrian Alps he painted watercolors of the subject, such as *Tyrolese Crucifix* (1914, private collection).

Sargent may also have had a spiritual affinity for nature. Only months before executing *Thistles*, he had painted the stylistically similar *The Hermit, or Il Solitario* (MMA), at Purtid, Valle d'Aosta, Italy. In that work the hermit's form is integrated into the flora and fauna of his rustic surroundings to the extent that he is nearly indistinguishable from them. The artist approved of the alternate title because he wanted "another simple word that did not bring with it any Christian association, and that rather suggested quietness or pantheism."<sup>7</sup> Doreen Bolger Burke has suggested that the painting possesses autobiographical undertones in that Sargent, like the hermit, "had immersed himself in the natural landscape—his source of artistic inspiration and, perhaps, personal solace."<sup>8</sup> *Valdemoso, Majorca: Thistles and Herbage on a Hillside* is an important example of Sargent's late style that, when viewed with his other landscape paintings of the period, provides some insight into his elusive personality and pantheistic beliefs.

RWT





John Singer Sargent, *Valdemosa, Majorca: Thistles and Herbage on a Hillside*, 1991.177.1



## Notes

1. Mrs. Ware's second husband was William A. Woodcock, and they lent the painting to the Heckscher Museum of Art in Huntington, New York, from August 1967 to March 1974 (letter of 26 August 1996 and telephone call of 19 February 1997 from William Titus, registrar, Heckscher Museum of Art [in NGA curatorial files]).

2. The painting was briefly discussed in *An American Gallery, Spring 1987* (Richard York Gallery, New York, 1987), no. 15. This dealer handled the sale of the painting for its last private owner.

3. Ormond 1970, 69.

4. Manierre Dawson Journal, 26 September 1910, 64, AAA.

5. Hoopes 1970, 64.

6. For the Boston Public Library commission, see Martha Kingsbury, "Sargent's Murals in the Boston Public Library," *Winterthur Portfolio* 2 (1976): 153–172.

7. Sargent, letter to Edward Robinson, 16 March 1911, quoted by Ratcliff 1982, 211.

8. Burke 1980, 264–266.

## References

1927 Charteris: 289, as *Valdemoso, Majorca (Thistles and Herbage on Hillside)*.

1969 Mount: 473, as *Roots, Valdemoso*.

1948.16.1 (1029)

### *Nonchaloir (Repose)*

1911

Oil on canvas, 63.8 × 76.2 (25 1/8 × 30)

Gift of Curt H. Reisinger

### Inscriptions

At upper right: *John S. Sargent 1911*

**Technical Notes:** The medium- to heavy-weight, plain-weave fabric support has been lined. The tacking margins have been removed, but cusping suggests that the painting is close to its original dimensions. The artist applied paint fluidly and thickly over a white ground layer. The painting was executed rapidly, with loose, broad brushstrokes. Paint was built up in a series of impasted brushstrokes placed one over the other. The last touches of highlights are the most highly impasted. The paint surface is in excellent condition, with only one small inpainted area on the right side of the sitter's hair. The surface coating is moderately discolored.

**Provenance:** Purchased 1911 by Hugo Reisinger [1856–1914], New York;<sup>1</sup> his wife, Edmée Busch Reisinger [later Mrs. Charles E. Greenough, d. 1955], New York; her son, Curt H. Reisinger [d. 1964], New York.

**Exhibited:** *Forty-fifth Exhibition of Modern Pictures by the New English Art Club*, Galleries of the Royal Society of British Artists, London, summer 1911, no. 184. *Fourth Exhibition of Oil Paintings by Contemporary Artists*, CGA, 1912–1913, no. 31. *Memorial Exhibition of the Works of the Late John Singer Sargent*, MFA, 1925, no. 107, as *Nonchaloire (Mme. Michel)*. *Memorial Exhibition of the Work of John Singer Sargent*, MMA, 1926, no. 53, as *Nonchaloire—Madame Michel*. *Opening Exhibition of the Sargent Gallery*, National Gallery, Millbank (Tate Gallery), London, 1926, unnumbered, as *Non-Chaloire*. *Masterpieces of Art*, New York World's Fair, 1940, no. 307. *A Centennial Exhibition, Sargent's Boston*, MFA, 1956, no. 43, as "Nonchaloire" (*Rose Marie Ormond*). *French, American, and Italian Review*, Oklahoma Art Center, Oklahoma City, 1963, no. 47, as *Repose*. *The Private World of John Singer Sargent*, CGA; Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio; Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts; MWPI, 1964–1965, no. 86, as *Nonchaloire*. *Americans at Home and Abroad 1870–1920*, Meredith Long & Company, Houston, Texas, 1971, no. 32, as *Repose*.

SARGENT probably executed this informal oil sketch in 1911, while on vacation with his sister's family in Switzerland. The woman represented here is Rosa-Marie Ormond (Madame Robert André Michel, 1893–1918), the artist's niece (daughter of his sister Violet Sargent Ormond), frequent companion, and model. She appears in eight of his oil paintings and in numerous watercolors. She was killed in Paris on 29 March 1918 when a "Big Bertha" shell hit the church of St. Gervais where she was attending Good Friday services. According to Evan Charteris, Sargent had been attracted to "her youth and high spirits and the beauty of her character," and her death "made a deep impression on him."<sup>2</sup>

In this rapidly executed and informal representation of a friend and relative, Sargent was at liberty to paint an unconventional portrait. The title *Nonchaloir* (occasionally spelled "Nonchaloire") is an archaic French word that means carelessness, negligence, and inaction.<sup>3</sup> The artist emphasized the young woman's reclining position by a series of horizontal lines created by the gilt frame above her head, the tabletop on the left, and the top of the sofa. Only a small portion of a painting is visible in the upper background, but its presence implies a large interior; Sargent placed his signature at the bottom right of this painting within a painting. Both the sitter's attire and her surroundings suggest great wealth and refinement. Trevor Fairbrother observed that "the palette strikes a Neoclassical note with its variations of pale green, white, gold,

and gray”; Sargent may have deliberately created an ambience reminiscent of the works of Jacques-Louis David and Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780–1867), who had both painted famous images of recumbent women.<sup>4</sup> The decorative design of the shawl, repeated on the fabric that covers the back of the sofa, adds an exotic element; Sargent painted the same distinctive garment in *Cashmere* (1908, private collection) and *The Cashmere Shawl* (1911, MFA). Indian Kashmir shawls (which also appear in portraits by Ingres) were luxury fashion items for European women from the late eighteenth century until the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871, so the appearance of one at this late date is rather surprising.<sup>5</sup>

*Nonchaloir (Repose)* was praised by critics when it was first exhibited in the United States at the Corcoran Gallery late in 1912. A New York critic drew attention to the informal quality of the work by observing that Sargent was “not in a mood to perform his astounding feats of portraiture. He seems to have painted this canvas of a woman reclining on a couch because he wanted to—neither more nor less.”<sup>6</sup> Another described how it was “beautifully swept in, of delicate gray tones, with charming arrangement of easily painted draperies, it has large distinction and authority. It is lovingly painted, too, as if the artist gave himself completely over to the joy of doing just that which appealed to him.”<sup>7</sup> A local writer described it as “a delightful recent work, an interior—a figure of a young woman lounging on a couch, beneath a voluminous robe,” and noted that it was

painted “as only Sargent can, with vivacity, amazing cleverness and sound knowledge.”<sup>8</sup>

Art historians have unanimously recognized that this image is, to borrow John Russell’s phrase, “a declaration of dreamy luxury rather than a personality profile.”<sup>9</sup> Carter Ratcliff, who regarded it as “an exemplary performance of his late style,” observed that here Sargent “presents a young woman as withdrawn into her mood as he is into the act of painting her. Artist and subject seem present to each other on terms resolved by the setting they share.”<sup>10</sup> Donelson Hoopes commented that “the figure seems wrapped in reveries that carry away the personality of the individual represented, leaving the viewer alone with abstract shapes.”<sup>11</sup> John Wilmerding noted that the painting “seems to embody a lingering fin-de-siècle mood of languor, elegant indulgence, and brooding calm.”<sup>12</sup> Fairbrother commented that “the picture looks on her as a symbol of beauty, serenity, and high culture, and not as an individual.”<sup>13</sup> These subtleties were lost to one critic, who denounced *Nonchaloir (Repose)* as “a pretty but meaningless picture” that demonstrated “how superficial Sargent could be.”<sup>14</sup> Linda Nochlin offered the most provocative interpretation of *Nonchaloir (Repose)* by viewing it, along with Sargent’s *Mosquito Net* (1900, White House, Washington, D.C.) and John White Alexander’s *Repose* (1895, MMA), as a manifestation of the fin-de-siècle ideal of the aristocratic, refined, and languorous “Aesthetic Woman *par excellence*,” replete with erotic undertones.<sup>15</sup>



Fig. 1. John Singer Sargent, *Rose-Marie Ormond Reading in a Cashmere Shawl*, watercolor, c. 1908–1912, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of the Art Museum Council, M.72.52



John Singer Sargent, *Nonchaloir (Repose)*, 1948.16.1

*Nonchaloir (Repose)*, which may have been influenced by Frederic Leighton's well-known *Flaming June* (1894–1895, Museo de Arte de Ponce, Puerto Rico), is a subtly sensual image that one early critic characterized as “a pretty Mondaine posing on a couch in a dainty boudoir.”<sup>16</sup> The lack of spatial recession and low point of view transform the viewer into a voyeur who indecorously intrudes upon a young, attractive woman during one of her unguarded moments. In contrast with her supine form and expressionless face, the cascading draperies of the white dress energize and dominate the composition, as if to signify psychosexual energy deep within her. As Leo Steinberg observed in his discussion of Picasso's renditions of the watcher-sleeper theme, “sleep is the opportunity of the intruder,”<sup>17</sup> and here it is the viewer, not an errant satyr, who intrudes. *Nonchaloir* is one of the most successful examples of Sargent's fascination with representing subjects either sleeping or in ambiguous semi-conscious states, a theme that he depicted frequently and with many variations throughout his long career.<sup>18</sup> This painting is very closely related to the watercolor, gouache, and charcoal sketch *Rose-Marie Ormond Reading in a Cashmere Shawl* (fig. 1).<sup>19</sup>

RWT

#### Notes

1. This information comes from a letter of 21 April 1912 written by the American artist Gari Melchers to Frederick B. McGuire, director of the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Melchers, who was in Europe for most of 1912, had been asked by the Corcoran to serve as the chairman of its Fourth Biennial jury, and he wrote to McGuire: “Let me suggest a very beautiful little picture of Sargents which was bought by Mr. Hugo Reisinger in London last summer [1911], ‘A seated girl with a shawl’ perhaps you could secure that from our friend Reisinger” (original in Corcoran Gallery and School of Art Archives, copy in NGA curatorial files; kindly provided by Marisa Keller, archivist). This is at odds with a letter of 6 December 1948 from Curt Reisinger's secretary to John Walker, then chief curator of the National Gallery of Art, that says, “The Sargent, called ‘Nonchaloire’ [*sic*], was bought by the late Hugo Reisinger from C. L. Hinds (Mrs. Lewis Hinds), London, in December 1912.” The Melchers correspondence indicates that Reisinger was the acknowledged owner of the painting before December 1912. The painting was first shown in the summer 1911 exhibition of the New English Art Club in London. Paintings in the exhibition were for sale, and it is possible this is where Reisinger purchased it; however, there are no records of sales or purchasers' names (letter of 5 August 1996 from Margaret

Thomas, archivist to the New English Art Club, in NGA curatorial files).

2. Charteris 1927, 210; see also Olson 1986, 255–256.

3. The painting was given a freely translated and more literally descriptive title, “Repose,” after it was acquired by the National Gallery in 1948. The title has now been returned to its original form. Richard Ormond in Sargent 1997 (p. 44) noted that “the painting's title is Sargent's play on the French word *châle* (shawl).”

4. Fairbrother 1990, 103; see Ormond 1970, 65–66, for his brief discussion of Ingres' influence on Sargent's late work.

5. John Irwin, *The Kashmir Shawl* (London, 1973), 18. A similar shawl appears in one of Ingres' best known portraits, *Madame Philibert Riviere* (1805, Musée du Louvre, Paris).

6. “Corcoran Exhibit,” New York *Evening Post*, 28 December 1912.

7. Arthur Hoeber, “Art in Washington,” *New York Globe and Commercial Advertiser*, 19 December 1912.

8. “Art Exhibit Ready,” *Washington Evening Star*, 16 December 1912.

9. John Russell, “The Edwardian Knight: John Singer Sargent,” *Réalités* 15 (January–February 1981): 61.

10. Ratcliff 1982, 221.

11. Hoopes 1964, n.p.

12. Wilmerding, *American Masterpieces*, 1988, 138.

13. Fairbrother 1994, 103.

14. John Simon, “Too Many Sargents?” *AM* 38 (September 1964): 22.

15. Nochlin 1983, 129. Another painting that falls into this category is Henry Siddons Mowbray's *Repose* (c. 1885–1895, Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts).

16. James B. Townsend, “Fourth Corcoran Exhibit,” *American Art News*, 21 December 1912. For erotic implications of other fin-de-siècle sleeping female subjects, see Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture* (New York, 1986): 69–82.

17. Leo Steinberg, “Picasso's Sleepwatchers,” in *Other Criteria, Confrontations with Twentieth-Century Art* (New York, 1972), 99.

18. For a provocative discussion of the sensual aspects of Sargent's fascination with sleeping subjects, see Fairbrother 1990, 41–43.

19. For a discussion of this sketch, see Fort and Quick 1991, 446–447.

#### References

- 1925 Downes: 237.  
 1927 Charteris: 210, 291.  
 1956 McKibbin: 69, 114, frontispiece.  
 1964 Hoopes: pl. 86.  
 1969 Mount: 475.  
 1982 Ratcliff: 221, pl. 332.  
 1983 Nochlin: 125–172, pl. 128.  
 1984 Walker: 569, color repro.  
 1988 Wilmerding, *American Masterpieces*: 138, no. 46 color repro.  
 1994 Fairbrother: 103, color repro.

# Frederick R. Spencer

1806–1875

THE PORTRAITIST Frederick Randolph Spencer was born in Lennox, Madison County, New York on 7 June 1806. He was one of four children born to the lawyer and first postmaster of Canastota, General Ichabod Smith Spencer, and Mary Pierson Spencer. He showed an early interest in art and at the age of fifteen saw an exhibition of portraits by Ezra Ames (1768–1836) in Albany. In 1822 in Utica he saw biblical scenes painted by William Dunlap, from whom he received informal instruction. In 1825 Spencer went to New York City and drew from the casts at the American Academy of the Fine Arts, where he studied under John Trumbull (1756–1843). By 1827 he had returned to his family's home in Canastota and commenced painting portraits.

After periods of professional activity in Albany and Utica, Spencer returned to New York City in 1831 and became a successful portraitist who painted many of New York's prominent citizens. In 1834 Dunlap reported that Spencer "has been in constant employment to the present time, and with increasing reputation."<sup>1</sup> He was elected to the American Academy in 1832 and served on its board of directors from 1833 to 1835. He became an associate member of the National Academy of Design in 1837, a full member in 1846, and corresponding secretary of the organization from 1849 to 1850, when he refused reelection in order to dedicate himself to painting.

In 1858 Spencer retired to upstate New York. He evidently experienced some marital difficulties at that time, because his wife, seemingly without justification, accused him of insanity and remained in New York City. Spencer died at Wampsville, New York, on 3 April 1875.

Spencer painted in an extremely smooth, linear style characterized by a high degree of finish; his later works appear almost photographic because he "sometimes painted from daguerreotypes, making few alterations."<sup>2</sup> His works generally have a wooden appearance. A provincial portraitist who specialized in conventional and literal likenesses, Spencer also painted genre and literary subjects.

RWT

## Notes

1. Dunlap 1834, 2: 436.
2. Goodrich 1966, 363.

## Bibliography

Dunlap 1834: 2: 436.  
Goodrich 1966.  
Crosier 1969.

1947.17.96 (1004)

*Frances Ludlum Morris*  
(*Mrs. Robert Morris*) (?)

1838

Oil on canvas, 91.1 × 74.3 (35<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 29<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>)  
Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support was relined in 1969. According to early records, the artist's inscription was once visible on the reverse of the support: "Painted by F R Spencer. / 1838." The tacking margins are still present. The thick beige ground layer extends onto the margins. Infrared examination reveals underdrawing lines, in a dry medium, along the sitter's chin and jawline, and minor changes in the positioning of the sitter's handkerchief and hands. X-radiography reveals that the handkerchief was originally larger and extended lower to the left than in the final composition. The painting is in good condition, with inpainting confined to a small area in the dress below the right shoulder. The matte varnish has not appreciably discolored.

**Provenance:** (Rose M. de Forest [Mrs. Augustus de Forest], New York); purchased 8 April 1922 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 Portraits by Early American Portrait Painters*, Union League Club, New York, 1923, no. 15. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered. *Painted by F. R. Spencer: A Retrospective Exhibition of the Work of Frederick R. Spencer 1806–1875*, Fountain Elms, Utica, New York, 1969, no. 16.

THE De Forests identified this painting as Frederick R. Spencer's portrait of Frances Ludlum Morris (1766–1852). She was the wife of Robert Morris (1762–1851) of the prominent Westchester County,



New York, family, whose father had been a signer of the Declaration of Independence. De Forest claimed that the portrait had once hung in the Morris family manor house Morrisania, and that he acquired it from a descendant of the sitter "from whom it was obtained through an agent."<sup>1</sup>

Both William Sawitzky and Alan Burroughs believed that the painting was authentic, the latter remarking that it had been executed "in the vigorous character of the self-taught artist." Anna Rutledge and James Lane felt that the painting was stylistically consonant with several of Spencer's portraits in the collection of the New-York Historical Society, but they were suspicious of the De Forest provenance. They decided that the signature, although close to genuine examples, was similar to spurious manuscript materials and inscriptions that had been used to validate pictures in the Clarke collection. They ultimately decided that the portrait was "probably not authentic as to subject and possibly not authentic as to artist."<sup>2</sup> In 1963 William Campbell began to reevaluate their decision. Although unsuccessful in tracing the painting's provenance, he was inclined to accept it as genuine because of its stylistic similarity to two Spencer portraits that recently had appeared on the art market and been advertised in *Antiques*. Furthermore, the sitter's features were identical to a portrait of Frances Morris that had been published in a genealogical study of prominent New York families.<sup>3</sup> Six years later his opinion was confirmed when Susan C. Crosier, the authority on Spencer's work, validated the signature and date.<sup>4</sup> The portrait was included in the exhibition of the artist's work that she organized at Fountain Elms, Utica, New York.

This portrait is typical of Spencer's linear, literal, and detailed style. Set against a neutral background, attired in a black dress, and wearing an elaborate lace headdress and collar, the unidealized

and matronly subject sits rigidly erect in her upholstered wood chair and stares wide-eyed back at the viewer. The composition, with its emphasis on the lace accouterments, is very similar to Spencer's *Margaret Palmer Kellogg* (1830, MWPI) and *Mrs. Joseph Kirkland* (1830, Oneida Historical Society) and seems to exemplify his standard formula for representing aged female sitters. Based solely on the De Forests' questionable and unsubstantiated claim, the sitter identification is by no means certain. The De Forests were very clever in deploying genealogical sources to establish false identities for the anonymous subjects of the portraits they were purveying, and they may well have arrived at this one via the illustration in Hamm's book. Moreover, if the inscribed date of 1838 is indeed genuine and accurate, as has been attested, Mrs. Morris would have been seventy-two years old, and the woman here appears younger. This is probably yet another example of how the De Forests attempted to take advantage of the fact that mediocre portraits by minor artists often achieve no more than a general likeness of a given sitter.

RWT

#### Notes

1. According to a De Forest data sheet (in NGA curatorial files), the painting had descended through the Morris family, and was acquired through a nephew of Henry M. Morris (d. 1892).

2. Rutledge and Lane 1952, 102.

3. Spencer's portraits of B. Brown and W. Turpin were illustrated in *Antiques* 83 (March 1963): 250. The portrait of Morris was published in M. A. Hamm, *Famous Families of New York*, 2 vols. (New York, 1901), 2: 33. See William P. Campbell, curatorial note, 21 June 1963 (in NGA curatorial files).

4. Susan S. Crosier, letter, 30 July 1969 (in NGA curatorial files).

#### References

1969 Crosier: no. 16.



Frederick R. Spencer, *Frances Ludlum Morris (Mrs. Robert Morris) (?)*, 1947.17.96

# Robert Street

1796–1865

ROBERT STREET was born in Germantown, Pennsylvania, the grandson of an English immigrant who had mistakenly been disinherited in his father's will. His activity as an artist is undocumented until 1815, when he exhibited a painting at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts; he exhibited there sporadically until 1861. Between 1821 and 1823 he achieved a measure of success by exhibiting four large biblical scenes, and subjects such as *The Infuriated Maniac Assaulting His Keeper* (location unknown), at various locations in Philadelphia and in several other cities. In 1824 he exhibited three historical paintings in Washington, D.C., and painted a portrait of Andrew Jackson (Sedalia Public Library, Missouri). Later that year he ceased painting historical subjects and began to concentrate on portraiture.

In 1834 William Dunlap erroneously reported that "Street of Philadelphia, aimed at historical composition and died in Washington city."<sup>1</sup> After receiving a letter from the artist correcting the mistake, Dunlap published a notice in the *New York Mirror* (28 February 1835) retracting the error and announcing that Street was alive and "prosperously pursuing his art in Philadelphia."

Street was an active member of the Artists' Fund Society. In 1840 he organized an exhibition of 172 of his own paintings, along with his personal collection of "old masters," that was held at the Artists' Fund Hall in Philadelphia. He also exhibited at the Apollo Association, New York, in 1838 and 1839, and at the Franklin Institute, Philadelphia, in 1847 and 1851. Street had six children by three wives, and at least four of the children became artists (Rubens Correggio, Austin del Sarto, Theophilus, and Claude Lorraine).

Although Street was chiefly a portraitist, he also painted landscapes and still lifes. He excelled in the difficult task of posthumous portraiture. Street's style, which remained fairly constant throughout his long career, was characterized by its naive, linear quality and tentative grasp of perspective and anatomical draftsmanship. Despite strong competition from more sophisticated portraitists, such as Thomas Sully, John Neagle, Jacob Eichholtz (1776–1842), and James Reid

Lambdin (1807–1889), he enjoyed liberal patronage in Philadelphia. Street is best remembered today for his numerous half-length portraits of stiffly posed figures dressed in dark coats, with fluidly painted white cravats and ruddy fleshtones, set against imaginary landscape backgrounds.

RWT

## Notes

1. Dunlap 1834, 2: 471.

## Bibliography

- Street 1840: 15–16.  
Semon 1945: 6–7, 19.

1973.3.2 (2640)

## *Elizabeth Price Thomas*

1834  
Oil on canvas, 76.2 × 63.5 (30 × 25)  
Gift of Edna L. Barbour

## Inscriptions

At upper right, on column: By R. STREET 1834

**Technical Notes:** The coarse plain-weave fabric support was lined during treatment in 1979. The inner bevel of the original four-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher was rounded at the corners. The original tacking margins are intact, and the bottom margin is a selvage. The artist applied paint evenly over a thin white ground layer. There is impasto in the lace collar, and brushstroking is evident in the flesh. During the 1979 restoration, small losses in both of the sitter's hands were inpainted.

**Provenance:** Lola Diehl Barbour [b. 1864], New Brunswick, New Jersey; her daughter, Edna L. Barbour, Washington, D.C.

STREET PAINTED Elizabeth Price Thomas (d. 1864) in 1834, the same year he executed the portrait of her young relative George Washington Deal [1973.3.1, p. 134].<sup>1</sup> No biographical information about her has survived.

This painting typifies Street's conventional female portraiture, and his hard, linear style that borders on the naive. The sitter's countenance was painted in a detail-oriented and literal manner,



Robert Street, *Elizabeth Price Thomas*, 1973.3.2

with great emphasis placed on the expressive quality of her eyes. Street's primitive delineation of her upper torso and hands, as well as her poorly foreshortened right arm and unnaturally rigid pose, reflects his tentative grasp of anatomical draftsmanship. He compensated for these deficiencies by his extensive use of accessories. The mountainous landscape background and stormy sky, which possibly had some iconographic significance that is no longer known, were probably the product of his imagination. Columns such as the one on the right were usually employed in portraits of the period as attributes of male sitters. Street's patrons were undoubtedly impressed by his careful treatment of such details as the sitter's lace collar, pearl necklace, and belt buckle; the red leather book with a tooled binding; and the carved wooden armrest of the Grecian-style sofa (an effort that more sophisticated British-influenced Philadelphia portraitists, such as Thomas Sully and John Neagle, would have considered superfluous). The National Gallery painting is very closely related to Street's portrait *Mrs. Napoleon Leidy* (1833, private collection).<sup>2</sup>

RWT

#### Notes

1. The exact relationship between the two sitters is unclear, although some general information about the family was supplied by her descendant Mrs. Benjamin W. le Sueur, letter, 16 August 1981 (in NGA curatorial files).

2. This portrait (and its pendant of the sitter's husband) is discussed and illustrated in *Philadelphia Portraiture: 1740–1910. Exhibition Celebrating Philadelphia's Tricentennial* [Exh. cat. Frank S. Schwarz & Son.] (Philadelphia, 1982), no. 13.

1973.3.1 (2639)

### *George Washington Deal*

1834

Oil on canvas, 76.2 × 63.5 (30 × 25)

Gift of Edna L. Barbour

#### Inscriptions

At lower left: BY R. STREET / 1834

**Technical Notes:** The coarse plain-weave fabric support was lined during treatment in 1978. The inner bevel

of the original four-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher was rounded at the corners. The original tacking margins are intact, and the bottom margin is a selvage. The artist applied paint thinly over a white ground layer. There is some impasto in the white highlights. The painting is in good condition, although small, scattered losses appear throughout the surface, especially in the bottom quarter.

**Provenance:** The sitter's daughter, Lola Diehl Barbour [b. 1864] New Brunswick, New Jersey; her daughter, Edna L. Barbour, Washington, D.C.

THIS PORTRAIT represents George Washington Deal, a relative of Elizabeth Price Thomas [1973.3.2, p. 132]; the fact that the portraits appear to be pendants indicates that the relationship was a close one.<sup>1</sup> No biographical information about Deal has survived.

This painting is typical of Street's linear style, use of color, penchant for unusual backgrounds, and standard compositional format for portraits of juvenile sitters. Deal's full-length seated figure dominates the left side of the composition. He holds a hammer and nail, suitable attributes for a young boy, and stares at the viewer with his large expressive eyes. The right side of the composition emphasizes the view down a road that leads to a pergola situated beyond a fence. This may be an allusion to a specific site, but such details were usually the products of Street's imagination. Despite Deal's unnaturally erect posture and serious expression, and the overall naive quality of the picture, the painting possesses a certain charm that is absent in the more technically sophisticated but overly romanticized and mannered images of young sitters by such Philadelphia portraitists as Thomas Sully and John Neagle. The fairly large number of juvenile portraits that were included in Street's exhibition at the Artists' Fund Hall in 1840 suggests that his more literal approach appealed to patrons and that he specialized in this difficult branch of his profession.<sup>2</sup>

RWT

#### Notes

1. The exact relationship between the two sitters is unclear. According to their descendant Mrs. Benjamin W. le Sueur, letter, 16 August 1981 (in NGA curatorial files), the family changed the spelling of the name from Diehl to Deal.

2. Street 1840.





Robert Street, *George Washington Deal*, 1973.3.1

# Thomas Sully

1783–1872

THOMAS SULLY was born on 19 June 1783 at Horncastle, Lincolnshire, England, the youngest son of nine children born to the actors Matthew and Sarah Chester Sully. At the suggestion of a relative who was a theater manager in Virginia and South Carolina, the Sullys emigrated to the United States in 1792. Thomas attended school in New York until his mother's death in 1794, when he went to live with his family in Richmond, Virginia. From there they moved to Charleston, South Carolina, where the future artist performed on stage with his father and siblings.

Following the example of his older brother, the miniaturist Lawrence Sully, Thomas resolved to become a painter. He first received art lessons from his young schoolmate Charles Fraser. After an unsuccessful attempt at learning the insurance business, Thomas was apprenticed to his brother-in-law, a French émigré miniaturist named Jean Belzons. After a violent quarrel with his teacher in 1799, Thomas left Charleston and joined his brother Lawrence in Richmond. Inspired by the sight of portraits by Henry Benbridge, he continued to study art and opened his first studio in 1804. When Lawrence died in September 1804, Thomas assumed responsibility for the family and eventually married Lawrence's widow Sarah.

In 1806 Sully accepted a commission to paint at a theater in New York, where he met such notables as William Dunlap, John Wesley Jarvis, and John Trumbull. He spent one hundred dollars to have Trumbull paint a portrait of his wife so that he could benefit from firsthand observation of the older artist's technique. In the summer of 1807 Sully spent three weeks in Boston studying with Gilbert Stuart. Later that year Sully moved to Philadelphia, where he remained for the rest of his life. It has been justly noted that there was "probably no name on the roll of famous artists which is more closely connected with the city of Philadelphia than that of Thomas Sully."<sup>1</sup>

Sully's portrait practice flourished, and in May 1809 he entered into an agreement with a group of prominent citizens that enabled him to embark on a yearlong trip to study art in London. Sharing a room there with Charles Bird King, he studied un-

der Benjamin West and Henry Fuseli (1741–1825), met the circle of British artists who were active at the Royal Academy of Art, and familiarized himself with collections of old master paintings. When Sully returned to Philadelphia in 1810 he quickly set about building his reputation by painting important full-length works, beginning in 1811 with *George Frederick Cooke in the Role of Richard III*. In 1812, when Sully's friends and admirers presented the painting to the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, the artist was elected to an honorary membership in the organization, in which he played an active role until resigning from its board of directors in 1831.

From 1819 to at least 1846 Sully and his partner, the restorer and framemaker James S. Earle, ran a successful commercial art gallery. Sully's artistic activity was not confined to Philadelphia, and throughout his long career he made numerous trips to Washington, Baltimore, Boston, New York, and West Point. At the height of his fame, in 1837, a Philadelphia association of British expatriates called the Society of the Sons of St. George sent him to England to paint a full-length portrait of Queen Victoria. Sully's professional stature was such that he attracted many pupils, most notable among them Charles Robert Leslie, John Neagle, and Jacob Eichholtz; he also trained several of his six children to become competent artists. In 1851 he prepared a short practical guide for portraitists entitled *Hints to Young Painters and the Process of Portrait Painting*. He revised this work in 1871, shortly before his death on 5 November 1872; it was published posthumously in 1873.

Sully was the foremost American exponent of the romanticized, painterly, and fluid style of portraiture practiced by the two contemporary British artists he had most admired during his year of study in England, Sir Henry Raeburn and Sir Thomas Lawrence. Although he painted many of the most prominent politicians, clergymen, and military heroes of his era, Sully's fame rests mainly on his exaggeratedly elegant and idealized portraits of fashionable society women and to a lesser extent on his sentimental group portraits of children and "fancy pictures." Often painted with a

nearly flawless technique, these ultra-refined images are fundamentally decorative. The deliberately self-conscious affectations of the sitters create a sense of artificiality that precludes any penetrating insight into their characters. This aesthetic was extremely popular among Sully's patrons and earned him status as the most successful American portrait painter from the death of Gilbert Stuart in 1826 until his own gradual decline in the 1850s.

RWT

#### Notes

1. Henry Budd, "Thomas Sully," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 42 (1918): 98.

#### Bibliography

Hart 1909.  
Biddle and Fielding 1921.  
PAFA 1922.  
Fabian 1983.

1945.17.1 (778)

### *Joseph Dugan*

1810  
Oil on canvas, 91.8 × 73.5 (36 1/8 × 28 15/16)  
Gift of Herbert L. Pratt

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support was relined in 1946–1947. The tacking margins have been removed, but cusping visible along the top and bottom edges suggests that the original dimensions of the painting have not been altered. Paint was applied over a warm tan ground layer, wet-into-wet, with vigorous brushmarking and low impasto in the costume. The face is more smoothly blended. The right background and parts of the figure appear to be underpainted with a dull red. Infrared examination indicates a minor adjustment to the lower right sleeve. The painting is in good condition. A 1 cm damage above the left brow and smaller, scattered instances of inpainting throughout the surface have discolored, especially in the left background. The varnish has not discolored significantly since the 1946–1947 restoration.

**Provenance:** The sitter's great-grand-niece, Mrs. Margaret B. Dohan, Philadelphia; purchased 1917 by Herbert Lee Pratt [d. 1945], New York City and Glen Cove, Long Island, New York.<sup>1</sup>

**Exhibited:** *Exhibition of Early American Paintings*, Museum of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, 1917, no. 108.<sup>2</sup> *Memorial Exhibition of Portraits by Thomas Sully*, PAFA, 1922, no. 77. *A Century of Progress Exhibition of Paintings and Drawings*, AIC, 1934, no. 380. *A Loan Exhibition of American Portraits by American Painters 1730–1944*, M.

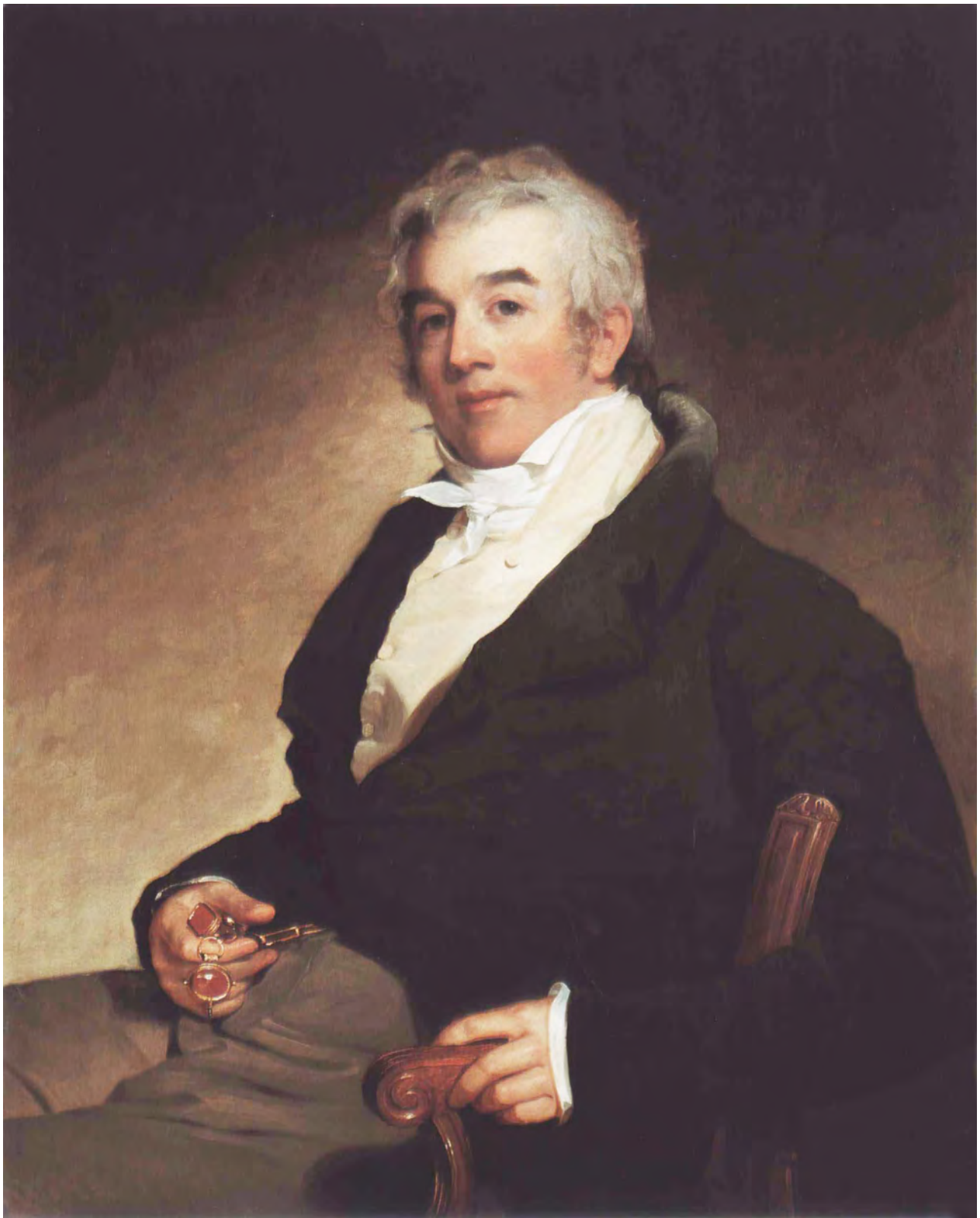
Knoedler & Co., New York, 1944, no. 12. *200 Years of American Portraiture: 1776–1976*, Museum of Art, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, 1976, unnumbered. *Benjamin West and His American Students*, NPG; PAFA, 1981, no. 121.

LITTLE is known about the wealthy Philadelphia merchant Joseph A. Dugan (c. 1766–1845) who was co-partner in the shipping firm of Savage & Dugan. An affluent parishioner and pewholder at St. Mary's, the cathedral church of the diocese and the parish of the Roman Catholic elite of Philadelphia, Dugan probably made a substantial financial contribution to the extensive renovations at St. Mary's that were initiated the year Sully painted this portrait. Dugan played a prominent role in the controversies over the issue of trusteeism that troubled the early American Catholic Church (for a discussion of the history of this phenomenon, see the entry for John Neagle's portrait of Reverend John Albert Ryan [1947.17.81, p. 21]).

Fragmentary evidence suggests that Dugan was one of the most radical lay trustees at St. Mary's whose support of the renegade priest William Hogan ultimately led to the church being placed under interdiction for five years.<sup>3</sup> In 1821 he was one of the thirteen signers of a "Memorial" addressed to the "brethren of the Roman Catholic faith throughout the United States of America" that advocated the founding of a church independent of Roman authority.<sup>4</sup> On Easter Sunday, 1822, he was present at the notorious brawl between the opposing Hoganite and Bishopite factions that occurred outside St. Mary's and in which more than two hundred people were wounded; shortly afterward he was elected treasurer of the board of directors.<sup>5</sup> In 1826 he seems finally to have compromised with episcopal authority and served on the acting committee of "The Vindicators of the Catholic Religion from Calumny and Abuse."<sup>6</sup>

From 1842 to 1845 Dugan served as the third president of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, but his activities in this office are undocumented. Dugan, who never married, raised his orphaned niece Clementine. She married Colonel Augustus James Pleasonton, and according to family tradition Dugan commissioned the colonel's portrait from Sully's son-in-law John Neagle in 1845 (see entry for 1957.9.1, p. 30). At his death Dugan made a bequest to the Society of St. Joseph for the education of poor orphans.

This three-quarter-length portrait was complet-



Thomas Sully, *Joseph Dugan*, 1945.17.1



ed on 18 December 1810, approximately nine months after Sully returned from his brief study of painting in London.<sup>7</sup> The high degree of technical proficiency evident here demonstrates how successfully the young artist had absorbed the influences he encountered at the Royal Academy, especially that of Sir Thomas Lawrence. The prematurely gray-haired but youthful Dugan has an aura of aristocratic reserve as he sits back in his neoclassical armchair and casually looks at the viewer. Set against a plain interior background, he wears a green waistcoat over a pale yellow vest. In the process of idealization Sully has omitted any devices that might allude to the sitter's mercantile profession. The fashionable attire, carved wood chair, prominently displayed carnelian or topaz watch fob, and intaglio seal ring that he holds in his skillfully foreshortened right hand are all emblematic of upper-class comfort.

In his "Account of Pictures" Sully recorded that shortly after he had commenced work on Dugan's portrait he began a kit-cat of a Miss "Dougan" (as he misspelled Dugan's name). Thus it is possible that the National Gallery painting originally had a pendant that has yet to be located.<sup>8</sup> The presence of a companion portrait is also suggested by Dugan's sideways position in the chair. The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, owns a copy of this painting that was made by the portraitist Albert Rosenthal in 1915.

RWT

#### Notes

1. Hart 1917, 64. There is no information in NGA curatorial files pertaining to the provenance of this portrait.

2. The author of the exhibition catalogue (Brooklyn Institute 1917, 100) spells the sitter's name "Dougan," as it appears in Sully's records. The portrait is illustrated but not discussed in John Hill Morgan, "Exhibition of Early American Paintings," *Brooklyn Museum Quarterly* 4, no. 3 (April 1917): 90.

3. For a history of these events, see Francis E. Tourscher, *The Hogan Schism and Trustee Troubles at St. Mary's Church, Philadelphia, 1820-1829* (Philadelphia, 1930).

4. See Joseph Kirlin, *Catholicity in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1909), 227-228.

5. Kirlin 1909, 233-234.

6. Kirlin 1909, 253.

7. Photographs of the Dugan portrait taken before its 1946-1947 cleaning and relining show that it once bore the artist's monogram and incorrect date "TS 1840" on the lower right corner (in NGA curatorial files). In a journal entry of 4 February 1811, Sully recorded, "Joseph Dougan's portrait sent to his order" (HSP).

8. The "Miss. Dougan" was painted between 17 November 1810 and 5 February 1811; see Hart 1909, no. 454, 56; and Biddle and Fielding 1921, no. 490, 142.

#### References

- 1909 Hart: no. 453, 56.  
 1917 Hart: no. 28, 64.  
 1917 Brooklyn Institute: no. 108, 100.  
 1921 Biddle and Fielding: no. 492, 142.  
 1922 PAFA: no. 77, 50.  
 1980 Evans: 156, fig. 121.

1947.4.1 (893)

### *Captain Charles Stewart*

1811-1812

Oil on canvas, 237 × 149.2 (93<sup>5</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 58<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>)

Gift of Maude Monell Vetlesen

**Technical Notes:** The twill-weave fabric has been lined. The original tacking margins have been removed; retention of the dimensions cannot be confirmed as no cusping is evident. The lining extends the image by 5.0 cm at the left and by 7.5-10.0 cm on the bottom. The artist vigorously applied paint over a white or cream-colored ground layer. Areas of high impasto in such costume details as the braid and epaulets, and in the folds of the curtain on the left, have been somewhat flattened by a past lining process. The paint surface is in fairly good condition, although scattered areas of inpainting have discolored. The varnish is yellowed.

**Provenance:** The sitter's daughter, Delia Stewart Parnell; her son, Charles Stewart Parnell [1846-1891], Avondale, County Wicklow, Ireland; possibly his daughter, Mrs. Olivia Parnell, Laragh Castle, Glendalough, Rathdrim, County Wicklow, Ireland; acquired July 1916 by Marie Louise Tudor Garland, Boston, Massachusetts;<sup>1</sup> her daughter, Hope Garland (Mrs. W. Fitch) Ingersoll, Boston;<sup>2</sup> (M. Knoedler & Co., New York).

**Exhibited:** *Second Annual Exhibition of the Society of Artists of the United States and the Pennsylvania Academy*, PAFA, 1812, no. 31.<sup>3</sup> *Exhibition at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts . . .*, PAFA, 1816, no. 101. *Memorial Exhibition of Portraits by Thomas Sully*, PAFA, 1922, no. 155. Loan for display with permanent collection, MFA, 1924-1932 (at least). *Your Navy: Its Contribution to America from Colonial Days to World Leadership*, MMA, 1948, unnumbered checklist. *La Pintura de los Estados Unidos de Museos de la Ciudad de Washington*, Museo del Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico City, 1980-1981, no. 6. *Federal Philadelphia 1785-1825: The Athens of the Western World*, PMA, 1987, no. 223.

THE famous American naval officer Charles Stewart (1778-1869) was the youngest of eight children



born to Charles and Sarah (Ford) Stewart, who had both emigrated to Philadelphia from Belfast, Ireland. At the age of thirteen he became a cabin boy in the merchant service and gradually worked his way up the ranks until he became master of his own vessel. When the undeclared war erupted between America and France he enlisted in the navy and in 1798 was commissioned lieutenant aboard the frigate *United States*. After active service aboard several ships he distinguished himself during the war with Tripoli. Thereafter he was promoted to master commandant of the frigate *Essex* and joined the expedition to Tunis led by Commodore John Rodgers. His cautious advice at a war council there led to a peaceful resolution of that conflict and earned the praise of President Thomas Jefferson, who “expressed to his cabinet the high satisfaction he felt at having an officer in the squadron who so thoroughly comprehended international law, the constitution of his country, and the policy of his government.”<sup>4</sup> From 1806, when Stewart was commissioned a captain, to 1807 he supervised the construction of gunboats in New York. Before the War of 1812 he participated in commercial assignments in the East Indies, the Mediterranean, and the Adriatic. In 1813 he married the daughter of a prominent Boston family, Delia Tudor, whose brother was the “Ice King” Frederic Tudor (1783–1864), so named because of his worldwide ice export business.

Captain Stewart earned his reputation during the War of 1812 by his many heroic exploits as commander of the fifty-two-gun frigate *Constitution*, better known as “Old Ironsides” after a British cannonball bounced off the oak hull of the ship. Because both master and vessel seemed invincible, eventually he too became known as “Old Ironsides.” The feat that most impressed Stewart’s contemporaries was his capture on 20 February 1815, near the Madeira Islands, of two British warships: the thirty-four-gun frigate *Cyane* and the twenty-one-gun sloop-of-war *Levant* (fig. 1b). In 1816 Congress recognized this action by awarding Stewart a gold medal, on the obverse of which appears a profile portrait of the captain (fig. 1a). The portrait on the medal is after Sully’s grisaille portrait of Stewart (fig. 2), which was probably taken from sketches he had made when working on the National Gallery’s full-length portrait.<sup>5</sup> Stewart’s lifelong service in the navy was rewarded by a special act of Congress in 1859 when he was made “senior flag officer.” In 1862 he was appointed a rear admiral

on the retired list; he spent the remainder of his life at his country estate in Bordentown, New Jersey. Stewart’s daughter Delia was the mother of Irish patriot and Home Rule advocate Charles Parnell.

Sully painted Stewart’s portrait, his first full-length portrait commissioned by a private patron, while simultaneously working on another full-length work, *George Frederick Cooke in the Role of Richard III* (PAFA), that would bring him great acclaim; the former was begun on 10 June 1811 and completed on 13 April 1812, while the latter was commenced on 13 April 1811 and finished on 13 June 1812.<sup>6</sup> Late in life the artist recollected that Stewart was “the most patient sailor I ever painted.” Captain Stewart called on Sully to make arrangements for sittings and was about to leave without having specified the painting’s dimensions. Sully exclaimed, “But, Captain, you have not told me the size.” Stewart responded, “Oh, the old woman wants me, and she shall have me *altogether*.”<sup>7</sup> This decision cost Stewart \$300, Sully’s fee for a full-length portrait. It was unusual for a young naval officer to so casually choose a formal state portrait in the European grand manner, apparently as a memento for his mother, but the captain seems to have been interested in art and was on familiar terms with his portraitist. In 1814 Stewart sent Sully a letter of introduction for an aspiring painter named Jones, and in 1818 his wife asked the artist to send her a collection of Palladio’s writings on architecture.<sup>8</sup>

Sully took full advantage of this unexpected opportunity and produced a brilliant image that has been justly hailed as “one of the finest of the artist’s prolific output.”<sup>9</sup> Closely adhering to Sir Henry Raeburn’s portrait of the British naval hero Admiral Viscount Duncan of Camperdown (fig. 3), he depicted the thirty-three-year-old captain in full dress uniform, standing imperiously before a table whose red drapery covering extends to the ceiling; he rests his right hand on a partially unrolled chart and with the left grasps an eagle-pommeled dress saber worn on a waist belt under his coat.<sup>10</sup> His hat rests on the tabletop. It appears that the captain has just decided to pursue an important naval stratagem and has interrupted his calculations to acknowledge the viewer’s presence. It is tempting to think that his awkwardly rigid stance, emphasized by the well-illuminated, tight-fitting white breeches, was intended to suggest how he would brace himself on a rolling deck on a ship at sea. This effect, like the unnaturally long left arm, is better at-



Thomas Sully, *Captain Charles Stewart*, 1947.4.1



Figs. 1a (obverse) and 1b (reverse). Moritz Furst after Thomas Sully, *Captain Charles Stewart*, silver congressional medal, 1819, Annapolis, United States Naval Academy Museum, \*88.1.15

Fig. 2. Thomas Sully, *Captain Charles Stewart*, oil on canvas (grisaille), 1817, Annapolis, United States Naval Academy Museum, \*69.1.14



tributed to Sully's inexperience with full-length portraiture. The artist employed the same pose, slightly modified and corrected, for his full-length painting of the Quaker president of the Pennsylvania Hospital, Samuel Coates (1812–1813, Pennsylvania Hospital, Philadelphia). The leatherbound tomes scattered on the desk and floor, the feather quill, and partially concealed globe are all the standard ingredients for grand manner portraiture of statesmen and military heroes. The fashionable signet seal and watch fob that dangle from the captain's waist complete the ensemble.

Despite the grand manner artifice, Sully captured Stewart's physical and psychological characteristics. An early biographer described the captain as "about five feet nine inches in height, erect and well proportioned, of a dignified and engaging presence, and possessed of great constitutional powers to endure hardships and privations of all kinds." The same source noted that "the cast of his countenance is Roman, bold, strong, and commanding, and his head finely formed."<sup>11</sup> Sully's dual success in communicating Stewart's martial prowess and his own technical mastery of the medium makes *Captain Charles Stewart* one of the most accomplished full-length American portraits of its time. It surely helped the artist secure the prestigious commission to paint another American naval hero, Commodore



Fig. 3. Sir Henry Raeburn, *Admiral Viscount Duncan of Camperdown*, oil on canvas, 1798, Leith, Scotland, Corporation of Shipmasters and Assistants of Trinity House, photograph courtesy of the Witt Library, Courtauld Institute of Art, London

Stephen Decatur, for New York City Hall in 1814. Such paintings must have been of considerable interest to early viewers, considering the immense esteem with which Americans regarded their naval heroes after the War of 1812. In 1813 a Philadelphia art critic noted how “our naval exploits are of a character so extraordinary that they have attracted the notice of all nations. The consummate skill, discipline and bravery of our little navy, have drawn forth the highest encomiums even from our enemies. And the splendid achievements of our naval and military heroes will be long remembered by an enlightened and generous people.”<sup>12</sup>

RWT

## Notes

1. She was the granddaughter of Frederick Tudor (1783–1864), a brother of Stewart’s wife Delia Tudor.

2. She put the painting on long-term loan to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. *Selected Oil and Tempera Paintings & Three Pastels* (Boston, 1932), n.p., illustrated the portrait, and in the index it is listed as “Lent by Hope Garland Ingersoll 1924.”

3. It was listed in the exhibition catalogue under the title “Whole Length of a U.S. Naval Officer.”

4. John Frost, *American Naval Biography, Comprising Lives of the Commodores Distinguished in the History of the American Navy* (Philadelphia, 1844), 392.

5. The Naval Academy portrait was probably commissioned by the Naval Department through its agent in Philadelphia and later sent to Washington, D.C. For a discussion of the medal, see J. F. Loubat, *The Medallie History of the United States of America 1776–1876*, 2 vols. (New York, 1878), 1: 245–248. The original medal was stolen from a Baltimore museum in 1978; the Naval Academy Museum owns a silver and bronze strike. The silver medal is illustrated here.

6. In a journal entry of August 1811, Sully recorded, “Capt. Stuart [*sic*], whole length, sent home” (HSP).

7. Thomas Sully, “Recollections of an Old Painter,” *Hours at Home: A Popular Monthly of Instruction and Recreation* 10 (November 1869–April 1870): 73; Biddle and Fielding 1921, 24.

8. Captain Stewart to Sully, 10 November 1814, and Delia Tudor Stewart to Sully, 9 May 1818, both in Ferdinand J. Dreer Autograph Collection, HSP.

9. Wilmerding 1980, 54.

10. At this early time there were no regulations governing naval officers’ swords; thus they “could be of any pattern that suited the owner’s fancy and purse.” Stewart’s ornate and prominently displayed saber was appropriate for an army or navy officer; see Harold Leslie Peterson, *The American Sword, 1775–1945* (New Hope, Pennsylvania, 1954), frontispiece, 150.

11. Frost 1844, 400.

12. “Review of the Third Annual Exhibition of the Columbian Society of Artists and Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.” *Port Folio* 2 (August 1813). These remarks were made in reference to Thomas Birch’s *Constitution and Guerriere*.

## References

- 1909 Hart: no. 1606, 157.  
 1921 Biddle and Fielding: no. 1646.  
 1922 PAFA: no. 155, 108.  
 1980 Mexico City: 52, pl. 6.  
 1983 Brown: 50, pl. 51.

*Robert Walsh*

1814

Oil on canvas, 77 × 63.6 (30<sup>5</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 25<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight twill-weave fabric support was lined in 1955. A photograph documents a colorman's stencil mark, "J. MIDDLETON[']S]—NEW YORK / B[EST] BRITISH LINEN," with "45" next to the stretcher bar, and an excise duty stamp with illegible numbers; all are stenciled in an inverted position at the lower right corner of the original support.<sup>1</sup> The four-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher in the photograph may have been original. The moderately thick white ground layer was coated with a brown imprimatura. Underdrawing with both thick and thin brushes outlined the features of the face and hand. For the background and jacket Sully used thin washes of brown paint over the imprimatura. The face, waistcoat, books, and inkwell were painted more thickly, with prominent brushmarking; the highlights of the tie were painted in low impasto. X-radiography reveals that Sully made minor changes in the composition, most notably in reducing the amount of white linen emerging from the dark suit, thereby creating a more dramatic focus on the face. The painting is in good condition with minor losses concealed by limited inpainting, including a small tear and hole at the top edge, a dent at the left edge, and reinforcement of the contour edges of the paper, inkwell, and hair. The varnish is only slightly discolored.

**Provenance:** The sitter's grandson, Dr. J. F. Walsh; his son, Henry C. Walsh, New York; Frank Bulkeley Smith, Worcester, Massachusetts; (his sale, American Art Association, New York, 22–23 April 1920, no. 136); W. J. Kane, New York; 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:** *February Exhibition*, Apollo Association, New York, 1840, no. 24. *Exhibition of Paintings by Early American Portrait Painters*, Union League Club, New York, December 1921, no. 2. *Memorial Exhibition of Portraits by Thomas Sully*, PAFA, 1922, no. 107. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered. *Washington Irving and His Circle*, M. Knoedler & Co., New York, 1946, no cat. *Inaugural Exhibition: American Portraits*, Art Museum, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, 1969, no cat. *Thomas Sully, 1783–1872*, Bedford Gallery, Longwood College, Farmville, Virginia, 1973, no. 5. *President Monroe's Message, an Exhibition Commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the Monroe Doctrine 1823–1973*, NPG, 1973–1974, no. 32. *Selected American Paintings from the National Gallery of Art*, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, 1974, no cat.

THE noted journalist and literateur Robert Walsh (1784–1859) was born in Baltimore, the son of an

Irish immigrant father and Pennsylvania Quaker mother.<sup>2</sup> After studying under the French Sulpicians of St. Mary's, Baltimore, he attended Georgetown University and then studied law under Robert Goodloe Harper. Following a three-year period of study and travel in England and France, Walsh returned to America at the age of twenty-five and settled in Philadelphia. He briefly practiced law, but was forced to abandon that profession because of deafness. Walsh then embarked on the literary career that made him famous. His *Letter on the Genius and Disposition of the French Government, including a View of the Taxation of the French Empire* (Philadelphia, 1809) was admired even in Britain, and he was a regular contributor to the *Port Folio* until 1811, when he became editor of America's first quarterly journal, the *American Review of History and Politics*, a publication that failed after eight issues. In 1812 he was elected to membership in the American Philosophical Society. In 1818 he founded the short-lived *American Register* and the following year assumed editorship of the *National Gazette and Literary Register*, a publication that has been described as "greatly superior to any other journal of that time . . . high-toned and dignified, and especially noted for its literary character."<sup>3</sup>

Walsh's *Appeal from the Judgments of Great Britain Respecting the United States of America* (Philadelphia, 1819), a meticulously researched and argued rebuttal to the numerous attacks that appeared in British literary magazines on everything American, earned him the thanks of Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, John Quincy Adams, and the Pennsylvania legislature. He was a professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania from 1818 to 1828. In 1827 he founded the *American Quarterly Review*. Walsh's numerous literary endeavors earned the praise of Edgar Allan Poe, who called him "one of the finest writers, and when not in too great a hurry, one of the most accurate thinkers in the country."<sup>4</sup> In 1837 Walsh settled permanently in Paris, where he served as consul-general from 1844 to 1851. He was buried at Versailles.

According to an entry in his "Account of Pictures," Sully painted this portrait between 3 April and 4 July 1814 for the sitter's father;<sup>5</sup> it was completed four days before the artist went to New York to execute the full-length *Commodore Stephen Decatur* for New York City Hall. William Sawitzky rightly characterized the draftsmanship and composition of this painting as "rather awkward" and concluded that it had been executed before Sully's 1809 trip





Thomas Sully, *Robert Walsh*, 1947.17.11

to England. Alan Burroughs, however, found it "typical of Sully's romantic style."<sup>6</sup> The artist represented his erudite subject seated at a desk before an open book, a tattered pamphlet, and an inkwell from which a quill protrudes; all these accessories are emblematic of Walsh's profession as an editor and essayist. Walsh rests his head in an unnaturally large left hand and looks distractedly toward the right, as if lost in a reverie of literary inspiration. Although the unusual gesture of his open palm cupped around his ear may allude to his deafness, this general type of pose was reserved for sitters characterized by their intellectual pursuits, and Sully had recently used a variant of it for his full-length seated *Dr. Benjamin Rush* (1813, Pennsylvania Hospital, Philadelphia).<sup>7</sup> Walsh's finely chiseled features agree with an early description that he "was a man of delicate frame and figure, with a fine intellectual face."<sup>8</sup> Around 1830 the graphic artist Albert Newsam (1809–1864) made a lithograph after Sully's painting, which was published by Cephas G. Childs.<sup>9</sup> In 1834 Sully painted a little-known but important group portrait of Walsh's four daughters, *The Walsh Sisters* (private collection).<sup>10</sup>

RWT

#### Notes

1. For information on the London colorman John Middleton, see *Artists and their Friends in England, 1700–1799*, 2 vols. (London, 1928): I: 333–335.

2. The bibliographical data are derived from Simpson 1859, 938–939; *DAB*, 10: 391–392; and Evert A. Duyckinck and George L. Duyckinck, *Cyclopaedia of American Literature*, 2 vols. (New York, 1855), 2: 37–39.

3. Simpson 1859, 939.

4. *Southern Literary Messenger* (May 1836): 399; quoted in *DAB* 10: 392.

5. In a journal entry of 23 September 1814, Sully wrote, "Mr. Walsh, portrait sent home to his father" (HSP).

6. Rutledge and Lane 1952, 163.

7. Walsh's pose is almost identical to that of one of the brothers in Sir Thomas Lawrence's *Henry and John Labouchere* (1811, Iowa State Educational Association, Salisbury House, Des Moines, Iowa), which he may have known through the stipple-engraved reproduction by C. W. Wass.

8. Simpson 1859, 939.

9. This lithograph is listed in P. McN. Stauffer, "Lithographic Portraits of Albert Newsam," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (1900): 446; and in Wendy Wick Reaves, "Portraits for Every Parlor, Albert Newsam and American Portrait Lithography," in Wendy Wick Reaves, ed., *American Portrait Prints: Proceedings of the Tenth Annual American Print Conference* (Charlottesville, Virginia, 1984), no. 469, 133. In Newsam's preparatory ink wash and pencil drawing for his litho-

graph of the Walsh portrait (Society Portrait Collection, HSP), Sully's monogram signature and the date 1814 appear at the lower right, directly under the spine of the open book.

10. See Biddle and Fielding 1921, no. 1878; it is illustrated in *Antiques* 47 (January 1945): 20.

#### References

- 1909 Hart: no. 1775, 172.  
 1921 Biddle and Fielding: no. 1877, 308.  
 1922 PAFA: no. 107, 76.  
 1973 Flynn: 13, repro.

1942.8.35 (588)

### *Abraham Kintzing*

1815

Oil on canvas, 76.1 × 63.8 (29<sup>15/16</sup> × 25<sup>1/8</sup>)

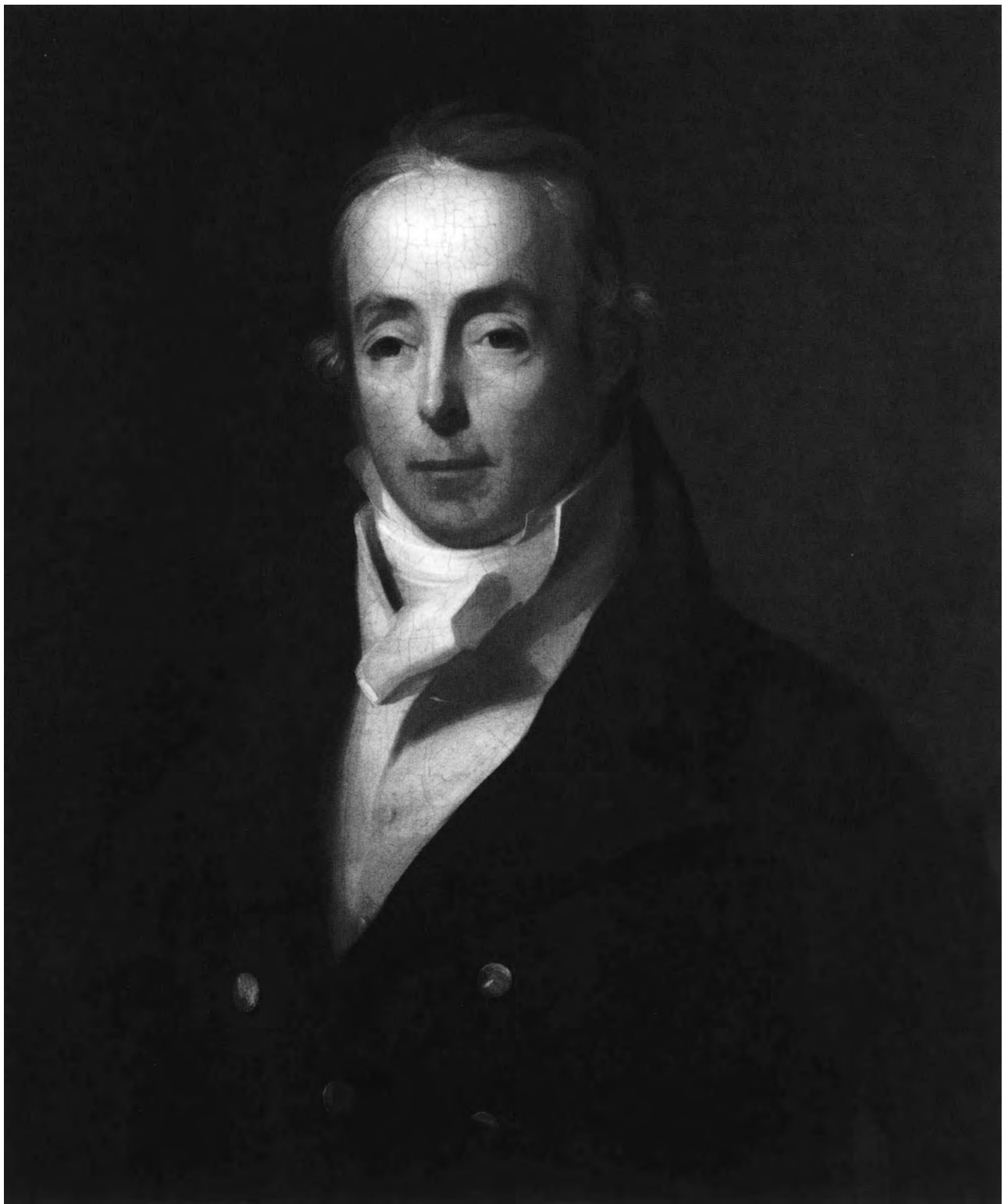
Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The coarse, medium-weight, plain-weave support has been lined. The inner edges of the four-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher were roughly beveled by hand; it is uncertain if the Norway pine stretcher is original. Although the tacking margins have been removed, cusping is visible on all four edges, suggesting that the dimensions remain unaltered. The gray ground layer was applied evenly so that it fills the interstices of the support weave. The free and thin application of paint in the background and costume contrasts with the thicker and more carefully modeled treatment of the face; slight impasto appears in the lighter areas of the costume, most notably in the cravat. A considerable amount of inpainting conceals craquelure that has developed throughout the paint surface. The moderately thick surface coating is yellowed.

**Provenance:** (J. P. Labey, New York); purchased 21 October 1918 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, December 1921, no. 23. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered. *Thomas Sully, 1783–1872*, Bedford Gallery, Longwood College, Farmville, Virginia, 1973, no. 7. *Selected American Paintings from the National Gallery of Art*, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, 1974, no cat.

ABRAHAM KINTZING (1763–1835) was a prominent Philadelphia merchant and the business partner of Henry Pratt in the firm of Pratt & Kintzing. Sully also painted Pratt's portrait in 1815 [1942.13.1, p. 148]. After withdrawing from the



Thomas Sully, *Abraham Kintzing*, 1942.8.35

firm in 1812, Kintzing entered into a new partnership with one of his sons and the son of an old friend. Within several years, however, declining health and blindness forced him to retire. He also served as a director of the Bank of North America and of the Old Philadelphia Insurance Company. Kintzing's reputation as a charitable man of great integrity, combined with his knowledge of commercial law, placed him in demand among his peers as an arbitrator of business disputes.

Edward Biddle and Mantle Fielding identified the National Gallery's bust portrait as the second of "Two copies of Mr. Kinzing's [*sic*] portrait" that Sully recorded in his account book as having been painted between 12 and 18 December 1815 from a bust he had executed between 6 September and 3 October; the artist charged his patron \$100 for each of the three paintings. In his journal Sully noted that the original portrait had been delivered to one of the sitter's sons and that the two copies were made "for A. Kinzing [*sic*] and his sister."<sup>1</sup>

There is considerable confusion as to which is the original, and similar confusion exists regarding its pendant of the sitter's wife, Margaret Harbeson Kintzing, which Sully had painted along with a copy in 1812. Biddle and Fielding identified the originals as the bust portraits of the couple (their nos. 981 and 984) owned by the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Charles Hart had also regarded these as the originals (his nos. 949 and 947), although he called them kit-cats and referred to the two copies of Pratt's portrait (he included both as no. 950) as busts. It is difficult to understand why these authorities regarded the Academy portraits of the Kintzings as Sully's originals; the one of Kintzing bears no resemblance to the National Gallery painting.<sup>2</sup> The National Gallery portrait is probably one of the two busts of Kintzing that Sully made after the original bust that was finished on 3 October (location unknown); the other bust copy, supposedly the first, is still owned by the sitter's descendants.

Seated in a red chair with his head turned slightly to the right, Kintzing wears a dark green coat with shiny brass buttons over a pale yellow waistcoat and white stock; both his attire and the color scheme are very close to those of Sully's portrait of Joseph Dugan [1945.17.1, p. 137], painted in 1810. Kintzing has a prominent forehead, long thinning gray hair, and smooth, polished features. His oddly vacant expression and aura of impenetrability can be explained by the fact that he had begun to lose

his sight at the time Sully recorded his likeness. Nevertheless, Kintzing's appearance here accords with an early biographer's impression that he "was possessed of a fine commanding personal appearance, and united great dignity and suavity with kindness of manner."<sup>3</sup>

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#### Notes

1. Sully, journal, unspecified entries of November and December 1815, HSP.

2. These portraits had first been ascribed to Gilbert Stuart, but when they were cleaned in 1930 the conservator discovered that *Mrs. Kintzing* was signed "J. P. 1790," so they were reattributed, with Sawitzky's approval, to James Peale. Neither Hart nor Biddle and Fielding noticed that the Academy's *Mrs. Kintzing* could not have been the original of 1812 because Sully had stipulated in his account book that it was "painted in wax" and was of slightly different dimensions; even more problematic, the subject was known to have died in 1804. For references to the Academy's Kintzing portraits, see *Exhibition of Portraits Painted by Gilbert Stuart* [Exh. cat. MFA.] (Boston, 1880), nos. 352 and 353, 45; *Loan Exhibition of Historical Portraits* [Exh. cat. PAFA.] (Philadelphia, 1887-1888), nos. 233 and 234, 57; and Lawrence Park, *Gilbert Stuart*, 4 vols. (New York, 1926), 2:900, where they are listed under the name "Kurtzing" and the author erroneously states that the two portraits were lent to the 1887-1888 exhibition at the Pennsylvania Academy by the sitters' grandson Henry Pratt McKean. The PAFA loan exhibition catalogue identifies them as the property of H. P. Birckhead.

3. Simpson 1859, 629.

#### References

- 1909 Hart: no. 950.  
1921 Biddle and Fielding: no. 983, 199.  
1973 Flynn: 15, repro.

1942.13.1 (696)

#### *Henry Pratt*

1815

Oil on canvas, 91.8 × 73.5 (36 1/8 × 28 15/16)

Gift of Clarence Van Dyke Tiers

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support has been lined. The tacking margins have been removed, but the presence of cusping along all four edges suggests that the original dimensions have not been altered. The paint layers were applied thinly and smoothly over a white ground layer that is visible through the very fine traction crackle in the brown paint in the right background. Transparent reddish glazes were used in the face and left background. Low impasto appears in the white shirt. Infrared reflectography indicates slight



Thomas Sully, *Henry Pratt*, 1942.13.1



adjustments to the left cheek and shirt collar. Fine lines of inpainting are scattered throughout to conceal the traction cracks; the shadows in the face and hair are slightly abraded. The surface is coated with a moderately discolored varnish. The varnish may have been reformed during a conservation treatment in 1977.

**Provenance:** The sitter's granddaughter, Maria Fennell [c. 1800–1880], Philadelphia; her niece, Rosalie Vallance Tiers Jackson [Mrs. Charles P. Jackson, 1852–1944], Jupiter, Florida; given 1915 to her nephew, Clarence Van Dyke Tiers [1869–1959], Oakmont, Pennsylvania, and Daytona Beach, Florida.<sup>1</sup>

**Exhibited:** *Loan Exhibition of Historical Portraits*, PAFA, 1887, no. 350. *American Art 1804–1954*, Ohio University, Athens, 1954. *Famous Americans*, Washington County Museum of Fine Arts, Hagerstown, Maryland, 1955, no cat. *Thomas Sully, 1783–1872*, Bedford Gallery, Longwood College, Farmville, Virginia, 1973, no. 6. *Selected American Paintings from the National Gallery of Art*, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, 1974, no cat.

HENRY CHARLES PRATT (1761–1838)<sup>2</sup>, eldest son of the American portraitist Matthew Pratt, sold china and crockery before entering the grocery business. He ultimately made his fortune as a shipping merchant and became one of Philadelphia's wealthiest citizens; until 1812 he and Abraham Kintzing [1942.8.35, p. 146] were partners in the shipping firm Pratt & Kintzing. According to an early biographer Pratt's "great perseverance and energy marked him to be a merchant of uncommon and unusual qualities," who confined himself "strictly to the business of being a merchant."<sup>3</sup> He had fifteen children by three wives. Pratt, who also speculated in real estate, is best remembered today for having been the owner of the famous Philadelphia landmark Lemon Hill, an Adamesque federal-style mansion and forty-two-acre estate overlooking the Schuylkill River that served as his country seat between c. 1799 and 1838. Pratt was a horticulturist, and his gardens, parterres, fishpond, and other novelties attracted many distinguished visitors and contributed to Lemon Hill's reputation for being "a little nearer Paradise than any other place in the neighborhood of Philadelphia."<sup>4</sup> The property was purchased by the city of Philadelphia in 1844, and eleven years later it became the first ground to be incorporated into Fairmount Park.

This excellent example of Sully's early portraiture was painted between 3 May and 5 June 1815 for a fee of \$100, according to an entry in the "Account of Pictures." It is one of his least romanticized and most penetrating character studies.<sup>5</sup> Sul-

ly posed the affluent merchant comfortably seated, with his right elbow resting on the back of a chair. Pratt's slightly furrowed brow and parted lips make him seem apprehensive as he looks directly at the viewer. His hand, head, and cravat are illuminated by strong light that falls across the composition from his left; the pronounced downward diagonal sweep of his dark coat toward the light source forms an elegant visual counterthrust to it. The base of a fluted stone column in the right background balances the sitter's lean toward the opposite direction and suggests the presence of a vast space behind him. In this subtle work Sully combined deep psychological insight with an austere but masterly composition. He imbued his sitter with a thoughtful quality that seems to contradict an early biographer who remarked that "Mr. Pratt was a happy example of the truth that plodding business capacity is better than genius."<sup>6</sup>

RWT

#### Notes

1. Rosalie Vallance Tiers was the great-granddaughter of the artist Matthew Pratt. Her mother, Anna Matilda (1809–1854), was one of three daughters of the artist's daughter Mary (1771–1849) who married William Fennell. Anna Matilda married Arundius Tiers II (b. 1795) in 1828, and the couple had at least two children, Rosalie and LaRue. Rosalie married Charles P. Jackson. In addition to this painting, she inherited from her aunt Maria Fennell two of Pratt's paintings now in the National Gallery [1942.13.2 and 1944.17.1].

2. These are the dates given in William Sawitzky, *Matthew Pratt* (New York, 1942), 27. A direct descendant of Pratt, however, claimed that his life dates were 1764–1834; Dorthea Pratt Disston, letter to Ruth Carlson, 3 May 1966 (in NGA curatorial files).

3. Simpson 1859, 820, 821.

4. Thompson Westcott, *The Historic Mansions and Buildings of Philadelphia, with Some Notice of Their Owners and Occupants* (Philadelphia, 1877), 377. For additional information on Lemon Hill, see Virginia Norton Naudé, "Lemon Hill," *Antiques* 82 (November 1962): 531–533; and Virginia Norton Naudé, "Lemon Hill Revisited," *Antiques* 89 (April 1966): 578–579.

5. In a journal entry of 22 February 1817 (an inexplicably late date), Sully recorded that he had "Sent home the portrait of H. Pratt, Esq." (HSP).

6. Westcott 1877, 376.

#### References

- 1909 Hart: no. 1363, 136.  
1921 Biddle and Fielding: no. 1425, 254.  
1973 Flynn: 14, repro.

1945.9.1 (831)

*Lady with a Harp: Eliza Ridgely*

1818

Oil on canvas, 214.5 × 142.5 (84<sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 56<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>)  
Gift of Maude Monell Vetlesen

**Inscriptions**

Monogram at lower left on harp pedestal: TS 1818

**Technical Notes:** The moderately coarse-weave fabric support was relined during restoration treatment in 1945–1946. The tacking margins have been removed. The off-white ground layer covers the entire support, and there is a warm gray underlayer beneath the sky and architecture. Moderately fluid paint was applied loosely. The figure is multilayered, highly developed, and more thickly painted than the background. Glazes were used in the eyes and cheekbones. Impasto appears in the drapery, around the collar, and in the lighter colored highlights. There are scattered areas of abrasion throughout the paint layer. Age crackle in the dark background colors has been inconsistently inpainted. There is inpainting in the middle and lower part of the harp, the left portion of the landscape, the right part of the chair and cushion, and the lower part of the right side of the architecture. The surface is coated with a thick varnish that is discolored.

**Provenance:** The sitter's son, Charles Ridgely [1830–1872], Hampton Farm, Towson, Maryland; his son, Captain John Ridgely [1851–1938], Hampton Farm, Towson, Maryland; his son, John Ridgely, Jr. [1882–1959], Hampton, Towson, Maryland.

**Exhibited:** *Seventh Annual Exhibition of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts*, Philadelphia, 1818, no. 112, as "Full length Portrait of a Young Lady of Maryland." *Loan Exhibition of Sully Portraits Owned in Maryland*, Maryland Institute and Municipal Art Society, Baltimore, 1921, no. 8, as *Mrs. John Ridgely*. *Exhibition of Baltimore Owned Art Treasures*, BMA, 1933, no. 42. *Survey of American Painting*, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, 1940, no. 110. *250 Years of Painting in Maryland*, BMA, 1945, no. 89. *The One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary Exhibition of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts*, Philadelphia, 1955, no. 32. *American Portraiture in the Grand Manner: 1720–1920*, LACMA; NPG, 1981–1982, no. 29 (shown only in Los Angeles). *Mr. Sully, Portrait Painter: The Works of Thomas Sully (1783–1872)*, NPG, 1983, no. 28. *Classical Taste in America 1800–1840*, BMA; Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte, North Carolina; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas, 1993–1994, no. 216.

ELIZABETH (known as Eliza) Eichelberger Ridgely (1803–1867) was the only child born to the wealthy Baltimore grocer and wine merchant Nicholas Greenberry Ridgely and his wife Eliza Eichelberger, who died three days after giving

birth. Eliza's father spared neither effort nor expense in her education. At the age of thirteen she was sent to Miss Lyman's Institution, a Philadelphia boarding school for young women, where the headmistress described her as "amiable, talented, and respectful."<sup>1</sup> Eliza studied deportment, natural history, botany, grammar, literature, French, drawing, singing, and dancing, and also took piano and harp lessons. Ridgely scrupulously monitored his daughter's progress and urged her by letter not to neglect drawing, French, and music.<sup>2</sup> In June 1817 he purchased a harp for Eliza from Sebastian Erard in London, and among his papers ninety-six bills for music lessons survive, along with many others for harp repairs and string replacements.<sup>3</sup> When the marquis de Lafayette passed through Baltimore during his triumphal tour of America in 1824, he met Eliza and was enchanted by her virtuosity on the harp and command of the French language; the two became friends and corresponded regularly until his death in 1834.<sup>4</sup>

In 1828 Eliza married John Ridgely, who later inherited the stately Hampton Mansion from his father Charles Carnan Ridgely, a former governor of Maryland, whose portrait Sully had painted in 1820 [1945.12.1, p. 159]. Although Eliza and her husband had the same surname, they were not related. Eliza devoted herself to being the mistress of Hampton and initiated numerous improvements to its furnishings and gardens.<sup>5</sup> She had five children, only two of whom survived to adulthood.

According to an entry in his "Account of Pictures," Sully painted this full-length grand manner portrait in Philadelphia between 1 May and 21 May 1818 for a fee of \$500. In early August he wrote to Nicholas Ridgely and advised him that the painting would be delivered to Baltimore by Rembrandt Peale, who would also varnish and hang it.<sup>6</sup>

Fifteen-year-old Eliza is portrayed standing in a luxuriously furnished interior. She is clad in a fashionable white short-waisted satin empire gown.<sup>7</sup> Maintaining a graceful though nonfunctional contrapposto pose, she is shown in the act of tuning a harp: She holds a key in her right hand and plucks a string with the left while simultaneously depressing a pedal with her foot. The instrument represented in the portrait is not the one that Eliza's father had imported from London, but is an accurate delineation of a European single-action pedal harp to which Sully evidently had access in Philadelphia.<sup>8</sup> The panoramic landscape background, more topographical than idealized, is evocative of

rural Maryland rather than of a view from Ridgely's house on 25 Hanover Street near the congested inner basin of Baltimore Harbor, where the portrait hung until his death in 1829.

*Lady with a Harp* is one of Sully's most famous and frequently reproduced portraits. Its idealization and exaggerated femininity have elicited an ambivalent reaction from some art historians. Jules Prown found it typical of the artist's "sleek, occasionally sentimental, prettified images of boneless figures."<sup>9</sup> For Wayne Craven it typified Sully's female portraiture by being "idealized in the sweet, peaches-and-cream concept of feminine loveliness and elegance."<sup>10</sup> William Gerds has more accurately pointed out that the portrait "exemplifies both the style of Sully's art and his interpretation of the female subject at its fullest and best," which he defined as "true idealization, constructed according to Sully's own ideal of femininity which is, in turn, a version of the admired one of the age."<sup>11</sup> Wendy A. Cooper examined *Lady with a Harp* in its sociological context and viewed it together with other images and objects that reflect early nineteenth-century developments in the education of American women.<sup>12</sup> The musicologist Beth L. Miller interpreted the portrait as a symbol of Eliza's mastery of the harp and discussed how such a skill reflected the dominance of young—usually unmarried—women in early nineteenth-century American domestic musical culture.<sup>13</sup>

This author analyzed how the image was orchestrated to symbolize Eliza's elite social status and education because in the years preceding its creation, British writers were accusing American women of being unsophisticated, ignorant, and sadly deficient in the social graces.<sup>14</sup> He further noted that while the European system of female education, which emphasized such "ornamental accomplishments" as playing a musical instrument, was widely emulated in the United States, many Americans found these attainments superfluous. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries both the education of women, and their comparative level of social refinement became sensitive issues with far-reaching ramifications, particularly in the Anglo-American sphere. Aspersion cast on American womanhood were especially serious in an era when it was believed—to quote a statement from a speech made before the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts by Sully's friend and patron Joseph Hopkinson in 1810—that women were "inseparably con-

nected with every thing that civilizes, sublimates, and refines man."<sup>15</sup>

The book that most offended Americans at the time was Henry Bradshaw Fearon's *Sketches of America*. Published in 1818, the same year that Sully painted Eliza's portrait, the text contains some very negative appraisals of American women. Fearon wrote that in Philadelphia the women lacked "the English standard of health—a rosy cheek . . . their color is produced by art, but for which disgusting practice, many of them might pass for beautiful." He was scandalized to discover that even Quaker women indulged in "rouging."<sup>16</sup> He reported that although American women maintained that they "combine the excellencies of the French and English character, without the defects of either," he detected no such influence. With obvious condescension he wrote, "Could American ladies be content to despise instead of copying the vanity of their countrymen, and take a few practical lessons from the English female in the management of domestic concerns, and the cultivation of their minds, then, indeed, their fine forms might become peculiarly interesting,—at least to a man of sense."<sup>17</sup> In his summation of the "American female character," Fearon wrote that "in mental pursuits it would appear at present but little advanced," and he lamented "the extreme attention to mere personal ornament, and the universal neglect of either mental or domestic knowledge."<sup>18</sup> Among the many British writers who expressed similar opinions was the agriculturalist Richard Parkinson, who had been a friend and frequent guest of Eliza's future father-in-law. He approvingly quoted the words of an unidentified Canadian traveler who found "everywhere the want of education and hypocrisy . . . the women only studying, not how to please, but how to rule, to be applauded as political oracles, or revered as religious saints."<sup>19</sup>

In 1818 American women found a champion in New York attorney John Bristed, who sought to refute foreign opinions by categorically stating that "in no country under the canopy of heaven do female virtue and purity hold a higher rank than in the Union. . . . Our American ladies make virtuous and affectionate wives, kind and indulgent mothers; are, in general, easy, affable, intelligent, and well bred; their manners presenting a happy medium between the too distant reserve and coldness of the English, and the too obvious, too obtrusive be-



Thomas Sully, *Lady with a Harp: Eliza Ridgely*, 1945.9.1

haviour of the French women."<sup>20</sup> *Lady with a Harp* was the visual counterpart of Bristed's words.

Among Sully's contemporaries the portrait served a propagandistic function. It vindicated American womanhood by reflecting, in every aspect of Eliza's appearance, the standards of ideal female beauty and decorum established by late eighteenth-century British authorities on the education of women. Her expensive but austere dress echoes Reverend John Bennett's admonition that "finery is seldom graceful" and that "neatness is the *natural* garb of a well ordered mind, and has a near alliance with *purity* of heart"; for him the most tastefully attired woman exhibited "elegant simplicity."<sup>21</sup> Sully's emphasis on Eliza's red cheeks would have been recognized by any early nineteenth-century viewer as a manifestation of her ideal femininity: Bennett advised young ladies to "let the fairness of your complexion be only that of nature, and let your rouge be the crimson blush of health, arising from temperance, regularity, exercise, and air."<sup>22</sup> Eliza's aloof attitude in the portrait is reminiscent of Dr. Gregory's statement that "one of the chiefest beauties in a female character is modest reserve, that retiring delicacy, which avoids the public eye, and is disconcerted even at the gaze of admiration."<sup>23</sup> Sully rendered Eliza as the embodiment of the "extraordinary charms" that an early American writer claimed for Philadelphia womanhood: "a sweet and interesting expression of countenance, a wholesome ruddiness of complexion, blended with a skin delicately fair, a form graceful and majestic, with a deportment of the most perfect ease."<sup>24</sup>

The harp is the most prominent iconographic feature in Eliza's portrait, and one that had important antecedents in British aristocratic portraiture.<sup>25</sup> By 1801 it had appeared so frequently that Thomas Lawrence unsuccessfully tried to persuade a sitter not to include one in her full-length because "the Harp—tis so commonplace. There's an inundation of them in the Exhibition all strumming St. Cecilians disgracing themselves and the Painters all for the love of Mr. Erard."<sup>26</sup> The graceful instrument was regarded as the ideal accoutrement for women, and Sully had already included harps in his portraits of Angelica Livingston (1815, Senate House State Historic Site, Kingston, New York) and Mlle. Adele Sigoigne (1829, Juilliard School of Music, New York). (Mlle. Sigoigne was both a musician and the mistress of a Philadelphia school for women.) An American writer described the harp as "the finest of all—the grand enchanter—the Pros-

pero among these imprisoned spirits of sweet sound. Its richness, expressiveness, comparative facility of execution, capability of being kept in order by oneself, extreme portability, and, though last not least, in woman's eyes, its grace of form, raise it to unapproachable superiority." For a woman "to appear at advantage at the harp, a certain appearance is indispensable. . . . no where does a good figure look better, nor a bad one worse."<sup>27</sup>

Sully was well aware of the necessity of maintaining propriety in such images, whose appeal came dangerously close to being sensual. While visiting London to paint the young Queen Victoria in 1837, he saw Lawrence's *Mrs. Francis Robertson* (c. 1800, Tate Gallery, London) and made a note of his reaction to it: "One of Lawrence's early pictures of a lady at full length, resting on a harp. A discredit to his name. She looks like a vulgar loose person."<sup>28</sup>

In addition to serving a decorative function, the harp alludes to Eliza's mastery of music, and it has recently been suggested that Sully probably modeled Eliza's pose after the image of the Muse Erato as she appears in George Richardson's *Iconology* (London, 1779).<sup>29</sup> In the British system of female education that was emulated in America, music was classified as an "elegant" or "ornamental accomplishment," along with the study of foreign languages and drawing, the very areas in which Eliza's father urged her to excel. The presence of the harp thus implies that she was the successful product of Miss Lyman's Institution, the type of boarding school based on British models that had begun to proliferate in early nineteenth-century America.<sup>30</sup> Although society belles were expected to attain proficiency in these subjects, some social critics thought them frivolous. This ambivalent attitude was exemplified by a conversation in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), when Miss Bingley remarked that to be considered "accomplished," a woman needed to have "a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing, and the modern languages, to deserve the word," to which the stern Mr. Darcy replied, "and to all this she must yet add something more substantial, in the improvement of her mind by extensive reading."<sup>31</sup> The debate over these accomplishments was not always so circumspect, and at the time Sully painted Eliza's portrait, many Americans, notably Dr. Benjamin Rush of Philadelphia, regarded music, French, and drawing as undesirable attainments for young women.<sup>32</sup>

Rush vehemently criticized the ornamental accomplishments and the boarding school system in



1787, when he wrote a pamphlet based on the premise that “the education of young ladies, in this country, should be conducted upon principles very different from what it is in Great Britain, and in some respects different from what it was when we were part of a monarchical empire.”<sup>33</sup> Rush felt that emphasis on the accomplishments inevitably led to decadence and moral laxity; although he approved of singing, some of his harshest strictures were devoted to instrumental music, which he dismissed as being “by no means accommodated to the present state of society and manners in America.” Instruments were expensive, the tuition charged by teachers extravagant, and countless hours wasted by the necessity to practice. Such excesses led Rush to speculate “how many useful ideas might be picked up in these hours from history, philosophy, poetry, and the numerous moral essays in which our language abounds, and how much more would the knowledge acquired upon these subjects add to the consequence of a lady, with her husband and with society, than the best performed pieces of music upon a harpsichord or a guitar!” After marriage women had no time for such frivolities, and “their harpsichords serve only as side-boards for their parlours, and prove by their silence, that necessity and circumstances, will always prevail over fashion, and false maxims of education.” Rush did allow that a woman of exceptional talent and wealth, who was unencumbered with domestic duties, could pursue the study of an instrument.<sup>34</sup> He was equally unenthusiastic about the study of French and predicted a time when America would succumb to European manners and vices, when women’s “idleness, ignorance, and profligacy will be the harbingers of our ruin,” from which “a train of domestic and political calamities” was certain to follow.<sup>35</sup> Rush was convinced that “the cultivation of reason in women, is alike friendly to the order of nature, and to private as well as public happiness.”<sup>36</sup>

Rush’s ideas had little immediate effect on the education of American women. Disillusionment with the accomplishments peaked late in the second decade of the nineteenth century. In 1816 “Florepha” wrote to the *Port Folio* and suggested that “if young ladies, instead of being flattered for their personal beauty, their musical voices, and their skill in dancing, or in beating the keys of a piano, were praised and admired in proportion as they excelled in the modest and affectionate duties of daughter, and sister, they would make better wives and mothers, and the world would have less reason to com-

plain of female frivolity.”<sup>37</sup> The following year a writer for the *Analectic Magazine* summarized the state of female education in America by observing that “many useful schools, under the tuition of well educated ladies, have been established in our cities: but we have to repeat the standing complaint, that they are devoted in too many instances, to the mere ornamental parts of education. . . . Mere ornament is a thing of nought; and if the system of female education goes on the course it has now taken, the daughters of our fair countrywomen may make good musicians, good dancers, and good frolickers,—but we are afraid they will never make good wives.”<sup>38</sup>

In 1820 disillusionment with boarding schools and the accomplishments was expressed in the form of two satirical engravings after aquatints by John Lewis Krimmel that were reproduced in the *Analectic Magazine*, each accompanied by an explanatory paragraph written by the editor, James Maxwell. *Departure for a Boarding School* represented a “young damsel in unadorned and rustic simplicity, but in the moment of departure for the boarding school, to which she is destined by the mistaken pride and foolishness of her parents—for the purpose of refinements of a city education” (fig. 1). *Return from a Boarding School* delineated the “metamorphosis effected by the ill-advised experiment”: Seated before her new piano, attired in an empire dress, with drawings scattered about her feet, the former country lass has been converted by her education into a grande dame who spurns her former suitor (fig. 2). Maxwell noted how “her foot on the overturned spinning wheel, indicates her contempt for the morning occupations of former days, now laid aside in favor of the piano.”<sup>39</sup> These two illustrations satirize the effects of a boarding school education on a rustic middle-class family that, unlike the Ridgely family, could ill afford the tuition, but the newly instilled airs and pretensions of the pupil would have been insufferable in a young woman of any social class.

The apparently benign landscape behind Eliza, with its quaint village and verdant trees, can also be interpreted as a visual refutation, this time of British depreciation of the American countryside. Robert Walsh had singled out what he considered a particularly offensive passage that typifies such comments: “Even their wildernesses and deserts, their mountains, lakes, and forests, will produce nothing romantic or pastoral; no ‘native wood-note wild’ will ever be heard from their prairies or savannahs; for these remote regions are only relin-



Fig. 1. After John Lewis Krimmel, *Departure for a Boarding School*, engraving from *Analectic Magazine* vol. II, n. V (November 1820), opp. p. 421, Baltimore, The Enoch Pratt Free Library



Fig. 2. After John Lewis Krimmel, *Return from a Boarding School*, engraving from *Analectic Magazine* vol. II, n. VI (December 1820), opp. p. 507, Baltimore, The Enoch Pratt Free Library

quished by pagan savages to receive into their deep recesses hoards of discontented democrats, mad, unnatural enthusiasts, and needy or desperate adventurers."<sup>40</sup> No such dangers lurk in Sully's concept of American nature, which integrates perfectly with the comely young harpist standing in her stately interior.

Nicholas Ridgely was surely aware of the debates concerning female education; his decision to send Eliza to a Philadelphia boarding school and to encourage her to perfect the ornamental accomplishments, especially music, indicates his approval of values that were rapidly becoming outmoded. It is unfortunate that little is known about Ridgely other than that he was descended from a wealthy and aristocratic English immigrant from Devonshire who had settled in Anne Arundel County in 1659. Many members of his family had fought against the British in the American Revolution and

the War of 1812.<sup>41</sup> He served on the board of managers for the erection of the Washington Monument in Baltimore.<sup>42</sup> As a wealthy merchant and prominent citizen of Baltimore, a city described by Fearon as having occupied "the foremost ranks in deadly animosity towards England,"<sup>43</sup> Ridgely must have been personally affronted by British aspersions directed at men such as himself. Fearon echoed the opinions of many British critics when he remarked that the population of the United States had no titled class and mostly comprised European immigrants from lower social strata who were "the most enterprising, the most needy, but by no means the most intelligent of their native country," who had been "placed in novel circumstances, and occupied in pursuits little calculated to increase political virtue, or advance mental requirements."<sup>44</sup>

Fearon and others characterized the most successful Americans as merchants and agriculturists

who, despite their wealth, remained uneducated, unsophisticated money-grubbing boors who employed wealth merely for “gratifying their passions, or indulging their indolence.”<sup>45</sup> It was unambiguously clear to early nineteenth-century viewers of this portrait that Ridgely’s mercantile success afforded—to quote an early American writer’s justification of his countrymen’s avid pursuit of gain—“education, and cultivation of mind and manners.”<sup>46</sup>

This portrait constituted a visual refutation to the many British defamations of American society, culture, and womanhood. Its rich interior setting, its accessories, and the idealized figure of Eliza tuning her harp all allude to the successful transplantation to the New World of the greatest European refinements, both cultural and material. The portrait either directly or indirectly inspired James Peale’s *Ann Thompson* (1819, private collection), Charles Bird King’s *Mrs. John Quincy Adams* (c. 1822, NMAA), George Cook’s *Mrs. Donald Robertson* (1832, Brooklyn Museum, New York), and James and Robert Boyle’s *Jane Ball Shoobred* (c. 1840, Gibbes Art Gallery, Charleston, South Carolina). Given the symbolic implications of the image, it was especially appropriate that it was painted by “The American Lawrence,” in the romantic style then fashionable in London.

RWT

## Notes

1. Quoted in Shipe 1982, 231.
2. Nicholas Ridgely, letters to Eliza Ridgely, 24 November 1817 and 14 February 1818, MS 1127, MHS.
3. Erard (1752–1831) was a celebrated maker of pianos who greatly improved the double-action pedal harp. The receipt for the harp and miscellaneous bills are preserved in the Ridgely Family Papers, MS 692, MHS.
4. See “Lafayette’s Letters to Eliza Ridgely of Hampton,” ed. James W. Foster, *Maryland Historical Magazine* 52, no. 3 (September 1957): 233–244.
5. For additional biographical material and an account of Eliza’s activities at Hampton, see Lynne Dakin Hastings, *A Guidebook to Hampton National Historic Site* (Towson, Maryland, 1986), 12–15, 58–60.
6. Biddle and Fielding 1921, no. 1474, 259; Sully, letter to Nicholas Ridgely, 5 August 1818, Ridgely Papers, MS 692.1, MHS. On 1 October 1818 Rembrandt Peale docketed this letter, acknowledging that he had received \$500 for the portrait and an additional \$55.25 for the frame. He later made a copy of the bust version of Sully’s portrait (c. 1820, Hampton National Historic Site, Towson, Maryland). Sully alluded to the portrait in a journal entry of 14 July 1818: “Elizh. Ridgely, of Baltimore. Whole length port. & frame sent to her father at Baltimore” (HSP). In the late 1980s Hirschl & Adler Galleries, New York, had what it purported to be Sully’s pen and ink preparatory sketches for this portrait (fig. 3).
7. The dress is identified and discussed by Alice Morse Earle, *Two Centuries of Costume in America*, 2 vols. (New York, 1903), 1: 793.
8. Roslyn Rensch, *The Harp* (New York, 1969), 132. Sully may have gained access to the harp through the Musical Fund Society of Philadelphia, a group that reg-

Fig. 3. Thomas Sully, *Lady with a Harp and Other Sketches*, pen and ink, New York, Collection of Hirschl and Adler Galleries, #APG 15212D.01



ularly met at his studio during the time he painted Eliza's portrait.

9. Prown 1969, 58.
10. Craven 1994, 144. For similar opinions, see Price 1957, 56; and Fabian 1983, 70.
11. William Gerdtz, "Natural Aristocrats in a Democracy: 1810–1870," in LACMA 1981, 35.
12. Cooper 1993, 266–268.
13. B. Miller 1994, 35–54.
14. Torchia 1995, 405–423. British writers escalated their attacks on American society after the War of 1812, and educated Americans resented the insults. After Sully's former patron Robert Walsh (1947.17.11, p. 144) published a meticulously researched and argued rebuttal to British misrepresentations about the United States, *An Appeal from the Judgments of Great Britain Respecting the United States of America* (Philadelphia, 1819), the book was praised by Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and John Quincy Adams, and the author received an official vote of thanks from the Pennsylvania legislature. See also Washington Irving's brief and eloquent essay on the subject, "English Writers on America," in *The Sketch-Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (New York, 1819), 101–119.
15. Joseph Hopkinson, *Annual Discourse Delivered before the P. A. of the F. A. on the 13th of November, 1810* (Philadelphia, 1810), 34.
16. Henry Bradshaw Fearon, *Sketches of America: A Narrative of a Journey of Five Thousand Miles through the Eastern and Western States of America* (London, 1818), 170.
17. Fearon 1818, 173–174.
18. Fearon 1818, 380. These quotations are taken from a copy of this book owned by the Library Company of Philadelphia. The marginal notes inscribed by two early readers next to these passages demonstrate their indignation at the contents. The allegations that Philadelphia women used rouge prompted the responses "a stinking lie," "untrue," "they are painted by God," and "Lie. What a spite this Fearon seems to have against the Quakers." Next to the author's conclusion about mental pursuits appears "What a damned lie."
19. Richard Parkinson, *A Tour in America in 1798, 1799, and 1800*, 2 vols. (London, 1805), 2: 656. For other British writers who expressed similar opinions, see especially Charles William Janson, *The Stranger in America* (London, 1807), 87; Thomas Ashe, *Travels in America*, 3 vols. (London, 1809), 4: 171–172; Morris Birkbeck, *Notes on a Journey in America, from the Coast of Virginia to the Territory of Illinois* (London, 1818), 81; and Lieutenant Francis Hall, *Travels in Canada, and The United States, in 1816 and 1817* (London, 1818), 180–181. It appears from the contents of a dialogue in Robert Waln, Jr., *The Hermit in America on a Visit to Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1819), 152–154, that authors of French travel books had also insulted American womanhood: namely, Claude C. Rolin, *Nouveau voyage dans l'Amerique septentrionale, en l'annee 1781* (Paris, 1782), and Jean Pierre Brissot de Warville, *Nouveau voyage dans les Etats Unis de l'Amerique septentrionale fait en 1788* (Paris, 1791); both books were translated into English and printed in America.
20. John Bristed, *The Resources of the United States of America* (New York, 1818), 423.
21. Reverend John Bennett, *Letters to a Young Lady on*

- a Variety of Useful and Interesting Subjects*, 4th American ed. (Worcester, Massachusetts, 1798), 140–141.
22. Bennett 1798, 143.
23. Dr. Gregory, *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters* (Boston, 1791), 16.
24. "The Ladies of Philadelphia," *Port Folio* 4 (1810): 604.
25. The most important of these are Sir Thomas Lawrence's *Queen Caroline and the Princess Charlotte* (1802, Royal Collection, St. James Palace, London), Sir William Beechey's *Miss Jane Reade* (c. 1813, Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas), and John Singleton Copley's allegorical *Mrs. Richard Crowninshield Derby as St. Cecilia* (1803–1804, private collection).
26. Quoted in Martin R. F. Butlin, "Lawrence's Portrait of Mrs. Francis Robertson: Some New Letters," *Burlington Magazine* 99 (January 1957): 27.
27. "Choice of Musical Instruments for Females," *Port Folio* 10, no. 1 (September 1820): 92.
28. The Robertson portrait is listed in Kenneth Garlick, *Sir Thomas Lawrence: A Complete Catalogue of the Oil Paintings* (New York, 1989), no. 684, 259; Sully, journal entry of 12 December 1837 (HSP).
29. Norine S. Hendricks, "Thomas Sully's *Lady with a Harp*, a Portrait of Eligibility," unpublished paper delivered at the Twenty-Third Annual Session of the Middle Atlantic Symposium in the History of Art, 3 April 1993. Although the following discussion interprets the harp as emblematic of Eliza's education, it may also allude to the Pythagorean cosmological theory of the harmony of the spheres; for a discussion of this philosophical theory and its appearance in literature, see S. K. Heninger, Jr., *Touches of Sweet Harmony: Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics* (San Marino, California, 1974).
30. For an account of the boarding school phenomenon, see Thomas Woody, *A History of Women's Education in the United States*, 2 vols. (New York, 1929), 1: 329–459.
31. Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (Oxford, 1991), 34.
32. Some British writers had also criticized what they regarded as undue emphasis on such accomplishments; see Thomas Gisborne, *An Inquiry into the Duties of the Female Sex* (London, 1797), 79–81; Thomas Broadhurst, *Advice to Young Ladies, on the Improvement of the Mind, and the Conduct of Life* (London, 1809), 14, 104; and Reverend John Bennett, *Strictures on Female Education in Four Essays* (Philadelphia, 1793), 25.
33. Benjamin Rush, *Thoughts upon Female Education Accommodated to the Present State of Society, Manners, and Government, in the United States of America* (Philadelphia, 1787), 5.
34. Rush 1787, 15–17.
35. Rush 1787, 22; for the author's opinion of French, see 17–18.
36. Rush 1787, 25.
37. *Port Folio* 5 (November, 1816): 379.
38. "A Review of the Systems of elementary Education in the United States: with a brief Account of the American Colleges," *Analectic Magazine* 9 (April 1817), 290. See also the attack on American women made by the anonymous American author of "The Truth Respecting England," *Analectic Magazine* 12 (September 1818): 185–186; and the response made by "Constantia,"

"Defence of American Women," *Port Folio* 4 (October 1818): 278–279.

39. *Analectic Magazine* 2 (November 1820): 421; and *Analectic Magazine* 2 (December 1820): 507–508. Krimmel's illustrations and the texts that accompany them are reproduced in full in Milo M. Naeve, *John Lewis Krimmel: An Artist in Federal America* (Newark, Delaware, 1987), 111–114; see also Anneliese Harding, *John Lewis Krimmel: Genre Artist of the New Republic* (Winterthur, Delaware, 1994), 200–203.

40. "Actual Condition of the United States," *British Review, and London Critical Journal* (May 1819), quoted by Robert Walsh, *An Appeal from the Judgments of Great Britain Respecting the United States of America* (Philadelphia, 1819), 291.

41. For genealogical information on Ridgely's family, see Charles Francis Stein, *Origin and History of Howard County, Maryland* (Baltimore, 1972), 299–306.

42. William D. Hoyt, Jr., "Robert Mills and the Washington Monument in Baltimore," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 34 (1939): 144–160.

43. Fearon 1818, 344.

44. Fearon 1818, 353–354, 364.

45. Fearon 1818, 362.

46. "Defence of the American Character, or an essay on wealth as an object of cupidity or the means of distinction in the United States," *Port Folio* 5 (May 1819): 413.

#### References

- 1909 Hart: no. 1408, 140.  
1921 Biddle and Fielding: no. 1474, 259.  
1981 Gerdts, William H. "Natural Aristocrats in a Democracy: 1810–1870." In LACMA 1981: 35, 128, color repro. 130.  
1982 Shipe: 230–237.  
1983 Fabian: 70, repro. 71.  
1993 Cooper: 266–268, color repro. 267.  
1994 Miller: 35–54: fig. 1.  
1995 Torchia: 405–423, illus.

1945.12.1 (832)

### *Charles Carnan Ridgely*

1820

Oil on canvas, 126.3 × 101.5 (49<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 39<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. John Ridgely

#### Inscriptions

At lower left, monogram and date: TS 1820

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support was relined in 1946. All four tacking margins have been removed. There is no evidence of cusping, so the composition may have been reduced. Paint was applied in thin, fluid layers on a white ground layer. The face was carefully modeled, and less controlled brushwork is evident in the sword, details of the chair arm, and the red curtain. Traction crackle, paint wrinkling, and numerous areas of inpainting are evident in the black clothing. The varnish is yellowed.

**Provenance:** The sitter's son, John Carnan Ridgely [1790–1867], Hampton Farm, Towson, Maryland; his son, Charles Ridgely [1830–1872], Hampton Farm, Towson, Maryland; his son, Captain John Ridgely [1851–1938], Hampton, Towson, Maryland; his son, John Ridgely, Jr. [1882–1959], Hampton Farm, Towson, Maryland.

**Exhibitions:** *Loan Exhibition of Sully Portraits Owned in Maryland*, The Maryland Institute and Municipal Art Society, Baltimore, 1921, no. 9, as *Gen. Charles Ridgely, Governor of Maryland. American Paintings from the Eighteenth Century to the Present Day*, Tate Gallery, London, 1946, no. 208. *Early American Portraits and Silver* [Golden Jubilee of the Colonial Dames of America], J. B. Speed Memorial Museum, Louisville, Kentucky, 1947, no cat. *American Painters of the South*, CGA, 1960, no. 69. *Classical Maryland 1815–1845: Fine and Decorative Arts from the Golden Age*, MHS, 1993, unnumbered.

CHARLES CARNAN RIDGELY (1760–1829), born Charles Carnan, was the son of John Carnan (1728–1762) and Achsah Ridgely (1729–1785), the descendants of English immigrants. After his father's death, the boy became the protégé of his wealthy uncle Captain Charles Ridgely (1733–1790), who had made a fortune after organizing the Northampton Iron Works and had erected a magnificent Palladian manor house known as Hampton. The captain made a provision in his will for his nephew to inherit his entire estate provided that he assume the surname Ridgely. Charles Carnan accordingly changed his name by a special act of the General Assembly of Maryland in 1790 and became the second master of Hampton. In 1782 he married Priscilla Dorsey (1762–1814); the couple had fourteen children, eleven of whom survived into adulthood. In 1794 he was appointed a major in Colonel Johnson Imans' Baltimore militia regiment, and two years later he was commissioned a brigadier general in the state militia.

A staunch Federalist, Ridgely initiated his political career by representing Baltimore County in the Lower House of the Maryland Assembly from 1790 to 1795, and he served as a senator from 1795 to 1800. After a long period spent managing his considerable property, he reentered politics and served three consecutive terms as governor of Maryland from 1816 until 1819. His administration was characterized by a concern for internal improvements and educational reforms. Following the expiration of his final term, Ridgely retired to Hampton, where he occupied himself with improving the estate and breeding racehorses. After his son John Carnan Ridgely's second marriage in 1828, he be-





Fig. 1. William Camp, Chair, c. 1819, Baltimore, First Unitarian Church

came the father-in-law of Elizabeth (known as Eliza) Eichelberger Ridgely, the subject of Sully's *Lady with a Harp* [1945.9.1, p. 151].<sup>1</sup>

Ridgely was a man of extraordinary taste and discrimination who spared neither effort nor expense in equipping Hampton with the highest quality furnishings, which he ordered from Baltimore's best artisans or imported from Europe. Around 1802 he enlisted the British expatriate artist William Russell Birch of Philadelphia to design the gardens at Hampton.<sup>2</sup> Famous for his hospitality, Ridgely entertained guests on a magnificent scale and was reputed to keep the best table in America. The author of his obituary noted that "the splendors with which he entertained, his plate and his equipage, was adapted to his fortune as well as to his disposition."<sup>3</sup> Like the rest of his furnishings, this exceptionally fine portrait reflected Ridgely's position as one of America's wealthiest and most cultivated men.

According to an entry in his "Account of Pictures," Sully painted this three-quarter-length portrait in Baltimore between 23 March and 22 October 1820 for a fee of \$200.<sup>4</sup> It received favorable mention in a local newspaper, whose reviewer proclaimed it "a noble picture; full of character, bold-

ness and resemblance."<sup>5</sup> Clad in a simple black walking coat and seated in a red upholstered armchair, the recently retired governor faces forward and leans slightly to his right. He is the essence of restrained elegance, and there is scant indication of his sumptuous lifestyle: The decorative sword grip and carved palmette on the chair arm are the sole ornamental devices in this otherwise austere image. The gray-haired Ridgely looks directly into the viewer's eyes with a pensive and somewhat melancholy expression that may be explained by the recent death of his eldest son in a riding accident. The sharply foreshortened dress sword that rests on the table at his right alludes to Ridgely's former service in the militia, for which he was still known as "the General." The configuration of the pilasters on the background wall suggests a circular or oval room and is characteristic of a stately Georgian interior, but no such room existed at Hampton.

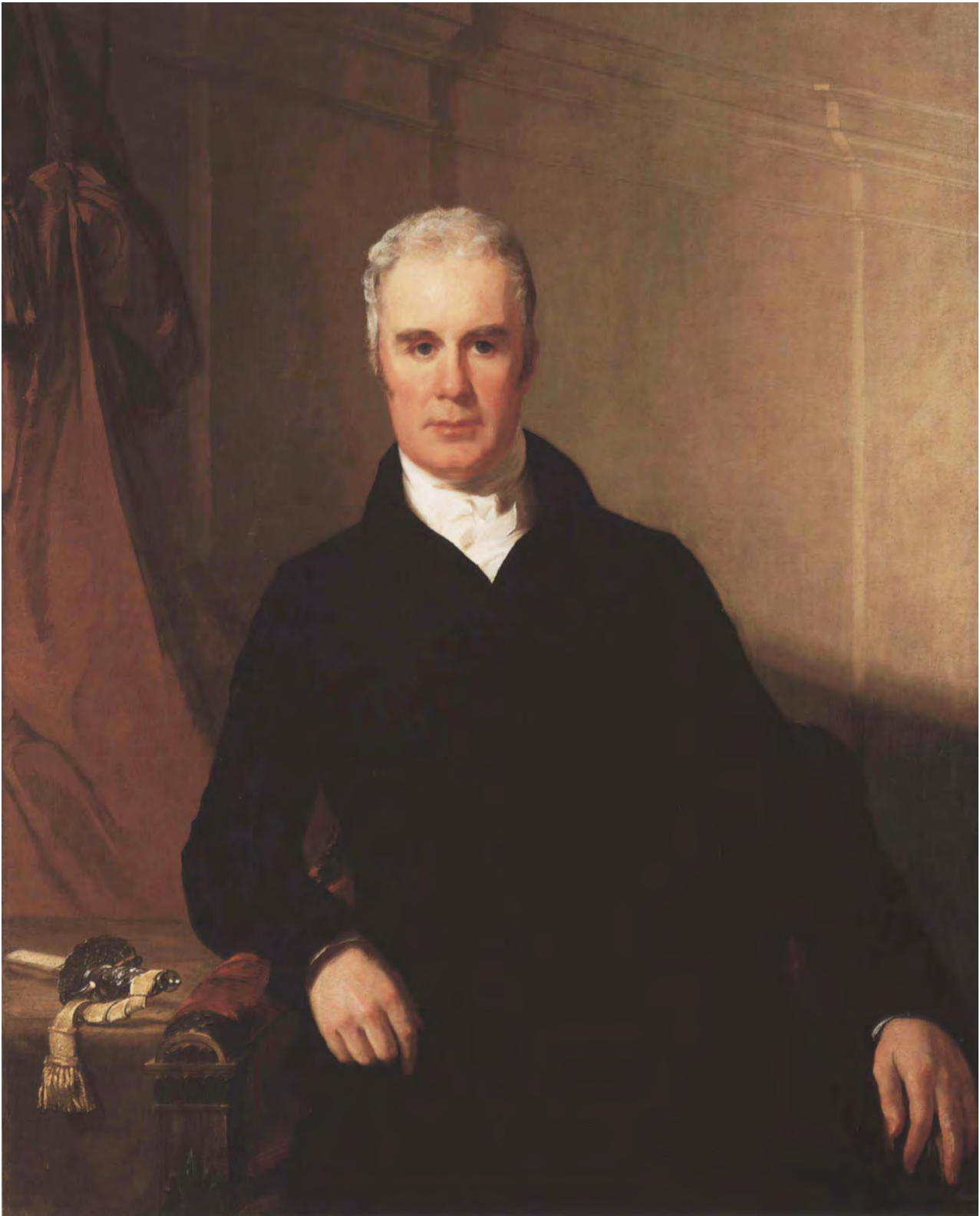
Ridgely's distinctive armchair is identical to the pair that had been designed by the architect Maximilian Godefroy as part of a set of furniture for the First Unitarian Church of Baltimore, which he also designed. The austere, domed building (modeled after the Pantheon in Rome) was erected between 1817 and 1818. The furniture was made in 1819 by Baltimore's preeminent cabinetmaker William Camp, from whom Ridgely had commissioned furniture for Hampton (fig. 1).<sup>6</sup> Although not a member of the Unitarian Church, Ridgely evidently admired the unique bird's-eye-maple chair with carved foliate and bronzed ornaments and chose to have it included in his portrait.<sup>7</sup> One of Sully's most accomplished images of a male subject, this portrait resembles the work of the fashionable London painter Sir Thomas Lawrence, a quality that was surely attuned to Ridgely's cosmopolitan, distinctly Anglophilic tastes. The carefully arranged props, including the drapery, sword, and unusual empire armchair, and the neoclassical interior combine with Ridgely's assertive frontal pose to create an air of authority thoroughly appropriate for the master of Hampton.

RWT

#### Notes

1. Biographical data on Ridgely comes from Frank F. White, Jr., *The Governors of Maryland 1777-1970* (Annapolis, 1970), 71-73; Charles Francis Stein, *Origin and History of Howard County, Maryland* (Baltimore, 1972), 304; and Hastings 1986, 8-12.

2. For a discussion of Ridgely's furnishings at Hampton, see Hastings 1986, 46-53.



Thomas Sully, *Charles Carnan Ridgely*, 1945.12.1

3. *Maryland Gazette*, 23 July 1829, quoted in White 1970, 73.

4. In a journal entry of 23 July 1821 Sully wrote, "Genl. Ridgely's portrait sent to his house, when in Baltimore" (HSP).

5. *Federal Republican and Baltimore Telegraph*, 22 December 1820, quoted in Colwill 1993, 73.

6. For a discussion of the chairs and other furnishings that Godefroy designed for the church, see Robert L. Alexander, *The Architecture of Maximilian Godefroy* (Baltimore, 1974), 151–152n.20.

7. It is possible that Ridgely gave the chairs to the Unitarian Church because he donated items to churches of various denominations in the Baltimore area. For example, in the year Sully painted his portrait Ridgely gave a stove to the Zion Church and one to Union Chapel; Ridgely Papers, MS 692, Box 6, Accounts and Receipts, Manuscripts Division, MHS Library. The unknown author of a "Description of the First Independent Church of Baltimore" (*Port Folio* 7 [May 1819]: 393, 391) observed that the Unitarian Church "will be acknowledged to approach nearer to the perfection of Architecture than any other edifice in America," and provided a detailed description of the chairs: "On the landing places, on each side of the pulpit, is an arm chair of antique form, also made of bird's eye maple, and enriched with bronzed ornaments in relief; and behind the pulpit is an antique sofa [*sic*]. The workmanship of these seats and the pulpit, is by Mr. Camp, of Baltimore, and to those who know the skill of that excellent mechanick, it can hardly be necessary to add, that the whole is in the finest style of execution."

#### References

- 1909 Hart: no. 1406, 140.  
1921 Biddle and Fielding: no. 1473, 259.  
1993 Colwill, Stiles Tuttle. "The Fine Arts in Classical Baltimore." In Weidman and Goldsborough 1993: 73, fig. 91.

1942.8.30 (583)

### *John Quincy Adams*

1824  
Oil on canvas, 61 × 51 (24 × 20 1/16)  
Andrew W. Mellon Collection

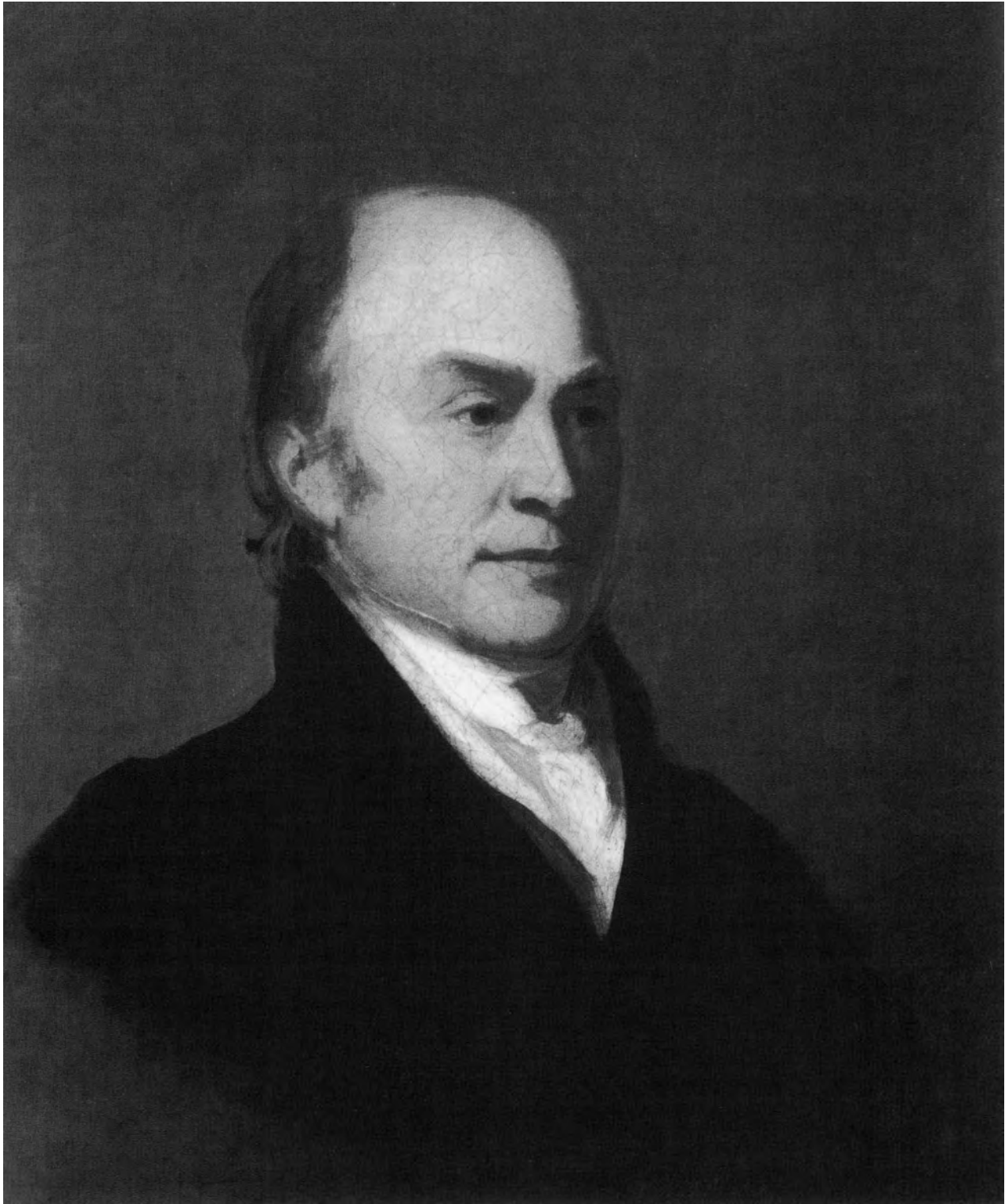
**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support was lined in 1920. Sully's inscription on the reverse of the support was visible before its lining: "TS from Life / Washington D.C. / 1824."<sup>21</sup> The original tacking margins have been removed; cusping suggests that the dimensions remain unchanged. The relatively thick white ground layer is covered by a dark pink imprimatura that was employed as a base layer for the flesh tones; in the remainder of the painting a translucent dark brown imprimatura was applied over the pink one. The portrait was painted mainly wet-into-wet, and the lower portion was left unfinished. Abrasion in the thinner and

darker passages of paint, such as the shaded flesh tones and hair, and mechanical cracks in the face and shirt are inpainted. A pigmented glaze covers much of the background. The glossy, uneven varnish is discolored.

**Provenance:** Henry Clay [1777–1852], Lexington, Kentucky; his son, James B. Clay [1817–1864], Lexington, Kentucky; his son, George H. Clay, Lexington, Kentucky; purchased March 1920 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 Portraits by Early American Portrait Painters*, Union League Club, New York, February 1924, no. 4. *Portraits by Early American Artists of the Seventeenth, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries Collected by Thomas B. Clarke*, PMA, 1928, unnumbered. *Famous Americans*, Washington County Museum of Fine Arts, Hagerstown, Maryland, 1955, no cat. *Mr. President; A Pictorial Parade of Presidents from Washington to Eisenhower 1789–1956*, Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, Texas, 1956, no. 16. [Exhibition of portraits of outstanding early jurists and lawyers], Columbia Museum of Art, South Carolina, 1964, no cat. *The Life Portraits of John Quincy Adams*, NPG, 1970–1971, no. 13. *'If Elected . . .': Unsuccessful Candidates for the Presidency 1796–1968*, NPG, 1972, unnumbered.

SULLY painted this portrait of the famous author, diplomat, statesman, and sixth president of the United States, John Quincy Adams (1767–1848), late in December 1824 in Washington, D.C. His reason for the trip was to obtain the life likeness of the marquis de Lafayette that he later used in his celebrated full-length portrait of the French hero (1826, Independence Historical Park Collection, Philadelphia). In addition to painting Adams, then secretary of state to President James Monroe, the artist also executed a similar bust of General Andrew Jackson [1942.8.34, p. 184]. Sully painted the portraits in an atmosphere charged with political tension, because Adams and Jackson were locked in a bitter struggle for the presidency of the United States. Jackson had already won the popular vote, but had failed to gain the requisite majority of electoral votes. In accordance with the Twelfth Amendment to the Constitution, the election was referred to the House of Representatives. The influential Henry Clay, a former candidate in the presidential contest who had finished well behind Adams and Jackson, decided the outcome by shifting his support to Adams in exchange for being appointed secretary of state in the new administration. After Adams' victory in the House on 9 February 1825, many Americans expressed outrage



Thomas Sully, *John Quincy Adams*, 1942.8.30

over what they considered a “monstrous union” whereby the will of the people was usurped through the machinations of ambitious and intriguing politicians.<sup>2</sup> These historical circumstances assume added significance in view of the fact that this portrait was once owned by Clay, but the exact means by which he acquired it are unknown.

Sully did not document this portrait in his account book because it was a preparatory study for another painting; it may be one of those he recorded as “some studies for other pictures [that] are begun, but not registered.”<sup>3</sup> Adams, however, recorded in his diary three sittings with Sully. On 23 December he wrote, “Sat to Sully for my picture; at [the artist Charles Bird] King’s house.” The second sitting took place on 28 December and the third on New Year’s Eve, when Adams wrote, “Third and last sitting to Sully. He and King have both taken

likenesses of La Fayette, of which I think King’s the best.” Adams was consistent in his lack of enthusiasm for Sully’s work, for in a diary entry of 14 October 1819 he had recorded his negative assessment of the artist’s monumental *Washington’s Passage of the Delaware* (1820, MFA) that had been painted for the state of North Carolina.<sup>4</sup>

Sully was so successful in capturing his distinguished sitter’s notoriously phlegmatic personality that it is difficult to believe this likeness was taken from life. The bald and smooth-featured Adams, set in a rigidly erect three-quarter view, looks slightly downward toward his left with an impenetrable air of stony reserve. The portrait conforms to an early description of Adams: “His complexion is fair, his face round and full, but what most distinguishes his features, is his eye, which is black; it is not a sparkling eye, nor yet dull, but one of such keenness that it pierces the beholder. Every feature of his face shows genius. . . . his countenance is serene and dignified, he has the steadiest look I ever witnessed.”<sup>5</sup>

Early in 1825 Sully incorporated this bust into a small full-length seated portrait of Adams (fig. 1), which had been commissioned in the previous year by the Philadelphia print seller William H. Morgan.<sup>6</sup> The chronology of the two portraits and Sully’s standard procedure of painting life likenesses of a subject that he later integrated into a full-length work suggest that the National Gallery painting was a study for this second portrait, which was ultimately engraved by Asher B. Durand and published by Morgan on 6 October 1826.<sup>7</sup> Adams approved of the engraving but, as usual, found fault with Sully by saying it was not a “good likeness” and noting that its “principal defect is a failure in the expression of character.”<sup>8</sup> In the privacy of his diary, however, Adams described himself as “a man of reserved, cold, austere, and forbidding manners,”<sup>9</sup> thus providing an unintentional explanation for Sully’s unflattering but perceptive rendering of his features.

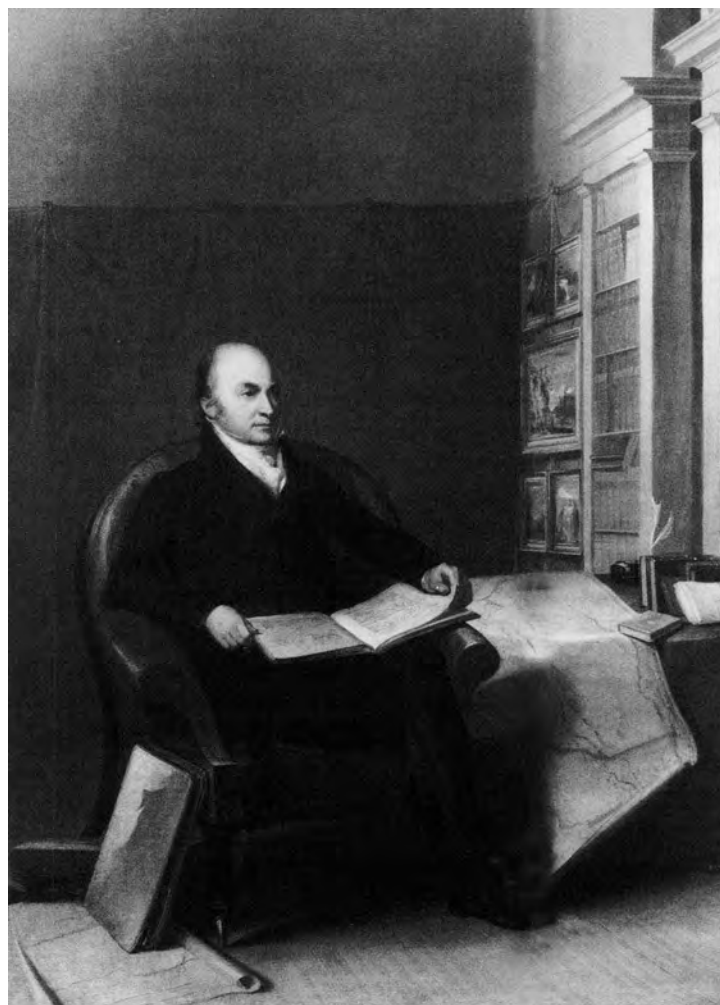
RWT

#### Notes

1. A handwritten explanatory label from a previous restorer attached to the stretcher reads: “March 15th to 23rd 1920 / This painting we have relined, the / life portrait of John Quincey [sic] Adams / by Thomas Sully and we have copied / the text on the back of canvas as appeared / on the original surface.”

2. For an account of this election, see Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Freedom, 1822–1832* (New York, 1981), 74–99.

Fig. 1. Thomas Sully, *John Quincy Adams*, oil on canvas, 1825, Yonkers, New York, Philipse Manor Hall State Historic Site, photograph courtesy of New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, PM.1972.23





3. Sully, "Account of Pictures," unspecified entry of early 1825, HSP.

4. The diary entries are cited by Oliver 1970, 109–110.

5. [Anne Royall], *Sketches of History, Life, and Manners, in the United States, by a Traveller* (New Haven, 1826), 166.

6. Hart 1909, 18, made no mention of the National Gallery bust and mistakenly thought that Sully derived the features of his small full-length work from Gilbert Stuart's portrait of Adams, an error that was corrected by Biddle and Fielding 1921, 83.

7. Sully alluded to the National Gallery portrait in a journal entry of 16 March 1828, when he was cleaning out his studio in preparation for moving to a new one: "Sent Morgan's whole length of Monroe by King and received my head of Adams" (HSP).

8. Adams, letter to George F. Morris, 6 November 1833, Adams Papers, Library of Congress, cited in Oliver 1970, 114. Oliver also provides (111–115) a full discussion of the small full-length portrait, the two preparatory sketches for it, and Durand's engraving.

9. Quoted in NPG 1972, 97.

#### References

- 1921 Biddle and Fielding: no. 7, 83.  
1970 NPG: n.p.  
1970 Oliver: 108–115.

1948.13.1 (1031)

### *The David Children*

1826

Oil on canvas, 87 × 112.4 (34 1/4 × 44 1/4)  
Chester Dale Collection

#### Inscriptions

Monogram at lower left: TS 18[. . .]

**Technical Notes:** The plain-weave fabric support has been lined. The tacking margins have been removed. Shallow cusping is visible along all edges except the bottom, which may have been slightly cropped. The paint was applied fluidly over a white or off-white ground layer. Low impasto and brushmarks are visible in the flesh tones and white pillow. The figures and background were executed over red underpaint that was also used for Ferdinand David's dress and shadows in the children's faces. Glazes and green underpaint were employed in a few areas to establish the sitters' facial characteristics. X-radiography reveals a change in Julia David's left arm to correct its foreshortened position. A large, complex tear was mended before 1948, when the painting was acquired by the National Gallery. One branch, 60 cm long, extends from Ferdinand David's hair to Stephen David's hand; another 60 cm branch extends from above Stephen David's head down to the red cushion. Conservation files record that stains were inpainted during 1957–1958. Sully's monogram signature has been reinforced. The ex-

remely discolored varnish conceals extensive areas of abrasion and inpainting that are scattered throughout the paint surface.

**Provenance:** John Foster Jenkins [1826–1882], husband of the sitters' sister, Elizabeth Sicard David Jenkins [d. 1885]; their son, John Foster Jenkins, Jr. [1861–1931], Yonkers, New York; Albert Rosenthal [1863–1939], Philadelphia, and (Ehrich Galleries, New York);<sup>1</sup> Cornelius Michaelson, New York; (his sale, Rains Galleries, New York, 8 May 1935, no. 88); Chester Dale [1883–1962], New York.

**Exhibited:** *15th Annual Exhibition*, PAFA, 1826, no. 19.<sup>2</sup> *Exhibition of Portraits by Stuart and Sully*, Ehrich Galleries, New York, 1917, no. 17. *Paintings by Thomas Sully*, Ehrich Galleries, New York, 1920, unnumbered. *Loan Exhibition of Early American Paintings*, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, 1931, no. 16. *An Exhibition of American Paintings from the Chester Dale Collection*, Union League Club, New York, 1937, no. 12. *Trumbull and His Contemporaries*, Lyman Allyn Museum, New London, Connecticut, 1944, no. 122.

THIS unusual triple portrait, whose composition is unlike any of Sully's other group portraits of children, represents three of the five children born to Jean Terford David (1792–1838) and his wife Mary Sicard David (1792–1864): Julia, Ferdinand, and Stephen. Sully's pendant portraits of the parents (1813, Cleveland Museum of Art) are among his finest early works. Both David and his wife were the children of French immigrants who had settled in Philadelphia; according to family tradition David was an amateur artist who was related to either the famous French painter Jacques-Louis David or the sculptor David d'Angers.<sup>3</sup> After serving as a paymaster in the War of 1812, he entered the import business with his brother-in-law Stephen Sicard and thereafter spent most of his time in France where he eventually died. Little is known about the three children that appear in Sully's portrait: Julia died in her youth, the elder brother Ferdinand died in China at an early age, and Stephen became an artist; none of them married.

According to an entry in the "Account of Pictures," Sully executed this portrait between 26 April and 16 May 1826 for a fee of \$250. In addition to a small preparatory wash drawing (fig. 1), he painted at least two studies of the children (location unknown).<sup>4</sup> The figure grouping of these three Philadelphia children is strikingly suggestive of a traditional religious subject, such as the Holy Family. Ferdinand leans over his infant brother Stephen and tickles the sole of his foot. Despite the casual

gesture, Stephen's oddly prostrate pose and proleptically limp right arm are reminiscent of Renaissance representations of the Christ Child. An awkwardly drawn Julia stands behind Ferdinand and rests her left hand on his wrist; she stares tenderly at Stephen. The low viewpoint and strong light draw the viewer's attention to the reclining child. A silver coral with bells lies in a prominent position slightly to the left of the center foreground; although such toys appear in some American portraits of the mid-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, coral was an attribute of the Infant Christ because of its associations with warding off evil.<sup>5</sup> In the preparatory drawing the gestures of Ferdinand and Julia impart a sense of tragic urgency to the scene that Sully muted in the final painting.



Fig. 1. Thomas Sully, *Study for Portrait of Julia, Ferdinand, and Stephen David*, wash drawing, 1826, private collection, photograph courtesy of Hirschl and Adler Galleries, New York

The novelty of this composition may be explained by the fact that four days after Sully had commenced work on *The David Children* he went to Bordentown, New Jersey, to inspect a collection of old master paintings owned by Napoleon's brother Joseph Bonaparte, count de Survilliers and former king of Spain, to select some of them for inclusion in the fifteenth annual exhibit of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. *The David Children* was also shown at that exhibition.<sup>6</sup> Bonaparte's 150 pictures "formed without doubt the most valuable and impressive collection in America at that time," and he was "arguably one of the most significant cat-

alysts in disseminating European culture and artistic knowledge to early nineteenth-century Americans."<sup>7</sup> Sully was deeply impressed with works by Titian (c. 1490–1576) and Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640), and his observations on the former's technique were later quoted at length in William Dunlap's *History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States*; some of the methods and materials he mentioned have been detected in this painting.<sup>8</sup> Bonaparte hosted a salon for members of Philadelphia's French émigré community, which makes it likely that he was acquainted with David, especially since his daughter Charlotte had studied painting with Jacques-Louis David, whose portrait of her had been exhibited at the Academy in 1823.<sup>9</sup> These circumstances and interrelationships make it reasonable to assume that Sully, perhaps at his artist-patron David's request, designed the composition of this portrait as a free adaptation of one of the European old master paintings that he had seen in Bonaparte's collection.<sup>10</sup>

Sully posed the children before a wall partially covered by a drapery that hangs on the left, but the right portion of the background abruptly recedes deep into the interior of a house where two women are seen ascending a staircase. This feature prompted one writer to remark on the "amazing spatial background that reminds one of Ingres and Courbet."<sup>11</sup> The interior view in the right background is a fairly accurate depiction of the ground floor of David's house at 173 Walnut Street, where he lived from 1825 until 1829.<sup>12</sup> Erected sometime between 1800 and 1802 and traditionally attributed to the architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe, the twenty red brick houses on the north side of Walnut Street were an architectural novelty in Philadelphia because they were "the city's first speculative row development in which the entire block was planned and built as a row rather than as individual houses built at different times adjacent to one another."<sup>13</sup> The development was named Sansom's Row, and the dwellings were modeled after traditional London houses with uniform plans. A commentator who wrote five years after Sully painted this portrait noted that the houses "have greatly tended to ornament the city, and to accommodate the inhabitants."<sup>14</sup>

The composition and setting of this remarkable group portrait were thus deliberate allusions to the David family's ties to European culture and to their architecturally progressive residence on Sansom's Row. This unusual painting did not elicit any spe-



Thomas Sully, *The David Children*, 1948.13.1

cial notice from Sully's contemporaries. A Philadelphia newspaper critic who reviewed the Academy's annual exhibit remarked that there was "nothing from Sully that can raise his well earned, and long established fame."<sup>15</sup>

According to Edward Biddle and Mantle Fielding,<sup>16</sup> *The David Children* was made into a lithograph by Albert Newsam, but there is no extant example of the print.

RWT

## Notes

1. The triple portrait and Sully's pendant portraits of the children's parents were offered for sale by John Foster Jenkins, Jr., who advertised them in a brochure entitled "Three Portraits by Thomas Sully." The Cleveland Museum of Art purchased the pendant portraits directly from him in 1916, but this part of the provenance of the National Gallery painting is unclear. Albert Rosenthal, in a letter to Chester Dale's secretary (10 December 1935, in NGA curatorial files), said that he purchased the painting from descendants of the David family through James B. Townshend, publisher of *American Art News*. The painting was reproduced in that magazine (16 June 1917: 5) with the caption, "Recently sold to Mr. Albert Rosenthal of Phila." Dale collection notes (in NGA curatorial files) indicate the purchase was probably made in May 1917. Cornelius Michaelsen wrote to Mr. Dale's secretary on 15 September 1935 (in NGA curatorial files) saying that he had purchased the painting from Mr. Rosenthal's private collection. However, other notes in NGA curatorial files indicate the painting was purchased by Rosenthal jointly with Ehrich Galleries. A 1918 publication by Ehrich Galleries, *One Hundred Early American Paintings*, lists paintings that have "at various times been in our possession," and the absence of a private owner's name in the listing for the Sully implies ownership by the firm. In the 1935 letter Rosenthal did not recall having lent the painting to any public exhibition, but it was included in a 1931 exhibition at the New Jersey State Museum that he organized, and was listed as lent by Ferergil Galleries. Ferergil and Ehrich Galleries were the main lenders.

2. It was listed in the catalogue as "Group of Children Portraits." The identity of the work is confirmed by a journal entry of 19 May 1826 in which Sully recorded, "John David paid me 250 for the portrait of his children; the picture will be sent to the Academy on Saturday afternoon for the Annual Exhibition which is to open on Monday 22nd."

3. John Francis Jenkins, letter to William S. Talbot, 9 May 1978, Cleveland Museum of Art curatorial files.

4. Biddle and Fielding 1921, 136, list a study of Ferdinand David (no. 439) that was painted between 27 February and 1 March, and one of Julia David (no. 440) executed between 4 March and early April 1826; Sully valued these studies at ten dollars each. In a journal entry of 17 February 1828 Sully noted that David had commissioned Jane Sully to "copy the portraits of his two children which I sketched" (HSP). The copies (location

unknown) were delivered to David on 4 January, and Jane received payment for them on 11 January 1829.

5. These toys are discussed in Bernice Ball, "Whistles with Coral and Bells," *Antiques* 80 (December 1961): 552-555; and George S. Sturtz, M.D., "Early American Baby Rattles," *Clinical Pediatrics* 2 (February 1972): 103-106.

6. Journal entry of 30 April 1826, HSP. Joseph Bonaparte left France after the Battle of Waterloo and settled in Philadelphia in 1815. The owner of a substantial collection of Old Master paintings, he became an active member of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and frequently allowed his paintings to be exhibited there. In 1819 Bonaparte had asked Sully to restore a portrait of Napoleon that Joseph Hopkinson, the president of the Academy, had given him; see Joseph Bonaparte, letter to Joseph Hopkinson, 14 March 1819, Hopkinson Papers, HSP.

7. Nathaniel Burt, *The Bonapartes in America* (Philadelphia, 1960), 10; Cooper 1993, 68.

8. Dunlap 1834, 2: 137-138; Susanna P. Griswold, "Examination Report," October 1993, 3 (in NGA curatorial files).

9. Bonaparte loaned David's *Portrait of Charlotte and Zenaide Bonaparte* (1821, J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu, California) to the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Charlotte Bonaparte, countess de Survilliers (1802-1839), exhibited her paintings there between 1822 and 1824.

10. For a list of Bonaparte's art collection, see E. M. Woodward, *Bonaparte's Park, and the Murats* (Trenton, New Jersey, 1879), 55-59.

11. Frankfurter 1937, 20.

12. David is first listed at this address in *The Philadelphia Directory and Stranger's Guide, for 1825* (Philadelphia, 1825), 40. Philadelphia buildings were renumbered in 1854, when the house's address was changed to its present number, 711 Walnut Street.

13. Richard J. Webster, *Philadelphia Preserved, Catalogue of the Historic American Buildings Survey* (Philadelphia, 1976), 53.

14. James Mease and Thomas Porter, *Picture of Philadelphia*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1831), 1: 21.

15. *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, 1 June 1826.

16. Biddle and Fielding 1921, 135.

## References

- 1909 Hart: no. 417, 52.  
1921 Biddle and Fielding: no. 438, 135.  
1937 Frankfurter: 20.  
1965 Dale Collection: 34, repro.

1947.17.108 (1016)

## Thomas Alston

1826

Oil on canvas, 76.7 × 63.7 (30<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 25<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

### Inscriptions

Monogram at lower left: *TS 1826*.

**Technical Notes:** The unusually coarse plain-weave fabric remains on its original four-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher and is unlined. The portrait was executed quickly with liquid paint over a white ground layer. Passages were painted wet-into-wet, and smoothly blended shading appears in the flesh tones of the face and hand. The red paint used in the background was also incorporated as a base color in the shades of the flesh tones. Next, details of the face, shirt, and coat were worked up, and the background was completed in varied shades of red. The coarseness of the fabric has caused pinpoint losses. Minor inpainting, probably due to a conservation treatment in 1950, can be discerned in the background and in other areas to conceal the craquelure. The surface coating is moderately discolored.

**Provenance:** Commissioned 1825 by the sitter's father, Colonel John Ashe Alston [1783–1831]. Sarah McPherson Alston Middleton [Mrs. John Izard Middleton, 1807–1878], Middleton, South Carolina, sister of the sitter; her son, John Izard Middleton [b. 1834], Baltimore, Maryland; his nephew, John Izard Middleton [b. 1867], New York; purchased 24 October 1922 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 Portraits by Early American Portrait Painters*, Union League Club, New York, 1923, no. 11. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered. *Thomas Sully, 1783–1872*, Bedford Gallery, Longwood College, Farmville, Virginia, 1973, no. 11.

BETWEEN 1825 and 1828 Sully painted a series of portraits for Colonel John Ashe Alston (1783–1831), a wealthy rice and indigo planter from the Georgetown District, South Carolina, who was the most important patron of art in his area. A cousin of Washington Allston,<sup>1</sup> he owned a substantial collection of paintings comprising works by John Opie, Benjamin West, Gilbert Stuart, John Vanderlyn, Alvan Fisher, and Raphaelle Peale. In an inscription on the back of a still life, Raphaelle Peale once referred to him as “The Patron of Living American Artists.”<sup>2</sup> Between 1818 and 1821 Colonel Alston had commissioned fourteen family

portraits from Samuel F. B. Morse, who made seasonal trips during those years to Charleston in search of business. Alston's patronage of Morse is extremely well documented, but very little is known of his relationship with Sully.

Sully, who had lived in Charleston from 1793 to 1799, maintained contacts within the city's art community. Late in 1821 he was made an honorary member of the South Carolina Academy of the Fine Arts, of which Alston was an active member, and a year later he exhibited and attempted to sell his monumental *Washington's Passage of the Delaware* (1819, MFA) there, after the commission had been rescinded by the state of North Carolina.<sup>3</sup> It was not until the middle of 1825, however, that Alston began to commission works from him. The colonel first ordered a portrait of himself, then a bust of Napoleon, and before the year's end he also purchased Sully's study for *Washington's Passage of the Delaware* (location unknown) for the considerable sum of \$400. Alston's generous patronage must have been a financial windfall for the artist; William Dunlap described how in 1824 “Mr. Sully's business had decreased fearfully, and his embarrassments increasing in proportion, he had determined to leave America,” and remained in Philadelphia only after being persuaded to do so by a group of local engravers.<sup>4</sup>

The National Gallery painting is the first of three portraits Alston ordered of his favorite son Thomas (1801–1833). On 14 August 1825 Sully recorded in his journal, “Received letter from John Ashe Alston to paint his son for a collection of pictures at his residence at Georgetown, S.C.” Evidently there was some delay, because he did not commence work on the portrait until 3 October 1826, completing it by 3 December. In the meantime Alston commissioned a similar bust portrait of Thomas' younger brother William. Both paintings were executed at the same time, each for a fee of sixty dollars.<sup>5</sup> Alston must have been satisfied with the portraits of his sons, because Sully then commenced work on a full-length portrait of Thomas for which he had painted a ten-dollar head as a preparatory study (locations unknown).<sup>6</sup>

Alston was an exacting patron who paid obsessive attention to detail, a quality that Paul Staiti summed up well: “from beginning to end, initial inquiry to final payment, he was the philosophical, stylistic, financial, and critical manager of the image making, leaving as little as possible to circumstance.”<sup>7</sup> Morse had already painted a portrait of



Thomas for Alston in 1818, and some facts that emerge from their correspondence are relevant to Sully's painting. The wealthy planter's desire for images of his children arose from his compulsion to preserve their likenesses in case one of them died suddenly. His unusually strong paternal affection for Thomas made this need particularly urgent; in a letter to Morse he wrote, "My feeling with regard to this boy are unutterable; he is enveloped in the fervor of my affection, 'Et vita et morti gloria justa mea.'"<sup>8</sup> Another letter, written after the portrait had been completed, provides a rare glimpse into the sentimental function of the image: Alston related to Morse how his son "was near expiring, in convulsions, to which he is subject, and the first thing I thought of when he was in peril was the likeness you had taken of him."<sup>9</sup> When Alston commissioned the portrait of Thomas from Morse he stipulated that it appear similar to an engraving by Francis Kearny of Joseph Wood's *Chief Justice John Marshall*, which he had seen reproduced in the *Analectic Magazine* 9 (February 1817). Because the father was proud of his son's scholarly attainments, he insisted that Thomas "must be seated in a beautiful chair, and the pen and paper held in his hands must rest on a handsome table." He further required that Thomas' eyes be "definitely looking *directly* at one."<sup>10</sup> Similar attributes appear in Sully's portrait, and following his customary procedure, Alston probably furnished the artist with equally unambiguous directions.

Sully represented Thomas in a much less formal pose than the one Wood used for his *Justice Marshall*. The young man is seated before a desk covered by books and papers, with his chair turned outward so he faces the viewer. Following the standard formula for subjects distinguished by their intellectual pursuits, Thomas supports his right elbow on a tattered notebook and rests his head lightly on his raised hand. His head leans to the right, and his eyes are focused so that he is "looking directly at one." He wears an olive-green coat over a white waistcoat and is set against a red drapery background. The carefully orchestrated disarray—evident in the dog-eared notebook, the open coat, the partially unbuttoned waistcoat, and Thomas' tousled hair—contributes to his dreamy, scholarly quality.

William Sawitzky considered *Thomas Alston* "so poor in draftsmanship and brushwork that it cannot be by Sully."<sup>11</sup> The artist's uninspired performance here is partially explained by an entry in his journal on the same day Alston ordered this portrait

(HSP): "the general complaint against my portraits of gentlemen—'That I labour away the spirit of my work.' I am sensible that I have lost much of Breadth and simplicity of manner that I once possessed." Despite the aesthetic demerits of this portrait, it provides tantalizing insights into Sully's relationship with an important patron.

RWT

#### Notes

1. For information on this prominent family, for which there is a distinction between those who spell the name with one ell and those who spell it with two, see Joseph A. Groves, *The Alstons and Allstons of North and South Carolina Compiled from English, Colonial and Family Records* (Atlanta, Georgia, 1901).

2. *Still-Life with Oranges* (c. 1818, Toledo Museum of Art).

3. Sully, unspecified journal entry of December 1821, entry of 18 November 1822, HSP. It is of interest to note that Sully's increased activity in Charleston, and perhaps Alston's patronage, can be attributed to the fact that in July 1821 he became personally acquainted with Washington Allston; see Dunlap 1834, 2: 134. For a discussion of this painting, see Philipp P. Fehl, "Thomas Sully's *Washington's Passage of the Delaware: The History of a Commission*," *AB* 55 (December 1973): 584–599.

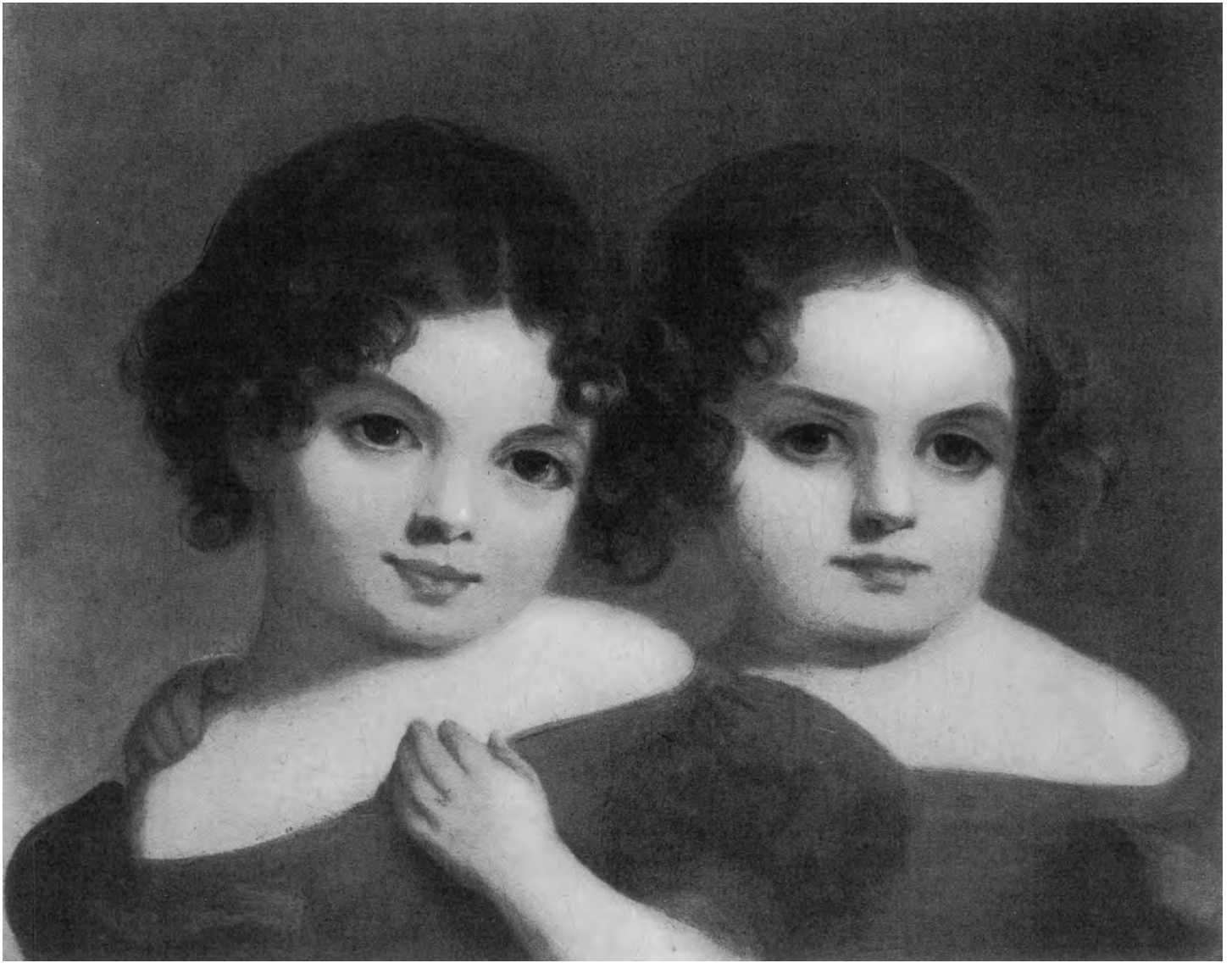
4. Dunlap 1834, 2: 135.

5. There is some confusion in the artist's records as to the date the National Gallery's *Thomas Alston* was completed. In a journal entry of 4 November 1826, Sully wrote, "The portrait of Thos. Alston was shipped by the Florian" (HSP), which obviously could not have been done if the painting was completed one month later, on 3 December. Sully alluded to the portrait of William (listed in Biddle and Fielding 1921 as no. 35, 87) in a journal entry of 6 June 1826: "J. A. Alston has written to apprise me of his second son preparing to sit to me" (HSP). Although Sully documented only one portrait of William, two exist today: One is owned by the Cincinnati Art Museum and the other by the Princeton University Art Museum. See Donald Drew Egbert, "Two Portraits by Thomas Sully," *Record of the Art Museum, Princeton University* 19 (1960): 11–16. In a journal entry of 2 March 1827 the artist wrote that he had sent Alston "his son's picture and frame—Jane's copy and frame, and two fruit pieces of Js. Peale's painting" (HSP). This information suggests that one of the portraits of William was painted by the artist's daughter Jane Sully. It is likely that Sully sent *Thomas Alston* to Charleston on 4 November 1826 and delayed sending the portrait of William so that his daughter could execute the copy. The portraits of William Alston should not be confused with the pair of pendant bust portraits of Colonel William Allston and his wife (Carolina Art Association) that Sully copied in 1846 from Morse's originals (United Missouri Bank, Kansas City), as Hart 1909, 20, seems to have done.

6. The bust (Biddle and Fielding 1921, no. 33) was painted between 14 and 20 October 1826, but work on the full-length portrait (Biddle and Fielding 1921, no. 34) dragged on from 16 December 1826 to 15 April 1828. In a



Thomas Sully, *Thomas Alston*, 1947.17.108



Thomas Sully, *The Leland Sisters*, 1973.4.1

journal entry of 20 June 1828 Sully recorded that he sent Alston's full-length portrait to the annual exhibition at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (HSP); *Seventeenth Annual Exhibition of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, May 1828* (Philadelphia, 1828) lists Sully's no. 104 as a "Full length portrait of a Gentleman."

7. Paul J. Staiti, "John Ashe Alston: Patron of Samuel F. B. Morse," in *Art in the Lives of South Carolinians*, edited by David Moltke-Hansen (Charleston, South Carolina, 1978), PSa-2.

8. John Ashe Alston, letter to Samuel F. B. Morse, 28 December 1818, quoted in Staiti 1978, PSa-4 (for a transcript of the entire letter, see PSa-12-13).

9. John Ashe Alston, letter to Samuel F. B. Morse, 7 March 1819, quoted in Staiti 1978, PSa-6.

10. Staiti 1978, PSa-4.

11. Undated note (in NGA curatorial files). In direct contrast to Sawitzky's opinion, the Sully scholar Edward Biddle, in a letter to John Izard Middleton, 28 October 1922 (in NGA curatorial files), remarked that "the attitude appears particularly easy in this instance and the expression of countenance very agreeable and lifelike. I should call it a very good example of Sully's art."

## References

- 1909 Hart: no. 29, 20.  
1921 Biddle and Fielding: no. 32, 86.  
1973 Flynn: 19, repro.

1973.4.1 (2641)

### *The Leland Sisters*

c. 1830

Oil on canvas, 41 × 51 (16<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 20<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)

Gift of Mrs. Philip Connors

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support has been lined. It is mounted on a four-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher, probably original. The tacking margins have been removed, but shallow cusping along the edges of the support suggests that the dimensions have not been altered. The paint was applied over a thick creamy white ground layer and a neutral brown-gray imprimatura. The paint used for the flesh tones and clothing was applied wet-into-wet; the hasty modeling of the faces suggests rapid execution. Infrared reflectography reveals underdrawing only in the face and hands of the sister on the left. X-radiography reveals that Sully used a different flesh-tone modeling technique for each sister: The one on the left was executed in Sully's usual method, using uneven applications of paint and heavy brush outlines to define the sitter's facial characteristics; the one on the right was painted with smooth and rather heavy applications of paint. This difference in technique suggests that only the sister on the left was painted directly from life. The paint surface is slightly abraded in the upper background, and there is a repaired tear in the left shoulder of the child on the left. The varnish is moderately discolored.

**Provenance:** By descent in the sitters' family; Emily Harrison Thorp Whitfield, a descendant of the sitters; by inheritance to her daughter, Mrs. Philip Connors, Middleburg, Virginia.

THIS DOUBLE PORTRAIT descended through the sitters' family, where it was identified simply as "the Leland Sisters" and attributed to Sully. Neither corroborating evidence about the children's identity nor biographical information about them survives. If the Leland surname is indeed correct, Sully left no manuscript record of ever having painted sitters of that name.

The idealized and sentimental treatment of the children certainly tends to support the attribution to Sully. Familiarity with the artist's usual procedure for preparing group portraits of young sitters suggests that this small and spontaneously painted picture was probably a preparatory study for a larger and more elaborate portrait that may have included other children. The existence and identity of that portrait, however, are unknown. As mentioned in the technical notes, above, it appears that only the girl on the left was painted from life, while the other was added later. This study is stylistically consonant with Sully's work of c. 1830.

RWT

1943.1.8 (709)

### *Mrs. William Griffin*

1830

Oil on canvas, 76.3 × 63.8 (30<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 25<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>)

Chester Dale Collection

## Inscriptions

Monogram at lower left: *TS 1830*.

**Technical Notes:** The fine-weight twill-weave fabric support has been lined to a preprimed fabric. The original tacking margins have been trimmed, but the dimensions of the painting have not been altered significantly because its measurements conform to Sully's standard bust-size portrait. The thinly applied white ground layer allows the texture of the fabric to remain visible through the paint. The paint layers were applied wet-into-wet and also rather thinly, with thicker applications in the modeled flesh tones of the face and hand. There is a loss with subsequent inpainting evident on the left shoulder. The thick and glossy varnish is considerably discolored.

**Provenance:** Dr. Samuel W. Woodhouse, Jr., Philadelphia; (his sale, Samuel T. Freeman & Co., Philadelphia,



Thomas Sully, *Mrs. William Griffin*, 1943.I.8



23–24 April 1928, 2d day, no. 174); Daniel H. Farr, Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia; (his sale, Plaza Art Auction Galleries, Inc., New York, 23 March 1935, no. 73); Chester Dale [1883–1962], New York.

**Exhibited:** *Exhibition of American Painting*, M. H. de Young Memorial Museum, Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, 1935, no. 210. *An Exhibition of Paintings from the Chester Dale Collection*, Union League Club, New York, 1937, no. 11.

LITTLE is known about Mrs. William Griffin except that in his “Account of Pictures” Sully wrote that she was from Cincinnati. The same source indicates that this was one of two pendant portraits; the companion (fig. 1) depicts the sitter’s husband William Griffin, a wholesale drygoods merchant from Cincinnati who presumably commissioned the paintings while on business in Philadelphia.<sup>1</sup>

This half-length bust portrait was painted between 27 October and 27 November 1830 for a fee of seventy-five dollars; in a journal entry of 27 November that year (HSP), Sully recorded, “On Friday I sent home the portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Griffin.” Seated in a red upholstered chair, Mrs. Griffin rests her right elbow on the chair arm and gently rests the index finger of her raised right hand on her face. Her body is turned slightly to her right, in the direction where the portrait of her husband would hang, and she has turned her head to make eye contact with the viewer. The source of light enters from the left so that a shadow cast by the sitter’s raised forearm and hand falls across her dress and bare shoulder. Sully’s anatomical draftsmanship is uncharacteristically inept: The sitter’s exaggeratedly long neck and rounded shoulders merge into an oddly short torso distinguished by its unnaturally delineated breasts and oddly pinched waist. Mrs. Griffin is attired in a low-cut gray silk dress with puffed sleeves trimmed with white lace cuffs. She wears an amber pin in a gold setting, which, like the single visible lace cuff, is highlighted by peaked impasto. A loosely painted landscape is visible through a window at the left. Mrs. Griffin’s prominent nose and widely spaced eyes indicate that she was not an attractive woman. Consequently Sully had to mediate between the practical consideration of producing a faithful likeness of his sitter and the necessity to idealize. RWT

#### Notes

1. The portrait of William Griffin is listed in Biddle and Fielding 1921, no. 685, 164; his name appears in the 1831 Cincinnati city directory.

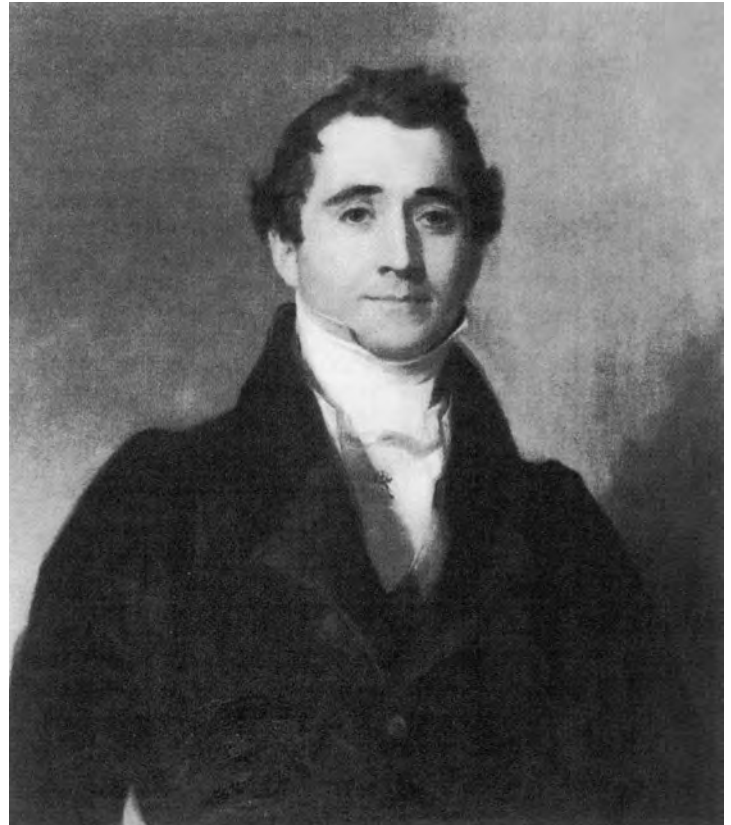


Fig. 1. Thomas Sully, *Portrait of William Griffin*, oil on canvas, 1830, Greenwich, Connecticut, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. John Prayias

#### References

- 1909 Hart: no. 663, 73.  
1921 Biddle and Fielding: no. 686, 164.  
1965 Dale Collection: 33, repro.

1966.11.1 (2314)

### *The Vanderkemp Children*

1832  
Oil on canvas, 70.9 × 90.5 (27<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 35<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>)  
Gift of Countess Mona Bismarck

#### Inscriptions

Monogram at lower center of portfolio: TS 1832

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support has been lined and mounted on an early but nonoriginal stretcher whose vertical crossbar bears the inscription “Lined by J. A. Currie from London / No. 48 So. 4th St. 3rd floor / Philadelphia Penn.”<sup>1</sup> The original tacking margins have been removed. The

moderately thick pale gray ground layer is covered by a gray layer of paint. Infrared reflectography reveals that Sully drew a mountain landscape with a figure along the bottom edge; the fact that this landscape does not appear in X-radiography suggests that it was abandoned at an early stage. Infrared reflectography also reveals that the three children were originally shown against an exterior setting, framed by trees and foliage; this area was later converted into the present neutral background in which the underlayers of sky and cloud in the upper right and center were transformed into wall and shadow. The paint was applied smoothly with moderate thickness with low brushmarking and no appreciable impasto. The execution was rapid and sometimes sketchy, with areas at the bottom and background intentionally left unfinished. During conservation treatment in 1969 minor losses along the edges were inpainted. In 1985 an additional varnish layer was applied to even an existing surface coating. The inpainting is discolored, and the surface coating is yellowed.

**Provenance:** (Ehrich Galleries, New York), at least 1920–1921. Countess Mona Bismarck, Paris.<sup>2</sup>

**Exhibited:** *21st Annual Exhibition*, PAFA, 1832, no. 95, as “Portraits of a Gentleman’s Three Children (grouped).” *Paintings by Thomas Sully*, Ehrich Galleries, New York, 1920, unnumbered, as *Pauline, Bertha and John Vanderkemp*. *Springfield Art Festival*, Drury College, Springfield, Missouri, 1968, no cat. *Two Centuries of American Portraits*, University of Kentucky Art Gallery, Lexington; Paducah Art Gallery, Kentucky; J. B. Speed Art Museum, Louisville, 1970, no cat. *Thomas Sully, 1783–1872*, Bedford Gallery, Longwood College, Farmville, Virginia, 1973, no. 12. *Mr. Sully, Portrait Painter: The Works of Thomas Sully (1783–1872)*, NPG, 1983, no. 49.

THIS GROUP PORTRAIT represents the three children of John Jacob Vanderkemp (1783–1855)<sup>3</sup> and his second wife Eliza Hepburn (1787–1855): from left to right, John Jacob, Jr. (1829–after 1896), Bertha Frances (1827–1844), and Pauline Elizabeth (1826–1905).<sup>4</sup> Their father, who had been born in Leiden, the Netherlands, was a merchant and general agent for the Holland Land Company who lived in Philadelphia. This painting probably once hung with the pendant portraits Jacob Eichholtz had done of Vanderkemp and his wife in 1825 (HSP).<sup>5</sup> John Jacob Vanderkemp, Jr., earned A.B. (1849) and A.M. (1852) degrees from Princeton University before receiving his M.D. from the School of Medicine of the University of Pennsylvania. He practiced medicine briefly before moving to Paris where, according to Edward Biddle and Mantle Fielding, he “followed sculpture as a profession.”<sup>6</sup> Pauline married Dr. Bernard Henry, Jr., assistant surgeon of the U.S. Navy, in 1855; at her

death she left generous bequests to Philadelphia churches and hospitals, most notable among them the Bethesda Home in Chestnut Hill. Bertha died unmarried.

According to an entry in the “Account of Pictures,” Sully painted the Vanderkemp children between 25 February and 3 May 1832 for a fee of \$150.<sup>7</sup> The three blue-eyed children are vignettted against a cloudy background that enhances their idealized, cherubic appearance. Perhaps the tender age of his subjects inspired the artist to achieve here a sense of spontaneity and charm that is so noticeably absent in one of the National Gallery’s other triple portraits by him, *The Coleman Sisters* [1947.9.3, p. 182]. Instead of being frozen in sterile, self-conscious poses, the children are grouped around an artist’s portfolio that young John, who wears a yellow dress and appears to be speaking, is anxious to inspect. His older sister Pauline pulls on its blue ribbons and turns her head to make eye contact with the viewer as if seeking permission to proceed, while Bertha is absorbed in looking at her brother. Monroe Fabian has suggested that Sully gave the children some drawings in order to captivate their attention while he sketched.<sup>8</sup> It is more likely, however, that the children’s interest in the contents of the portfolio implies their high level of cultivation or even documents John’s early predilection for art. In 1839 Sully employed the device for a similar purpose in the portrait of his artist daughter Rosalie Kemble Sully (MMA). By this conceit the artist carried the process of idealization beyond the level of appearances to the intellectual realm. Biddle and Fielding noted that Sully’s preparatory sketch (location unknown) with color notes for this portrait was owned by the artist’s great-granddaughter.<sup>9</sup> *The Vanderkemp Children* was once displayed in the White House, where two former inhabitants were unimpressed by the portrait’s charming sentimentality: A National Gallery curator noted that it had been relegated to storage because “the Reagans aren’t too keen on it.”<sup>10</sup>

RWT

#### Notes

1. According to Katlan 1992, 414, John A. Currie was a picture cleaner and restorer who was listed in Philadelphia business directories between 1856 and 1860, although he was not mentioned as being located at the 48 South Fourth Street address.

2. The painting is listed as owned by the Ehrich Gallery in Biddle and Fielding 1921. A label on the stretcher includes the line “Owner: Mrs. B. M. Liddell,”



Thomas Sully, *The Vanderkemp Children*, 1966.11.1

but she has not been identified. The donor of the painting provided no provenance information.

3. John Jacob used this anglicized version of the ancestral last name, van der Kemp, although it is spelled Van der Kemp on their tombstones in the graveyard of All Saints Episcopal Church, Philadelphia. He was the son of Dutch patriot Francis Adrian van der Kemp who had emigrated to New York in 1788 to escape political persecution; see Helen Lincklaen Fairchild, ed., *Francis Adrian van der Kemp 1752–1829, an Autobiography* (New York, 1903).

4. Fabian 1983, 90, erroneously identified the subjects in reverse order.

5. Rebecca J. Beal, *Jacob Eichholtz 1776–1842* (Philadelphia, 1969), nos. 840 and 841, 241–242.

6. Biddle and Fielding 1921, 302.

7. In a journal entry of 14 July 1832 Sully recorded that he had “Deposited the \$200 received of Mrs. Vanderkemp’s” (HSP); the amount probably included the price for a frame.

8. Fabian 1983, 90.

9. Biddle and Fielding 1921, 302.

10. Linda Ayres to Ann Hoenigswald, memorandum, 7 May 1987 (in NGA curatorial files).

#### References

- 1909 Hart: no. 1734, 168.  
1921 Biddle and Fielding: no. 1838, 302.  
1973 Flynn: 20, repro.  
1983 Fabian: no. 49, 90, repro.

Fig. 1. X-radiograph composite of 1942.8.33



1942.8.33 (586)

### *Francis Hopkinson*

1834

Oil on canvas, 51 × 43.5 (20 1/16 × 17 1/8)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

#### Inscriptions

Monogram at lower left: TS. 1834.

**Technical Notes:** Unlike its companion *Ann Biddle Hopkinson* [1942.8.32, p. 000], this portrait was painted on a medium- to fine-weight, plain-weave fabric support. It was lined during conservation treatment in 1943–1944. A photograph shows an inscription on the back of the painting, “TS 183[3].”, now hidden by the lining. The original tacking margins have been removed. Although there is cusping only on the right edge, the dimensions are probably unaltered. The support was prepared with a white ground layer. X-radiography reveals that this portrait was painted over a fully finished portrait of a woman. The artist covered this with a gray-brown paint layer that also serves as a midtone in the sitter’s face (fig. 1). The paint was applied mostly wet-into-wet, with little or no impasto. The dark parts of the hair, coat, and cravat were applied in thin, transparent brown and black layers over a lighter colored underlayer; these passages are slightly abraded. Like those of its companion, the edges and corners of this portrait were either unpainted or unfinished because it was originally placed in an oval frame. Inpainting is evident over crackle in the face, hair, coat, and a series of losses in an area toward the right edge. The fairly thick varnish is discolored.

**Provenance:** The sitter’s daughter, Emily Hopkinson Scovel; her daughter, Florence Scovel Shinn, New York; 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. 3. *Memorial Exhibition of Portraits by Thomas Sully*, PAFA, 1922, no. 201. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered. *Exhibition of Early American Portraits on Loan from the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.*, Pack Memorial Public Library, Asheville, North Carolina, 1949, no. 11. *From Plymouth Rock to the Armory*, Society of the Four Arts, Palm Beach, Florida, 1950, no. 19. *The Face of American History*, Columbia Museum of Art, South Carolina, 1950, no. 18. *American Portraits from the National Gallery of Art*, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgia, 1951, no. 20. *Opening Exhibition of the George Thomas Hunter Gallery of Art*, George Thomas Hunter Gallery of Art, Chattanooga, Tennessee, 1952, unnumbered. [Opening exhibition], Mint Museum, Charlotte, North Carolina, 1952, no cat. [Opening exhibition of new art gallery], Randolph-Macon Woman’s College, Lynchburg, Virginia, 1952–1953, no cat. *Famous Americans*, Washington County Museum of Fine Arts, Hagerstown, Maryland, 1955, no cat.

FRANCIS HOPKINSON (1796–1870) was the eldest of fourteen children born to the eminent Philadelphia jurist Joseph Hopkinson (1770–1842) and his wife Emily Mifflin Hopkinson. Both sides of the sitter's family were highly distinguished: His paternal grandfather Francis Hopkinson (1737–1791) was a signer of the Declaration of Independence and designer of the American flag; his father wrote "Hail Columbia" and served for many years as president of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts; and his maternal grandfather, revolutionary war hero General Thomas Mifflin (1744–1800), served three terms as governor of Pennsylvania between 1790 and 1799. Hopkinson, who lived in Philadelphia all his life, served for fifteen years as clerk of the U.S. Circuit and District Court.

Sully commenced painting this small "head" on 19 May 1834, while he was completing its companion portrait of the sitter's wife Ann Biddle Hopkinson, and it was finished by 9 June 1834.<sup>1</sup> Hopkinson's shoulders are oriented in the direction where his wife's portrait would hang, and like her he turns his head to face the viewer. Sully's abbreviated delineation of Hopkinson's tousled hair, sideburns, and apparel emphasizes the more detailed treatment of the face. Although the artist's fame rests mainly on his sentimental and idealized images of society women, the vivid and lifelike quality of this bust demonstrates that he was equally adept at painting men. RWT

#### Notes

1. In a journal entry of 15 June 1834, Sully recorded that he had "Sent home the portrait of Hopkinson" (HSP).

#### References

- 1909 Hart: no. 784, 82.  
 1921 Biddle and Fielding: no. 809, 177.  
 1922 PAFA: no. 201, 149.

1942.8.32 (585)

### *Ann Biddle Hopkinson* (Mrs. Francis Hopkinson)

1834  
 Oil on canvas, 51 × 44.3 (20<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 17<sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)  
 Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The coarsely textured, medium-weight plain-weave fabric support was lined in 1943–

1944. A photograph in NGA curatorial files shows that the lining covers the artist's monogram and date, "TS. 1834." The original tacking margins have been removed, but cusping suggests that the dimensions have not been reduced. Although the gray-white ground layer was applied thickly, the weave texture remains perceptible. The paint was applied wet-into-wet, thinly in the flesh tones and thickly in the whites of the hat and clothing. The edges and corners were either unpainted or unfinished because the portrait was originally placed in an oval frame. Mechanical cracks have formed, especially in the forehead. X-radiography reveals a 6 cm tear by the left eyebrow that extends to the right into the darker paint of the sitter's hair. The thinly applied darks of the sitter's face and hat are slightly abraded. Minor inpainting is evident in the eyes, cheeks, and hair. The fairly thick varnish is discolored.

**Provenance:** The sitter's daughter, Emily Hopkinson Scovel; her daughter, Florence Scovel Shinn, New York; 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. 22. *Memorial Exhibition of Portraits by Thomas Sully*, PAFA, 1922, no. 79. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered. *Exhibition of Early American Portraits on Loan from the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.*, Pack Memorial Public Library, Asheville, North Carolina, 1949, no. 10. *From Plymouth Rock to the Armory*, Society of the Four Arts, Palm Beach, Florida, 1950, no. 18. *The Face of American History*, Columbia Museum of Art, South Carolina, 1950, no. 17. *American Portraits from the National Gallery of Art*, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgia, 1951, no. 21. *Opening Exhibition of the George Thomas Hunter Gallery of Art*, Chattanooga, Tennessee, 1952, unnumbered. [Opening exhibition], Mint Museum, Charlotte, North Carolina, 1952, no cat. [Opening exhibition of new art gallery], Randolph-Macon Woman's College, Lynchburg, Virginia, 1952–1953, no cat.

ANN BIDDLE HOPKINSON (1800–1863), daughter of Charles and Hannah (Shepard) Biddle, was the sister of Major Thomas Biddle [1942.8.31, p. 192] and Nicholas Biddle, president of the Bank of the United States. Sully had painted a bust portrait of her in 1827, before her marriage to the Philadelphia attorney Francis Hopkinson on 13 January 1829.<sup>1</sup>

This small "head" is the pendant to that of the sitter's husband, Francis Hopkinson [1942.8.33, p. 178]. According to an entry in Sully's "Account of Pictures," it was painted between 12 and 24 May 1834 for a fee of eighty dollars.<sup>2</sup> Both portraits originally had oval frames. Mrs. Hopkinson turns her face to the viewer, and her body is oriented toward the direction where the portrait of her husband





Thomas Sully, *Francis Hopkinson*, 1942.8.33



Thomas Sully, *Ann Biddle Hopkinson (Mrs. Francis Hopkinson)*, 1942.8.32

hung. Even on this limited scale Sully effectively represented his attractive sitter, who looks younger than her thirty-four years, as a fashionable society woman born to one of Philadelphia's wealthiest and most prominent families, and connected to an equally prestigious one by marriage. Her head is framed by a large hat from which long feathers cascade down over her right shoulder onto a fur-trimmed cloak. The varied textures of these accoutrements, executed in a painterly technique, offer a contrast with the sitter's smooth ivory skin. Mrs. Hopkinson's exaggeratedly long neck is not the product of faulty draftsmanship, but is rather a calculated device that contributes to the linear elegance and refined sensuality of her appearance, in conformance to the ideal of feminine beauty in that era. This portrait was engraved by J. B. Forrest (c. 1814–1870).

RWT

#### Notes

1. See Hart 1909, no. 119, 27.
2. In a journal entry of 1 June 1834, Sully recorded that he had "sent home" Mrs. Hopkinson's portrait (HSP).

#### References

- 1909 Hart: no. 785, 82.  
 1921 Biddle and Fielding: no. 810, 177.  
 1922 PAFA: no. 79, 55.

1947.9.3 (905)

### *The Coleman Sisters*

1844  
 Oil on canvas, 112.5 × 87.5 (44<sup>5/16</sup> × 34<sup>7/16</sup>)  
 Gift of William C. Freeman

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support was mounted onto plywood during a restoration treatment by Hannah Mee Horner in 1935. The plywood was nailed and glued to a stretcher. A photograph shows a false monogram on the reverse: "TS april, 1844." The artist applied paint thinly and smoothly, with no appreciable impasto, over a white ground layer. The colors were applied wet-into-wet, but with numerous modifying glazes. The painting has a highly finished appearance and is in very good condition; there is minor inpainting in the hair of the three girls and in the background. The surface is coated with a thin varnish that is only slightly discolored.

**Provenance:** Margaret Coleman Freeman [1820–1894], Cornwall, Pennsylvania, one of the sitters; her

daughter, Margaret Freeman Buckingham [1857–1946], Washington, D.C.; her nephew, William C. Freeman, Cornwall, Pennsylvania.

**Exhibited:** [Opening exhibition of new art gallery], Randolph-Macon Woman's College, Lynchburg, Virginia, 1952–1953, no cat. *The American Portrait: From the Death of Stuart to the Rise of Sargent*, Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts, 1973, no. 5. *Mr. Sully, Portrait Painter: The Works of Thomas Sully (1783–1872)*, NPG, 1983, no. 69.

THIS large triple portrait represents the three daughters of Thomas Bird Coleman (1794–1837) and his wife Hannah Coleman (d. 1830) of Cornwall, Pennsylvania: Sarah Hand (1822–1893), Isabel (1825–1849), and Margaret (1820–1894). Their immensely wealthy father owned the Colebrook iron furnace and vast tracts of land in Cornwall, Lebanon County, Pennsylvania, where iron and copper ore were mined. In 1883 a historian of the region valued the family estate at \$30 million and noted that its capacity for producing iron had "made a reputation unequalled by any in America, and unsurpassed by any in Europe."<sup>1</sup> Scant biographical information on the sisters survives, but family correspondence indicates that the Colemans were extremely concerned about their children's education; Margaret and her elder sister Anne Caroline (1818–1896) both attended Miss Mercer's Academy, a fashionable boarding school for young women near Annapolis, Maryland.<sup>2</sup> (Anne Caroline was probably married at the time Sully painted this portrait and was therefore not included in it.)

Sully painted the Coleman sisters at his Philadelphia studio between 6 March and 13 April 1844 for a fee of \$300, and in a journal entry of 24 April (HSP) the artist noted that both he and the framer James Earle were paid by the girls' guardian. The artist posed his three subjects against a plain interior background and strove to achieve an atmosphere of sisterly intimacy. Sarah, who wears a dark maroon shawl over her light blue dress, stands on the left with her right shoulder toward the viewer with whom she makes eye contact. She is about to place a red book on the table at which her elder sister Margaret sits. Margaret, clad in a pink dress, fondles a ringlet of her shoulder-length hair and also looks at the viewer. The young Isabel, placed in the center of the composition behind and between her two sisters, looks to her right as she rests a hand on Sarah's shoulder; only a small portion of her yellow dress is visible. Sully's skillful treatment of the or-





Thomas Sully, *The Coleman Sisters*, 1947.9.3

namental patterns on the sleeve of Sarah's shawl, her bracelet, and especially the flowers in a glass vase on the table enlivens the ensemble.

Monroe Fabian characterized this painting as a "graceful but somewhat self-conscious threesome" and found it lacking the high artistic quality of *Eliza Leslie* (PAFA), which Sully completed less than a week after the Coleman portrait.<sup>3</sup> The arrangement of the heads on a descending diagonal is certainly awkward, the interaction among the sisters lacks the convincing spontaneity of Sully's earlier triple portrait *The Vanderkemp Children* [1966.11.1, p. 175], and their facial expressions fail to convey a sense of individual personalities. The color scheme and still life are the most attractive elements in the picture. Despite these criticisms, the refined femininity of the three fashionably attired long-necked belles leaves no doubt as to their high social status and educational attainments. The National Gallery also owns a pendant pair of portraits that Jacob Eichholtz painted of the girls' paternal grandparents Robert and Ann Old Coleman around 1820 [1947.9.1 and 1947.9.2].<sup>4</sup>

RWT

#### Notes

1. William Henry Egle, M.D., *History of the Counties of Dauphin and Lebanon in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania: Biographical and Genealogical* (Philadelphia, 1883), 167.

2. Selections from the Coleman Papers, MS. 252, Manuscripts Division, MHS Library, are published in Joan K. Quinn, ed., "Keep a Letter in Hand: School Days at Cedar Park, 1830-1833," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 91 (summer 1996): 211-223.

3. Fabian 1983, 109.

4. Kelly 1996, 207-211.

#### References

- 1909 Hart: no. 325, 44.  
1921 Biddle and Fielding: no. 349, 124.  
1973 Hennessey: 11, repro.  
1983 Fabian: 109, repro.

1942.8.34 (587)

## Andrew Jackson

1845

Oil on canvas, 51.8 × 43.8 (20<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 17<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The reverse of the moderately fine plain-weave fabric support bears the colorman's stencil mark, "BROWN. / 163. HIGH HOLBORN / LONDON / ABSORBENT," and what is probably the artist's hand-painted inscription: "TS From a study after life, / done in 1824 / at Washington." The fabric is lined and mounted on a stretcher that is slightly smaller than the original one. The tacking margins are intact, so the original dimensions remain unaltered. The fabric is prepared with a thin off-white ground layer, over which the artist applied a rich red underlayer, followed by a striated light gray. The paint retains brushmarking but there is no impasto. The hair and background are painted wet-into-wet, and the shading at the side of the face consists of translucent scumbles. The flesh tones have an admixture of black, and gray is used to shade the corner of the eye and to shape the mouth. There is minimal inpainting, and the glossy varnish is only slightly discolored.

**Provenance:** Francis Preston Blair [1791-1876], Silver Spring, Maryland; his son-in-law, Rear Admiral Samuel Phillips Lee [1812-1897], Silver Spring, Maryland; his wife, Elizabeth Blair Lee [1818-1906], Silver Spring, Maryland; her son, Blair Lee [1857-1944], Silver Spring, Maryland; sold 1932 or 1933 to (M. Knoedler & Co., New York); sold 29 June 1934 to The A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

**Exhibited:** [Opening exhibition], Birmingham Museum of Art, Alabama, 1951, no cat. *Famous Americans*, Washington County Museum of the Fine Arts, Hagerstown, Maryland, 1955, no cat. *Mr. President: A Pictorial Parade of Presidents from Washington to Eisenhower 1789-1956*, Dallas Museum of Fine Art, Texas, 1956, no. 18. *Tenth Anniversary Exhibition*, Birmingham Museum of Art, 1961, no cat. *French, American, and Italian Review*, Oklahoma Art Center, Oklahoma City, 1963, no. 49. *Art in Miniature, International Philatelic Exhibition*, San Diego Community Concourse; Fine Arts Gallery of San Diego, 1969, no cat. *Old Hickory, A Life Sketch of Andrew Jackson*, NPG; Tennessee State Museum, Nashville, 1990-1991, unnumbered.

WITH the single exception of "the King's painter" Ralph E. W. Earl (1788-1838), Sully throughout his long career executed more images of Old Hickory than any other artist. One of the most important figures in American history, General Andrew Jackson (1767-1845) was hero of the Battle of New Orleans and seventh president of the United States for two terms. As the inscription on its reverse





Fig. 1. Thomas Sully, *Andrew Jackson*, oil on canvas, 1845, Washington, Collection of The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Gift of William Wilson Corcoran, 69.49

states, this painting is a copy of a portrait Sully had painted of Jackson from life late in 1824 in Washington, D.C., at approximately the same time he had executed the similar bust of John Quincy Adams [1942.8.30, p. 162]. Sully never documented the original in his account book because he probably intended to keep it for his personal use, in exactly the same way Gilbert Stuart had retained the “Athenaeum” *George Washington*.<sup>1</sup> Because of Old Hickory’s immense popularity, there were excellent prospects for replicating his likeness, especially when it was widely believed that the general would defeat Adams in the 1824 presidential election. At an unspecified time during Jackson’s presidency, Sully presented the original portrait to him as a gift,

and when the president was preparing to vacate the White House early in 1837, he gave it to his intimate friend and loyal supporter Francis Preston Blair, editor of the partisan newspaper the *Globe*.<sup>2</sup>

According to Sully’s “Account of Pictures” this replica was painted between 9 and 18 April 1845 for a fee of fifty dollars, only two months before Jackson’s death on 8 June. It shares the same Blair family provenance as the 1824 painting, so Blair probably commissioned it and loaned Sully the original when he was in Philadelphia and had the artist paint portraits of him and his son.<sup>3</sup> Sully then incorporated this head into the eight- by five-foot full-length portrait of Jackson (fig. 1) that he completed between 8 and 31 July 1845 and exhibited at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts; this large painting was also once owned by Blair, but his involvement with the commission remains undocumented.<sup>4</sup> Directly before commencing the full-length work, Sully painted a somewhat romanticized copy of the 1824 bust in the oval format for his friend, the prominent Philadelphia jurist and Jackson supporter Judge John Kent Kane (fig. 2).<sup>5</sup>

Fig. 2. Thomas Sully, *Andrew Jackson*, oil on canvas, painted 1845 from a sketch done in 1824, Shreveport, Louisiana, The R. W. Norton Art Gallery



Scholarly discussion about the National Gallery portrait has been concerned with the issue of confirming or denying that it was indeed the copy Sully had made from his 1824 original. William Sawitzky called it “authentic, but somewhat below Sully’s usual level.” Alan Burroughs found it to be “a carefully accented study, strong and typical, but not as nervous and hesitating as one might expect a simultaneous sketch to be, like the sketch of Adams.”<sup>6</sup> This purely visual analysis was confirmed when James Lane obtained information from a Blair family source that identified the National Gallery’s *Jackson* as the copy.<sup>7</sup> James G. Barber, the authority on portraits of Jackson, recently determined it to be the original, basing his opinion on documentary and visual evidence.<sup>8</sup> In a newspaper advertisement written to promote Thomas B. Welch’s 1852 steel engraving of the portrait, Blair testified that it had been copied from the original by Sully that was in his possession.<sup>9</sup> The text of the testimonial, however, reveals that Blair was confused as to exactly which Sully portrait of Jackson he owned, because he said it “was taken soon after the close of the Seminole War, at the very prime of the hero’s life, and at a much earlier period than any of the portraits with which the public are familiar.” In a letter that Blair had written to Martin Van Buren the previous year (in which he dismissed Earl’s portraits of Old Hickory as “dreadful spiritless daubs”), he declared that Welch’s engraving was “of the finest portrait extant of the General as he was in 1819 when it was taken;”<sup>10</sup> evidently he was under the misapprehension that he possessed Sully’s portrait of Jackson that now belongs to the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Clermont State Historic Site. Barber further raised the point that Sully included the prominent and much discussed scar on the left side of Jackson’s mouth in the National Gallery portrait, but omitted that feature in the Blair family version. Because of Sully’s tendency to idealize sitters, the presence of the scar is open to argument, but Barber’s contention that the National Gallery version is more lifelike than the other portrait is true.

The definitive solution to this problem lies in the colorman’s stencil on the reverse of the support. In an 1841 entry in his “Hints for Pictures,” Sully wrote, “A memorandum of the prices of differently prepared canvases from the factory of Thos. Brown, 163 High Holborn, London; given to me by him on 24 July, 1838.”<sup>11</sup> The carefully itemized list included the “Head Size” used for this portrait

(measuring twenty by seventeen inches), which was available in the “Roman” or slightly less expensive “single primed” variety. In a journal entry of about the same time the artist recorded that he had “Sent an order for absorbent canvas to Brown of London by the firm of Carey and Hart—amount about \$100.00.”<sup>12</sup> On the day he commenced painting the National Gallery portrait, Sully noted in the “Hints for Pictures” that he had “Painted a head (copy of General Jackson) on a ground which was varnished on a painted surface.”<sup>13</sup> These data eliminate any lingering doubt, proving that the National Gallery’s *Jackson* is the copy Sully executed in Philadelphia in 1845 from the original he had painted in Washington in 1824, with which Blair had supplied him.

This portrait has been reproduced so many times that it has become the standard likeness of Jackson. After George Caleb Bingham (1811–1879) was commissioned by the Missouri legislature in 1860 to paint portraits of Jackson and Henry Clay, he examined Sully’s painting at Captain Lee’s home in Washington.<sup>14</sup> In 1869 the engraver Alfred Sealy’s adaptation, in an oval format with an added section at the bottom where Jackson clutches his cloak in his left hand, appeared on a five-dollar U.S. banknote. This version has since been used on the ten-thousand-dollar bill of 1878, a ten-dollar bill of the early 1900s, and the current twenty-dollar bill. In addition to appearing on some late nineteenth-century revenue stamps, Sully’s portrait of Jackson was used on a three-cent postage stamp in 1902 and a ten-cent stamp in 1967.<sup>15</sup> In his testimonial Blair expressed gratification that the publisher of Welch’s engraving had “chosen to make this splendid work of one of our greatest painters the companion piece of Stuart’s noble head of Washington.”<sup>16</sup> Due to the numerous reproductions of this image, Sully’s *Jackson* has indeed achieved equal status as a national icon alongside his former teacher’s famous portrait.

RWT

#### Notes

1. Early in 1825, when he added up the number of paintings done during the previous year in his “Account of Pictures,” the artist noted “some studies for other pictures are begun, but not registered” (HSP). In a journal entry of 26 December 1824, 33, Sully wrote, “Called on Gen’l Jackson & Lady” (HSP).

2. The provenance of the 1824 portrait, now owned by Blair’s descendant Mrs. Arnold A. Willcox, was provided by Breckinridge Long in letters to James W. Lane, 18 March 1948, and John Walker, 23 June 1948 (in NGA curatorial files).



Thomas Sully, *Andrew Jackson*, 1942.8.34

3. Shortly after painting the Jackson copy, Sully executed a bust of Blair (Blair House, Washington, D.C.) and two "heads" of his son Judge Montgomery Blair in May; apparently Blair had informed Jackson about the portrait he had commissioned of himself because the former president alluded to it in a letter to him dated 26 May 1845. See John Spencer Bassett, ed., *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson*, 7 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1935), 6: 410.

4. *Catalogue of the Tenth Annual Exhibition of the Artists' Fund Society of Philadelphia, and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts* (Philadelphia, 1845), 5–6; the full-length portrait passed to Jacob Thompson, secretary of the interior in the Buchanan administration, to John F. Cyle, and then to William Wilson Corcoran who donated it to the Corcoran Gallery of Art in 1869.

5. See Biddle and Fielding 1921, no. 881, 187.

6. In NGA curatorial files.

7. See note 2.

8. Barber 1990, 116. This catalogue was later published as a book in which the subject was treated in greater detail; see Barber 1991, 208–209.

9. *The Daily Union*, 9 January 1853.

10. Francis Preston Blair, letter to Martin Van Buren, 25 November 1852, Van Buren Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

11. Sully "Hints for Pictures," MS, Yale University Library, New Haven, Connecticut, unspecified entry of

1841. Sully had been in London to paint his famous full-length portrait of the young Queen Victoria for the Sons of the Society of St. George.

12. Journal entry of 13 July 1841, HSP. For information on the London colorman Thomas Brown, see Kattan 1992, 456–457; his fig. 216 shows a similar stencil on a Sully portrait of 1853, and before conservation treatments others appeared on his *Charlotte Augusta Norris Calvert* (1843, MHS) and *Charles Calvert, Fifth Lord Baltimore* (1853, MHS).

13. Sully, "Hints for Pictures," MS, entry of 9 April 1845.

14. Bingham's large equestrian portrait of Jackson, which was destroyed by fire in 1911, is discussed by John Francis McDermott, *George Caleb Bingham, River Portraitist* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1959), 127–132.

15. For the various uses of Sully's portrait of Jackson, see A. L. Van Nest, "Thomas Sully's Andrew Jackson Portraits," *The American Philatelist* (December 1940): 179–181; and Barber 1991, 210–211, 219–220n.12.

16. *Daily News*, 9 January 1853.

## References

- 1909 Hart: no. 855, 89.  
1921 Biddle and Fielding: no. 884, 187.  
1990 Barber: 116.  
1991 Barber: 208–209.

## After Gilbert Stuart

1947.17.111 (1019)

### *John Philip Kemble*

1867

Oil on canvas, 53.6 × 40.9 (21 1/8 × 16 1/8)  
Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave support is unlined and remains mounted on its original four-member stretcher. An inscription on its reverse is written in large letters in brown paint: "John Kemble as / Richard 3<sup>d</sup> / after Stuart / TS 1867 / January." Probably commercially prepared, the off-white ground layer is of moderate thickness and smoothness. The paint was applied thinly and rapidly with low brushmarking. Impasto appears in the star medallion on the sitter's red cloak. Areas of abrasion in the sitter's hair and chin and in the left background have been inpainted. The varnish is significantly discolored.

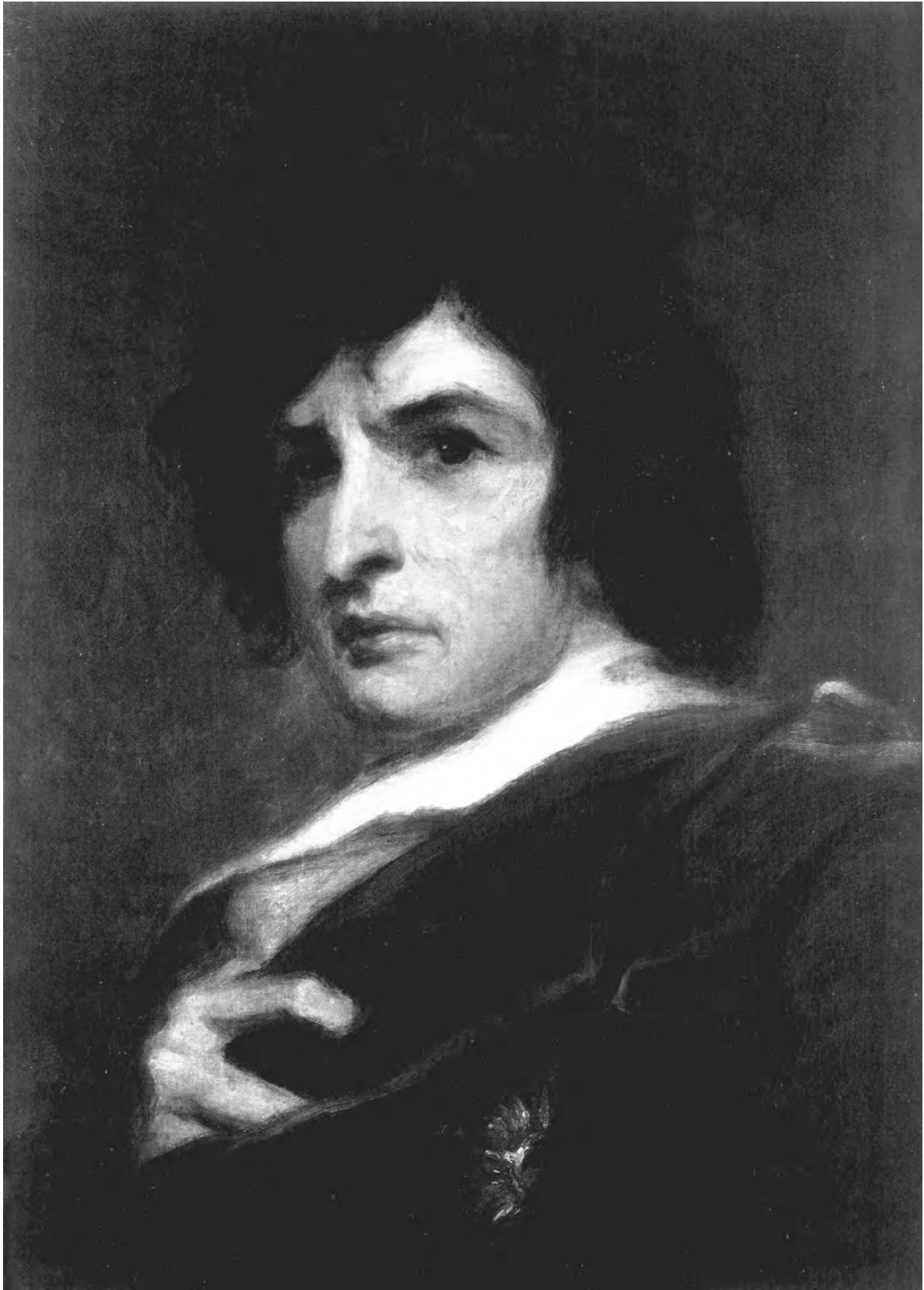
**Provenance:** (Augustus W. Oberwalder [Augustus de Forest], New York); purchased 13 December 1920 by Thomas B. Clarke [1848–1931], New York;<sup>1</sup> his estate; sold as part of the Clarke collection 29 January 1936,

through (M. Knoedler & Co., New York), to The A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

**Exhibited:** *Exhibition of the Earliest Known Portraits of Americans by Painters of the Seventeenth, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, Union League Club, New York, March 1924, no. 14. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered.

JOHN PHILIP KEMBLE (1757–1823) was the second child and eldest son born to the actor and theatrical manager Roger Kemble and his wife Sara Ward. Many members of the Kemble family were professional thespians, and John Philip Kemble's elder sister was the famous actress Sarah Siddons. Originally trained for the priesthood, Kemble rejected that calling and turned to the theater. From his first appearance at London's Drury Lane Theatre in 1783 until his farewell performance in Edinburgh in 1817, Kemble was one of the most celebrated Shakespearean actors of his era. He was famous for his ability to perform a wide range of both comic and tragic roles, and his performances





Thomas Sully after Gilbert Stuart, *John Philip Kemble*, 1947.17.111





Fig. 1. H. H. Houston after Gilbert Stuart, *John Philip Kemble*, engraving published by Freeman & Co. (Philadelphia, 16 August 1796), reproduced in David McNeely Stauffer, *American Engravers Upon Copper and Steel* vol. I (New York, 1907), opp. p. 150, Washington, Library of Congress

were admired by such notables as Gilbert Stuart, Lord Byron, and Sir Walter Scott.<sup>2</sup>

This small painting is a copy of Gilbert Stuart's *John Philip Kemble as Richard III* (c. 1786, private collection), which the artist executed shortly after he had completed the full-length portrait of his friend in the character of Macbeth (location unknown). Stuart and Kemble had vainly hoped to impress the London print seller, Alderman John Boydell, with the full-length work and thereby obtain commissions for his series of engravings of Shakespearean subjects.<sup>3</sup> According to an entry in the "Account of Pictures," Sully painted this copy very late in his career, between New Year's Day and 9 January 1867, for a fee of thirty dollars. The circumstances of the commission are unknown. Sully was on intimate terms with the Kemble family, who arrived in Philadelphia in 1832, as a friend of Kemble's

nephew Charles and niece Frances Anne, better known as Fanny.<sup>4</sup>

The poor quality and De Forest provenance of this portrait led early authorities to doubt its authenticity. William Sawitzky said that it was "most certainly not by Sully" and thought that the inscription on its reverse was a forgery. Alan Burroughs suggested that it had been painted by Robert M. Sully. Anna Rutledge and James Lane suspected that it was a recent copy derived from an engraved portrait of Kemble that had been forged to fit the description in Sully's account book.<sup>5</sup> William Campbell reviewed these opinions and in 1966 recommended that the attribution be changed from Sully to "American School."<sup>6</sup> In 1982 the Sully authority Monroe Fabian reopened the issue

Fig. 2. Henry Meyer after Gilbert Stuart, *John Philip Kemble*, engraving, published by Matthews & Leigh (1 September 1808), NGA curatorial files



with his opinion that the painting was “not untypical of some of Sully’s later, less accomplished work”; he accepted the inscription as genuine. After Frank Goodyear Jr., Darrel Sewell, and John Wilmerding concurred, the portrait was officially reattributed to Sully.

Deborah Chotner outlined the feasibility of the reattribution in her curatorial report:<sup>7</sup> The poor quality of execution was the result of Sully’s advanced age, the thirty-dollar fee indicates that it was a trifling commission, and it was probably copied not from Stuart’s original but from one of the two engravings that had been made by H. H. Houston (fig. 1) or Henry Meyer (fig. 2). Although the De Forest provenance alone is sufficient cause for doubt, it is difficult to accept Rutledge and Lane’s hypothesis that such a minor and inferior work was deliberately painted as a deception. A visual comparison between Sully’s *Kemble* and the various painted and engraved versions demonstrates how he imposed his own artistic personality on his former teacher’s work. Sully replaced Stuart’s scowling and malevolent Richard III with an effeminate youth who fails to project the character of one of Shakespeare’s greatest villains. In view of Sully’s own family background in the theater, his early association with Stuart, and close friendship

with the Kembles, the eighty-four-year-old artist must have experienced a wave of nostalgia as he painted a work so closely related to his past.

RWT

#### Notes

1. The painting is listed in Biddle and Fielding 1921, 197, as the property of A. T. Bay, who was Clarke’s secretary Alice T. Bay.

2. For biographical information on Kemble, see *Dictionary of National Biography* (London, 1959–1960), 10:1260–1266.

3. For the history of Stuart’s portraits of Kemble, see Charles Merrill Mount, *Gilbert Stuart: A Biography* (New York, 1964), 110–111, 360.

4. For Sully’s close friendship with the Kembles, see Biddle and Fielding 1921, 40–45. Between 1832 and 1865 Sully painted at least thirteen portraits of Fanny Kemble as herself or in various theatrical roles. Evidently he had known some of the Kembles before their arrival in America because he named one of his daughters Rosalie Kemble Sully (1818–1847).

5. Rutledge and Lane 1952, 107.

6. William P. Campbell, memorandum, 19 January 1966 (in NGA curatorial files).

7. Deborah Chotner, memorandum, 18 August 1982 (in NGA curatorial files).

#### References

1909 Hart: no. 930, 95.

1921 Biddle and Fielding: no. 963, 197.

## Thomas Wilcocks Sully

1811–1847

THOMAS WILCOCKS SULLY was born in Philadelphia on 3 January 1811, the son of the artist Thomas Sully and his wife Sarah Annis Sully. His middle name was probably derived from the elder Sully’s patron Benjamin Chew Wilcocks, a leading Philadelphia merchant. After studying art with his father, he became a painter of portraits and miniatures. He was active in Philadelphia during the 1830s and 1840s, where he exhibited at the Artists’ Fund Society and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.

Thomas Wilcocks Sully was interested in the theater and executed a series of portraits of famous actors that were engraved by Albert Newsam. His style greatly resembled that of his father, and he later signed his name as Thomas Sully, Jr. He died in Philadelphia on 18 April 1847.

#### Bibliography

Dunlap 1834: 2: 471.

Groce and Wallace 1957: 615.

# Thomas Wilcocks Sully and Thomas Sully

1942.8.31 (584)

## *Major Thomas Biddle*

1832

Oil on canvas, 90.5 × 69.5 (35<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 27<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support has been lined. All the tacking margins have been removed, but slight cusping suggests that the dimensions remain unaltered. The fabric was prepared with a smoothly applied creamy yellow-white ground layer over which the paint was applied in rich, fluid layers with little texture. The face, coat, and trim were painted wet-into-wet. The hair was reworked while the paint was still wet. Details such as the shadows, buttons, buckles, and trim were added in the last phase of painting; the final paint layer was a scumble added for tonal modification. A short tear in the upper left background and a small hole below the subject's right eye have been inpainted. Pitting has occurred in areas of unusually smooth-surfaced paint, a condition that may have resulted from the application of localized overheating during a past lining process; these areas were inpainted with colors that have darkened. The slightly glossy varnish is yellowed.

**Provenance:** The sitter's sister, Ann Biddle Hopkinson [Mrs. Francis Hopkinson, 1800–1863], Bordentown, New Jersey; the sitter's niece, Emily Hopkinson Scovel; her daughter, Florence Scovel Shinn, New York; purchased 4 November 1918 by Thomas B. Clarke [1848–1931], New York; his estate; sold as part of the Clarke collection 29 January 1936, through (M. Knoedler & Company, New York), to The A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

**Exhibited:** *Memorial Exhibition of Portraits by Thomas Sully*, PAFA, 1922, no. 125. *Exhibition of Portraits by Early American Artists*, Union League Club, New York, March 1922, no. 12. *A Loan Exhibition of Paintings by Early American Portrait Painters*, Century Association, New York, 1926, no. 6. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered. *John Trumbull and His Contemporaries*, Lyman Allyn Museum, New London, Connecticut, 1944, no. 123. Loan for display with permanent collection, NMAH, Washington, D.C., 1964–1987.

MAJOR THOMAS BIDDLE (1790–1831), son of Charles and Hannah Shepard Biddle of the noted Philadelphia family, volunteered for service in the army at the outbreak of the War of 1812 and served with distinction as captain of Colonel Pike's regiment on the Canadian frontier. He was wounded

twice at the Battle of Lundy's Lane and once again at the siege of Fort Erie in 1814. His commanding officer in the latter engagement described Biddle as "an officer of great gallantry, vigilance, and merit," and further remarked "that the position of greatest danger, when known to be the post of honor and greatest usefulness, was, in war, the position of Major Biddle's choice."<sup>1</sup>

After the war he served for three years as commanding officer of Fort Mifflin, a post on the Delaware River below Philadelphia. He applied for orders to join General Andrew Jackson for duty in the Seminole War but arrived in Florida too late to take part in the campaign. In 1819 he was attached to Major Stephen H. Long's scientific expedition to the Rocky Mountains. The following year Biddle was appointed army paymaster and pension agent in St. Louis, Missouri, where he remained for the rest of his life. There he helped establish the Bank of the United States (his brother Nicholas was its president) in Missouri, made successful speculations in the lead business, and dabbled in politics, an interest that was hindered by his unpopular anti-Jackson position. In 1823 the major married Ann Mullanphy, whose father was reputed to have been the first millionaire west of the Mississippi River.

Biddle's tragic death in a duel with the pro-Jackson Missouri congressman Spencer D. Pettis was a highly publicized event. The source of enmity was their opposing political convictions, and the confrontation occurred during the intense national debate over President Jackson's impending veto of the bill to recharter the Bank of the United States, with which the major and his brother were so closely affiliated. Most historians have been circumspect in identifying the specific insult that precipitated the duel, but according to a reliable source Pettis had published a newspaper article in which he cast aspersions on Biddle's manhood by making some tasteless speculations as to the reason why his wife was childless. Thus provoked, Biddle, who in his own words "found it necessary to repel his abuse by a personal chastisement," proceeded to Pettis' residence and "before he was up with a cowhide in my hand & a pistol in my pocket, called him to get up, threw the clothes off him & commenced chastising him."<sup>2</sup> After this severe horsewhipping Pettis, goaded on by his comrades, challenged Biddle to a



Thomas Wilcocks Sully and Thomas Sully, *Major Thomas Biddle*, 1942.8.31



Fig. 1. Thomas Sully, *Major Thomas Biddle*, oil on canvas, 1818, Philadelphia, The Museum of American Art of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Bequest of Ann E. Biddle, 1925.<sup>8</sup>



Fig. 2. William Sartain after Thomas Sully, *Major Thomas Biddle*, engraving, Philadelphia, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Stauffer Collection, vol. 14, p. 994

duel. Because he was nearsighted the major chose pistols at a distance of five feet. On 26 August 1831 the opponents met on Bloody Island while crowds of people gathered on the shores of the Mississippi River to witness the event.<sup>3</sup> Both men fell mortally wounded; Pettis died the following day, and Biddle lingered on for two more. It was rumored that they had ordered their coffins before the fatal encounter.

This painting has traditionally been identified as Thomas Willcocks Sully's replica of his father Thomas Sully's kit-cat portrait of Biddle (fig. 1). According to a Biddle family source, the original was commissioned by the subject's father Charles, and the copy was ordered by his bereaved sister Ann [1942.8.32, p. 179] shortly after the duel.<sup>4</sup> The degree of Thomas Sully's participation in this portrait by his son is a matter of conjecture. At the end of 1831 he included it in a list of unfinished paintings as a "Copy of Major T. Biddle, begun by Tom."<sup>5</sup> Edward Biddle and Mantle Fielding speculated that

Sully's contribution "must have been considerable as it was begun Jan. 10th, 1832, and the price or value of the work was \$70."<sup>6</sup> The awkward treatment of the uniform shows a lack of Sully's usual painterly fluency, although the technical examination suggests that he reworked certain details and the scumbles as a final tonal modification. Sully probably painted a significant portion of the head. The main difference between the original and the copy is that the background of the former features a clear break in the clouded sky that frames the sitter's head, an effect that Sully and his son eliminated in their copy. The absence of this feature in William Sartain's engraving (fig. 2) of the portrait indicates that he used the copy as his source.

The National Gallery painting faithfully preserves Biddle's aristocratic demeanor and casual attitude of aloof superiority that are so striking in the original portrait. The uniformed and gloved Biddle looks to his right, imperiously resting one hand on



his hip and casually cradling a saber under his arm. While his attitude and pose are typical of military portraiture, it is appropriate to quote one of Biddle's friends on the effect his nearsightedness had on some who were familiar with his countenance: "His unfortunate defect of vision was calculated to make the impression that he was cold and reserved, but those who knew him intimately can testify that he united a gentle and kind disposition with a warm and generous heart."<sup>7</sup>

RWT

#### Notes

1. Simpson 1859, 78.
2. Thomas Biddle, letter to William S. Biddle, 23 July 1831, cited by Nicholas Biddle Wainwright, "The Life and Death of Major Thomas Biddle," *Pennsylvania*

- Magazine of History and Biography* 104 (July 1980): 339.
3. For an account of the duel, see Lorenzo Sabine, *Notes on Duels and Duelling* (Boston, 1855), 64–65.
  4. Wainwright 1980, 328n.6.
  5. Sully, unspecified journal entry of late December 1831 or early January 1832, HSP. Before the painting was lined, an inscription was visible on the reverse: "By Thomas Wilcocks Sully, copied from that painted by his father, Thomas Sully; retouched by the father."
  6. Biddle and Fielding 1921, 101. In a journal entry of 22 January 1832, Sully recorded that he had "sent home the portrait of Major T. Biddle" (HSP).
  7. Colonel Towson, letter to Charles Biddle, Jr., 3 October 1831, quoted by Wainwright 1980, 326.

#### References

- 1909 Hart: no. 141, 30.  
1921 Biddle and Fielding: no. 147, 101.  
1922 PAFA: no. 125, 89.

## Henry Ossawa Tanner

1859–1937

Henry Ossawa Tanner was born in Pittsburgh on 21 June 1859, the first of five children born to Reverend Benjamin Tucker Tanner and his wife Sarah, a former slave who had escaped on the Underground Railroad. Reverend Tanner later became a bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Their son's unusual middle name was derived from the name of the town Osawatimie, Kansas, where the abolitionist John Brown had initiated his antislavery campaign.

The family settled in Philadelphia in 1868, and in 1879 Henry Tanner enrolled in the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, where he studied under Thomas Eakins (1844–1916) and Thomas Hovenden (1840–1895). He exhibited at the Academy and at the Philadelphia Society of Artists. In 1889 he moved south to establish a photography studio in Atlanta. Although this venture failed, it was there that the young artist met a bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church named Joseph Crane Hartzell, who arranged for him to teach drawing at Clark University. In 1890 Hartzell organized an exhibition of Tanner's work in Cincinnati. When none of the paintings sold, Hartzell and his wife purchased them, thus

providing Tanner with enough money for a period of study in Europe.

In 1891 Tanner sailed for Europe, intending to stay in Rome. Instead, he decided to remain in Paris and study under Jean-Joseph Benjamin Constant and Jean-Paul Laurens at the Académie Julian. Paris attracted him not only as an artistic center but also as a city with a liberal atmosphere, relatively free of racial prejudice. Tanner soon joined the American Art Students' Club and spent his first summer in France with the colony of artists at Pont-Aven, Brittany. Tanner's choice of subject matter was briefly influenced by a growing consciousness of his racial identity, and during a trip to America in 1893 he delivered a paper entitled "The American Negro in Art" at the World's Congress on Africa in Chicago. His concern during this period for creating dignified and sympathetic portrayals of African-Americans in art is exemplified by *The Banjo Lesson* (1893, Hampton University Museum, Virginia).

Tanner returned to Paris in 1894, and his *Banjo Lesson* was accepted for exhibition at that year's Salon. He soon abandoned the genre, however, and began painting the biblical scenes that made

him famous. His interest in religious painting probably grew out of his intensely religious upbringing, as well as the popularity of oriental subjects during this period. Museums started to acquire his paintings after *Daniel in the Lions' Den* (1895, location unknown) won honorable mention in the 1896 Salon. The following year, thanks to the financial backing of his lifelong friend and supporter Rodman Wanamaker of the Philadelphia retail firm, Tanner embarked on the first of several long trips to the Near East. His purpose was to familiarize himself with the topography and appearance of the people there, with the aim of increasing the visual appeal of his biblical subjects by scrupulous attention to original settings and naturalistic details. Also in 1897 Tanner's *Resurrection of Lazarus* (1896, Musée d'Orsay, Paris) was exhibited at the Salon, where it received great critical acclaim and was purchased by the French government for the Luxembourg Gallery.

In 1899 Tanner married an American woman, Jessie Macauley Olssen. Earlier that same year Booker T. Washington visited him in Paris, where the artist painted his portrait. Although Tanner was an expatriate, he maintained close ties to the country of his birth and remained concerned about the struggle for racial equality. He was a supporter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People after it was founded in 1910.

In 1909 Tanner was made an associate member of the National Academy of Design, along with Mary Cassatt (1844–1926); he was elected to full membership in 1927. Severely depressed during World War I, he curtailed his artistic activity and worked for the American Red Cross. Although he later returned to art, he no longer enjoyed the success and international prominence of the prewar years and began a period of gradual decline. One of his greatest distinctions, however, came in 1923, when the French government named him Chevalier of the Légion d'Honneur. He died in Paris on 25 May 1937.

Although Tanner's career spanned the period of the birth of modern art, he remained a basically conservative painter whose work bore only traces of artistic innovations that developed before the turn of the century. His freer handling of paint beginning in the late 1890s shows his familiarity with impressionism, and many of his mature bib-

lical scenes reveal the influence of James McNeill Whistler in their pronounced tonalism, a characteristic that enhances their subtle but pervasive mystical quality. Lois Marie Fink has noted how Tanner's biblical scenes "relate to current Symbolist art in Paris, with its allusions to meaning beyond material reality, and to the international Art Nouveau movement, which emphasized line and shape as lively and independent elements of design."<sup>1</sup> These biblical subjects are also noteworthy for their unusual thematic and iconographic content, which may reflect the teachings of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>2</sup>

RWT

#### Notes

1. Fink 1990, 175.

2. See Jennifer J. Harper, "The Early Religious Paintings of Henry Ossawa Tanner: A Study of the Influences of Church, Family, and Era," *American Art* 6 (Fall 1992): 69–85.

#### Bibliography

Mathews 1969.  
 Mosby, Sewell, and Alexander-Minter 1991.  
 Bearden and Henderson 1993: 78–109.  
 Mosby 1995.

1971.57.1 (2562)

#### *The Seine*

c. 1902  
 Oil on canvas, 22.8 × 33 (9 × 13)  
 Gift of the Avalon Foundation

#### Inscriptions

At lower left: F. F. Gut[ekunst] / H. O. T[anner] / [. . .]y  
 10, 1902

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support has been lined. The original tacking margins have been removed. Early records document an inscription that was formerly visible on the backing board (now removed and in NGA curatorial files): "Presented to / Mr. F. F. Gutekunst / H. O. Tanner / *Seine* 1902 *Paris*." This is a reference to the artist's otherwise undocumented friendship with the noted Philadelphia photographer Frederick Gutekunst.<sup>1</sup> A thin, dark gray layer that was applied over the white ground layer may be an abandoned color scheme rather than a second ground layer. This gray seems to have been modified by a second brown-gray layer in the sky. Brushwork is evident in the opaque colors of the sky and water, while the translucent colors of the ship, wharf, and bridge were more thinly and smoothly painted. The line of the ship was made by



Henry Ossawa Tanner, *The Seine*, 1911.57.1

dragging a brush through the impasto of the water. The painting is in excellent condition, with minimal inpainting. The slightly glossy varnish has not discolored.

**Provenance:** Frederick F. Gutekunst [1831–1917]. Private collection; Graham Williford, Fairfield, Texas.

**Exhibited:** *Henry Ossawa Tanner*, PMA; DIA; High Museum of Art, Atlanta; FAMSF, M. H. De Young Memorial Museum, 1991–1992, no. 37.

PAINTED eleven years after Tanner had settled in Paris, this rapidly executed plein-air oil sketch is one of his rare depictions of a contemporary urban Parisian view.<sup>2</sup> The scene is topographically accurate, so it is possible to identify the artist's exact vantage point on the right bank of the Seine, looking west toward the twin towers of the Palais du Trocadéro, the ornate convention center that had been erected for the 1878 Exposition Universelle.<sup>3</sup> This sketch was painted at twilight: The setting sun is concealed by the Trocadéro, and the shadow cast by the boat in the right foreground falls to the east toward the viewer. The forms of the buildings on the horizon, the Pont Royal that spans the Seine and horizontally bisects the composition, the boat, and the dock are all obscured and silhouetted by the diffused light. The texture of the freely applied paint describes the uneven reflections of light across both the river and the sky. With the sole exception of the barely distinct solitary figure on the dock, the poetic scene is devoid of human activity.

John Wilmerding observed that *The Seine* is surprisingly modern in comparison with the majority of Tanner's works and noted that "the soft colors and gauzy silhouettes, the open expanse of water and sky, and the high horizon serving to flatten out

the spatial recession are all Whistlerian in character."<sup>4</sup> William James Williams has noted that in its subject matter, composition, and technique this painting "is among the earliest indications that Tanner had observed the pictures of the French Impressionists."<sup>5</sup> The artist, however, stopped short of the impressionist tendency to allow light to dissolve the solidity of three-dimensional objects. Although the atmospheric quality of this sketch is evidence of Tanner's familiarity with impressionism, the point should not be overemphasized because *The Seine* was not destined for exhibition. Rather, it was an impromptu study perhaps intended as a memento for a friend in Philadelphia. In any case, it is an exceptionally eloquent small painting that possesses some of the mood and mystery characteristic of the artist's better known religious subjects.

RWT

#### Notes

1. Tanner presumably brought this painting to America in 1903 and presented it to Gutekunst at some point during his lengthy stay in the United States. It should be noted that the conservator discerned the presence of an indecipherable word after the date on the artist's inscription on the front of the painting.

2. Other examples are *Les Invalides* (1896, Terra Museum of American Art, Chicago) and *The Man Who Rented Boats* (c. 1900, NMAA).

3. Mosby, Sewell, and Alexander-Minter 1991, 134, misidentified the building as the "two towers of the Louvre."

4. Wilmerding 1988, 156.

5. Williams 1981, 185.

#### References

- 1981 Williams: 185.  
1988 Wilmerding: 156, color repro.  
1991 Mosby, Sewell, and Alexander-Minter: 134, no. 37.

# Edmund Charles Tarbell

1862–1938

EDMUND TARBELL was born 26 April 1862 in West Groton, Massachusetts, and raised by his grandparents in the Boston suburb of Dorchester. He showed an early aptitude for drawing, studied briefly at the Massachusetts Normal School (1877–1878), and at the age of fifteen was apprenticed at the Forbes Lithographic Company.

After three years at Forbes, Tarbell entered the Boston Museum School, where he befriended fellow students Frank W. Benson (1862–1951) and Robert Reid (1862–1929), and studied under Otto Grundmann (1844–1890) and Frederick Crowninshield (1845–1918). In 1884 Tarbell joined Benson and Reid at the Académie Julian in Paris.<sup>1</sup> Among his teachers were Gustave Boulanger, Jules-Joseph Lefebvre, Adolphe William Bouguereau (1825–1905), and the American expatriate William Turner Dannat (1853–1929). In France Tarbell became aware of the work of the impressionists and was able to study paintings by old masters in the collection of the Louvre. Before returning to America, Tarbell and Benson traveled through Italy and England.

Once back in the United States, in 1886 Tarbell took a studio in Boston. Almost immediately he went to New York to seek out William Merritt Chase (1849–1916), at that time president of the Society of American Artists. Tarbell later became a member of the Society and exhibited regularly there and at the National Academy of Design. He became known as one of The Ten, a group of established painters that eventually resigned from the conservative Society, holding their own exhibition in 1898.

From about 1886 to 1888 Tarbell earned an income as a magazine illustrator and portraitist. He married Emeline Arnold Souther in 1888 and soon thereafter began teaching at the Boston Museum School, becoming the head of the painting department upon the death of Grundmann in 1890. Tarbell taught there for the next twenty-three years, resigning in 1913 in the wake of a conflict. Shortly afterward he founded and became president of the Guild of Boston Artists. At this time he was already well known for his contri-

butions to the Boston art world and for his stature as a member of The Ten.

In 1918 Tarbell was chosen for the directorship of the Corcoran School of Art in Washington, D.C. He held that post for seven years, but was abroad for a good part of this time, executing portraits. The U.S. government commissioned likenesses of statesmen, resulting in Tarbell's *President Woodrow Wilson* (1920, NPG) and *Marshal Ferdinand Foch* (1920, NMAA). By 1926 the artist had retired to his home in New Castle, New Hampshire, where he died in 1938.

During his lifetime Tarbell was a tremendously important influence for Boston artists. His students—and many of his established colleagues as well—were called Tarbellites and adhered to his program of high standards of execution in painting and drawing, and a preference for genteel subject matter. Their style was acceptable to their upper-class patrons, who were grudgingly wooed away from a strict belief in the superiority of European artists and to a new appreciation of native talent. Tarbell's own work was widely exhibited, and he was the recipient of numerous awards and medals, including the Thomas B. Clarke Prize of the National Academy of Design (1890, 1894, and 1900), the Columbian Exposition Medal (1893), and the Lippincott Prize of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (1895).

DC

## Notes

1. "Benson and Tarbell did not go to Paris together as is commonly believed. Tarbell did not leave Boston until the summer of 1884, a year after Benson's departure" (Leader 1980, 237).

## Bibliography

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1967.1.1 (2327)

## *Mother and Mary*

1922

Oil on canvas, 112.1 × 127.5 (44 1/8 × 50 3/16)

Gift of the Belcher Collection, Stoughton, Massachusetts<sup>1</sup>

### Inscriptions

At lower right: Tarbell'22

**Technical Notes:** The painting is secured to a stretcher that, according to records, was used in 1979 to replace an earlier "Bay State Stretcher" with half-lap joins made in Boston by Wadsworth-Howland & Co. The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support has selvages on the left and right and is unlined. The fabric was primed with a white ground while on a slightly larger stretcher. Tarbell used both wet-over-dry and wet-into-wet painting techniques. While most of the painting was built up with opaque pastelike paints, he also used glazes. The fabric texture is dominant, except in the highlights on the floor and the outdoor view where the paint has been built up with tiny bits of impasto to form a distinctive texture of its own. Other areas are smoother, such as the gray walls of the room, where the fabric texture was filled with layers of a more fluid paint. There is a pentimento of a footstool at the feet of the older woman. The varnish, which was applied with a brush while the picture was in its frame, resulting in drips and unevenness, is quite yellowed. The gilded frame is signed and dated 1922 by Walfred Thulin, the Boston framemaker, together with a stock number, 1060.

**Provenance:** Purchased 1923 by Elva A. Belcher [Mrs. George E. Belcher], Stoughton, Massachusetts; her daughter, Gertrude H. Belcher [1872–1966], Brockton, Massachusetts; her estate; bequeathed 1967 to Miss Beatrice Monk and John Hill, Boston.

**Exhibited:** Art Club of Philadelphia, January 1923, probably no cat.<sup>2</sup> *Edmund C. Tarbell*, Guild of Boston Artists, Boston, February 1923. *Twenty-second Annual International Exhibition of Paintings*, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, April–June 1923, no. 50. *Thirty-sixth Annual Exhibition of American Paintings and Sculpture*, AIC, November–December 1923, no. 218. *French Impressionists Influence American Artists*, Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, 1971, no. 170.

A LATE WORK, *Mother and Mary* was completed well into Tarbell's career, some three decades after he first began painting scenes of interiors. An admirer of the French impressionists, he developed plein-air techniques early on and, while maintaining his interest in the effects of light, eventually moved his subjects indoors. Not surprisingly, he favored the work of Edgar Degas, with its emphasis

on draftsmanship and the use of unusual interior spaces. Tarbell's treatment of softly and dramatically illuminated spaces and his sensitivity to subtle gradations of light also followed the example of seventeenth-century Dutch painters, particularly Jan Vermeer (1632–1675), whose work he clearly knew and admired.

Tarbell's brushwork, though somewhat loose, never dissolved into the small, separate strokes of his French colleagues or, for that matter, some of his American counterparts, such as fellow members of The Ten, Childe Hassam and John Twachtman. Even though he was careful to teach his students methods for softening the appearance of the edges of the objects they painted, his forms never lost their solidity and three-dimensional presence.<sup>3</sup> Occasionally he executed some cursory passages, such as Mary's right hand in the National Gallery painting, but these do not affect the ultimate clarity of the works.

In general, Tarbell's work is characterized by his ability to convey the serene atmosphere of quiet pastimes pursued in well-appointed interiors, such as that shown in *Mother and Mary*. A related painting of an earlier date, *My Family* (1914, Senator and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller IV), is similar to *Mother and Mary* in subject and spirit, although it has a greater number of figures and a slightly less generous sense of space. The later painting exudes an aura of greater elegance. Both the placement of the elements and the selection of textures and surfaces are carefully balanced.

The figures in the painting are the artist's wife Emeline Souther Tarbell and their third daughter, Mary, born 2 March 1897.<sup>4</sup> They are seen in the livingroom of Tarbell's New Castle, New Hampshire, house, with windows looking north to the Piscataqua River. The artist's daughter described the contents of the room: "I am seated at Father's Governor Winthrop desk. . . . On the desk are two old brass whale oil lamps. The antique card table on the left has a silver trophy Father won at one of his favorite sports with flowers in it from our gardens. The two chairs are some of the original Tarbell chairs. I am seated on one of four antique chairs Father and Mother purchased with other antiques early in their married life."<sup>5</sup>

Trevor Fairbrother writes that Tarbell, in his interior scenes, was interested "in conveying a specific regional image. . . . The objects he pictured all belonged to Tarbell, whose collection of decorative arts was not unlike that of many well-to-do Bosto-



Edmund Charles Tarbell, *Mother and Mary*, 1967.1.1

nians of the day.”<sup>6</sup> Unlike many of these New Englanders, however, the artist did not inherit his furnishings, but rather purchased them. His desire to surround himself with these objects was a result of a strong identification with Boston’s founding families and a general interest in the colonial revival that widely affected decorative arts and architecture at the turn of the century.<sup>7</sup>

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#### Notes

1. This credit line was chosen by the painting’s last private owners to honor the family that originally owned the work, from whose estate they received it.
2. It was awarded the Weber Prize.
3. An interesting comment on this aspect of Tarbell’s work was made by Boston painter Philip Leslie Hale, who wrote that “the Impressionists have at times painted the general aspect of things with a great deal of truth, but often there is lacking in their work a certain

sense of structure that always exists in the finest works of art. Tarbell always tries to get the structural sense beneath the general aspect of things, and it is this effect which so often makes his work unique” (“Edmund C. Tarbell—Painter of Pictures,” *Arts and Decoration* 2 [February 1912]: 130).

4. A related pastel drawing of Mary with her hand draped over the chairback is reproduced in Pierce 1980, 126. However, it is now thought to be the work of a forger rather than a study for the painting.

5. Mary Tarbell Schaffer, letter of 7 February 1967 (in NGA curatorial files).

6. Trevor J. Fairbrother, “Edmund C. Tarbell’s Paintings of Interiors,” *Antiques* (January 1987): 230.

7. For a discussion of this aesthetic direction, see Betsky 1985.

#### References

- 1978 Reitz, Susie. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 240 (1 December 1978): 2516, 2538, color repro. cover.
- 1980 Pierce: 92, 106, 207, repro. 128.
- 1981 Williams: 194, repro. 189 and 195.

## John Henry Twachtman

1853–1902

JOHN HENRY TWACHTMAN was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on 4 August 1853 to German immigrants Frederick Christian Twachtman and Sophia Droege Twachtman. Among the various jobs that Frederick Twachtman took to support his family was that of windowshade decorator, work that son John also undertook when he was fourteen years old. While thus employed the young man also attended classes at the Ohio Mechanics Institute. After 1871 he was enrolled part time in the McMicken School of Design (later the Art Academy of Cincinnati), where he met Frank Duveneck (1848–1919).

Although only five years Twachtman’s senior, Duveneck, who had studied in Munich, had already achieved some success in the United States. The older artist invited Twachtman to share his studio in Cincinnati and eventually to return to Europe with him. In 1875 Twachtman began to study under Ludwig von Loefftz at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Munich, learning the broad, vigorous brushwork and somber tones typical of that school. A trip to Venice with Duveneck

and William Merritt Chase in 1877 did not lighten his palette appreciably.

Returning to the United States in 1878, Twachtman taught briefly at the Women’s Art Association of Cincinnati, but spent much of his time in the East. He became a member of the Society of American Artists in 1879. The following year he returned to Europe, assisting as a teacher in Duveneck’s school in Florence. In 1881 he married Martha Scudder in Cincinnati, and the couple went abroad, staying until just before the birth of their first child in 1882. During this visit Twachtman spent time in Holland, painting and etching with his close friend J. Alden Weir.

From 1883 to 1885 Twachtman studied at the Académie Julian in Paris, painting in Normandy and at Arques-la-Bataille, near Dieppe, in the summer. During this period his style changed considerably: his brushwork became more subdued, while his palette grew lighter. He may have felt the influence of the French painter Jules Bastien-Lepage, whose work was very popular among American artists at this time. Although

Twachtman disliked Bastien-Lepage's meticulous attention to detail, he admired the pervasive quality of natural light found in his paintings. Twachtman's familiarity with the paintings of the expatriate James McNeill Whistler may have also helped his work to become more thinly painted and atmospheric.

By 1886 Twachtman and his family, which eventually numbered seven children, had returned to the United States, probably spending much of their time in New York. During the winter of 1886–1887, the artist supported them by painting Civil War battle scenes on a cyclorama constructed in Chicago. In 1889 he began to teach at the Art Students League in New York and to produce illustrations for *Scribner's Magazine*. At about this time he was able to purchase a farm in Greenwich, Connecticut, which became the subject of many of his best known landscapes. The work that Twachtman produced in the 1890s, during his "Greenwich period," was characterized by increasingly rough and often layered brushwork.

Although he lived in the country, Twachtman exhibited in New York throughout the 1890s. Eighteen ninety-three was a significant year for Twachtman: His work was included in an American Art Galleries exhibition with that of J. Alden Weir (alongside an exhibition of works by Claude Monet and Paul-Albert Besnard [1849–1934]), and he also won a medal at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. About a year later he received commissions for a landscape series of Niagara Falls and Yellowstone National Park. In 1897 Twachtman became a founding member of The Ten and exhibited with the group until his death on 8 August 1902. His final summer was spent painting at Gloucester, Massachusetts.

DC

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Peters, Gerdts, Hale, and Boyle 1989.

1964.22.1 (1927)

### *Winter Harmony*

c. 1890/1900

Oil on canvas, 65.4 × 81.1 (25 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 31 <sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)

Gift of the Avalon Foundation

#### Inscriptions

At lower right: J. H. Twachtman

**Technical Notes:** The support consists of a medium-weight plain-weave fabric that has been lined. The original tacking margins have been removed. Paint is thickly applied over a cream-colored ground layer of medium thickness, and the composition is built up using a complex layer structure with darker, purer colors covered by dry, thick scumbles of very pale, opaque top layers. The rough ends of the scumbled brushstrokes have been left, creating some highly textured areas that have trapped varnish residues that are now discolored. Lines have been drawn in the wet paint with the end of a brush or similar object. Extenders in the form of small, clear, translucent particles are visible in many of the paint areas. To the left of the foreground tree and below the center of the top edge, inpainting over the age cracks has turned white. There is limited small, scattered inpainting, primarily in the top half of the picture. Some polishing of the paint has occurred, presumably as a result of the lining process. The varnish is now somewhat gray, diminishing the subtle color effects of the painting. The silvergilt frame may be original.

**Provenance:** Purchased c. 1900 from the artist by Mrs. L. Horatio Bigelow, New York; her daughter, Mrs. Edward L. Ballard [d. 1964], New York City and Ridgefield, Connecticut; consigned to (sale, Coleman Auction Galleries, Inc., New York, 15 November 1963, no. 746, as *Winter Scene*); (Ira Spanierman, New York); sold 1963 to (Vose Galleries, Boston).

**Exhibited:** Possibly Wunderlich Gallery, New York, March 1891. *John Henry Twachtman: A Retrospective Exhibition*, Cincinnati Art Museum, 1966, no. 69. *Spirit of Romanticism*, Drury College Art Gallery, Springfield, Missouri, April 1968, no cat. *In Memoria, Ailsa Mellon Bruce*, NGA, 1969, no cat. *French Impressionists Influence American Artists*, Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, Florida, 1971, no. 178. *Wilderness*, CGA, 1971, no. 162. *American Impressionist Painting*, NGA; WMAA; Cincinnati Art Museum; North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, 1973–1974, no. 65. *Turn-of-the-Century America: Paintings, Graphics, Photographs, 1890–1910*, WMAA; Saint Louis Art Museum; Seattle Art Museum; Oakland Museum, California, 1977–1978, no. 77. *The Snow Show*, Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York, 1980, no. 97. *John Twachtman: Connecticut Landscapes*, NGA; Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, 1989–1990, no. 1. *American Impressionism: Masterworks from Public and Private Collections in the United States*, Thyssen-Bornemisza Foundation, Villa Favorita, Lugano, Switzerland, 1990, no. 28.

ALTHOUGH POPULAR and commercial success eluded John Twachtman, his poetic landscapes received much critical acclaim and elicited the sincere admiration of his colleagues. His best known works were evanescent scenes of winter. Among the loveliest of these is *Winter Harmony*, one of Twachtman's many views of Horseneck Brook on his property in Greenwich, Connecticut.

It is not certain when Twachtman and his family moved to the old farmhouse on a seventeen-acre parcel of land originally known as Hangroot. His son, Alden, recalled the moment at which he and his father first came upon the site and viewed the brook flowing through it: "This is it!" the artist exclaimed. The Twachtmans may have lived at the farm on Round Hill Road as early as the winter of 1888–1889, probably as tenants. Records of deeds indicate the artist purchased the land in two installments in 1890 and 1891.<sup>1</sup> Twachtman went on to paint the partly wooded, uneven terrain innumerable times between 1890 and 1900.

Views of the portion of Horseneck Brook seen in the National Gallery painting are also the subjects of *Icebound* (AIC), *Winter Silence* (Mead Art Museum, Amherst College), *Hemlock Pool—Autumn* (private collection), and *Hemlock Pool* (Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts). All are composed around the V shape of the converging banks of a stream that feeds into a pool of irregular contour. It is difficult to establish a definite chronology for these works; however, the National Gallery painting seems to date from the earliest part of the artist's Greenwich period.<sup>2</sup> The paintings from these years, with their "lightness of touch and economy of means" and areas of light paint over dark, most clearly show the influence of Twachtman's work in pastels, a medium that dominated his first one-man show, held at Wunderlich Gallery in March 1891.<sup>3</sup> An oil painting singled out for praise in a review of that exhibition might very possibly be the work now known as *Winter Harmony*.<sup>4</sup> It was described as "a little valley or dale with bare trees growing on the sloping banks of a brook flowing down towards the front of the picture . . . a charming piece of painting, delicate, and tender in color and simple in method."<sup>5</sup>

The subtlety of Twachtman's work often elicited comparisons to that of the renowned James

McNeill Whistler. Unlike Whistler, who usually achieved his soft, atmospheric qualities through the application of the thinnest glazes, Twachtman used greatly varied brushwork and often, as in *Winter Harmony*, laid on areas of paint in quite visible impasto, sometimes leaving adjacent bits of canvas exposed. Other areas of the composition show the thin, calligraphic strokes of bare tree trunk and limbs or the lightly brushed, dry paint of trees and leaves. Using the most expressive and individualistic brushstrokes, the artist maintains a fidelity to nature that captures both the appearance and the spirit of place.

*Winter Harmony*, with its veil of moist atmosphere, exemplifies Twachtman's emotive landscapes. His personal approach to the depiction of the natural world was part of a common thread of intimacy and evocation of mood that permeated the treatment of landscape at the turn of the century. Contemporaries such as Thomas Wilmer Dewing (1851–1938) and Dwight Tryon (1849–1925), following the example of Barbizon-inspired George Inness, turned to scenes of quietude, eschewing the grandeur and drama that had typified American landscape painting earlier in the century. These artists often showed a preference for the indistinct light of dawn and dusk, soft moonlight, and mist. The winter scene, with its blurring of snow-covered contours, offered perhaps the most appropriate subject for contemplation.<sup>6</sup> No artist has shown greater sensitivity to the special beauties of that season than Twachtman.<sup>7</sup>

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#### Notes

1. Larkin 1980, 89, notes that the warranty deed identified the artist as "John Twachtman of said town of Greenwich."

2. The most thorough discussion of the Greenwich paintings and the possible evolution of their style is found in Lisa Peters, "Twachtman's Greenwich Paintings: Content and Chronology," in Chotner, Peters, and Pyne 1989.

3. Chotner, Peters, and Pyne 1989, 24.

4. It is not known when or by what means *Winter Harmony* acquired its current title. The granddaughter of Mrs. Edward Ballard, former owner of the painting, recalled that the family referred to it simply as *Snow Scene* (letter of 26 July 1967, in NGA curatorial files). Several of Twachtman's works were exhibited at various times with the title *Hemlock Pool*, making it difficult to determine today which one is which.

5. "Art Notes: Pictures by J. H. Twachtman at Wunderlich," *New York Evening Post*, March 1891, 7, quoted in Chotner, Peters, and Pyne 1989.





John Henry Twachtman, *Winter Harmony*, 1964.22.1

6. See Kathleen Pyne, "John Twachtman and the Therapeutic Landscape," in Chotner, Peters, and Pyne 1989.

7. See Deborah Chotner, "Twachtman and the American Winter Landscape," in Chotner, Peters, and Pyne 1989.

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- 1979 Boyle: 17, 42, color repro. 43.  
1980 Wilmerding: 138.  
1989 Chotner, Peters, and Pyne: 27, 54.  
1992 Pyne.

## Eugene Lawrence Vail

1857–1934

SON of a French mother and an American father, Eugene Vail maintained strong ties with both France and the United States throughout his life. He was born 29 September 1857 in Saint-Servan, France. As a young man, he studied in Paris and New York. Although he showed an early aptitude and enthusiasm for art, his father insisted on a practical education; before he was twenty Vail graduated from Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, New Jersey, with a concentration in mechanical engineering. After college he joined the National Guard, participating in a western expedition led by Captain George Wheeler. Vail sketched the terrain and painted portraits of his traveling companions and the Native Americans they met.

At the end of his service, the young artist studied first with William Merritt Chase and J. Carroll Beckwith (1852–1917) at the Art Students League in New York, then in Paris. After working under Alexandre Cabanel (1823–1889), Pascal Dagnan-Bouveret (1852–1929), and Raphael Collin (1850–1916) at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, he left to pursue his art independently at Pont-Aven and Concarneau, favorite locations of painters in Brittany. The first of his canvases to be included in the Paris Salon had as its subject a Breton peasant girl. Vail went on to paint images of peasants and fishermen in villages and towns throughout Europe. His seafaring subject, *Ready About* (location unknown) won him a gold medal at the Exposition Universelle in 1889.

Vail's realistic, anecdotal works were exhibited in Europe and the United States. He won medals at Berlin, Munich, Antwerp, Liège, and St. Louis, and his paintings were purchased by several insti-

tutions. In 1894 he was made a Chevalier of the Légion d'Honneur.

After many successful years of producing work in the academic, "Salon" tradition, Vail gradually adopted a looser and more impressionistic style. His palette, too, became lighter, perhaps in response to the light and color of Italy, particularly of Venice, where he began to spend his autumns. At other times of the year he visited Saint-Moritz, Saint-Tropez, and Lake Como. He became known for his lighthearted scenes of people engaged in winter sports.

Vail died in Paris on 28 December 1934. His wife, Gertrude Mauran Vail, brought the contents of his studio to America for safekeeping during World War II. These works were circulated in a well-received retrospective exhibition that traveled to several museums between 1938 and 1941. Gertrude Vail later dispersed many of them to museum collections.

DC

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1973.1.1 (2638)

*The Flags, Saint Mark's,  
Venice—Fête Day*

c. 1903

Oil on canvas, 82 × 92.6 (32<sup>5</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 36<sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)

Gift of Gertrude Mauran Vail

**Inscriptions**

At lower right: Eugene Vail

**Technical Notes:** The painting has been lined and its original tacking margins removed. A smoothly applied, off-white ground layer covers the medium-weight plain-weave fabric support. Paint was applied in layers that range from very thin washes to thick impasto. Generally, it was applied wet-into-wet, although there are clearly areas where layers of paint dried before further paint was added. In addition to manipulating the paint itself, the artist intentionally abraded the paint layer and scratched through it in places. Over the paint layer a grid system has been penciled at 5.5–6.5 cm intervals. There are also diagonal perspective lines that intersect the grid. Occasionally additional paint was applied over these lines. At the top left is evidence of the use of a compass. The paint layer is in very good condition except for very minor, scattered abrasion and minor losses. A loss approximately 3 cm long, close to the right edge of the painting, has been inpainted. The surface coating is gray and dull.

**Provenance:** The artist [1857–1934]; his wife, Gertrude Mauran Vail, until 1948; on deposit with the National Collection of Fine Arts (now NMAA), Washington, D.C., 1948–1973.

**Exhibited:** *Exposition Eugene Vail, 1857–1934*, Galerie Jean Charpentier, Paris, June 1937, no. 24, as *St. Marc—Jour de Fête. Memorial Exhibition of Paintings by Eugene Vail*, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, November 1937, no. 17, as *St. Marks [sic]—Venice. Retrospective Exhibition of Paintings by Eugene Lawrence Vail*, Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts, 1938. *Memorial Exhibition of Paintings by Eugene Vail*, American Fine Arts Society Galleries, New York, January–February 1939, no. 19, as *St. Marks [sic]—Fête Day—Study. Memorial Exhibition of Paintings by Eugene Vail*, Providence Art Club, Rhode Island, March 1939, no. 46, as *San Marco. Memorial Exhibition of Paintings by Eugene Vail*, CGA, January 1940, no. 11, as *San Marco—Fête Day. Eugene Vail, 1857–1934, Exhibition of Paintings*, Delaware Art Center, Wilmington Society of the Fine Arts, March 1940, no. 21, as *San Marco, Fête Day*. Possibly *Paintings by the Late Eugene Vail*, Currier Gallery of Art, Manchester, New Hampshire, November 1940, no cat. *Eugene Vail, 1857–1934, Exhibition of Paintings*, L.D.M. Sweat Memorial Art Museum, Portland, Maine, 1940–1941, no. 9, as *San Marco, Fête Day. Eugene Vail, 1857–1934, Exhibition of Paintings*, Art Association of Newport, Rhode Island, 1941, no. 44, as *San Marco—Fête Day*.

THROUGHOUT the centuries the light, color, and everyday spectacle of Venice have attracted the attention of artists. American artists in particular fell under its spell in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>1</sup> The images of Venice they produced are as varied as James McNeill Whistler's delicate drawings and etchings of doorways and sidestreets, and John Singer Sargent's bold watercolors of sunlit façades and paintings of Venetian women in cool, shadowed interiors. Thomas Moran's paintings of Venetian canals and churches glistening under warm sunsets were second in importance only to his famous visions of the American West. Also working in Venice at the turn of the century, Maurice Brazil Prendergast (1859–1924) created clever and joyful watercolors of the busy bridges, piazzas, and waterways.

Of all the picturesque aspects of the city, perhaps the most visually compelling was the Byzantine church of San Marco and its adjoining plaza. Prendergast turned to the subject often. During his first trip to Venice, in 1898, he captured the dramatic façade of the basilica in a frontal view of its five ornately decorated portals and domed roofline, entitled *Square of S. Marco (Splash of Sunshine and Rain)* (1899, formerly Alice M. Kaplan collection).<sup>2</sup> On three tall poles in front of the church fly the green, white, and red flags of the Italian republic. Whether or not Vail knew this or other Venetian images by Prendergast, his own painting of San Marco shared Prendergast's head-on vantage point and intensity of color.

Vail chose an unusual composition for this view of the basilica: a close-up from which the ornate roofline is excluded. His primary subject seems to be the color and movement of the flags that float before the façade. A reviewer of an exhibition in which this work was included commented, "Most gorgeous of all perhaps is his *San Marco (Saint Mark's) Fete Day* with the scarlet of the great banners brilliant in the foreground before the majestic beauty of that famous edifice."<sup>3</sup> In actuality, the intricate and highly articulated front of the church is rather flattened by Vail's uniform application of multicolored strokes.

The grid pattern lightly penciled over most of the paint layer suggests that this work may have been used in the creation of *Jour de Fête à Venise*, a large version of the same subject now in the Brooklyn Museum. The Brooklyn painting was probably made for the St. Louis World's Fair, where it was exhibited in 1904. At this time in his life Vail used





Eugene Lawrence Vail, *The Flags, Saint Mark's, Venice—Fête Day*, 1973.1.1

to pass the autumn in Venice, so it seems likely that the National Gallery painting was made in the fall of 1903. Vail also produced a third painting of this same subject. Vertical in format, it was titled *Flags* (location unknown).

DC

#### Notes

1. For examples, see Lovell 1984.
2. Reproduced in Lovell 1984, color pl. on 51.

## John Vanderlyn

1775–1852

JOHN VANDERLYN was born on 15 October 1775 in Kingston, Ulster County, New York, the son of house and sign painter Nicholas Vanderlyn and his second wife Sarah Tappan; his grandfather was the Dutch immigrant and limner Pieter Vanderlyn. After completing his education at the prestigious Kingston Academy, he went to New York City and worked at an art supply and engraving shop. He studied at Alexander and Archibald Robinson's Columbian Academy of Painting.

Vanderlyn soon attracted the attention of Aaron Burr, who provided him with financial support and patronage until 1804. Burr arranged for him to study briefly with Gilbert Stuart in Philadelphia, and then sent him to Paris in 1796. Vanderlyn was the first American artist to study in France. He enrolled at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts under the history painter and portraitist François-André Vincent (1746–1816). He copied works by the old masters at the Louvre and met Robert Fulton, who stimulated his interest in panorama painting.

Vanderlyn returned to the United States in 1800. He made sketches of Niagara Falls for a series of engravings and practiced portraiture in New York and Washington. In 1803 he returned to Paris to procure casts of antique statues and paint copies of old masters for the newly founded American Academy of the Fine Arts. He met Washington Allston during a visit to London, and the two artists later traveled through Europe together. In 1804 Vanderlyn painted his first histor-

3. *Portland Sunday Telegram and Sunday Press Herald*, 8 December 1940.

#### References

- 1937 Cann, Louise Gebhard. Untitled essay. In *Exposition Eugene Vail*. [Exh. cat. Galerie Jean Charpentier, Paris.] Paris: 17.
- 1937 *Providence Sunday Journal*, 31 October: n.p.
- 1939 Cortissoz, Royal. Exhibition review. *New York Tribune*, 29 January: 8.
- 1940 *Portland Sunday Telegram and Sunday Press Herald*, Maine, 8 December: n.p.

ical subject, *The Death of Jane McCreia* (Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut), commissioned by Joel Barlow as an illustration for his epic poem *The Columbiad*.<sup>1</sup> In Rome he painted the powerful *Caius Marius amid the Ruins of Carthage* (1807, FAMSF), which was awarded a gold medal and admired by Napoleon at the Salon of 1808. His *Ariadne Asleep on the Isle of Naxos* (1812, PAFA) was the first academic nude subject by an American artist.

Vanderlyn returned to the United States in 1815 and exhibited his works in several major cities. *Ariadne* scandalized unsophisticated and prudish American audiences unaccustomed to nudity in art. He settled in New York and obtained permission from the authorities to erect a rotunda in City Hall Park, where he planned to exhibit a large panorama of Versailles (1818–1819, MMA).<sup>2</sup> The venture failed, and the artist declared bankruptcy. He spent the remaining years of his life in unsuccessful attempts to promote his panoramic views and regain control of the rotunda.

In 1837, after receiving a prestigious commission to paint *The Landing of Columbus* for the Capitol Rotunda in Washington, D.C., he went to Havana to sketch the appropriate topography and foliage. Two years later he sailed for Paris to execute the painting, but work progressed slowly, and rumors circulated that it was largely the work of assistants. When the artist brought the painting back to his native country, it received little attention. His finances exhausted, Vanderlyn was



forced to paint portraits to earn a living, and many of these late works are of extremely poor quality. Shortly before his death he unsuccessfully attempted to persuade the Senate to establish a national gallery and art school. He died embittered, destitute, and alone in Kingston on 23 December 1852 at the age of seventy-seven.

Vanderlyn was a proponent of the French neoclassical style well after its popularity was exhausted. The figures in his most significant historical and narrative subjects were derived from classical statuary. At a time when most of his American contemporaries were attracted to the painterly style associated with London's Royal Academy, Vanderlyn worked in a highly finished manner, characterized by precise drawing and emphasis on human anatomy, that was taught at the *Ecole*. Like Allston and Samuel F. B. Morse, Vanderlyn attempted in vain to elevate the aesthetic sensibilities of his countrymen by exposing them to the traditions of formal European academic art. RWT

#### Notes

1. For a discussion of this important painting, see Samuel Y. Edgerton, Jr., "The Murder of Jane McCrea: The Tragedy of an American *Tableau d'Histoire*," *AB* 47 (December 1965): 481–492.

2. See Avery and Fodora 1988.

#### Bibliography

Lindsay 1970.  
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1942.8.36 (589)

### *Zachariah Schoonmaker*

1815/1818  
Oil on canvas, 66.4 × 57 (26 1/8 × 22 7/16)  
Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The preprimed medium-weight plain-weave fabric support remains unlined and mounted on its original four-member mortise-and-tenon stretcher. The artist applied paint thinly and fluidly over a thin white ground layer. The sitter's face was painted with layers of short strokes to which highlights were added. Brushmarks are evident in the face and white collar. Horizontal cracks have developed throughout the paint surface. There are a few minor areas of inpainting in the shadows of the face and in the background. The painting was coated with a varnish that has discolored with age; areas of the underlying varnish were removed

during a past treatment, resulting in an exaggerated contrast between the light and dark areas.

**Provenance:** The sitter's son, Marius Schoonmaker [1811–1894]; his daughter, Ella Schoonmaker Darrow, St. Louis, Missouri; purchased 10 January 1923 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 the Earliest Known Portraits of Americans by Painters of the Seventeenth, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, Union League Club, New York, March 1924, no. 18. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered. *300th Anniversary*, Senate House State Historic Site, Kingston, New York, 1952, no cat. *The Works of John Vanderlyn: From Tammany to the Capitol*, University Art Gallery, State University of New York at Binghamton, 1970, no. 28.

ZACHARIAH SCHOONMAKER (1784–1818) was the son of the surveyor, lawyer, and member of the New York Assembly, Cornelius C. Schoonmaker, and his wife Sally Hoffman. The Schoonmakers, an old and distinguished family, were descended from a native of Hamburg, Germany, who became a lieutenant in the Dutch West India Company and settled in New York by 1654.<sup>1</sup> As a young man Zachariah Schoonmaker lived in Kingston, Ulster County, New York, and after graduating from Union College began to practice law there in 1807. The following year he married Cornelia Marius Groen, whose Dutch ancestors had settled in New Amsterdam in the mid-seventeenth century. Schoonmaker volunteered for service at the outbreak of the War of 1812 and was commissioned a first lieutenant and paymaster in the 2nd Regiment of U.S. volunteers from New York.<sup>2</sup> His son Marius Schoonmaker, a Whig member of Congress and noted local historian, was Vanderlyn's intimate friend, patron, and biographer.<sup>3</sup>

This half-length bust is a well-preserved and vivid example of Vanderlyn's portraiture. The youthful-looking Schoonmaker sits against an empty green background with his body oriented toward the right, and turns his head to look toward, but not directly at, the viewer. The white vest and neckcloth that he wears under his high-collared, double-breasted dark blue coat are freely painted. The visible brushstrokes in the face and attire mark a stylistic departure from the crisp, detail-oriented portraits Vanderlyn had painted earlier in the century under the influence of his teacher François André Vincent and of Jacques-Louis David. In 1877 Marius Schoonmaker recollected that his father's portrait had been painted in 1817, shortly after the



John Vanderlyn, *Zachariah Schoonmaker*, 1942.8.36

time he believed Vanderlyn to have returned from Europe.<sup>4</sup> The artist had in fact returned late in 1815, so the portrait could have been executed in Kingston at any time between then and 1818, when the sitter died.

Marius Schoonmaker paraphrased Vanderlyn's statement that "portrait painting was not to his taste" because of his predilection for classical subjects, and that it was "with little relish and under different feelings that he engaged in portraits, but do them he must and glad to get them or starve, such was the alternative."<sup>5</sup> Despite his self-professed dislike of portraiture, Vanderlyn was a highly competent practitioner of the genre, as this skillful and sensitive delineation of Schoonmaker demonstrates. A nearly identical portrait of Schoonmaker by Vanderlyn is in a private collection, Stone Ridge, New York, but its relationship to the National Gallery's painting is unclear. RWT

#### Notes

1. For a brief history of the Schoonmaker family written by the sitter's son, see Marius Schoonmaker, *The History of Kingston, New York. From its Early Settlement to the Year 1820* (Kingston, New York, 1888), 487–489.

2. Thomas H. S. Hamersley, *Complete Army and Navy Register of the United States of America from 1776 to 1887* (New York, 1888), 124.

3. For biographical information on Marius Schoonmaker, the author of the posthumously published *John Vanderlyn, Artist* (Kingston, New York, 1892), see *Commemorative Biographical Record of Ulster County, New York* (Chicago, 1896), 10–11.

4. The *Kingston Daily Freeman*, 11 October 1887. According to this article, Vanderlyn's last two portraits were of Marius Schoonmaker and his wife; the day before his death the artist had made arrangements to paint Schoonmaker's mother.

5. Schoonmaker 1892, 49.

#### References

- 1949 Averill: no. 79, 371, fig. 63.  
1970 Lindsay: 130, fig. 28.  
1970 NGA: 118, repro.  
1980 NGA: 252, repro.

1997.19.1

### *Mary Ellis Bell (Mrs. Isaac Bell)*

c. 1827

Oil on canvas, 76.2 × 61 (30 × 24)

Gift of Evangeline Bell Bruce

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight, plain-weave fabric support has been lined. The tacking margins have

been removed, but the presence of cusping along the edges indicates that the original dimensions of the support have not been altered. The artist painted a dark pink outline on the white ground to mark the contours of the sitter's shoulders, arms, and hands. Paint was applied in fairly smooth layers, with brushwork and low impasto emphasizing the folds in the white dress. The painting is in very good condition. The surface coating of varnish has yellowed, and there are noticeably discolored streaks in the dress.

**Provenance:** The sitter's son, John Ellis Bell (d. 1837); by descent in the Bell family through the sitter's great-grandson, Harold Bell, to Evangeline Bell Bruce [Mrs. David K. E. Bruce, 1918–1996], Washington, D.C.

**Exhibited:** *13th Annual Exhibition*, American Academy of the Fine Arts, New York, 1827, no. 5, as *Portrait of a Lady*. *Inaugural Exhibition*, Museum of the City of New York, 1932, no cat.

MARY ELLIS BELL (1791–1871) was born in New York, the daughter of John Ellis, an immigrant from Yorkshire, England, and his wife Marie Faugeres. Her maternal grandfather Dr. Lewis Faugeres was a native of Limoges, France, who had been brought to New York as a prisoner of war in 1756; according to family tradition, his mother Magdalen Bertrand was descended from French nobility. Faugeres' wife Evana Remsen was a member of a prominent Brooklyn family and was related to the noted Voorhies and Vanderbilt families. In 1810 Mary Ellis married the East India merchant Isaac Bell, the son of a Connecticut mill owner and shipping merchant who had suffered considerable economic losses during the Revolution because of his loyalist sympathies. The couple had three sons and a daughter.<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Bell, who wears a white high-waisted Empire dress with trim on the sleeves, sits and looks at the viewer; she rests her hands on her lap, so that her wedding ring is visible. A rose is tucked into the sash of her dress. The most unusual aspect of the portrait is the inclusion of a plain oval mirror in the left background that reflects the left side of the sitter's face, so that her profile resembles a classical coin or cameo. Such a reflection is clearly impossible, although the artist attempted to make it plausible by slightly tilting the mirror on a diagonal axis, and placing the sitter's head in the lower right section of the mirror rather than in its center. Mirror reflections had appeared in late eighteenth-century European portraits and were later used by Ingres, but examples in American art are extremely rare. Vanderlyn had used the mirror reflection previously in



John Vanderlyn, *Mary Ellis Bell (Mrs. Isaac Bell)*, 1997-19.1



his 1802 portrait of Eliza McEvers (Mrs. John L. Livingston), a painting that he copied that year (fig. 1).

Although Vanderlyn probably based the motif on a French prototype, perhaps Vigée Le Brun's *Julie Le Brun* (1787, private collection),<sup>2</sup> his use of multiple views of the same sitter may have been inspired by Van Dyck's famous *Charles I in Three Positions* (1635–1636, Collection of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II).

The putative date of 1827 for the portrait of Mrs. Bell is supported by the style of the sitter's coiffure and dress, and the fact that Vanderlyn exhibited the work at the American Academy that year, probably in the hope that the complex composition would attract the attention of potential patrons. Except for its unusual composition, this portrait is characteristic of Vanderlyn's style and technique of the peri-

od. Charles C. Ingham also painted a portrait of Mrs. Bell (location unknown).<sup>3</sup> RWT

#### Notes

1. The genealogical information is drawn from *The Bell Family in America* (New York, 1913), 13–15.

2. For a discussion of this painting, see Joseph Bailio, *Elizabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun, 1755–1843* [Exh. cat. Kimbell Art Museum.] (Fort Worth, Texas, 1982), 74–75. See also letter of 2 January 1997 from William T. Oedell to the author; and letter of 7 June 1997 from Lorenz Eitner to Katherine Whann (both in NGA curatorial files).

3. It was included in the exhibition *Portraits of Ladies of Old New York, XVIII and XIX Centuries* [Exh. cat. Museum of the City of New York.] (New York, 1936), unnumbered.

#### References

1968 Lee, Cuthbert. *Portrait Register*. Asheville, North Carolina: 65.

1947.17.14 (922)

### John Sudam

1829–1830

Oil on canvas, 76.2 × 63.2 (30 × 24 7/8)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support has been remounted on a modern stretcher, probably 4–6 cm smaller than the original. The painting is unlined, and there is a selvage at the top margin. The artist applied paint thinly over a moderately thick, commercially prepared white ground layer. There is very little texture in the sitter's face, although some appears in the whites of his shirt and neckcloth. The portrait was sketched in with a red-brown wash and then filled with thicker opaque layers. The hand and book were applied over the black coat. X-radiography reveals changes in the neckcloth and collar. In the background to the left of the sitter's head are two large, elongated ovals of inpainting, and minor areas of discolored inpainting appear in the coat. The painting is in relatively good condition. Old, discolored varnish residues under the surface coating give the face and tie a rather mottled appearance.

**Provenance:** The sitter's granddaughter, Mary H. S. Ingraham; purchased 5 April 1913 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 Portraits by Early American Artists*, Union League Club, New York, March 1922, no. 24. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered. *Famous Americans*,

Fig. 1. John Vanderlyn, *Eliza McEvers (Mrs. John R. Livingston)*, oil on canvas, 1802, Kingston, New York, Senate House State Historic Site, photograph courtesy of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, SH.1977.23





Washington County Museum of Fine Arts, Hagerstown, Maryland, 1955, no cat. *The Works of John Vanderlyn: From Tammany to the Capitol*, University Art Gallery, State University of New York at Binghamton, 1970, no. 36.

A RESIDENT of Kingston, New York, John Sudam (1782–1835) was a prominent Ulster County attorney who served two terms in the state Senate (1823–1825, 1833–1835). Around 1803 he married Anna Talmage, with whom he had two daughters; sometime after his first wife’s death in 1809 he married Mary Harrison Elmendorf. Sudam was re-elected to serve a third term in the Senate, but died in Albany while the legislature was in session. He was a close friend of Martin Van Buren and Washington Irving;<sup>1</sup> the latter succeeded Sudam as regent of the State University of New York, a position that he had held since 1829. According to a historian of Kingston, Sudam was famous for his “matchless oratory,” and his “talents were not only those which showed well but he was able to hold his own with the great men of his day, who were impressed by solid worth.”<sup>2</sup>

Sudam was interested in art and had attempted to relieve Vanderlyn’s chronic insolvency. Late in 1829 the artist thanked him for redeeming *Caius Marius amid the Ruins of Carthage* (1807, FAMSF) and informed him that “I have had a visit from Mr. Lewis—he seems much pleased with *your portrait*—I promised it would be ready in the early part of next week to be taken to his house.” The New York City postmark on the envelope indicates that the portrait was executed there.<sup>3</sup> Vanderlyn later recorded that “in the latter part of 1829” Sudam had redeemed both *Marius* and the gold medal he had been awarded at the Salon of 1808: “For the portrait of Mr. S. I was paid \$60 the estimated price (this last amount was advanced me in separate sums, at different times—and afterwards \$50 were advanced me toward the portrait of Mrs. Sudam for which when finished, I proposed to charge \$60—the same as that of Mr. S’s portrait.” He added that Sudam had recently paid him twenty-five dollars for “a large portfolio of prints & a couple of drawings the whole value of which I estimate at least three times the sum advanced.”<sup>4</sup>

Sudam, who wears a dark coat over a white vest and neckcloth, sits before a stone column and rests his right hand on a leatherbound book. He looks di-

Fig. 2. Copy from the original painting by John Vanderlyn, *John Sudam*, oil on canvas, Stone Ridge, New York, Ulster County Community College, on permanent loan from the Senate House State Historic Site, Kingston, New York, photograph by Susan Jeffers, 1996



Fig. 1. John Vanderlyn, *Mary Harrison Sudam (Mrs. John Sudam)*, oil on canvas, 1830, Kingston, New York, Senate House State Historic Site, photograph courtesy of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, SH.1981.141



Fig. 1. John Vanderlyn, *Mary Harrison Sudam (Mrs. John Sudam)*, oil on canvas, 1830, Kingston, New York, Senate House State Historic Site, photograph courtesy of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, SH.1981.141



John Vanderlyn, *John Sudam*, 1814.17.14

rectly toward the viewer, but his body is oriented toward the left, where the pendant portrait of his wife Mary Harrison Sudam (fig. 1)<sup>5</sup> once hung. Kenneth Lindsay singled out this portrait as one of Vanderlyn's best character studies because it conveys a sense of the sitter's "pedestrianism."<sup>6</sup> Vanderlyn did not intend it to be a flattering likeness. Its stiff, formal quality, as well as the relatively free, painterly style, relate it to Vanderlyn's other images of male sitters from this period, namely, *Philip Hone* (1827, Art Commission, City of New York) and *John A. Sidell* (c. 1830, MMA). Although these qualities have usually been considered evidence of Vanderlyn's diminishing artistic talent, it has also been suggested that he was attempting to imitate the style of portraiture practiced very successfully in New York City by the partners Samuel L. Waldo and William Jewett.<sup>7</sup>

A copy of the National Gallery portrait that also descended through the sitter's granddaughter is now owned by Ulster County Community College, Stone Ridge, New York (fig. 2).<sup>8</sup> Shortly after Sudam's death Vanderlyn wrote from New York to his own nephew in Kingston and asked him "to bring down the portrait of the late J. Sudam as I proposed to make a lithographic [*sic*] engraving after it if Mrs. Sudam had no objections to it, I have leisure hours sufficient to have done it had I had the picture—and under the instructions, as to the mechanical part, of Mr. Langhime."<sup>9</sup> The lithograph was never made, but the copy was probably related to that undertaking.

RWT

## Notes

1. The *Ulster Republican*, 18 September 1833, noted that Van Buren and Irving "arrived at this village yesterday afternoon and tarried over night at the residence of John Sudam. We learn it is their intention to remain here until Thursday." This quotation and biographical information on Sudam are from "The Residence of John Sudam," *Olde Ulster* (December 1912): 367–372.

2. "Residence" 1912, 368.

3. John Vanderlyn, letter to John Sudam, 30 December 1829, Edward Coykendall Collection, Senate House State Historic Site Archives, Kingston, New York. Late in 1828 the artist went to Havana to exhibit his paintings, but *Ariadne* (1812, PAFA) was detained by customs officers because of the nude subject. The trip was a dismal failure, and he was forced to pledge his *Marius* and the gold medal to obtain money; in a letter to Sudam of 17 December 1829, NYHS, quoted in Salvatore Mondello, "John Vanderlyn," *New-York Historical Society Quarterly* 52 (April 1968): 178, Vanderlyn alluded to the "unfortunate visit to Havana in which I sunk \$500."

4. John Vanderlyn, memorandum of 25 December 1830, Roswell Randall Hoes Collection, Senate House State Historic Site Archives, Kingston, New York.

5. The pendant portrait of Sudam's wife also descended through Mary H. S. Ingraham, who bequeathed it to her distant relative Mrs. James O. Winston, who gave it to her son James O. Winston Jr., of Texas, who donated it to the Senate House on 25 June 1981. A transcription of the artist's inscription on the reverse of the painting accompanies a photograph of it in the Senate House files: "Mrs. Mary H. Sudam—John Vanderlyn. Pinx. Kingston, Ulster Co. 1830."

6. Lindsay 1970, 25.

7. For a brief summary of Vanderlyn's stylistic development, see Kenneth C. Lindsay, "John Vanderlyn in Retrospect," *AAJ* 7 (November 1975): 79–80; Caldwell and Rodriguez Roque 1994, 264.

8. Mary H. S. Ingraham bequeathed the copy to the Ulster County Court House, Kingston, in her will of 3 January 1928, "Book of Wills No. 12," 608, Ulster County Surrogate's Court. James W. Lane, curatorial report, 19 April 1951 (in NGA curatorial files), quoted a letter from a C. Gordon Reel, 2 September 1949, who informed him that it had already been deposited there sometime before 1913, and that Clarke had offered to buy it. It was found there in a state of neglect in 1948 and subsequently loaned to the Senate House State Historic Site. NGA curatorial files contain much correspondence in which past researchers took opposing positions as to which version was the original portrait of Sudam. Lindsay 1970, 132, dismissed the Ulster County version as a "leathery work of inferior quality." After extensive analysis, it was determined by the Senate House curatorial staff to be "either a copy or a replica" of the National Gallery portrait; their findings were summarized in an unpublished report by Anne Ricard Cassidy, "*John Sudam* Loan (SH.1981.98): Curatorial Research Notes," New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Bureau of Historic Sites, Pebbles Island, Waterford, 23 July 1982. Consequently the Senate House officially returned it to the County of Ulster on 1 July 1983, and it was transferred to its present location shortly after that date.

9. John Vanderlyn, letter to John Vanderlyn Jr., 7 November 1835, Henry Darrow Collection, Senate House State Historic Site Archives, Kingston, New York. A former superintendent of the Senate House State Historic Site recollected that she had seen the stencil mark of the New York colorman Edward Dechaux on its reverse. This report has not been confirmed because the painting was relined in 1948 and the stencil covered. According to Katlan 1987, 78, Dechaux did not use such a stencil with only his own name until 1835, when he dissolved his partnership in the firm Parmentier & Dechaux and formed an independent business; if the copy indeed had such a stencil, Vanderlyn probably painted it in 1835.

## References

- 1970 Lindsay: 25, 132, fig. 36.  
 1970 NGA: 118, repro.  
 1980 NGA: 252, repro.  
 1992 NGA: 371, repro.

# Douglas Volk

1856–1935

SON of the noted sculptor Leonard Wells Volk (1828–1895), Stephen Arnold Douglas Volk was born in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, on 23 February 1856. Volk was named after his mother's cousin Stephen A. Douglas, the well-known political rival of Abraham Lincoln. The artist chose to use Douglas as his first name. At the age of fourteen Douglas accompanied his parents to Rome and began to attend classes at the Accademia di San Luca; at that time he also received informal guidance from George Inness, who was then living in Rome. In 1873 he went to Paris. After the independent academician Léon Bonnat made a disparaging remark about one of his drawings, Volk transferred to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, where he studied under Jean-Léon Gérôme for the next two years. Gérôme referred to Volk and his fellow student and friend George de Forest Brush as his "twins" because they looked alike and were frequently seen together.<sup>1</sup> Volk exhibited his first major painting *En Bretagne* (location unknown) at the Salon of 1875. The following year he visited the United States and was one of the youngest exhibitors at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia.

Volk continued to study with Gérôme in Paris until 1879, when he returned to the United States to live. He took up a career in art education by accepting a professorship at the Cooper Institute in New York City, where he taught until 1884. In 1881 he married Marion B. Larrabee of Chicago, with whom he had four children.

Volk was elected to membership in the Society of American Artists in 1880. In 1886 he founded the Minneapolis School of Fine Art, Minnesota (now the Minneapolis College of Art and Design), and served as its director until 1893. During his stay in Minnesota, Volk executed murals for the state capitol at Saint Paul. He was a member of the national jury of selection for the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exposition, where he also exhibited three paintings, one of which received a medal.

Volk moved back to New York and became an instructor at the Art Students' League, where he

remained until 1898. He also taught classes at the New York Society for Ethical Culture, and his moral philosophy of art was greatly influenced by the society. He was elected associate member of the National Academy of Design in 1898 and became a full member the following year. He taught a class in portraiture at Cooper Union from 1906 to 1912 and was an instructor at the National Academy of Design from 1910 to 1917.

Volk was one of eight American artists selected in 1919 by the National Art Committee to paint portraits of distinguished American and Allied leaders for a pictorial record of World War I. For this project he executed portraits of King Albert I of Belgium (who awarded him the Cross of the Order of Leopold II in 1920), Premier Lloyd George (NMAA), and General John J. Pershing (NPG). During the last fifteen years of his life, Volk painted a series of posthumous portraits of Abraham Lincoln. Throughout his long career he received numerous awards and distinctions.

Volk established his reputation by painting romanticized colonial revival themes, such as *The Puritan Maiden* and *The Puritan Captives* (locations unknown). One writer described him as "a figure painter who relies upon the subjects of his work to suggest Americanism."<sup>2</sup> He later became an accomplished portraitist. While living at their summer retreat in Maine, Volk and his wife Marion contributed to the American arts and crafts movement by producing homespun wool rugs of exceptionally high quality, an enterprise in which Marion took the lead. He died in Maine on 7 February 1935.

Volk was neither a major artist nor an innovator, but his oeuvre reflects a mastery of Gérôme's academic style in its skillful draftsmanship, composition, and individual choice of subject matter. Throughout the developmental years of modernism, Volk never abandoned allegiance to his traditional academic training. As a writer for the *Herald Tribune* put it, "With the painters of red-yellow-blue enigmas he had nothing in common. . . . He was a conservative and was proud of it."<sup>3</sup> His reputation consequently lapsed into ob-

scurity, but with the recent revival of interest in American academic painting, Volk has received a measure of recognition.<sup>4</sup>

RWT

### Notes

1. For a discussion of Gérôme's influence on Volk, see Weinberg 1984, 72.
2. Earle 1924, 320.
3. Quoted in "Volk Is Dead," *Art Digest* (15 February 1935): 15.
4. See Blaugrund et al. 1989, 221–222; Huntington 1983, 138; and Weinberg 1991, 118–119. A brief biography of Volk appears in Burke 1980, 286–288.

### Bibliography

*NCAB*: C: 138–139.  
Interview with DeWitt McClellan Lockman [1927].  
Lockman Papers, NYHS. [AAA microfilm.]  
Obituary. *New York Times*. 8 February 1935: 22.

1947.17.17 (925)

### *Abraham Lincoln*

1908, reworked in 1917  
Oil on canvas, 51.4 × 41 (20 1/4 × 16 1/8)  
Andrew W. Mellon Collection

### Inscriptions

At lower left: c 1908 / Douglas Volk

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support was lined during restoration in 1953. The tacking margins are no longer present. The artist applied paint fluidly over a white ground layer. The face was painted with many superimposed layers and colors of paint; an underlying layer of beige paint is visible through the brushmarks used to create the bristle of the beard. X-radiography indicates that the sitter's collar was originally much wider and the portion of the shirt revealed by the open jacket extended farther to the right. The paint layer is in good condition, with only minor inpainted losses in the corners. The painting is coated with a thick layer of glossy discolored varnish.

**Provenance:** Alfred Seligman [d. 1912], New York; his son, Isaac Seligman [d. 1917], New York; presented by a member of his family to a War Relief Sale; purchased by (an unspecified dealer); the artist, Douglas Volk [1856–1935], New York; purchased 2 February 1918 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:** [Monthly exhibition], Century Club, New York, February 1918. *Art in Miniature, International Philatelic Exhibition*, San Diego Community Concourse; Fine Arts Gallery of San Diego, 1969, no cat.

DOUGLAS VOLK'S profile portrait of the sixteenth president of the United States, Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865), is familiar to many Americans because it appeared on a four-cent postage stamp that was in circulation between 1954 and 1968. The circumstances behind the creation of this vivid image are well documented. Thomas B. Clarke, who had been one of Volk's earliest patrons,<sup>1</sup> first saw this painting when it was exhibited at the Century Club on 2 February 1918. Although he no longer collected works by contemporary American painters, Clarke purchased the portrait immediately after the artist gave him a long verbal account of its genesis. The following day he wrote to Volk and requested a written record of the painting's history, commenting that "your words made such an impression that I simply bought the picture of this incomparable American."<sup>2</sup> In response to his patron's request, Volk wrote that he had "devoted long thought and

Fig. 1. photograph of 1947.17.17 taken 1908, before changes were made, published as frontispiece to Charles Henry Butler, *Our Leader*, 1909, Washington, Library of Congress

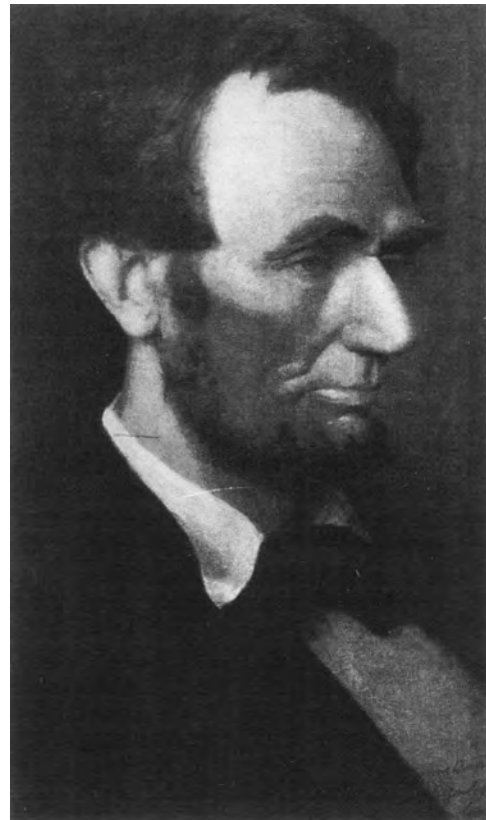






Fig. 2. Douglas Volk, *Abraham Lincoln*, oil on canvas, 1922, Buffalo, New York, Albright-Knox Art Gallery (photograph taken from *Magazine of American Art*, January 1923, p. 14)

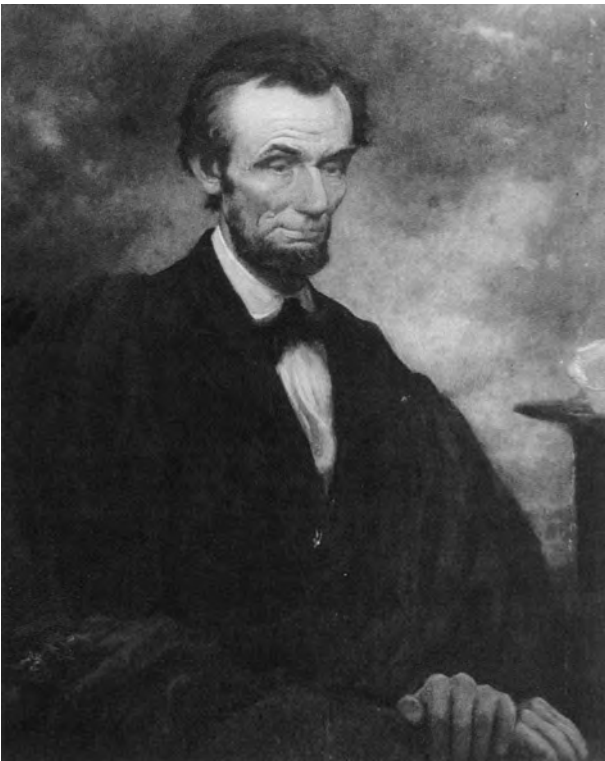


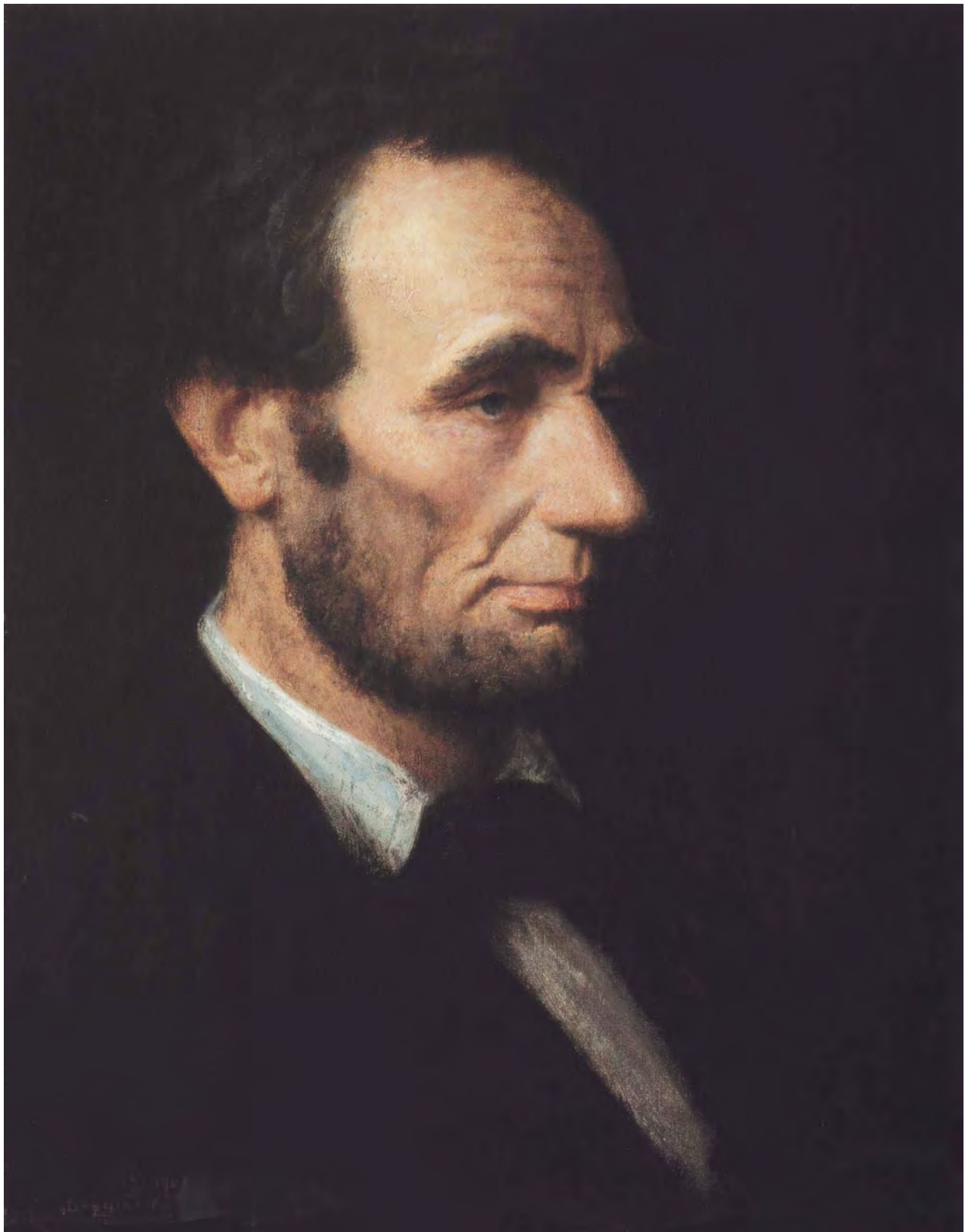
Fig. 3. Douglas Volk, *With Malice Toward None*, oil on canvas, 1925, Maine, Portland Museum of Art, Gift of Cyrus H. K. Curtis, 1927.<sup>1</sup>

study to the development of this portrait” and destroyed several early attempts because he found them unsatisfactory. He began this work in 1908 and worked on it intermittently for about a year. His sources for the likeness were mostly studies made by his father Leonard Wells Volk (1828–1895), who was noted for his sculptured life portraits of Lincoln; they included a well-known life mask made in April 1860, the busts for which the life mask had been a preparatory stage, and the older artist’s verbal description of Lincoln.<sup>3</sup> Volk himself remembered having sat on Lincoln’s knee on one of the occasions when the great man had visited his father’s studio.

The portraitist’s meticulous approach was enhanced by his self-professed “deep reverence” for Lincoln’s “great nature and achievements.” Not content with attaining a convincing physical likeness, he sought also to delineate his subject’s psychological disposition. Volk had first envisioned representing a younger, beardless Lincoln as he appeared in his father’s life mask and bust, but ultimately decided that “it was not until later years that the lines formed in his face yielded to the great pressure of the weighty problems that bore in upon him so tragically.” As work progressed, Volk realized that “the beard did not destroy in any way the wonderfully unified features which we all know so well.”

A descendant of the portrait’s first owner sold it at a War Relief sale, where it was purchased by an art dealer. When the dealer later asked Volk to authenticate the painting, he bought it. After not having seen the picture for almost a decade, the artist thought he could “greatly improve it” and proceeded to rework it around 1917, but he did not specify what alterations had been made.<sup>4</sup> The painting’s original appearance, however, is preserved in a lithograph that was copyrighted by Volk and the Detroit Publishing Company in 1908 (fig. 1). Volk made minor alterations to Lincoln’s shirt collar and the lapel of his jacket.<sup>5</sup>

The National Gallery’s *Lincoln* was the first in a series of at least nine portraits of the former president that Volk painted toward the end of his career, and it was his favorite among them.<sup>6</sup> All the artist’s future images of Lincoln, most notably *Man of Vision* (1922, location unknown), *Abraham Lincoln* (fig. 2), *With Malice toward None* (fig. 3), *Abraham Lincoln* (fig. 4), and *The Ever Sympathetic* (fig. 5), were based on this initial conception of the subject’s physiognomy.



Douglas Volk, *Abraham Lincoln*, 1947.17.17



Fig. 4. Douglas Volk, *Abraham Lincoln*, 1921, location unknown, photograph in NGA curatorial files

William Sawitzky judged this portrait an “authentic and a good piece of painting” that was “of very limited interest and value” because it had not been painted from life. Alan Burroughs mistakenly called it a “poetic study from photographs.” Anna Rutledge and James Lane found no reason to doubt the authenticity of the work and confined their discussion to a review of its history.<sup>7</sup> To dismiss this portrait on the grounds that it was not executed from life is an overly harsh judgment that ignores Volk’s documentary approach (for which he was uniquely well qualified) and the resulting subtle realism and strong visual appeal of the image. Volk’s *Lincoln* is a powerful likeness that not only captures his subject’s remarkable physical characteristics, but also communicates the solemnity and dignity of his careworn visage. The result of painstaking efforts to achieve the spiritual presence of one of the greatest statesmen in American history, this work is also imbued with the artist’s own deep personal admiration for the former president. In consequence, this posthumous image is vastly superior to the host

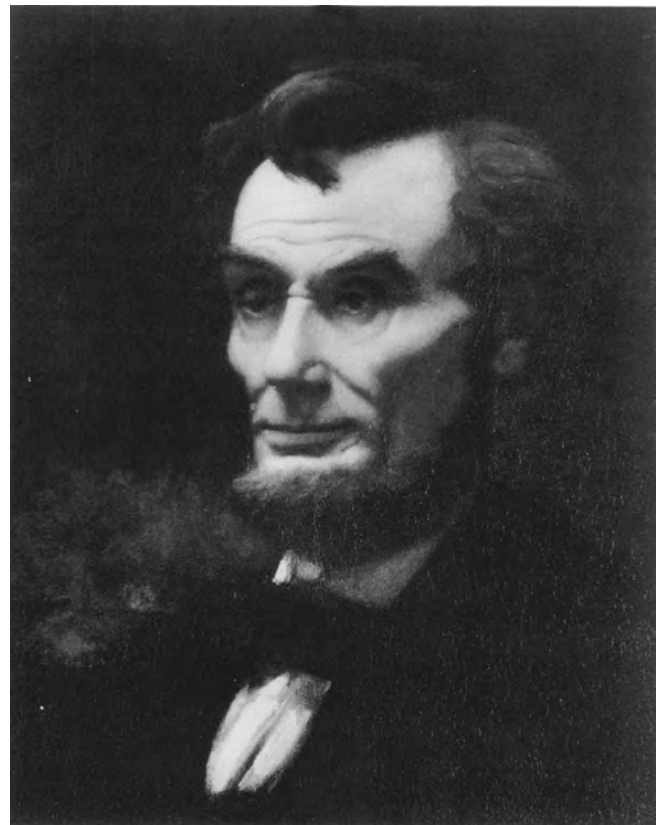


Fig. 5. Douglas Volk, *The Ever Sympathetic*, oil on canvas, 1931, Washington, The White House, ©The White House Historical Association

of mediocre life portraits of Lincoln. Volk was probably aware of Walt Whitman’s denunciation of them as “all failures—most of them caricatures. . . . None of the artists or pictures has caught the deep, though subtle and indirect expression of this man’s face,”<sup>8</sup> and the artist sought to realize that objective.

This portrait was created just before the 1909 centennial of Lincoln’s birth. By that time the national veneration for him, which had been steadily increasing since the end of the Civil War, had become a social phenomenon, and the martyred president’s reputation was aggrandized to almost mythical proportions.<sup>9</sup> Lincoln was the subject of numerous biographies, plays, poems, and commemorative statues. In 1915 work commenced on the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. Volk’s popular and widely exhibited images of Lincoln served nationalistic, moral, and didactic purposes; *With Malice toward None* was conceived as a touring picture to be “shown for the benefit of school children, in order to increase patriotism and to estab-

lish more firmly the National ideals which Lincoln embodied.”<sup>10</sup> One writer noted how the portrait “may almost be called a religious picture, so vividly does it portray the spiritual forces that made Lincoln a man of the ages, a servant for all time of mankind.”<sup>11</sup>

The tone of the letters exchanged between Volk and Clarke demonstrates that they shared this enthusiasm. In the early part of the twentieth century Americans were also becoming acutely aware that an important historical era had passed, and they looked back at Lincoln’s presidency with nostalgia. The author of Volk’s obituary expressed this sentiment when he noted how the death of an artist who had once met Lincoln in his boyhood “breaks a living link between the present and the turbulent days of the Civil War.”<sup>12</sup>

RWT

### Notes

1. H. Barbara Weinberg, “Thomas B. Clarke: Foremost Patron of American Art from 1872–1899,” *AAJ* 8 (May 1976): 82, records Clarke as the owner of three historical genre paintings by Volk.

2. Thomas B. Clarke, letter to Douglas Volk, 3 February 1918 (in NGA curatorial files).

3. For the sculptor’s account of making the life mask, see Leonard W. Volk, “The Lincoln Life Mask and How It Was Made,” *Century Magazine* 23 (December 1881): 223–227. For a discussion of his sculptures of Lincoln, see Harold Holzer and Lloyd Ostendorf, “Sculptures of Abraham Lincoln from Life,” *Antiques* 113, no. 2 (February 1978): 382–393.

4. Douglas Volk, letter to Thomas B. Clarke, 7 February 1918 (in NGA curatorial files).

5. This lithograph was used as the frontispiece for Charles Henry Butler, *Our Leader. Read at the Lincoln Memorial Meeting of the Church of the Covenant, Washington, D.C., Sunday, February 7, and also at the Lincoln centennial banquet in Springfield, Illinois, February 12, 1909* (Washington, 1909).

6. Lockman n.d. [1927]. Volk’s nine portraits of Lincoln are listed and briefly discussed in “Paintings of Stephen Arnold Douglas Volk,” *Lincoln Lore* (10 June 1940), 1.

7. Rutledge and Lane 1952, 169.

8. Quoted in Roy P. Basler, *The Lincoln Legend: A Study in Changing Conceptions* (New York, 1969), 283.

9. For excellent analyses of the wide-ranging manifestations of this phenomenon, see Basler 1969 and Merrill D. Peterson, *Lincoln in American Memory* (New York, 1994); for a brief discussion of its art historical ramifications, see Barry Schwartz, “Picturing Lincoln,” in Ayres 1993, 148–153.

10. “Volk’s Portrait of Lincoln to Tour,” *American Magazine of Art* (June 1926): 302.

11. Quoted from a typed transcript of a pamphlet written by Reverend Edgar Whitaker Work that was printed by the American Federation of Arts and distributed to viewers of *With Malice toward None*, AAA; the same text later appeared in the *Chicago Evening Post Magazine of the Art World*, 8 October 1929, in the context of a discussion of another of Volk’s Lincoln portraits, *Midst of Gathering Clouds* (1929, location unknown).

12. “Volk Is Dead,” *Art Digest*, 15 February 1935, 15.

### References

n.d. [1927] Lockman, De Witt M. “Stephen Arnold Douglas Volk, N.A.” Unpublished typed transcript of an interview with the artist, De Witt M. Lockman Papers, NYHS, microfilm 504, AAA, 24–25.

1940 “Paintings of Stephen Arnold Douglas Volk.” *Lincoln Lore* (10 June): 1.

## Samuel Lovett Waldo

1783–1861

THE PORTRAITIST Samuel Lovett Waldo was born in Windham, Connecticut, on 6 April 1783, one of the eight children of Zacheus Waldo, a farmer, and Esther Stevens Waldo. At the age of sixteen Samuel went to Hartford to take drawing lessons from a painter named Joseph Steward. He set up a studio there in 1803, but found few clients and supplemented his income by painting signs. After a brief stay in Litchfield he proceeded south to Charleston and remained there for three years.

In 1806 Waldo went abroad to study art in

England, where he introduced himself to Benjamin West and John Singleton Copley (1738–1815), and shared lodgings with Charles Bird King (1785–1862). He returned to the United States in 1809 and settled permanently in New York. The artist’s unusual character study *Old Pat, the Independent Beggar* (1819, Boston Athenaeum) attracted considerable attention and was engraved by Asher B. Durand.

In July 1817 Waldo established a successful partnership, sharing portrait commissions with

former pupil William Jewett. The exact nature of their collaboration is unknown. Some historians have speculated that Waldo painted the heads and hands, while Jewett was responsible for the costumes, accessories, and backgrounds; others have dismissed the theory as untenable. Waldo served on the board of directors of the American Academy of the Fine Arts from 1817 until 1828. In 1826 he was one of the founding members of the National Academy of Design, of which he became an associate in 1847. Waldo died in New York on 16 February 1861.

One of the most successful and competent portraitists active in New York during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, Waldo was a businesslike, conservative painter who produced sober, literal likenesses that seldom achieved profound insights into his clients' personalities. There is some justification for critics who have dismissed him as a "commercial face painter" who was "competent but never inspired."<sup>1</sup> Like many other noted American artists of his generation of similar origins, he transcended his humble beginnings and successfully assimilated the British painterly style to which he had been exposed at the Royal Academy. Waldo's esteem for this tradition is shown by his having initiated a subscription at the National Academy to commission Thomas Lawrence to paint a full-length portrait of Benjamin West, "that artists might see what constituted a work of art in that branch of painting."<sup>2</sup>

RWT

#### Notes

1. Mather 1927, 26.
2. Dunlap 1834, 2: 207.

#### Bibliography

- Dunlap 1834: 2: 205–208.  
 "Artist Biography: Samuel L. Waldo." *The Crayon* 8 (May 1861): 98–100.  
*DAB* 19: 333–334.

1942.8.38 (591)

### Robert G. L. De Peyster

1828

Oil on wood panel, 84 × 64 (33 1/16 × 25 3/16)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

#### Inscriptions

At lower right on letter: *WALDO New York July 1828 / Robt. G. L. Depeyster*

**Technical Notes:** The grain of the yellow poplar wood-panel support runs vertically. The layer of green-gray paint on its reverse was probably applied by either the artist or the panelmaker to prevent it from warping. The face of the panel was scored to simulate the appearance of a twill-weave fabric. The moderately thick gray ground layer does not fill the scoring marks, so the texturing remains visible. Paint was applied with moderate, fluid consistency. Moderate impasto appears in the brass buttons, silver pin, white stock, and red watch fob. Infrared reflectography reveals no evidence of underdrawing. The paint surface is in very good condition, with only minute losses and minor traction crackle in the white highlights. The varnish has become slightly dull.

**Provenance:** Mrs. V. H. Fields, New York; (Ehrich Galleries, New York); purchased 2 February 1924 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 Portraits of Early American Portrait Painters*, Union League Club, New York, February 1924, no. 6. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered. *Survey of American Painting*, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, 1940, unnumbered. [Opening exhibition of new art gallery], Randolph-Macon Woman's College, Lynchburg, Virginia, 1952–1953, no cat.

A MEMBER of the prominent New York family of Dutch descent, Robert Gilbert Livingston De Peyster (1795–1873) was the son of Frederick De Peyster and his first wife Helen Livingston Hake. After graduating from Columbia College in 1815, he became a successful merchant and in 1820 formed the partnership of Depeyster & Ogden, located at 24 Broad Street in New York City. He lived for a time in New Orleans. De Peyster's portrait, along with those of eighty-three other socially prominent New Yorkers, appears in the amateur artist John Searle's watercolor *Interior of Park Theater, N.Y.C.* (1882, NYHS), a work that documents the memorable evening of 7 November 1822, when the comic actor Charles Matthews first performed before an audience in the city.<sup>1</sup> In 1839 De Peyster





Samuel Lovett Waldo, *Robert G. L. De Peyster*, 1942.8.38



Fig. 1. Samuel Lovett Waldo, *Robert Gilbert Livingston de Peyster*, oil on canvas, Museum of the City of New York, Given in memory of Justina de Peyster Martin by her sister Estelle de Peyster Hosmer, 40.108.124

married Virginia E. Shepherd in the parish of St. Andrew, Virginia (now West Virginia); the couple had no children. De Peyster died in Norwalk, Connecticut, and was buried at Trinity Church, New York City.<sup>2</sup>

William Sawitzky regarded this painting as “authentic, very characteristic, and in good condition”; Alan Burroughs considered it “one of Waldo’s most important portraits”; and Frederic Sherman included it in his list of authentic Waldo portraits.<sup>3</sup> William Campbell, perplexed that the

portrait had usually been identified as “R. G. Livingston de Peyster,” discovered that all the early printed sources identified the sitter exactly as his name appears in Waldo’s inscription.

Executed in New York in 1828, this half-length portrait represents an impassive and fashionably attired De Peyster seated in a conventional pose, before a romantic landscape and cloudy sky background. He appears to have just finished writing a letter, and looks up as if to acknowledge the viewer’s presence. The predominantly dark palette is enlivened by the sitter’s white clothing and by details such as the gold buttons on his coat and the red watch fob that dangles from his waist. Waldo’s conservative painterly technique is similar to that of many early nineteenth-century American painters who were influenced by British portraiture, and reflects his Royal Academy training and the influence of Thomas Lawrence. This painting is an important and rare example of Waldo’s work done without the collaboration of his former pupil and business associate William Jewett. The Museum of the City of New York owns a very similar portrait of De Peyster by Waldo (fig. 1), but its relationship to the National Gallery painting is unclear.<sup>4</sup>

RWT

#### Notes

1. For discussions of Searle’s watercolor, see Martha J. Lamb, *History of the City of New York: Its Origins, Rise and Progress* (New York, 1877), 2: 685–686; and Richard J. Koke et al., *American Landscape and Genre Painting in the New York Historical Society*, vol. 11 (New York, 1982), 131–135.

2. For biographical data on the sitter, see Waldron Phoenix Belknap Jr., *The de Peyster Genealogy* (Boston, 1956), 83.

3. Curatorial data sheet (in NGA curatorial files); Sherman 1930, 18.

4. This portrait, which has the same dimensions as the National Gallery version and was also painted on a wood panel, was given to the museum by the sitter’s descendant, Mrs. De Peyster Hosmer, in 1940.

#### References

1930 Sherman: 18.

# Julian Alden Weir

1852–1919

ALTHOUGH BEST KNOWN today as an American impressionist, Julian Alden Weir had a long and varied career. He was born in West Point, New York, on 30 August 1852, the son of Robert Weir (1803–1889), who was a professor of drawing at the U.S. Military Academy for forty-four years. Julian received his earliest artistic education from his father. His elder brother, John Ferguson Weir (1841–1926), was also an artist and served as dean of the School of Fine Arts at Yale University.

As a young man Julian studied at the National Academy of Design for three years. In 1873 he traveled to France, where he entered the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* and worked under Jean-Léon Gérôme. It was at about this time, partly in gratitude to Mrs. Bradford Alden, the family friend who sponsored his trip, that the artist began to use only his first initial and middle name rather than his given name.

Through his European travels, particularly to Holland and Spain, Weir was able to study the paintings of Frans Hals and Diego Velázquez. Among French painters, one of the strongest influences on the artist was the naturalist Jules Bastien-Lepage, who became a close friend of the American. Given Weir's inclination toward the accepted masters and his essentially conservative training, it is not surprising that he reacted negatively upon first viewing French avant-garde painting at the impressionist exhibition of 1877.

In that same year Weir returned to the United States. Settling in New York, he became a member of the newly established Society of American Artists, but continued to exhibit at the National Academy of Design. Teaching, portrait commissions, and still life subjects provided his income. He maintained his ties to Europe, making several trips there and exhibiting at the Paris Salons of 1881, 1882, and 1883. In the spring of 1883 he married Anna Dwight Baker, and the couple visited Europe until September. Upon their return they divided their time between New York City and two Connecticut towns: Branchville, where Weir had recently acquired a 150-acre farm, and Windham, home of Anna Weir's parents.<sup>1</sup> Over

the years the Weirs had four children: three daughters, and a son who died in infancy.

At Branchville Weir was host to many artists, among them his closest friend John Twachtman and also Childe Hassam, Theodore Robinson, and Albert Pinkham Ryder. In the late 1880s Weir developed an interest in pastels and etchings, often working alongside Twachtman and reflecting his lightness of touch. Weir, whose work had become increasingly daring after his initial stay in Europe, absorbed many aspects of impressionism from his American colleagues and eventually exhibited with the group known as The Ten. When he had his first important one-man show in 1891, Weir was described by one critic as "the first among Americans to use Impressionistic methods and licenses successfully."<sup>2</sup> Two years later, when he and Twachtman held their joint exhibition at the American Art Association, their works were shown adjacent to and compared with those of French impressionist Claude Monet. Weir's style, however, vacillated greatly through the years. His underlying training in figure drawing, which helped establish his reputation with celebrated paintings, such as *Idle Hours* (1888, MMA), often reasserted itself in his later works.

By 1900 Weir was widely known and respected. That year he won a bronze medal at the Exposition Universelle in Paris. Four years later he won medals for both painting and engraving at the St. Louis exposition. A retrospective exhibition of his work circulated to Boston, New York, Buffalo, and Cincinnati in 1911–1912 and he was elected president of the National Academy of Design in 1915. Weir died on 8 December 1919. DC

## Notes

1. In 1991 the artist's Branchville house, studio, and surrounding property were added to the national park system as the Weir Farm National Historic Site.

2. "Painting by Mr. J. Alden Weir," *AAM* 24 (February 1891): 56.

## Bibliography

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Burke 1983.

Cummings, Fuscias, and Larkin 1991.

1990.74.1

*U.S. Thread Company Mills,  
Willimantic, Connecticut*

c. 1893/1897

Oil on canvas, 50.8 × 60.9 (20 × 24)

Gift (Partial and Promised) of Mr. and Mrs. Raymond J. Horowitz

**Inscriptions**

At lower left: J. Alden Weir.

**Technical Notes:** The medium-fine plain-weave fabric support has been lined. Tacking margins are intact. The cream-colored ground layer appears to have been commercially applied. Paint was applied fairly loosely, with more even and flat application in the sky area, and more layering and impasto in the foreground and foliage. Glimpses of a reddish brown underlayer in several areas suggest that the artist may have sketched in parts of the composition with a reddish wash. Numerous old losses are restricted to the edges of the painting. Some abrasion and wear are evident in the sky. The varnish is slightly yellowed.

**Provenance:** (Wickersham Gallery, New York), in 1965; (Robert Carlen, Philadelphia); (Schoelkopf Gallery, New York); sold 1968 to Mr. and Mrs. Raymond J. Horowitz, New York.

**Exhibited:** *American Paintings: Exhibition of Oils, Drawings, and Watercolors*, Wickersham Gallery, New York, 1965, no. 7. *American Impressionist and Realist Paintings and Drawings from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Raymond J. Horowitz*, MMA, 1973, no. 22. *Paris-New York: A Continuing Romance*, Wildenstein & Company, New York, 1977, no. 82. *J. Alden Weir: An American Impressionist*, MMA; LACMA; Denver Art Museum, 1983–1984, unnumbered. *NGA* 1991, unnumbered.

THE FAMILY of J. Alden Weir's wife, Anna Dwight Baker, owned a farm in Windham, Connecticut, that the Weirs visited frequently after their marriage in 1883.<sup>1</sup> Just a few miles away, "at the junction of the Willimantic and Natchaug Rivers which converge to form the headwaters of the Shetucket,"<sup>2</sup> is the town of Willimantic, which was dominated in Weir's time, and well into the twentieth century, by the factories of the American Thread Company. Organized in 1854 as the Willimantic Linen Company, the firm became known as the manufacturer of the finest spool cotton thread made in the United States.<sup>3</sup> Weir found its gray granite buildings a subject worthy of aesthetic consideration and painted them, from varied vantage points, about a half-dozen times.<sup>4</sup> His

daughter Cora "remembered her father loading up the wagon with canvas and painting equipment to make the two or three mile trip from Windham Center to Willimantic. 'Pa loved those mills,' she said."<sup>5</sup> *U.S. Thread Company Mills* depicts a view of the American Thread Company with the Jillson Hill Bridge, a stone arch bridge built c. 1869, at lower right.<sup>6</sup>

The Willimantic images, most of them painted in the 1890s, are among Weir's most successful works. They display the broken brushwork and sun-saturated colors of impressionism, while retaining Weir's strong sense of composition and structure. The artist's friend Theodore Robinson greatly admired the mill town pictures, observing one of them to be "modern, and yet curiously medieval in feeling."<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the views of buildings tightly clustered together within the natural landscape are reminiscent of ancient European villages viewed from a distance. Yet Weir's factory subjects are up-to-date images of the flourishing industrial age. He depicts their intriguing visual forms without editorial or political comment.<sup>8</sup> They are observed and recorded with freshness and immediacy: spare, handsome buildings nestled in the low hills of the lush Connecticut countryside. Weir took picturesque New England, the favorite subject of the American impressionists, and injected into it an element of modern American life that was bold and atypical.

*U.S. Thread Mill Company Mills, Willimantic, Connecticut* is novel not only in its subject but also in its treatment. The composition—with the bridge dominating the foreground and entering diagonally from the right, and the tree that stretches from the foreground to the top edge of the canvas—probably owes some debt to Japanese prints, such as those by Hokusai (1760–1849), whose work Weir admired and collected.<sup>9</sup> An intriguing looseness and ambiguity in the area of the foreground shows Weir at his most adventurous, almost as if the novelty of the subject freed him from the usual constraints of finish. The open and experimental quality of this landscape is not often repeated in Weir's work.

DC

**Notes**

1. The farm was also the home of Weir's second wife. He married Ella Baker in 1893, a year and a half after her sister Anna's untimely death.





Julian Alden Weir, *U.S. Thread Company Mills, Willimantic, Connecticut*, 1990.74.1



2. *Connecticut: A Guide to Its Roads, Lore and People*, Federal Writers Project of the Works Progress Administration (Boston, 1938), 391.

3. "By 1882, it was Connecticut's largest manufacturing company. The American Thread Company, a British trust, took control in 1898 and operated on the site until 1985" (Thomas R. Beardsley, *Willimantic Industry and Community: The Rise and Decline of a Connecticut Textile City* [Willimantic, Connecticut, 1993], 4). Beardsley's detailed study ranges from the 1820s into this century.

4. Other works with Willimantic subjects are: *The Factory Village* (1897, MMA), *Willimantic Thread Mills* (1893, Brooklyn Museum), *Willimantic, Connecticut* (1903, Arizona State University, Tempe), *Willimantic* (1893–1897, private collection), *Thread Mills* (1893, location unknown), and *Willimantic* (1897, location unknown).

5. Hildegard Cummings, "Home Is the Starting Place," in *J. Alden Weir: A Place of His Own* [Exh. cat. Benton Museum, University of Connecticut.] (Storrs, Connecticut, 1991), 34.

6. Identification of this bridge was kindly provided by Beverly L. York, director, Windham Textile & History Museum, Willimantic, Connecticut. Notes of a telephone conversation, 8 February 1996, and letter of March 1996 (in NGA curatorial files).

7. Theodore Robinson, diary entry, 17 February 1894, FARL.

8. The historical and social context of the Willimantic factories is discussed, in relation to Weir's *The Factory Village*, in Weinberg, Bolger, and Curry 1994, 25–27.

9. The influence of Japanese art on Weir, particularly as it relates to this painting, is discussed at length in Burke 1983, 209. It is interesting that Weir's painting somewhat exaggerates the curvature of the Jillson Hill Bridge, perhaps in a recollection (conscious or unconscious) of Japanese structures.

1954.4.1 (1340)

## *Moonlight*

c. 1905

Oil on canvas, 61 × 50.8 (24 × 20)  
Chester Dale Collection

### Inscriptions

At lower left: J. Alden Weir

**Technical Notes:** The support is a plain-weave fabric, unlined. It was primed with a gray-white ground layer after being attached to the four-member stretcher, which is original. Paint was applied wet-into-wet in successive layers, varying from thinly painted trees to more thickly painted sky. The foreground appears to have been painted in several stages, with an intermediate varnish layer between two paint layers. In some areas the artist reworked the paint, scraping it down to reveal brightly colored underlayers. Examination with a stereomicroscope suggests that the blue-green shadows of the tree trunk at the center of the picture are a later addition. Due to a

thick, glossy, yellowed varnish, the visual condition of the painting is poor.

**Provenance:** Probably purchased from the artist by (Newman Emerson Montross, New York); sold 1908 to Hugo Reisinger [1856–1914], New York; his estate; (his estate sale, American Art Association, New York, 18 January 1916, no. 8); A[aron] Augustus Healy [1850–1921], Brooklyn; by inheritance to his wife, Theodosia [Mrs. A. Augustus] Healy, Cold Spring-on-Hudson, New York; (her sale, American Art Association, Anderson Galleries, Inc., New York, 23 March 1939, no. 72); Chester Dale [1883–1962], New York.

AS A YOUNG MAN Weir wrote longingly to his fiancée of "walking in the moonlight, when we can wander and watch the beautiful forms that the shadows will make."<sup>1</sup> Moonlight appears to be the theme of at least two of Weir's landscapes of the 1880s,<sup>2</sup> but his appreciation for the subtle beauties of the night continued strongly in his work even after the turn of the century. Among these landscapes in half-light are *Lantern Light* (c. 1907, private collection) and *Foggy Morning* (c. 1907–1910, private collection), the latter of which shares the pale blue and green tones of the National Gallery painting.<sup>3</sup> Both also use the device of trees silhouetted against strong backlight.

Weir's friend and patron Charles Erskin Scott Wood seems to have shared the artist's appreciation for the subject and over time owned at least three such works by Weir: a small *Moonlight*, one titled *Garden at Night*, and an ambitious painting in a vertical format, *The Hunter's Moon*.<sup>4</sup> Writing to Wood in 1910, Weir observed, "We had a light fall of snow two days ago and last night with the moonlight, it was very lovely. I have one moonlight mostly completed, but it is more difficult to get a suggestion of that most subtle note. My large moonlight of last year [probably *The Hunter's Moon*] goes to the Corcoran Gallery and after that to the Exposition at Rome next year."<sup>5</sup>

Weir's aesthetic exploration of the night was not limited to woodland or pastoral scenes. Sometime after 1910 he produced a pair of paintings, *Queensboro' Bridge—Nocturne* and *The Plaza—Nocturne* (both Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, SI), which were purchased by Horatio S. Rubens, a collector of American impressionist and tonalist works.<sup>6</sup> The same collector owned several works by Weir's close friend John Twachtman, an artist with a distinct preference for the landscape of mood. Both the murkiness of Weir's *Moonlight* and the poetic subtlety of Twachtman's winter landscapes



Julian Alden Weir, *Moonlight*, 1954.4.1

partake of the turn-of-the-century taste for intimate views that strike a personal emotional chord. They also broadly reflect the continuing influence of James McNeill Whistler, whose delicate works, often depicting landscapes cloaked in mist or darkness, were embraced by later generations of American artists.

Weir's nocturnes undoubtedly reflect more directly the influence of another of his close friends, Albert Pinkham Ryder, who often painted moonlit marine scenes and dreamy imaginary landscapes. While *Moonlight* lacks the mysterious, sometimes mystical quality of Ryder's work, it reflects the same affinity for the special beauty of natural forms seen in silhouette against the light of the moon. DC

## James McNeill Whistler

1834–1903

JAMES MCNEILL WHISTLER was born in Lowell, Massachusetts, on 11 July 1834, the third son of West Point graduate and civil engineer Major George Washington Whistler and his second wife Anna Matilda McNeill. After brief stays in Stonington, Connecticut, and Springfield, Massachusetts, the Whistlers moved to St. Petersburg, Russia, where the major served as an engineer for the construction of a railroad line to Moscow. Young Whistler studied drawing there at the Imperial Academy of Science. In 1848 he went to live with his sister and her husband in London. After his father's death the following year, the family returned to the United States and settled in Pomfret, Connecticut. In 1851 Whistler enrolled in the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, where he excelled in Robert W. Weir's drawing class. He was dismissed from the academy in 1854. He worked briefly for the Winans Locomotive Works in Baltimore and the drawings division of the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, then resolved to become an artist and went to Europe.

Whistler settled in Paris, where he studied at the Ecole Impériale et Spéciale de Dessin, before entering Charles Gleyre's atelier. He quickly associated himself with avant-garde artists and was

### Notes

1. Cummings, Fuscas, and Larkin 1991, 17.
2. *The Moon Obscured* and *Moonlight* (collection of C.E.S. Wood) are listed under "1880–1889" in Dorothy Weir's list of her father's paintings in Phillips et al. 1921.
3. Illustrated in Burke 1983, figs. 6.16 and 6.17.
4. *Moonlight* and *Garden at Night* are listed in Phillips et al. 1921. *The Hunter's Moon* was sold at Sotheby Parke Bernet, New York, on 16 February 1946 by Wood's descendants.
5. Burke 1983, 227.
6. Illustrated in Burke 1983, figs. 6.18 and 6.19.

### References

- 1983 Burke: 232, illus. 6.15.

influenced by the realism of Gustave Courbet (1819–1877), as well as the seventeenth-century Dutch and Spanish schools. He befriended Henri Fantin-Latour and Alphonse Legros (1837–1911), with whom he founded the Société des Trois. His *At the Piano* (Taft Museum, Cincinnati) was rejected at the Salon of 1859, whereupon the artist moved to London (where the painting was exhibited at the Royal Academy) and began work on a series of etchings. There Whistler was influenced by the pre-Raphaelites and became acquainted with Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882).

Whistler achieved international notoriety when *Symphony in White, No. 1: The White Girl* [1943.6.2, p. 238] was rejected at both the Royal Academy and the Salon, and became a major attraction at the famous Salon des Refusés in 1863. Thereafter, Courbet's influence waned, and orientalism—and to a lesser extent classicism—became increasingly pronounced elements in his work. Whistler maintained close ties with France during the London years and painted at Trouville with Courbet, Charles-François Daubigny (1817–1878), and Claude Monet in 1865.

In 1866 Whistler went to South America, where he painted seascapes in Valparaíso, Chile.

After returning to Europe, he commenced work on a series of monumental figure compositions for the wealthy patron Frederick R. Leyland. The paintings for this enterprise, called the "Six Projects," were never completed, but the preparatory sketches are owned by the Freer Gallery, Washington. They reflect the influence of the English artist Albert Moore.

In 1869 Whistler began to sign his paintings with a butterfly monogram composed of his initials. In 1871 he painted his well-known *Arrangement in Grey and Black, No. 1: Portrait of the Artist's Mother* (Musée du Louvre, Paris), which was later acquired by the French government. During the early 1870s he painted his famous "Nocturne" series, views of the Thames. His Peacock Room, or *Harmony in Blue and Gold* (1876–1877, FGA), created for Leyland, exerted a strong influence on the interior design of the aesthetic movement.

In 1877 the critic John Ruskin denounced Whistler's *Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket* (c. 1875, DIA) as being tantamount to "flinging a pot of paint in the public's face." The artist successfully sued Ruskin for libel the following year, but was awarded only a token of one farthing in damages. His finances were exhausted by legal expenses, and potential patrons were repelled by the negative publicity surrounding the case.<sup>1</sup> As a result, Whistler was forced to declare bankruptcy in 1879. He proceeded to Italy with a commission from the Fine Arts Society to make twelve etchings of Venice.

After returning to England in 1880, he painted a wide variety of subjects, pursued his interest in the graphic arts, and expressed his aesthetic theories in print, especially in the *Ten O'Clock* lecture (1885). His polemical work *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies* was published in 1890. In 1886 he was elected president of the Society of British Artists, but despite some successes his revolutionary ideas ran afoul of the conservative members, and he was voted out of office within two years.

During the late 1880s and 1890s Whistler achieved recognition as an artist of international stature. His paintings were acquired by public collections, he received awards at exhibitions, and he was elected to such prestigious professional associations as the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Munich, and the French Légion d'Honneur. In 1898 he was elected president of the International Soci-

ety of Sculptors, Painters and Gravers. He withdrew from an active social life when his wife Beatrice Godwin, whom he had married in 1888, died of cancer in 1896. Whistler himself died in London on 17 July 1904. Later that year a memorial exhibition was held in Boston; the following year similar retrospectives were held by the International Society in London and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris.

Whistler was one of the most innovative and controversial artists of his era.

RWT

#### Notes

1. For a discussion of this incident, see Linda Merrill, *A Pot of Paint: Aesthetic on Trial in Whistler v. Ruskin* (Washington, 1992).

#### Bibliography

Pennell and Pennell 1908.

Pennell 1921.

Young et al. 1980.

1982.76.8 (2874)

### Wapping

1860–1864

Oil on canvas, 72 × 101.8 (28<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 40<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)

John Hay Whitney Collection

#### Inscriptions

At lower right: Whistler. / 1861

**Technical Notes:** The tightly woven, plain-weave fabric support has been lined. The artist applied paint thickly, with low and broad brushmarking, possibly over a tan ground layer. X-radiography reveals that the central figure originally leaned close toward the woman and placed his right hand around her shoulder (fig. 1). The paint surface is in good condition, although areas of traction crackle are evident throughout. Much of the traction crackle, abrasion in the woman's hair, and a few small scattered losses were inpainted during a conservation treatment in 1984. As early as 1892 the owner of the painting was worried about its condition, and in 1907 the artist Harper Pennington said that it had "cracks a quarter of an inch wide in it." In 1908 the Pennells noted that the paint surface "may be badly cracked" because of the artist's "want of knowledge of the chemical properties of his paints and mediums."<sup>1</sup>

**Provenance:** Purchased c. 1864 by Thomas DeKay Winans [1820–1878], Baltimore;<sup>2</sup> his daughter, Celeste Winans [Mrs. G. M.] Hutton, Baltimore, until at least 1923; Flora MacDonald White, New York; sold 29 Sep-



tember 1928 to John Hay Whitney [1904–1982], Manhasset, New York; deceded 1982 to the John Hay Whitney Charitable Trust, New York.

**Exhibited:** *96th Exhibition of the Royal Academy of Arts*, London, 1864, no. 585. *Artists' Fund Exhibition*, New York, 1866, no. 360, as *On the Thames*, cat. untraced.<sup>3</sup> *Universal Exhibition*, U.S. section, Paris, 1867, two cat. editions, no. 76, as *Wapping* or *On the Thames*, and no. 69, as *Wapping, On the Thames*. *Charity Art Exhibition*, Academy of Music, Baltimore, 1876, no. 39.<sup>4</sup> *Inaugural Exhibition*, BMA, 1923, no. 242. *American Painting and Sculpture, 1862–1932*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1932–1933, no. 114, as *Wapping Docks, London*. *Trois Siècles d'Art aux Etats-Unis*, Musée du Jeu de Paume, Paris, 1938, no. 174, as *Wapping on Thames*. *Paintings of London, Paris*, Knoedler Galleries, New York, 1940, no. 22, as *Wapping-on-Thames*. *James McNeill Whistler*, Lyman Allyn Museum, New London, Connecticut, 1949, no. 28, as *Wapping on Thames*. *Sargent, Whistler and Mary Cassatt*, AIC; MMA, 1954, no. 93, as *Wapping on Thames*. *Pictures Collected by Yale Alumni*, YUAG, 1956, no. 7, as *Wapping on Thames*. *James McNeill Whistler: An Exhibition of Paintings and Other Works, Organized by the Arts Council of Great Britain and the English-Speaking Union of the United States*, Arts Council Gallery, London; Knoedler Galleries, New York, 1960, no. 5. *The John Hay Whitney Collection*, Tate Gallery, London, 1960–1961, no. 65, as *Wapping on Thames*. *Art of the United States: 1670–1966*, WMAA, 1966, no. 293, as *Wapping on Thames*. *From Realism to Symbolism: Whistler and His World*, Wildenstein Gallery, New York; PMA, 1971, no. 10. *London and the Thames: Paintings of Three Centuries*, National Maritime Museum for the Department of the Environment at Somerset House, London, 1977, no. 63. *The John Hay Whitney Collection*, NGA, 1983, no. 73, as *Wapping on Thames*. *The Image of London: Views by Travelers and Emigrés 1550–1920*, Barbican Art Gallery, London, 1987, no. 155. *James McNeill Whistler*, Tate Gallery, London; Musée d'Orsay, Paris; NGA, 1994–1995, no. 33. *The Vic-*

*torians: British Painting in the Reign of Queen Victoria (1837–1901)*, NGA, 1997, no. 27.<sup>5</sup>

WHISTLER BEGAN this major painting in 1860, about a year after he had moved from Paris to London, and he sporadically repainted it over the next three and a half years. Its title refers to a district on the Thames in London's East End that Nathaniel Hawthorne characterized as “a cold and torpid neighborhood, mean, shabby, and unpicturesque, both as to its buildings and inhabitants,” where “everything was on the poorest scale, and . . . bore an aspect of unredeemable decay.”<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth and Joseph Pennell wrote that Whistler painted the scene from the balcony of the Angel, an inn near Cherry Gardens, in Rotherhithe, on the south bank of the river; Wapping appears on the opposite bank in the distant background.<sup>7</sup> This was the artist's first major plein-air painting. Two other compositions that have similar views of the London docks were taken from the same vantage point: an etching from the “Thames Set,” *Rotherhithe* (1860), and *The Thames on Ice* (1860, FGA [Young et al. 1980, 36]). In October 1860 the cartoonist George Du Maurier probably alluded to *Wapping* when he noted that his roommate Whistler was “working hard & in secret down in Rotherhithe, among a beastly set of cads and every possible annoyance and misery, doing one of the greatest chefs d'oeuvres—no difficulty discourages him.”<sup>8</sup>

In its final state *Wapping* represents the artist's model and mistress Joanna Hiffernan, known as Jo



Fig. 1. X-radiograph composite of 1982.76.8





James McNeill Whistler, *Wapping*, 1882.76.8

[1943.6.2, p. 238], sitting at a table with two men; she leans slightly backward in her chair, resting her right arm on the balustrade for support.<sup>9</sup> The bearded man in the center is the French artist Alphonse Legros, who looks toward the sailor seen in profile on the far right, whose body is abruptly cut off by the painting's right margin.<sup>10</sup> The figure group occupies the lower right quadrant of the composition, the remainder of which is a view across the Thames. Robin Spencer has pointed out that this portion of the painting was influenced by similar representations of marine life in pre-Raphaelite-inspired pictures, as well as by J. C. Hook's *Luff, Boy!* (1859, private collection), which Whistler had seen at the Royal Academy in 1859.<sup>11</sup> During the four years he worked on *Wapping*, Whistler left the background intact but made considerable alterations to the figures. An early stage of the painting is documented in a letter that Whistler wrote to Henri Fantin-Latour sometime before July 1861, on which he drew a rapid ink sketch of the still unfinished composition (fig. 2). He described the male figures as "an old man in a white shirt" (who in the sketch looks directly at Hiffernan), a "sailor in a cap and blue shirt," and a "jolly gal" with "a superlatively whorish air." He noted that the woman's "bust is exposed, one sees the chemise almost entirely." He complained of the extreme difficulty of perfecting her expression and finally

reaching the desired effect where she seemed to say to the sailor, "That's all very well my friend, but I've seen others!"—you know—winking and mocking him."<sup>12</sup> At this early stage Whistler very probably intended the scene to represent negotiations between a prostitute and a sailor, mediated by a pimp.

In November 1862 Whistler informed Fantin-Latour that he wanted to finish "the big Thames and *The White Girl*" so they could be exhibited in Paris at the Salon of 1863.<sup>13</sup> In December of that year, however, Dante Gabriel Rossetti advised a collector that the English sailor on the far right was "hardly yet commenced." He identified the other male figure (formerly the old man in a white shirt) as Legros, and stated that "though painted in from him just as he was from the first instance, [it] is to be quite differently continued, to represent a Spanish sailor. Glasses etc. will be on the table."<sup>14</sup> On 3 February 1864 Whistler informed Fantin-Latour that he was going to exhibit *Wapping* at the Salon later that year, and that it was "all changed from the first plan . . . there is a portrait Legros and a head of Jo that are my best."<sup>15</sup>

One week later Whistler's mother described the picture as "the finest painting he has yet done . . . which three years ago took him so much away from me." She went on to praise how it captured the spirit of life on the Thames, "so much full of its life, shipping, buildings, steamers, coal heavers, passen-



Fig. 2. James McNeill Whistler, ink sketch of "Wapping on Thames," in letter to Henri Fantin-Latour, 1860, Washington, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division

gers going ashore, all so true to the peculiar tone of London & its river scenes is so improved by his perseverance to perfect it, a group on the Inn balcony has yet to have the finishing touches."<sup>16</sup> Whistler had a potential buyer for *Wapping* at this time, but the artist William Bell Scott thought the price too high because the foreground figures were "just rubbed in, one of them merely in a tentative way, but the general is so rough it is difficult to say how far he means them for finished."<sup>17</sup> The painting was completed later that year and exhibited at the Royal Academy, along with *Purple and Rose: The Lange Leizen of the Six Marks* (1864, PMA).<sup>18</sup>

The result of these extensive revisions was the complete elimination of what Whistler called "expression," or a sense of the sitters' psychological presence. The trio sit in impenetrable silence. The narrative context that Whistler had struggled so hard to create is absent, and the scene is strangely unresolved. Spencer speculated that Whistler may have been influenced by the equally enigmatic subjects of Edouard Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1863, Musée d'Orsay, Paris), and Richard Dorment attributed the peculiar appearance of the group to the strained relationships among them.<sup>19</sup> It is also possible that the artist deleted those elements that would have offended Victorian sensibilities because he wanted *Wapping* to be accepted for exhibition at the Academy. When Thomas Armstrong warned Whistler that the Academy would find the woman's déshabille unacceptable, he humorously insisted that "if it was rejected on that account, he would open the shirt more and more every year until he was elected and hung it himself."<sup>20</sup>

Whistler's aesthetic orientation changed considerably during the four years that he worked on *Wapping*, and it is likely that the metamorphosis of the painting reflects the formalism that gradually replaced the early influence of the realism of Gustave Courbet. Divested of their former narrative function, the human figures play a subsidiary part to the superbly painted, vivid background that Whistler's mother admired so much. Indeed, the most memorable aspect of the composition is the maze of complex interwoven patterns formed by the sails and rigging on the ships, as they float on the Thames. It was for this reason that a British critic who saw *Wapping* at the Royal Academy in 1864 disparaged the figures as "repulsive and unfinished," but commented that "if Velasquez had ever painted our river he would have painted it something in this style."<sup>21</sup>

RWT

## Notes

1. Young et al. 1980, 14; Pennell and Pennell 1908, 1:91.
2. According to an unidentified newspaper clipping in the Winans-Hutton Family Scrapbook, MS 916, Box 18, Manuscripts Division, MHS, Winans purchased *Wapping* in 1867 when it was exhibited at the Universal Exhibition in Paris; according to the same source, Whistler "wanted it for exhibition at Goupil's, in 1892, but could not get it and it has not been seen in Europe since 1867." Pennell and Pennell 1908, 1: 88, indicated that Winans brought the painting to Baltimore shortly after the 1867 Paris exhibition. Winans had accompanied the artist's father Major George Washington Whistler to Russia in 1844, where they began construction on a railroad line between Moscow and St. Petersburg. Winans became wealthy through the venture and shortly after returning to Baltimore in 1851 built a house that he called Alexandroffsky. Whistler had briefly worked for the Winans Locomotive Company in Baltimore in 1854, after his discharge from West Point. His elder half-brother George Whistler married into the Winans family. For biographical information on Winans, see Bertram Lippincott III, "The Hutton Family of 'Shamrock Cliff,'" *Newport History: Bulletin of the Newport Historical Society* 64, no. 221 (fall 1991): 164–166; and Alexandra Lee Levin, "Inventive, Imaginative, and Incurable: The Winans Family and the Building of the First Russian Railroad," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 84 (spring 1989): 50–55.
3. Information drawn from an unidentified newspaper clipping, Birnie Philip Collection, Glasgow University Library.
4. The literature states that the exhibition catalogue is untraced, but a copy is owned by the MHS Library. In "The Art Exhibition," *Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser*, 20 March 1876, *Wapping* was cited under the title *The Thames at Wapping Stairs*.
5. John Rewald, in *The John Hay Whitney Collection* [Exh. cat. Tate Gallery.] (London, 1960), made the otherwise unconfirmed statement that *Wapping* was exhibited at *85th Exhibition, Ouvres de peinture, sculpture, architecture, gravure et lithographie des artistes vivants*, Palais des Champs-Élysées (The Salon), 1867, as *Sur la Tamise, l'hiver*.
6. Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Our Old Home: A Series of English Sketches* (Boston, 1863), 284.
7. Pennell and Pennell 1908, 1: 88.
8. Du Maurier 1951, 16.
9. A rough preliminary pencil sketch that Whistler made on a blank page in the passport that he used for travel between 1855 and 1859 and thereafter as a notebook (Glasgow University Library) shows that at some stage of the painting's development he considered having Hiffenan and a man leaning over the balcony; see MacDonald 1995, no. 298, 95–96.
10. Pennell and Pennell 1908, 1: 88, first identified the sailor as "a workman from Greaves' shipbuilding yard" in Chelsea, but later questioned that claim; see Pennell 1921, 161.
11. For example, Spencer Stanhope's *Thoughts of the Past* (1859, Tate Gallery, London), William Bell Scott's *Iron and Coal: Industry of the Tyre* (1861, Wellington Hall,

Northumberland), and Matthew White Ridley's *Pool of London* (1862, Tate Gallery, London); see Spencer 1982, 135–136.

12. Whistler, letter to Fantin-Latour, Pennell Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; the full French text of the letter appears in Spencer 1982, 132–133.

13. "La grande Tamise and *la Fille blanche*": Whistler, letter to Fantin-Latour, 10–30 November 1862, Pennell Collection; quoted by Bénédite 1905.

14. Rossetti, letter to James Leathart, 15 December 1863, University of British Columbia, Victoria; quoted in Young et al. 1980, 14. Alphonse Legros (1837–1911) had probably arrived in London during the summer of 1863.

15. Whistler, letter to Fantin-Latour, 3 February 1864, Pennell Collection, quoted in Young et al. 1980, 14.

16. Anna McNeill Whistler, letter to James H. Gamble, 10 February 1864, Glasgow University Library; the full text of the letter is quoted in Katherine E. Abbott, ed., "The Lady of the Portrait: Letters of Whistler's Mother," *Atlantic Monthly* 136 (September 1925): 324.

17. William Bell Scott, letter to James Leathart, 25 February 1864, University of British Columbia.

18. *The Lange Leizen of the Six Marks* was the first of Whistler's exhibited works that reflected the influence of orientalism. The abruptly truncated design elements in *Wapping* may have resulted from the artist's early interest in Japanese prints.

19. Spencer 1982, 138–139; Dormont and MacDonald 1994, 104.

20. Thomas Armstrong, letter to Joseph Pennell, 8 September 1907, Pennell Collection; Pennell and Pennell 1908, 1:89.

21. Tom Taylor, *London Times*, 5 May 1864; this review and others are quoted in Fleming 1978, 196–198; and Spencer 1982, 139–140.

## References

- 1905 Bénédite: 496–497.  
1908 Pennell and Pennell: 1: 88–89, 91, 127, 140, repro. facing p. 88.  
1917 Duret: 41.  
1921 Pennell: 119, 122, 161–162.  
1960 *Whistler*: 34–35, pl. 4.  
1963 Sutton: 43, fig. 5.  
1966 Sutton: 9, 186, color pl. 11.  
1978 Fleming: 158–159, 196–198, fig. 22.  
1978 Taylor: 22–23, fig. 18.  
1980 Young et al.: 1: 14–15; 2: pl. 23.  
1982 Spencer: 131–142, fig. 1.  
1983 Rewald: 172–173, repro.  
1988 Wilmerding, *American Masterpieces*: 140, color repro.  
1994 Anderson and Koval: 94–95, color pl. 3.  
1994 Dormont and MacDonald: 103–104, color illus. 33.  
1995 Koval: 28–31.  
1996 Warner: 110–111, color pl. 27.

1943.6.2 (750)

## *Symphony in White, No. 1:* *The White Girl*

1862

Oil on canvas, 213 × 107.9 (83<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 42<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>)

Harris Whittemore Collection

## Inscriptions

At upper right: *Whistler. 1862*

**Technical Notes:** The very fine plain-weave fabric support has been lined and, at a more recent date, strip-lined to reinforce the tacking margins. The tacking margins have been removed. The white or light gray ground layer is covered in selected areas with a gray imprimatura. The artist applied paint thickly and with heavy impasto overall.<sup>1</sup> He scraped or sanded down the subject's head and right hand, and reapplied the paint very thinly.<sup>2</sup> This procedure damaged the support, and it is probable that the artist had the painting lined to stabilize the area before reworking it. A visible line of horizontal impasto indicates that the skirt was initially about 10 cm shorter. The bearskin rug appears to have been applied over an initially more colorful floor covering. The rug, present floor covering, and flowers were all painted at the same time. The paint surface is in good condition. Small areas of inpainting in the background, dress, and face conceal minor damage to the support and paint losses. With the exception of the reworked head and hand, a broad crackle pattern has developed throughout the surface.

**Provenance:** Sold 1866 by the artist to his half-brother, George W. Whistler [d. 1869], London, but retained possession; bequeathed to his wife, Mrs. George W. Whistler [d. 1875]; sent 1875 by the artist to her son, Thomas Delano Whistler, Baltimore; sold 28 February 1896 for Thomas D. Whistler by (Boussod, Valladon & Cie, New York) to Harris Whittemore [1864–1927], Naugatuck, Connecticut; sold 1897 to his father, John Howard Whittemore [d. 1910], Naugatuck, Connecticut; bequeathed to the J. H. Whittemore Company, Naugatuck, Connecticut, with life interest to John Howard Whittemore's daughter, Miss Gertrude B. Whittemore [d. 1941], Naugatuck, Connecticut.<sup>3</sup>

**Exhibited:** Morgan's Gallery, 14 Berniers Street, London, 1862, no. 42, as *The Woman in White*, cat. untraced. *The Artists' and Amateurs' Conversazione*, Willis' Rooms, London, 1863, as *The Woman in White*, according to William Rossetti. *Ouvrages de peinture, sculpture, gravure, lithographie et architecture, refusés par le Jury de 1863, et exposés, par décision de S. M. l'Empereur, au salon annexe* (Salon des Refusés), Palais des Champs Elysées, Paris, 1863, no. 596, as *Dame blanche*. *Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts*, Martinet's Gallery, Paris, 1863. *Universal Exhibition*, U.S. section, Paris, 1867, two cats., no. 68 and 75, as *The White Girl*. *Charity Art Exhibition*, Academy of Music, Balti-

more, 1876, no. 43, as *A Girl in White*. *Loan Collection of Paintings*, MMA, 1881, no. 60, as *The White Girl*. Union League Club, New York, 1881, cat. untraced. *Loan Collections*, MMA, 1894, no. 252, as *The White Girl*. *Loan Collections*, MMA, 1895, no. 253, as *The White Girl*. *Loan Exhibition of Portraits for the Benefit of the Orthopaedic Hospital*, NAD, 1898–1899, no. 254, as *The Woman in White*. *Memorial Exhibition of the Works of Mr. J. McNeill Whistler: Oil Paintings, Water Colors, Pastels and Drawings*, Copley Society of Boston, Copley Hall, Boston, 1904, no. 71, as *The White Girl*. *Memorial Exhibition of the Works of the Late James McNeill Whistler, First President of the International Society of Sculptors, Painters and Gravers*, New Gallery, London, 1905, no. 37, as *The Woman in White, Symphony in White, No. 1. Oeuvres de James McNeill Whistler*, Palais de l'École des Beaux-Arts, Paris, 1905, no. 4, as *Symphony in White No. 1, The White Girl*. *Paintings in Oil and Pastel by James A. McNeill Whistler*, MMA, 1910, no. 3, as *Symphony in White I: The White Girl. Pictures of People, 1870–1930: A Loan Exhibition for the Benefit of Hope Farm*, M. Knoedler & Co., New York, 1931, no. 4, as *The White Girl*. *American Painting and Sculpture, 1862–1932*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1932–1933, no. 113, as *Woman in White*. Possibly *Paintings and Sculpture by American Artists* [opening exhibition], Grand Central Galleries, Fifth Avenue Branch, New York, 1933. *Oils, Water-colors, Drawings and Prints by James McNeill Whistler*, MFA, 1934, no. 4, as *The White Girl*. *A Century of Progress Exhibition of Paintings and Sculpture*, AIC, 1934, no. 433, as *The White Girl*. *The Twentieth Anniversary Exhibition of the Cleveland Museum of Art: The Official Art Exhibit of the Great Lakes Exposition*, Cleveland Museum of Art, 1936, no. 377, as *The White Girl, Symphony in White, No. 1. Exhibition of Paintings*, Tuttle House, Naugatuck, Connecticut, 1938, no. 42. *Art in Our Time: An Exhibition to Celebrate the Tenth Anniversary of the Museum of Modern Art and the Opening of Its New Building Held at the Time of the New York World's Fair*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1939, no. 45, as *The White Girl*. *Modern Masters from European and American Collections*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, January–March 1940, no. 1, as *The White Girl*. *Golden Gate International Exposition*, Palace of Fine Arts, San Francisco, May–September 1940, no. 1221, as *The White Girl*. *Old Masters and Modern American and French paintings from the San Francisco Exposition, and the Los Angeles County Fair, and from individual dealers*, Fine Arts Gallery of San Diego, October–November 1940, no cat. *Paintings from the Whittemore Collection*, Mattatuck Historical Society, Waterbury, Connecticut, 1941, no. 35, as *The White Girl*. *De Gustibus . . . An Exhibition of American Paintings Illustrating a Century of Taste and Criticism*, CGA, 1949, no. 15. *Diamond Jubilee Exhibition: Masterpieces of Painting*, PMA, 1950–1951, no. 65, as *The White Girl*. *Sargent, Whistler, and Mary Cassatt*, AIC; MMA, 1954, no. 94, as *The White Girl: Symphony in White, No. 1. American Classics of the Nineteenth Century*, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, 1957–1958, no. 51, as *The White Girl* (traveling exhibition, five venues, shown only in Pittsburgh). *James McNeill Whistler*, AIC; MWPI, 1968, no. 3. *From Realism to Symbolism: Whistler and His World*, Wildenstein Gallery, New York; PMA, 1971, no. 12, as *The White Girl (Symphony in White, No. 1)*. *Amerikanische Malerei des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts*, Orangerie

of the Schloss Charlottenburg, Berlin; Kunsthau Zurich, 1988–1989, no. 67. *James McNeill Whistler*, Tate Gallery, London; Musée d'Orsay, Paris; NGA, 1994–1995, no. 14. *The Victorians: British Painting in the Reign of Queen Victoria (1837–1901)*, NGA, 1997, no. 28.

WHISTLER commenced this full-length portrait at his Paris studio in December 1861. It represents his model and mistress Joanna Hiffernan, known as Jo, who also appears in *Wapping* [1982.76.8, p. 233] and other paintings of the early and mid-1860s. Elizabeth and Joseph Pennell described her as “Irish, a Roman Catholic . . . a woman of next to no education, but of keen intelligence who, before she had ceased to sit to Whistler, knew more about painting than many painters, had become well read, and had great charm of manner.”<sup>4</sup> Evidence suggests that Hiffernan and Whistler had a stormy relationship; in 1864 George Du Maurier reported that the artist was “in mortal fear” of her, and that she was “an awful tie.”<sup>5</sup> The couple parted after Whistler went to Valparaiso in 1867. Hiffernan went to Paris, where she posed for Gustave Courbet’s erotic *Le Sommeil* (Musée du Petit Palais, Paris); it is presumed that she had an affair with the French artist. Little is known of her later life.

*The White Girl* is one of Whistler’s most famous and provocative works. The brief description of the composition that he gave Du Maurier in February 1862 conveys something of its striking appearance: The model is “standing against a window which filters the light through a transparent white muslin curtain—but the figure receives a strong light from the right and therefore the picture barring the red hair is one gorgeous mass of brilliant white.”<sup>6</sup> Attired in a long white dress, she stands before a shallow white linen drapery, on what has been variously described as a bear or wolf pelt; the animal’s rounded ears suggest that it is a bear. The distorted perspective of the upturned floor makes her appear to hover above the rug rather than stand on it, an impression that is confirmed by the uncomfortable proximity of her head to the top of the picture. Her face is expressionless, and she stares vacantly off to the right, scarcely seeming to focus her eyes.<sup>7</sup> The absence of any definable emotion on the part of the subject is countered by the lifelike head of the bear, which with bared fangs and protruding tongue stares out from the bottom of the composition and makes direct eye contact with the viewer. The woman holds a wilted white lily in her



left hand, and her arms hang limply at her side in a manner that Ernest Cheseau characterized as “lacking grace, but not without elegance.”<sup>8</sup> Hiffernan’s full red lips and long, unkempt red hair, the bouquet of purple and yellow pansies, the unidentified flowers that inexplicably lie at her feet, and the blue patterns on the Chinese carpet beneath the animal-skin rug provide the only color in the predominantly white tonal scheme of the painting. Whistler admired his model’s hair, which he described as “the loveliest you’ve ever seen! a red that is not golden but *copper*—like what one dreams of in a Venetian woman!”<sup>9</sup> To complete the ensemble, Whistler designed the decorative frame for the painting.<sup>10</sup>

In this work Whistler defied artistic conventions by keeping his subject free of a narrative context. He achieved this by creating a richly textured paint surface through varied techniques (thus deviating from the smooth, uniform finish typical of academic painters) and by making use of a predominantly white palette. Although these artistic innovations went far beyond what the majority of Whistler’s contemporaries could tolerate, *The White Girl* was generally admired by progressive artists and critics. In the early spring of 1862 Hiffernan, writing from London, informed an American art collector in Paris that “the White Girl has made a fresh sensation—for and against. Some stupid painters don’t understand it at all while Millais for instance thinks it splendid, more like Titian and those of old Seville than anything he has seen—but Jim says for all that, perhaps the old duffers may refuse it altogether.”<sup>11</sup> As Whistler predicted, the Royal Academy refused the painting for its annual exhibition of 1862. He then exhibited it at Matthew Morgan’s gallery in Berners Street, London, where it was advertised as “Whistler’s Extraordinary picture *The Woman in White*.” Whistler wrote to a friend and announced that he was “waging an open war on the Academy.” He described the exhibition as a place “where she shows herself proudly to all London—that is all London who goes to see her. She looks grandly in her frame and creates an excitement in the artistic world which the Academy did not prevent or foresee.”<sup>12</sup>

Whistler wrote the first of the many vehement rebuttals he would publish over the course of his career when the critic and original member of the pre-Raphaelite group, Frederic George Stephens, objected to the “bizarre production” because “the face is well done, but it is not that of Mr. Wilkie

Collins’s *Woman in White*.”<sup>13</sup> The artist responded that the title had been given “without my sanction” and stated, “I had no intention whatsoever of illustrating Mr. Wilkie Collins’s novel; it so happens, indeed that I have never read it. My painting simply represents a girl dressed in white standing in front of a white curtain.”<sup>14</sup> The gallery manager responded that Whistler had been aware of the title before the exhibition and that it was intended to be purely descriptive, not misleading.<sup>15</sup> Whistler had probably foreseen that the title *Woman in White* would be associated with the popular novel, and the ruse succeeded in obtaining additional notoriety for his painting.

Whistler next submitted *The White Girl* for exhibition at the Paris Salon of 1863. As he explained to a friend, “I have set my heart upon this succeeding, and it would be a crusher for the Royal Academy here, if what they refused were received at the Salon in Paris and thought well of.”<sup>16</sup> When the painting was refused, Whistler exhibited it at the Salon des Refusés. Even though it was accompanied by over a thousand other “objectionable” works, the painting caused a *succès de scandale* equal to that of Edouard Manet’s *Déjeuner sur l’herbe* (1863, Musée d’Orsay, Paris), which was also included in the show. Emile Zola, who mentioned *The White Girl* favorably in his review of the exhibition, reported that “folk nudged each other and went almost into hysterics; there was always a grinning group in front of it.”<sup>17</sup>

The critic Jules-Antoine Castagnary attempted to provide the subject with a narrative context by speculating that the woman appears on the morning of her bridal night, at “the troubling moment when the young woman questions herself and is astonished at no longer recognizing in herself the virginity of the night before.”<sup>18</sup> Paul Mantz of the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* noted that the *Symphonie en blanc*, as he called it, was in fact “continuing the French tradition” because the predominant use of white was reminiscent of works by Jean-Baptiste Oudry. Like some other early viewers he was struck by the ethereal quality of the figure. Mantz posed the rhetorical questions: “Whence comes this white apparition? What does she want from us with her dishevelled hair, her great eyes swimming in ecstasy, her languid pose and that petalless flower in the fingers of her trailing hand? No one can say: the truth is that Mr. Whistler’s work has a strange charm: in our view, the White Woman is the principal piece in the heretics’ salon.”<sup>19</sup>



James McNeill Whistler, *Symphony in White, No. 1: The White Girl*, 1862

Théophile Thoré (a pseudonym for Willem Burger) called her “a vision”; Fernand Desnoyers characterized the painting as “the portrait of a spirit, a medium”;<sup>20</sup> and Henri Fantin-Latour reported that Courbet was annoyed to observe that Hiffernan looked like “an apparition, with a spiritual content.”<sup>21</sup> Richard Dorment noted that such interpretations grew out of the mid-Victorian fascination with spiritualism, an interest that both Whistler and Hiffernan shared with their contemporaries.<sup>22</sup>

*The White Girl* was not well received by conservative American critics.<sup>23</sup> When it was shown along with four other of Whistler’s paintings in Baltimore in 1876, an anonymous writer prefaced his perceptive but ultimately negative review by remarking that *White Girl* was “especially marked” by Whistler’s “idiosyncrasies”:

It represents, on a background formed by a white curtain, the full-length figure of a young girl, attired in an anomalous white garment, which hangs upon her person in absolute defiance of all ordinary canons of good taste. Her attitude, also, is devoid of all feminine grace, and the effect of the whole is extremely stiff and unlife-like. Yet the face is attractive and even fascinating, and the long, dishevelled hair approaches to that pure golden-brown hue the great Venetian masters loved to paint; while the whole picture, on closer acquaintance, loses much of its first unpleasing effect. But it cannot be doubted that mannerisms which have the appearance of affectation are not in unison with the spirit of true art.<sup>24</sup>

Henry Tuckerman quoted a French reviewer who saw the painting at the Paris Exposition of 1867 and who described it as representing “a powerful female with red hair, and a vacant stare in her soulless eyes. . . . The picture evidently means vastly more than it expresses—albeit expressing too much. Notwithstanding an obvious want of purpose, there is some boldness in the handling and a singularity in the glare of the colors which cannot fail to divert the eye, and to weary it.”<sup>25</sup> The critical tide had changed by 1905, when Samuel Isham dismissed these words as “stupid and coarse,” and praised *The White Girl* as “a beautiful work in itself” that contained “all of the artist’s characteristic qualities.”<sup>26</sup> One year earlier the artist Kenyon Cox had accurately perceived the place of this picture within Whistler’s development: “It is somewhat timid and awkward as yet, but [in] its reliance for artistic effect upon the decorative division of space, on grace of line, and on the delicate opposition of nicely discriminated tones, it is already . . . characteristic. The artist has found the road he was des-

tinued to tread, and henceforth steps aside from it but seldom.”<sup>27</sup>

Whistler himself regarded *The White Girl* as an expression of his aesthetic credo that art should appeal directly to the eye without having to rely on ideas and emotions; those who attempted to provide it with a narrative context failed to see its significance. As the artist stated, the painting has no subject in the conventional sense: It is simply a representation of a model standing in a studio. Ron Johnson has linked *The White Girl* to the writings of the French poet and art critic Théophile Gautier, who expounded his aesthetic theory of “art for art’s sake” in the novel *Mlle. de Maupin* (1834) and the poem “Symphonie en blanc majeur” (1849).<sup>28</sup> It is a paradox that many art historians have persisted in trying to find some vestige of a narrative in the image. This tendency is understandable because the painting is a synthesis of the diverse influences that affected Whistler during a critical phase of his artistic development: pre-Raphaelitism, rococo revivalism, Courbet’s realism, orientalism, and his own growing penchant for pure aestheticism.

Most Victorian viewers reasonably associated the work with the implicitly sexual female subjects of well-known pre-Raphaelite paintings, such as Holman Hunt’s *Awakening Conscience* (1853, Tate Gallery, London) and Spencer Stanhope’s *Thoughts of the Past* (1859, Tate Gallery, London). As a feminine type Hiffernan resembled Elizabeth Siddall, the model for John Everett Millais’ *Autumn Leaves* (1855, City Art Gallery, Manchester) and *Ophelia* (1852, Tate Gallery, London).<sup>29</sup> Moreover, both the style of her dress and the lily are typical pre-Raphaelite accessories. Knowledgeable critics such as Mantz immediately recognized that *The White Girl* fit into the French artistic tradition. David Park Curry has demonstrated at length how the painting reflects the aesthetic movement’s conscious revival of the French rococo style, but his attempt to relate it directly to Antoine Watteau’s *Gilles* (1717–1719, Musée du Louvre, Paris) is forced.<sup>30</sup> Curry hypothesized that the bearskin and flowers in *The White Girl* were symbols that alluded to Whistler’s intimate relationship with his model, but he ultimately concluded that the portrait was an “inaccessible riddle.”<sup>31</sup>

In the final analysis, the genre of the full-length portrait was adamantly resistant to Whistler’s purpose of making a spontaneous formalist statement. The significance of the painting can be understood only in historical perspective. The subject was too

similar to contemporary *femme fatale* types, the woman's sexually charged appearance was too highly suggestive, and attributes such as the wilted lily were too vulnerable to a traditional iconographic explication. This explains why Whistler singled out *The White Girl* for criticism in 1867, when he wrote to Fantin-Latour and repudiated his past realist convictions.<sup>32</sup> Whistler's two later paintings of the "Symphony in White" series, *Symphony in White No. 2: The Little White Girl* (1864, Tate Gallery, London [Young et al. 1980, 52]) and *Symphony in White, No. 3* (1865–1867, Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham [Young et al. 1980, 61]),<sup>33</sup> are more conducive to a narrative interpretation, yet they succeed as formalist aesthetic statements. Despite its ambiguities, or perhaps because of them, *The White Girl* is considered one of the most innovative paintings of the nineteenth century.

RWT

#### Notes

1. Pennell and Pennell 1908, 1: 95, mentioned that Whistler became sick while working on the painting, suffering from the ill effects of working with white lead.
2. Robert Henri, *The Art Spirit*, comp. Margery Ryerson (New York, 1923), 266, commented that "the hands are not finished because he [Whistler] knew he could do them in the same spirit he had while painting the rest, and he could not descend to common manufacture."
3. Young et al. 1980, 18, lists the last owners of the painting as Harris Whittemore's son and daughter, Harris Whittemore Jr. and Mrs. Charles S. Upson. They were officers of the J. H. Whittemore Company (Harris Whittemore Jr. was president), the actual owner of the painting.
4. Pennell and Pennell 1908, 1:94–95; see also Pennell 1921, 161–163. For a summary of the available biographical information on Hiffernan, see Dorment and MacDonald 1994, 74–75.
5. February 1864, in Du Maurier 1951, 227, partially quoted in Sutton 1963, 32–33.
6. Du Maurier 1951, 105.
7. Caffin 1907, 43, offered a wordy but ultimately inconclusive description of Jo's demeanor: "The girl stands mysteriously aloof from all contact with, or suggestion of, the world, her dark eyes staring with a troubled, wistful look, as if she had been surprised in her maiden meditation and were apprehensive of something she cannot fathom, and is too reliant upon herself to wholly fear." However difficult Jo's appearance may be to interpret, it is aesthetically superior to the unfortunate result of Whistler's reworking her features in *Wapping* [1982.76.8, p. 233].
8. "Sans grace, mais non sans elegance": Ernest Chesneau, *L'Art et les artistes modernes en France et en Angleterre* (Paris, 1864), 190.

9. "Le plus beaux que tu n'est jamais vue! d'un rouge non pas dore mais *cuirre*—comme tout ce qu'on reve de Venitienne!" Whistler, letter to Henri Fantin-Latour, undated but before July 1861, Pennell Collection, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

10. The butterfly insignia on the upper right of the frame indicates that it postdates the painting. According to *Memorial Exhibition of the Works of the Late James McNeill Whistler*, International Society of Sculptors, Painters and Gravers (London, 1905), 90, Whistler's inscription, "J. McN. Whistler, 2 Lindsey Houses, Chelsea" (his address between 1866 and 1878), was once visible on its reverse. Ira Horowitz, "Whistler's Frames," *Art Journal* 39, no. 2 (winter 1979–1980): 128–129, speculated that the frame had been made for the occasion of the 1872 International Exhibition, but it is now known that *The White Girl* was never shown there. For a more recent discussion of Whistler's frames, see Mendgen 1995, 87–95.

11. Joanna Hiffernan, letter to George A. Lucas, 10 April 1862, quoted in John A. Mahey, ed., "The Letters of James McNeill Whistler to George Lucas," *AB* 49 (September 1967): 249.

12. Whistler, letter to George A. Lucas, 26 June 1862, Wadsworth Athenaeum, Hartford; the letter is quoted in Spencer 1989, 63–71.

13. "Fine Art Gossip," *Athenaeum*, 28 June 1862, 859.

14. *Athenaeum*, 5 July 1862, 23; reprinted in *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies* (London and New York, 1890).

15. *Athenaeum*, 19 July 1862, 86.

16. Whistler, letter to George A. Lucas, 16 March 1863, Pennell Papers.

17. Emile Zola, *L'Oeuvre*, 1886, in *Oeuvres complètes*, 15 vols. (Paris, 1967), 5: 533–534. The English critic P. G. Hamerton, *Fine Arts Quarterly*, quoted in Pennell and Pennell 1908, 1: 102, also observed that those who saw the painting were "struck with amazement. This for two or three seconds, then they always looked at each other and laughed."

18. Jules Castagnary, *Salons 1857–1870*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1892), 1:179, went on to compare it with Jean-Baptiste Greuze's *La Cruche cassée*.

19. Paul Mantz, "Salon de 1863," *GBA* 15 (1863): 60–61; quoted in Spencer 1989, 71. Curry 1984, 39, noted that Mantz had in mind Oudry's *The White Duck* (1753, Collection of the Marchioness of Cholmondeley); the still life is discussed and illustrated in Hal N. Opperman, *Jean Baptiste Oudry, 1686–1755* [Exh. cat. Kimbell Art Museum.] (Fort Worth, Texas, 1983), fig. 113.

20. Fernand Desnoyers, *Salon des refusés: La Peinture en 1863* (Paris, 1863), 27–28.

21. He noted that "Baudelaire finds it charming, charming, exquisite, absolutely delicate, as he says. Legros, Manet, Bracquemond, de Balleroy and myself; we all think it admirable" (Fantin-Latour, letter to Whistler, [15] May 1863, Glasgow University Library).

22. Dorment and MacDonald 1994, 78.

23. For a highly speculative attempt to interpret *The White Girl* as Whistler's politically motivated statement of sympathy for the South during the Civil War, and as a response to Frederic Edwin Church's *Icebergs* (1861, Dallas Museum of Art, Texas), see Jean Jenson Page, "James McNeill Whistler, Baltimorean, and *The White Girl*: A

Speculative Essay," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 84 (spring 1989): 10–38.

24. W.W.C., "Baltimore Art-Exhibition," *Art Journal*, American edition (May 1876): 136. The unknown author of "The Art Exhibition," *Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser*, 20 March 1876, considered Whistler's paintings to be "the most remarkable pictures in the exhibition. . . . They have attained considerable fame in art circles, and their style has been the object of much contention among the critics." He described the artist's aesthetic objective as "the mastery of color and nature as it is, unadorned by artistic effects." He concluded that despite adverse criticisms, "the pictures stand there with true merit that cannot be denied, and they have many admirers."

25. Tuckerman 1867, 486.

26. Isham 1905, 333.

27. Kenyon Cox, "The Art of Whistler," *Architectural Record* (May 1904): 471.

28. Johnson 1981, 166–167.

29. Cary 1907, 37, observed that *The White Girl* "reflected Rossetti's evocations of expressive physical beauty, and passive reverie." For a discussion of the pre-Raphaelite influence on Whistler, see Alastair Grieve, "Whistler and the Pre-Raphaelites," *AQ* 34 (summer 1971): 219–228.

30. Curry 1984, 35–51; for Trevor J. Fairbrother's assessment of Curry's theories relating to *The White Girl*, see his review in *Archives of American Art Journal* 24, no. 2 (1984): 29.

31. See Curry 1984, 42, 91n.44, 91n.48.

32. Whistler, letter to Fantin-Latour, September 1867, Pennell Collection; the full text of the letter is given in Spencer 1989, 82–84.

33. In 1867 Whistler exhibited *Symphony in White, No. 3* under that title at the Royal Academy and added the prefix *Symphony in White no. II* to the title of *The Little White Girl*, thus implying that he then considered the National Gallery painting to be *Symphony in White, No. 1*. Young et al. 1980, 18, corrected the common error that *The White Girl* had been exhibited at the International Exhibition, South Kensington Museum, London, 1872, under the title *Symphony in White*; although Whistler had planned to exhibit it there, he later submitted *Symphony in White, No. 2* instead. The National Gallery painting was never exhibited as one of the "symphonies in white" during the artist's lifetime. Whistler's oil sketch *The White Symphony: Three Girls* (c. 1868, FGA [Young et al. 1980, 87]) was part of "The Six Projects" frieze commissioned by Frederick R. Leyland, and thus not one of the "Symphonies in White."

## References

- 1867 Tuckerman: 486.  
1903 Way and Dennis: 26.  
1905 Bénédict: 233, 507, 510–511, pl. V.  
1905 Isham: 333.  
1907 Cary: 37–41, illus.  
1908 Pennell and Pennell: 1: 94–98, 102–103, 140–141, 144, 157.  
1910 MMA: 3–6.  
1917 Duret: 14–16, 20–22, 45, 148.  
1921 Pennell and Pennell: 4, 144.

- 1963 Sutton: 36–38, fig. 6.  
1966 Cairns and Walker: 162, color repro.  
1966 Sutton: 10, 47–48, 187, color pl. 25, pl. 29, detail.  
1968 Sweet: 54, color pl. 3.  
1978 Fleming: 171–174, 189–191, fig. 23.  
1978 Newton and MacDonald: 150–152, fig. 2.  
1978 Taylor: 27–29, color pl. 5.  
1981 Johnson: 164–168, fig. 1.  
1984 Curry: 38–43, color repro.  
1984 Stein: 9–10, color pl. 3.  
1984 Walker: 558–559, color repro.  
1988 Wilmerding, *American Masterpieces*: 142, color repro.  
1994 Anderson and Koval: 106–109, 133–135, color pl. 4.  
1994 Dormont and MacDonald: 76–78, color pl. 14.  
1995 Chaleyssin: 22–26, color pl.  
1995 Koval: 32–36.  
1996 Warner: 111–112, color pl. 27.

1942.9.99 (695)

## *Grey and Silver: Chelsea Wharf*

c. 1864/1868

Oil on canvas, 61 × 46 (24 × 18 1/8)

Widener Collection

**Technical Notes:** The coarse plain-weave fabric support<sup>1</sup> has been lined, perhaps in 1892 when it was "varnished & restored" under Whistler's supervision. A tracing in NGA curatorial files documents a stencil on the back of the painting: "FROM / WOOD & C<sup>o</sup> / 190 / BROMPTON ROAD / LONDON S.W." The gray ground layer was pigmented with coarsely ground black particles. The paint was applied in two distinct techniques: The background consists of a thick textured layer, over which the boats, wharf, and figures were delineated with a fluid, diluted medium. X-radiography and infrared examination do not reveal any major changes or the presence of another painting underneath the present image.<sup>2</sup> Crackle has developed throughout the background, and small areas of inpainting appear along all four edges. There is a small vertical damage in the lower left quadrant that was repaired before 1944, when the painting was relined. Discolored varnish was removed from the painting during conservation treatments in 1930<sup>3</sup> and 1994. The picture has a thin synthetic resin varnish applied as part of treatment in 1994.

**Provenance:** Sold by the artist before 1886 to Gerald Potter, London;<sup>4</sup> probably sold before August 1895 to (Boussod, Valladon & Cie, New York); sold 1895 to Peter A. B. Widener [1834–1915], Lynnewood Hall, Elkins Park, Pennsylvania; inheritance from Estate of Peter A. B. Widener by gift through power of appointment of Joseph E. Widener, Elkins Park, Pennsylvania.





Fig. 1. James McNeill Whistler, *Grey and Silver: Old Battersea Reach*, oil on canvas, 1863, The Art Institute of Chicago, Mr. and Mrs. Potter Palmer Collection, 1922.449

**Exhibited:** Possibly 11th Exhibition, *Society of French Artists*, Descamps Gallery, London, 1875, no. 80, as *Chelsea Reach—Harmony in Grey*.<sup>5</sup> *Nocturnes, Marines, and Chevalet Pieces*, Boussod, Valladon & Cie, Goupil Gallery, London, 1892, no. 35, as *Grey and Silver*. *Chelsea Wharf. Memorial Exhibition of the Works of the Late James McNeill Whistler, First President of the International Society of Sculptors, Painters and Gravers*, New Gallery, London, 1905, no. 69. *James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903)*, Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen, Berlin, 1969, no. 26. *The Color of Mood: American Tonalism 1880–1910*, California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, 1972, no. 46. *London and the Thames: Paintings of Three Centuries*, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, 1977, no. 68. *James McNeill Whistler*, Tate Gallery, London; Musée d'Orsay, Paris; NGA, 1994–1995, no. 38.

THIS VIEW from the Chelsea waterfront across the Thames toward Battersea is one of several such scenes that Whistler painted from the windows of a small house he rented on 7 Lindsey Row, Chelsea, where he lived from 1863 to 1866.<sup>6</sup> He was attracted to the area for the picturesque possibilities of its scenery, commercial life, and colorful inhabitants, and for the fact that it “offered London’s closest equivalent to *la vie de bohème* of the Latin Quarter in Paris.”<sup>7</sup> The artist became familiar with the London waterfront through his neighbors Henry and Walter Greaves, two brothers who had grown up on the river and knew it intimately. In exchange for companionship and occasional art lessons, they rowed Whistler on the river as their father had done for J.M.W. Turner.<sup>8</sup>

The early Thames views exemplify a transitional point in Whistler’s stylistic development, in which he gradually abandoned the detailed realism of *Wapping* [1982.76.8, p. 233] in favor of the aesthetic idealism and tonalism that culminated in the “nocturnes” of the 1870s. This scene is set at dusk, and the dense fog rolling across the river enhances the dreamy, poetic ambience.<sup>9</sup> Shadowy figures hurry along the Chelsea embankment in the foreground. Behind them boats with furled sails—one of Whistler’s favorite motifs in such compositions—are moored to piers. The pair of smokestacks, the triangular coal slag, and the spire of St. Mary’s Church visible on the distant horizon on the Battersea side of the Thames also appear in *Grey and Silver: Old Battersea Reach* (fig. 1) and *Variations in Flesh Colour and Green: The Balcony* (fig. 2).<sup>10</sup> Whistler provided no indication that Battersea was considered “the sink hole of Surrey”<sup>11</sup> because of its turpentine factory, chemical works, and other vestiges of the Industrial Revolution.

*Grey and Silver: Chelsea Wharf* was formerly considered to have been painted in 1875 because of its putative inclusion in the Society of French Artists exhibition that year.<sup>12</sup> The earlier date, which is based on the artist’s incongruous combination of paint textures, is more plausible. Whistler began to use the highly diluted paint that he called “sauce” as early as 1863, and it appears in *Battersea Reach* (1863, CGA [Young et al. 1980, 45]). After a period of experimentation that lasted from the mid- to



Fig. 2. James McNeill Whistler, *Variations in Flesh Colour and Green—The Balcony*, oil on wood panel, 1864–1870, Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, F29.23a-b

late 1860s, this feature became a dominant element of the artist's technique after 1870. Securely dated landscapes from the mid-1860s show the same combination of impasto and "sauce" as the National Gallery painting, although the human figures in them tend to be more fully developed.<sup>13</sup> Whistler continued to depict the London waterfront, and his paintings of the 1870s are handled with greater assurance, are usually horizontally oriented, and have the paint applied in a uniformly thin manner. *Grey and Silver: Chelsea Wharf* can best be characterized as a "proto-nocturne," in which Whistler imbued his idealized and aesthetic perceptions of the Chelsea waterfront at dusk with a distinctive atmosphere



Fig. 3. James McNeill Whistler, related drawing, London, Leighton House Art Gallery and Museum, M 396

and mood. A drawing closely related to this painting is in Leighton House, London (fig. 3).<sup>14</sup>

RWT

#### Notes

1. Young et al. 1980, 30; according to the authors the support corresponds in size to the French "toile de 12," like *Gold and Brown: Self Portrait* [1959.3.2, p. 257].

2. It is thus extremely unlikely that the sophisticated tones and sketchy treatment are a later addition to the painting, as has been suggested by Young et al. 1980, 30, and Dorment and MacDonald 1994, 108.

3. These particles may have been added by Herbert N. Carmer, 24 March 1930, who reported that he had "remov[ed] bloom, refreshen[ed] old varnish" (conservation report, 25 August 1983, in NGA curatorial files).



James McNeill Whistler, *Grey and Silver: Chelsea Wharf*, 1942-9.99



4. According to Young et al. 1980, 30, in 1886 Whistler listed it in Potter's collection under the title *Chelsea Barges*.

5. Roberts 1915, n.p., linked the National Gallery painting to one mentioned in a review of the Descamps Gallery exhibition that was published in *The Athenaeum*, 20 November 1875: "*Chelsea Reach* (80), a study almost in monochrome, but of great richness and delicacy, is called a 'harmony in grey,' and so it is." When Widener purchased the painting in 1895 it was called *La Rivière*. Pennell and Pennell 1908, 2: facing 46, reproduced the work as *Chelsea Wharf: Grey and Silver*, but did not connect it to their discussion (1: 199) of Whistler's entry in the 1875 exhibition. Young et al. 1980, 30, accept the Descamps Gallery exhibition as part of the painting's history.

6. His next residence, from 1867 to 1878, was 2 Lindsey Row (now 96 Cheyne Walk); Young et al. 1980, lx–lxi.

7. Curry 1984, 74.

8. Pocock 1970, 56–58, 66–67.

9. Richard Dormont, in Dormont and MacDonald 1994, 107–108, noted how fog had come to be admired for its aesthetic qualities in the 1860s and remarked that "Whistler claimed to have been the first painter to make the fog his special subject."

10. Other landscapes produced during Whistler's residence on Lindsey Row with similar arrangements of forms, sometimes articulated more clearly, are *Chelsea in Ice* (1964, private collection [Young et al. 1980, 53]), *Nocturne: Blue and Silver—Battersea Reach* (1870–1875, FGA [Young et al. 1980, 119]), and *Nocturne in Blue and Silver* (c. 1871–1872, Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts [Young et al. 1980, 113]).

11. Sherwood Ramsey, *Historic Battersea: Topographical Biographical* (London, 1913), 21, quoted in Dormont and MacDonald 1994, 99.

12. See note 5 above.

13. Early examples are *Blue and Silver: Trouville* (1865, FGA [Young et al. 1980, 66]) and *Harmony in Blue and Silver: Trouville* (1865, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston [Young et al. 1980, 64]). More distinct human figures appear in *Battersea Reach from Lindsey Houses* (c. 1864, Hunterian Art Gallery, Glasgow [Young et al. 1980, 55]) and *Chelsea in Ice* (1864–1871, private collection, Great Britain [Young et al. 1980, 53]).

14. MacDonald 1995, 108.

## References

- 1885–1890 Widener: 1: 115, repro.  
1908 Pennell and Pennell: 1: 199; 2: facing p. 46.  
1915 Roberts: n.p.  
1915 Widener: n.p., repro.  
1923 Widener: n.p., repro.  
1931 Widener: 214, repro.  
1969 Holden: 40, pl. 10.  
1980 Young et al.: 30, color pl. 25.  
1994 Dormont and MacDonald: 108, color illus.  
38.

1943.6.1 (749)

## *Mother of Pearl and Silver: The Andalusian*

1888(?)–1900

Oil on canvas, 191.5 × 89.8 (75<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 35<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>)

Harris Whittemore Collection

### Inscriptions

At right center: butterfly mark

**Technical Notes:** Although there is no evidence that the very rough and irregular fabric support had been damaged, it was lined with a finer fabric during Whistler's lifetime.<sup>1</sup> He believed either that the lining process helped to preserve the painting or that it enhanced aesthetic appeal; the heavy pressure and hot glue of the nineteenth-century lining procedure resulted in flattened areas of impasto and emphasized the canvas weave. This is especially true of thinly painted works on coarse canvas such as this, where the irregular thickness of the threads and weave became an integral element of the appearance of the painting. Other than fine crackle in the center and slight abrasion throughout, the paint surface is in excellent condition. The ground layer appears to be a thin dark wash over the plain-weave fabric. X-radiography reveals some changes: The head was originally larger, the right sleeve was slightly larger, and the bow on the back of the dress at the waist was higher. During conservation in 1995, discolored varnish was removed. The gilded frame may be original.

**Provenance:** Sold 1900–1901 by the artist to Edward G. Kennedy, New York; his firm (H. Wunderlich & Co., New York); sold January 1902 to John Howard Whittemore [d. 1910], Naugatuck, Connecticut; probably bequeathed to the J. H. Whittemore Company, Naugatuck, Connecticut, with life interest to his daughter, Miss Gertrude B. Whittemore [d. 1941], Naugatuck, Connecticut.<sup>2</sup>

**Exhibited:** *Fine Arts Exhibit of the United States of America*, Exposition Universelle, Paris, 1900, no. 103, as *Mother-of-Pearl and Silver—The Andalusian*. *71st Annual Exhibition*, PAFA, 1902, no. 49, as *The Andalusian*. *24th Annual Exhibition*, Society of American Artists, New York, 1902, no. 21, as *L'Andalousienne*. *Memorial Exhibition of the Works of Mr. J. McNeill Whistler: Oil Paintings, Water Colors, Pastels and Drawings*, Copley Society of Boston, Copley Hall, Boston, 1904, no. 46, as *L'Andalousienne*. *Oeuvres de James McNeill Whistler*, Palais de l'École des Beaux-Arts, Paris, 1905, no. 25, as *L'Andalouse*. *Paintings in Oil and Pastel by James McNeill Whistler*, MMA, 1910, no. 33, as *L'Andalousienne: Mother of Pearl and Silver*. *Oils, Water-colors, Drawings, and Prints by James McNeill Whistler*, MFA, 1934, no. 5. *A Century of Progress, Exhibition of Paintings and Sculpture*, AIC, 1934, no. 417, as *L'Andalouse, Mother of Pearl and Silver*. *American Painting from 1860 until Today*, Cleveland Museum of Art, 1937, no. 208, as *L'Andalousienne*. *Exhibition of Paintings*, Tuttle House, Naugatuck, Connecticut, 1938,

no. 37. *Survey of American Painting*, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, 1940, no. 138, as *L'Andalusienne*. *Paintings from the Whittemore Collection*, Mattatuck Historical Society, Waterbury, Connecticut, 1941. *La Pintura de Los Estados Unidos de Museos de la Ciudad de Washington*, Museo del Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico City, 1980–1981, no. 19. *James McNeill Whistler*, Tate Gallery, London; Musée d'Orsay, Paris; NGA, 1994–1995, no. 196.

DEPICTED IN *Mother of Pearl and Silver: The Andalusian* is Whistler's sister-in-law Ethel Birnie Philip (1861–1920), wearing an evening dress with a transparent silk bolero jacket derived from traditional Andalusian costume. The daughter of the sculptor John Birnie Philip, she was one of the younger sisters of Whistler's wife Beatrice. She lived with the Whistlers and acted as the artist's secretary before her marriage in 1894 to the American writer and London literary figure Charles Whibley. After her sister Beatrice's death she occasionally traveled with Whistler and nursed him during his illness.<sup>3</sup> She was one of the artist's favorite models, and his depictions of her range from intimate drawings, etchings, and lithographs to at least five life-size oil paintings.

The full-length figure stands against an empty, shallow background, with her back to the spectator. Set in a pose reminiscent of Edouard Manet's *Camille (The Green Dress)* (1866, Kunsthalle, Bremen), her shoulders are oriented slightly to the right, and she turns her head in that direction to reveal her profile. Although the woman's black hair is tied back over her head in a topknot, it is the dress, and not her features, that commands the viewer's attention. The graceful pose emphasizes the costume's long, sweeping cascade to the floor. The tonality is dark, and the subtle gradations of browns, blacks, and grays are relieved only by the light flesh tones and the white bow at the back of the waist.

Citing Whistler's interest in women's attire, Richard Dorment recently argued that the dress in this work "has far more to do with Parisian high fashion than with Spanish national dress." During the early 1890s Paris was the home of many noted couturiers, and Whistler, who had designed dresses for his female sitters, avidly collected fashion plates and journals. Dorment suggested that the title of this painting refers not to Spain, but rather to a specific model of designer dress. He concluded that it "is not a portrait of a person, but of a dress," thus transforming Ethel Philip into a fashion model or mannequin rather than the subject of a formal full-

length portrait. In a very general sense this image reflects the late nineteenth-century cultural phenomenon of hispanism. Many of Whistler's French and American contemporaries were drawn to Spain by the painterly legacy of Diego Velázquez and were fascinated by romantic Spanish themes. Andalusia was especially appealing to the imagination because the area combined the colorful folk customs of its inhabitants with the vestiges of its past Islamic culture. In 1882 Whistler's friend John Singer Sargent had dazzled the Paris art world with his famous Andalusian subject *El Jaleo* (Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston).<sup>4</sup> Whistler had never been to Spain, and hispanism was never as central to his art as *japonisme*, but he revered Diego Velázquez, whose influence is manifested here in the somber palette and painterly technique.

It is unclear exactly when Whistler commenced painting *Mother of Pearl and Silver: The Andalusian*. Evidence suggests that the dealer Edward G. Kennedy was mistaken in his claim that he saw the artist working on it in 1888.<sup>5</sup> The style and signature are consistent with works securely dated to the mid-1890s. Moreover, Dorment noted that "the style of dress indicates a date closer to 1894–1895 when leg-of-mutton sleeves were in fashion."<sup>6</sup> The garment may be the "Spanish costume" that the French sculptor Charles Drouet asked Whistler to return to him late in 1892.<sup>7</sup> The composition is closely related to two of Whistler's other portrayals of Ethel Philip that date from the mid-1890s, *Rose et or: La Tulipe* (Young et al. 1980, 418; fig. 1) and *Harmony in Black: A Portrait of Mrs. Charles Whibley* (Young et al. 1980, 419; fig. 2).<sup>8</sup>

The Pennells saw *Mother of Pearl and Silver: The Andalusian* in 1894 at Whistler's Paris studio at 110, rue du Bac.<sup>9</sup> Kennedy inquired about the price of "the girl . . . in black or grey" in February 1896, but Whistler refused to sell it without further revisions.<sup>10</sup> As in other instances late in his career, the alterations dragged on interminably, and the artist did not part with his work at the promised time. In July 1896 Whistler wrote to Kennedy, "It has been sent home, relined & in delightful condition . . . we will hope that you finally get that Spanish lady safely into your collection."<sup>11</sup> Ten months later, in May 1897, the artist informed Kennedy, "I shall have the black Spanish picture I have for you to look at the end of the week."<sup>12</sup> But on 6 November 1897 Kennedy complained that he had bought but not received four portraits of Mrs. Whibley.<sup>13</sup> Two and a half years later Kennedy still had not received the





Fig. 1. James McNeill Whistler, *Rose et or: La Tulipe*, oil on canvas, ©Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow, Bequeathed by Miss Rosalind Birnie Philip

picture. In May 1900 Whistler wrote, "Tell me what is our arrangement... about the full lengths—For you see, one of them I have completed—the one that you said was in the 'slate colored dress'."<sup>14</sup> In another letter written shortly thereafter the artist commented, "The 'Andalouse' is of course very swagger and in beautiful condition."<sup>15</sup> The painting was not shipped to Kennedy in New York until after the Paris Universal Exhibition that year, where it was exhibited for the first time and given its formal title.<sup>16</sup>

RWT

## Notes

1. See note 11 below. In addition, Rosalind Birnie Philip, in a note of 1 May 1897 on a letter to Ethel Whibley, Glasgow University Library, wrote that she had been taken to see "Ethel's picture which had been rebacked & the background restored (Black lace cloak)" (quoted in Young et al. 1980, 170).

2. Young et al. 1980, 170, date the transaction with Whittemore to 1900, based on a note by Kennedy in the NYPL. However, according to a letter (signed by Hermann Wunderlich) of 24 November 1934 from Kennedy & Co. to the J. H. Whittemore Company, the painting was purchased directly from the artist in May 1901 (recounted in letter of 7 April 1948 from Clarence E. Jones, Whittemore Company treasurer, to James Lane, in

Fig. 2. James McNeill Whistler, *Harmony in Black: A Portrait of Mrs. Charles Whibley*, oil on canvas, ©Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow, Bequeathed by Miss Rosalind Birnie Philip





James McNeill Whistler, *Mother of Pearl and Silver: The Andalusian*, 1943.6.1

NGA curatorial files). In addition, the invoice for the sale from Wunderlich to Whittemore is dated 6 January 1902, with payment received 22 January (copy in NGA curatorial files). The artist Edward Austin Abbey recommended the painting, as "the property of a Mr. Whittemore of Naugatuck," to Isabella Stewart Gardner when it was exhibited at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in early 1902 (letter of 30 January 1902, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, copy in NGA curatorial files).

Another question in the records seems to be which "Mr. Whittemore" purchased the painting: John Howard or his son Harris. Most of the records seem to point to John Howard Whittemore. The 1902 invoice was made out to "J. H. Whittemore," and the loan of the painting to five exhibitions before John Whittemore's death in 1910 was credited to either "John H. Whittemore" or "J. H. Whittemore." Although not explicitly documented, it seems that, as with *Symphony in White, No. 1: The White Girl* [1943.6.2, p. 238], John Howard Whittemore's daughter, Gertrude B. Whittemore, was given a life interest in the painting after it became owned by the J. H. Whittemore Company, which was formed after John Howard Whittemore's death. Miss Whittemore is credited as the owner of the painting in the six exhibitions to which it was loaned before her death in 1941. Despite this evidence, letters in NGA curatorial files from the Whittemore Company always discuss the painting as having been owned by Harris Whittemore, and Young et al. 1980, 170, confuse the two Whittemore men, referring at one point to "J. Harris Whittemore."

3. Young et al. 1980, 170.

4. For a discussion of Sargent's painting and its cultural context, see Mary Crawford Volk, *John Singer Sargent's El Jaleo* [Exh. cat. NGA.] (Washington, D.C., 1992).

5. Edward G. Kennedy, note dated 1 May 1900, NYPL, cited in Young et al. 1980, 170.

6. Dorment and MacDonald 1994, 275. Young et al. 1980, 170, also believed that the early date was unlikely.

7. Charles Drouet, letter to Whistler, 3 December 1892, Whistler Collection, Glasgow University Library.

8. Whistler's two other life-size portraits of Ethel Philip also date from the 1890s: *Red and Black: The Fan* (early 1890s, Hunterian Art Gallery, Glasgow [Young et al. 1980, 388]) and *Harmony in Brown: The Felt Hat* (1891, Hunterian Art Gallery, Glasgow [Young et al. 1980, 395]). Gallatin 1918, 9, erroneously stated that *Rose et or: La Tulipe* was "evidently a study" for *The Andalusian*.

9. Pennell and Pennell 1908, 2:158. The other two paintings were *Red and Black: The Fan* and *Rose et or: La Tulipe*.

10. Kennedy, letter to Whistler, 25 February 1898, Glasgow University Library; Whistler, letter to Kennedy, 14 and 28 March 1896, NYPL.

11. Whistler, letter to Kennedy, July 1896, NYPL. *Mother of Pearl and Silver: The Andalusian* was one of three full-lengths Kennedy was negotiating to buy at the time.

12. Whistler, letter to Kennedy, 20 May 1897, NYPL.

13. Kennedy, letter to Whistler, 6 November 1897, Glasgow University Library.

14. Whistler, letter to Kennedy, 1 May 1900, NYPL.

15. Whistler, letter to Kennedy, 12 May 1900, NYPL.

16. For a more complete summary of the documents relating to this painting, see Young et al. 1980, 170. Whistler variously referred to it in his letters as "The 'Andalusian'" and "L'Andalousienne," leading to confusion about the correct title. These were merely nicknames, and he exhibited it only as *Mother-of-Pearl and Silver—The Andalusian*. The National Gallery title reflects a regularization of the punctuation consistent with other published references to the painting and other titles given by Whistler.

## References

- 1905 Bénédite: 246.  
 1907 Cary: no. 46, 163.  
 1908 Pennell and Pennell: 2: 158, 251.  
 1917 Duret: 206.  
 1980 Young et al.: 170, repro. 242.  
 1994 Dorment and MacDonald: 275–276, color repro.

1948.16.2 (1030)

## Alice Butt

c. 1895

Oil on canvas, 51.7 × 38.1 (20<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 15)

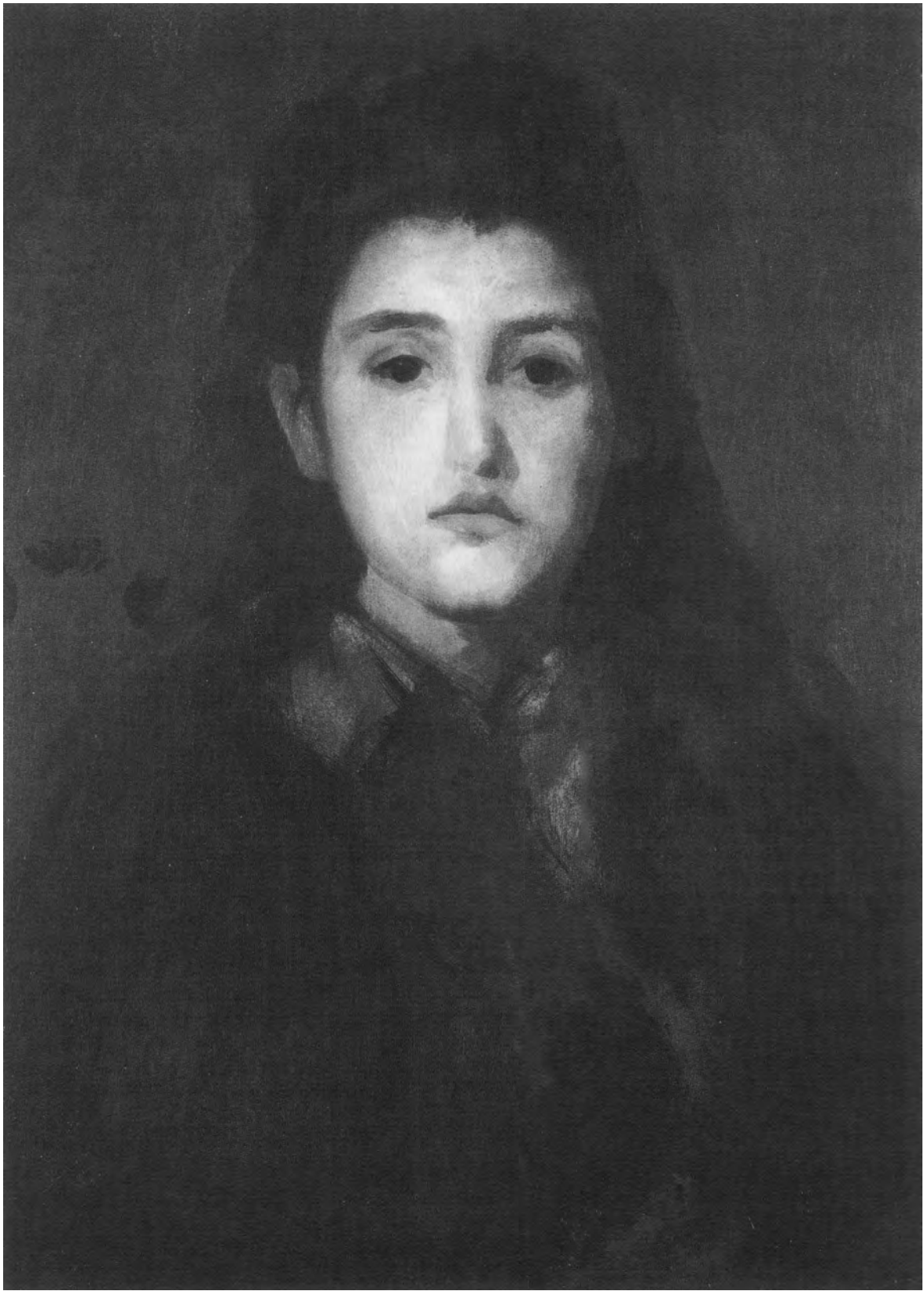
Gift of Curt H. Reisinger

## Inscriptions

At left center: butterfly mark

**Technical Notes:** The finely woven plain-weave fabric support has been lined and remounted on what is possibly its original four-member stretcher. The tacking margins were removed, but cusping visible along the edges suggests that the original dimensions have not been altered. The artist applied the white ground layer with vigorous brushstrokes. He first delineated the girl's features with a gray wash. Thereafter he added the flesh tones, leaving the gray wash visible for the shadows. The brown robe consists of a quick wash of brown paint; the white ground was left visible for the collar. The paint was applied rapidly and fluidly, with many wet-into-wet passages. Whistler may have used a brush handle to scratch into the paint, especially in the shadow under the girl's chin. Other than mild abrasion throughout (although some may have been caused by improper handling, much was deliberately induced by the artist), the paint surface is in very good condition. There is only very minor inpainting. The surface is coated with a slightly discolored varnish.<sup>1</sup>

**Provenance:** Stolen from Whistler's Paris studio, c. 1896. (A. Reid, Glasgow, Scotland); purchased April 1900 by J. J. Cowan, Edinburgh, Scotland; returned to Whistler 30 June 1901; probably returned c. April 1904 by Whistler's executrix Rosalind Birnie Philip to J. J. Cowan; (A. Reid); purchased December 1906 by (C. Vose & Sons, Boston); purchased 1908 by Hugo Reisinger [1856–1914], New York; his wife, Edmée Busch Reisinger



James McNeill Whistler, *Alice Butt*, 1948.16.2

[later Mrs. Charles E. Greenough, d. 1955], New York; her son, Curt H. Reisinger [d. 1964], New York.

**Exhibited:** Loan for display with permanent collection, MMA, 1908, as *Head of a Girl*. *Ausstellung Amerikanischer Kunst*, Royal Academy of Arts, Berlin; Royal Art Society, Munich, 1910, no. 93, as *Kopf eines jungen Mädchens*. *Masterpieces of Art*, New York World's Fair, 1940, no. 299, as *Head of a Girl*. *Triumph of Realism: An Exhibition of European and American Realist Paintings 1850–1910*, Brooklyn Museum; Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond; California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, 1967–1968, no. 88, as *Head of a Girl*. *Whistler: The Later Years*, University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor, 1978, unnumbered, as *Head of a Girl*. *Two Hundred Years of American Paintings, 1700–1900* [inaugural exhibition], Museum of Arts and Sciences, Macon, Georgia, 1981, no. 48, as *Head of a Girl*.

UNTIL the publication of the Whistler catalogue raisonné in 1980, this painting was identified only as “Head of a Girl.” The authors determined that it was one of two nearly identical portraits of the same sitter that had been stolen from Whistler’s Paris studio during the late 1890s; they speculated that the other, more spontaneously executed portrait may have been a preparatory study for this painting.<sup>2</sup> Whistler, who initiated legal proceedings to recover the paintings in 1901, recollected that he had painted them in his Chelsea studio during the middle 1890s and identified their subject as “a little child called ‘Alice Butt’—charming—quite Italian in type.” He considered both to be “defective and purloined pictures” that had been “painted upon” after the theft.

The Glasgow art dealer Alexander Reid claimed that he had bought this painting directly from Whistler in Paris around 1896. When he sold the portrait to J. J. Cowan of Edinburgh in 1900, Reid averred that he had acquired it from a friend of Whistler who did not want the artist to find out that he had sold it. Cowan ultimately returned the painting to Whistler, and it was still in his studio when he died in 1903. Acting upon the artist’s instructions, Whistler’s executrix Rosalind Birnie Philip attached a notice to it in 1904 saying, “This picture was removed from Mr. Whistler’s studio without his knowledge & worked on by some person unknown,” before it was returned to Cowan. This painting was probably the portrait called “Head of a Girl” that Reid sold to the Boston dealers Vose & Sons in 1906.<sup>3</sup>

Set against a red background, Alice Butt is noteworthy for her disheveled hair and full red lips; she



Fig. 1. James McNeill Whistler, *Little Juniper Bud: Lizzie Willis*, oil on canvas, 1896–1897, ©Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow, Bequeathed by Miss Rosalind Birnie Philip

looks directly at the viewer. This vivid and adeptly painted portrait is an outstanding example of the many full-face bust studies of young children that Whistler painted during the mid- and late 1890s. It is difficult to understand why the artist dismissed this portrait as “defective,” and conservators have determined that it was never “painted upon.” One of the finest examples of the type is the unfinished *Little Juniper Bud—Lizzie Willis* (Young et al. 1980, 475; fig. 1).

Nothing is known about the sitter, who may well have been one of the street urchins Whistler found while searching for picturesque subjects in London’s poor neighborhoods. He was attracted to girls with exotic foreign characteristics; Charles Lang Freer recorded that he had seen several portraits of Italian children in the artist’s studio.<sup>4</sup> In his discussion of another example of the genre, Whistler’s *Lillie: An Oval* (after 1896, Hunterian Art Gallery,



University of Glasgow [Young et al. 1980, 465]), Richard Dorment noted that "one might almost describe these subjects as the human equivalent to the dilapidated façades and shop-fronts he found in Chelsea and Dieppe."<sup>5</sup>

RWT

#### Notes

1. Conservation report, April 1993 (in NGA curatorial files).
2. Young et al. 1980, no. 437, 193–194. A third painting of a similar subject, *The Bridesmaid* (late 1890s, Newark Museum, New Jersey [Young et al. 1980, 487]), was also stolen at this time.
3. For a full record of the lengthy correspondence concerning the two stolen portraits of Alice Butt, see Young et al. 1980, 193–194; all the quotations are taken from that text.
4. Freer Diaries, Book 13, FGA Archive. Freer purchased two related paintings, *Vert et or: Le Raconteur* and *The Little Faustina* (1896–1900, FGA [Young et al. 1980, nos. 513 and 510]).
5. Dorment and MacDonald 1994, 281.

#### References

- 1980 Young et al.: 194, no. 438, color pl. 279.  
1981 Williams: 130, repro., 131

1943.11.7 (758)

### Alexander Arnold Hannay

c. 1896  
Oil on wood, 22.3 × 13.3 (8<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>)  
Rosenwald Collection

#### Inscriptions

At left center: butterfly mark

**Technical Notes:** The tangentially cut, vertical-grain mahogany panel is beveled on the reverse, and strips of the same wood 0.3 cm wide were attached along all four sides before painting. The reverse is inscribed "22379" in crayon. The artist applied paint with liquid strokes over a thin white ground layer; occasionally there is a more complex layering of glazes and scumbles. The figure was finished before the background. The sitter's hands may have been left incomplete. The paint surface is slightly abraded, and crackle has developed throughout. The thick surface coating is heavily discolored.

**Provenance:** The sitter, Alexander Arnold Hannay, London, until at least 1912. (Chester H. Johnson Gallery, Chicago); sold May 1929 to Lessing Julius Rosenwald, Jenkintown, Pennsylvania.

**Exhibited:** *Loan Collection of Works by James McNeill Whistler*, National Gallery of British Art (now Tate Gallery), London, 1912, no. 13, as *Portrait*. Chester H. Johnson Gallery, Chicago, 1929.

LITTLE IS KNOWN about Alexander Arnold Hannay, who was the son of a Presbyterian minister from Dundee, Scotland. He came to London at an early age and became a solicitor in 1881. During the late 1890s his family was friendly with Whistler's sister-in-law Rosalind Birnie Philip and her husband. In addition to this portrait, Hannay owned at least seven other paintings by the artist.<sup>1</sup> Hannay's name is last listed in the Court Directory of the London Post Office Directory in 1917.

In this small full-length portrait Hannay stands in the corner of a room, next to a sketchily painted chair that is visible at his left. He wears a black frock coat and gazes at the viewer. The dim lighting is reinforced by a predominantly gray-brown palette accentuated by touches of rose on Hannay's face and his muted red lips. Elizabeth and Joseph Pennell dated this work to c. 1896, when Whistler painted several similar small full-lengths in order to demonstrate "the fallacy of the life-size theory and the belief that the importance of a portrait depended on the size of the canvas."<sup>2</sup>

RWT

#### Notes

1. Young et al. 1980, 206.
2. Pennell and Pennell 1908, 2: 172. Comparable small full-lengths are the portrait of C. E. Holloway, *Rose and Brown: The Philosopher* (1896–1897, Comte de Ganay Collection, Paris [Young et al. 1980, 472]), and *E. G. Kennedy II* (1893–1895, MMA [Young et al. 1980, 404]).

#### References

- 1908 Pennell and Pennell: 2: 172.  
1980 Young et al.: 206, repro. 306.



James McNeill Whistler, *Alexander Arnold Hannay*, 1943.11.7

1959.3.2 (1531)

## *Gold and Brown: Self-Portrait*

c. 1896–1898

Oil on canvas, 62.4 × 46.5 (24<sup>9</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 18<sup>5</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)

Gift of Edith Stuyvesant Gerry

### Inscriptions

At right center: butterfly mark

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support was relined during restoration in 1959. Like that of *Grey and Silver: Chelsea Wharf* [1942.9.99, p. 244], the support is of the same dimensions as the standard French size “toile de 12,” and thus may have been acquired in Paris.<sup>1</sup> The tacking margins have been removed, and the absence of cusping on all but the right edge indicates that the painting may have been slightly cropped. The artist applied paint very thinly, with free brushwork and no impasto, over a very thin beige ground layer. The face and hand are underpainted with black paint. X-radiography indicates that the sitter’s shoulders were narrowed, the contours of his head reworked, and his clothing more defined in the underpaint. Whistler’s technique of rubbing down the paint after it was applied probably contributed to the almost transparent, stained appearance. The painting was treated most recently in 1995, when discolored varnish was removed. The gilded reeded frame is signed by Frederick Grau (one of Whistler’s framemakers) and was fitted with a liner to accommodate the dimensions of this painting.

**Provenance:** Sold by 1900 to George W. Vanderbilt [1862–1914], Asheville, North Carolina, but retained in Whistler’s studio until probably 1904;<sup>2</sup> bequeathed 1914 to Vanderbilt’s widow, Edith Stuyvesant Dresser Vanderbilt [later Mrs. Peter G. Gerry, d. 1958], Asheville, North Carolina, and Providence, Rhode Island.

**Exhibited:** *Exhibition of International Art*, International Society of Sculptors, Painters, and Gravers, London, 1898, no. 179, as *Gold and Brown. Oil Paintings, Watercolors, Pastels and Drawings: Memorial Exhibition of the Works of Mr. J. McNeill Whistler*, Copley Society of Boston, Copley Hall, 1904, no. 1, as *Gold and Brown—Portrait of Mr. James McNeill Whistler. Oeuvres de James McNeill Whistler*, Palais de l’Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris, 1905, no. 29, as *Brun et Or—Portrait de Whistler. From El Greco to Pollock: Early and Late Works by European and American Artists*, BMA, 1968, no. 90, as *Brown and Gold: Self-Portrait. James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903)*, Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen, Berlin, 1969, no. 53, as *Braun und Gold: Selbstbildnis. Selected American Paintings from the National Gallery of Art*, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, 1974, no cat., as *Brown and Gold: Self-Portrait. Whistler: The Later Years*, University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor, 1978, unnumbered checklist, as *Brown and Gold: Self-Portrait. Fin-de-siècle Faces: Portraiture in the Age of Proust*, Visual Arts Gallery, School of Humanities, University of Alabama at Birmingham, 1988, no. 40. *James McNeill Whistler*, Tate Gallery, London; Musée d’Orsay, Paris; NGA, 1994–1995, no. 204.

NOTED for his caustic wit, carefully groomed appearance, personal affectations, and extravagant mode of dress, the publicity-conscious Whistler used self-portraiture as a means to manipulate his public persona. In a series of self-portraits painted in the mid-1890s, he replaced the flamboyance that typifies his earlier examples of the genre with an aura of introspection and heightened spirituality. During these years Whistler was annoyed at other artists’ critical portrayals of him in literature and art, most notably George du Maurier’s caricature of him as the “idle apprentice” in the popular novel *Tribby* (1894) and Giovanni Boldini’s (1845–1931) formal full-length *James McNeill Whistler* (fig. 1). Whistler also was still smarting with resentment over William Merritt Chase’s full-length *James McNeill Whistler* (1885, MMA).<sup>3</sup> Whistler’s self-orchestrated transformation of character in his late self-portraits can partly be ascribed to his despon-

Fig. 1. Giovanni Boldini, *Portrait of James McNeill Whistler*, oil on canvas, 1897, New York, The Brooklyn Museum of Art, 09.849



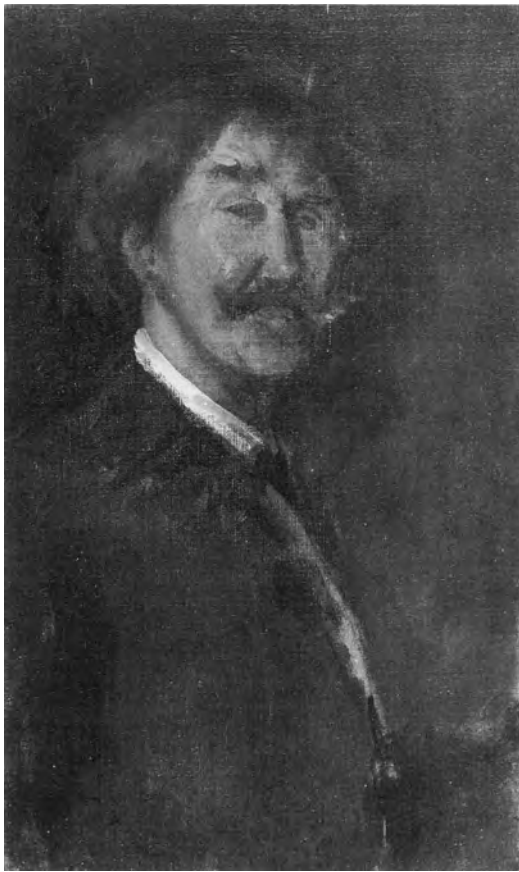


Fig. 2. James McNeill Whistler, *Gold and Brown: Self-Portrait*, oil on canvas, c. 1896, ©Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow



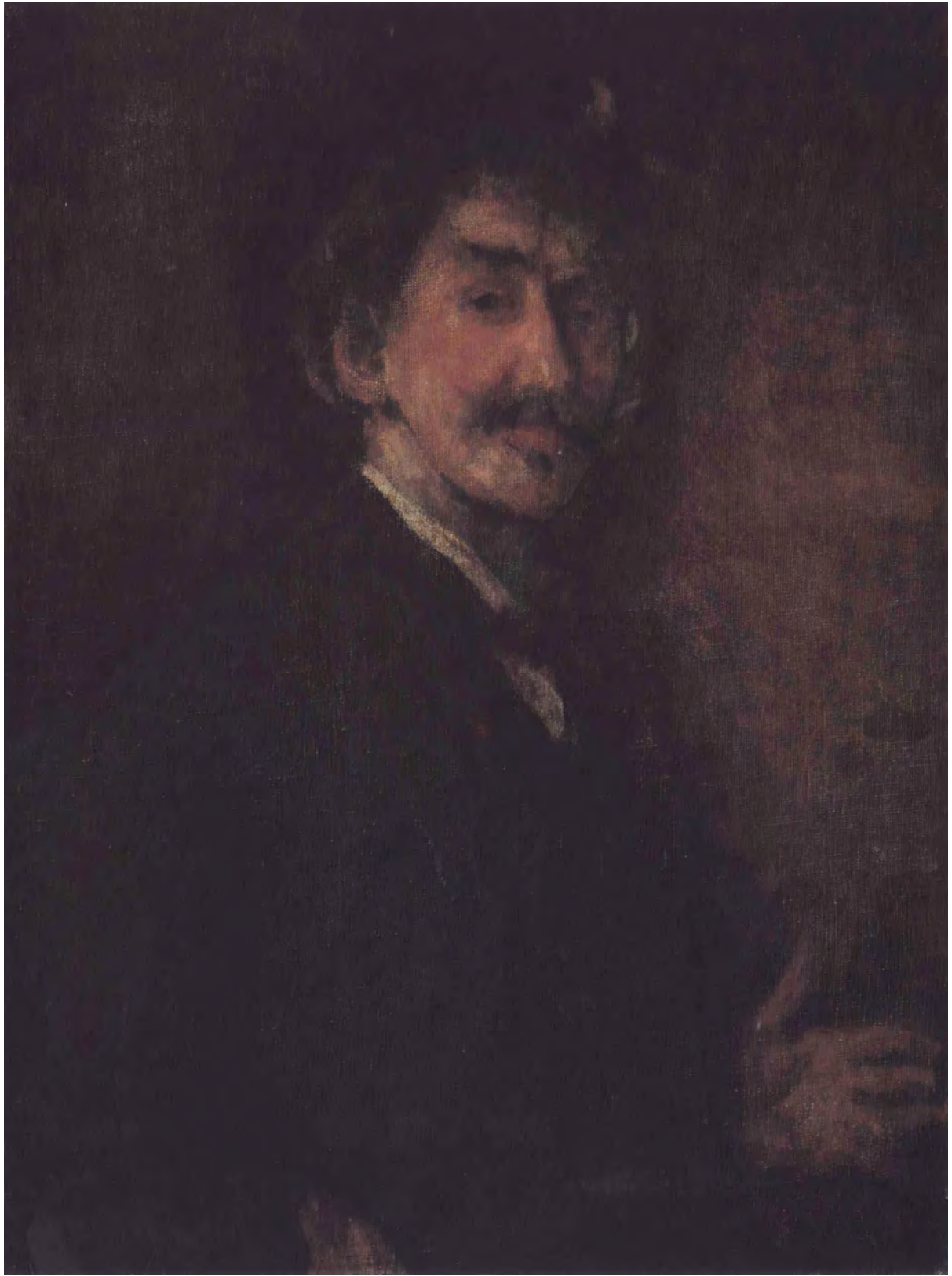
Fig. 3. James McNeill Whistler, *Self-Portrait*, oil on canvas, c. 1897–1898, ©Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow

dency over his wife Beatrice's fatal illness. At the same time, he wanted to present himself as one who was regarded by his admirers as a "living old master": He had a claim to that status after the French government purchased his *Arrangement in Gray and Black No. 1: The Painter's Mother* (1871, Musée d'Orsay, Paris) in 1892. In her study of Whistler's changing image, Sarah Burns noted that this development, "along with his purported disdain for financial and material circumstances, rendered him a modernized, scientifically verified re-creation of the idealized, lofty, disinterested Old Master."<sup>4</sup>

In the full-length self-portrait *Brown and Gold* (1895–1900, Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow [Young et al. 1980, 440]) that Whistler began shortly before the National Gallery painting, he represented himself as an aged and tragic figure, standing in a pose taken from Diego Velázquez's *Pablo de Valladolid* (c. 1635, Museo del Prado,

Madrid).<sup>5</sup> *Gold and Brown: Self-Portrait* is the most finished of the three half-length self-portraits that the artist commenced around 1896. It is possible that the other two paintings (Young et al. 1980, 460, 461; figs. 2 and 3),<sup>6</sup> which depict a more animated personality and are sketchier in technique, were preparatory studies for this.<sup>7</sup> Richard Dornment speculated that all three of these late half-lengths may have constituted the artist's attempt to correct the similarly composed but much earlier *Arrangement in Grey: Portrait of the Painter* (1872, DIA [Young et al. 1980, 122]), in which he appears to hold his paintbrushes in a right hand attached to a left arm.<sup>8</sup> The awkwardly painted open left hand in the lower right corner of this composition, however, scarcely constitutes an improvement.

The artist's sister-in-law Rosalind Birnie Philip recollected that *Gold and Brown* was the portrait that "Whistler wanted to be remembered by."<sup>9</sup> In an-



James McNeill Whistler, *Gold and Brown: Self-Portrait*, 1959.3.2





Fig. 4. James McNeill Whistler, preparatory study for *Brown and Gold: Self-Portrait*, pen and brown ink on paper, 1898/1900, Washington, Library of Congress, Pennell Collection, Prints and Photographs Division

other letter she indicated that the artist was working on it early in 1898, preparing it for the International Society of Sculptors, Painters, and Gravers exhibition, where he intended to display it alongside Boldini's portrait of him; he was concerned that Boldini not see it before that event.<sup>10</sup> The two paintings were not exhibited together on that occasion, although in 1900 the Boldini and Whistler's full-length *Brown and Gold* were shown in separate sections of the Exposition Universelle at Paris. Whistler disliked Boldini's portrait and commented, "They say that looks like me, but I hope I don't look like that!"<sup>11</sup> Evidence suggests that at some stage in the creative process he regarded *Gold and Brown* as a visual refutation to the Italian artist's portrait of him.

A greater contrast between two images of the same person can scarcely be imagined. The nervous, elegant, and extroverted subject of Boldini's bravura grand manner portrait presented himself in *Gold and Brown* as a reserved, mature gentleman who turns his head to acknowledge the viewer's presence. The grave mood and monochromatic palette immediately invite comparison with some of

Rembrandt's late self-portraits; Burns noted that Whistler here "poses amidst thick brown shadows like a new, more spiritual, Velasquez."<sup>12</sup> Despite the ravages of age and ill-health, traces of the artist's inimitable hauteur are still evident in his slight smile and the expression of his eyes. His trademarks—the monocle, the white lock of hair, and the moustache and small imperial beard—are all present. Completing the ensemble is the red ribbon of the Légion d'Honneur that Whistler wears in his lapel; he had been made a *chevalier* of the organization in 1889, and an *officier* in 1892.

A pen-and-ink self-portrait (fig. 4) is very similar to the National Gallery painting, but the exact relationship between the two images is unclear.<sup>13</sup>

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#### Notes

1. Young et al. 1980, 202–203.
2. Charles Lang Freer (Diaries, Book 12, FGA) saw it in Whistler's studio as late as 1892.
3. For a summary of the well-known episodes concerning Whistler's successful lawsuit against Du Maurier and Harper's, and his stormy relationship with Chase, see Denker 1995, 90–93, 114–118.
4. Sarah Burns, "Old Maverick to Old Master: Whistler in the Public Eye in Turn-of-the-Century America," *AAJ* 22, no. 1 (spring 1990): 41–42.
5. The full-length was often confused with the National Gallery's half-length because both were known by the same title until 1983, when the title of the National Gallery painting was changed to the one under which it was exhibited during Whistler's lifetime.
6. See Young et al. 1980, 460–461.
7. Sutton 1963, 131.
8. Dorment and MacDonald 1994, 284.
9. Holker Abbott, letter to Joseph Pennell, 31 March 1904, Pennell Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; quoted in Dorment and MacDonald 1994, 284.
10. Rosalind Birnie Philip, letter to Edward G. Kennedy, 8 May 1898, NYPL, cited in Young et al. 1980, 202. The authors identified *Gold and Brown* in a photograph of the Whistler wall of the exhibition that appeared in Thomas Dartmouth, "International Art at Knightsbridge," *Art Journal* (August 1898): 249, but it is extremely difficult to discern.
11. Pennell and Pennell 1908, 2: 193. For discussions of the Boldini portrait, see Burns 1990, 42, 45; and Denker 1995, 138–140.
12. Burns 1990, 42. Earlier viewers characterized Whistler's demeanor in this self-portrait as cheerful: Gallatin 1913, 6–7, approvingly quoted Bénédict's statement that "one feels that it is painted in a state of happiness, following the return of approval, so unjustly withheld from him in England, and painted in the years after his marriage; we call it the portrait of the true Whistler."
13. For a discussion of this drawing and the various theories relating to it, see MacDonald 1995, no. 1533.

## References

- 1907 Cary: 155.  
1908 Pennell and Pennell: 2: 221, drawing repro. facing 202.  
1913 Gallatin: 6–7, 20–21, fig. 7.  
1918 Gallatin: 10, 28, fig. 7.  
1921 Pennell and Pennell: 40.  
1963 Sutton: 131, fig. 58.  
1966 Sutton: 197, pl. 128.  
1980 Young et al.: 202–203, repro. 296.  
1981 Williams: repro. 132, 135, 137.  
1984 Stein: 30, color pl. 15.  
1990 Burns: 42, fig. 9.  
1994 Dorment and MacDonald: 284, color pl. 204.  
1995 Denker: 144, fig. 5:23.

1959.3.3 (1532)

### *George W. Vanderbilt*

1897/1903

Oil on canvas, 208.6 × 91.1 (82 1/8 × 35 7/8)

Gift of Edith Stuyvesant Gerry

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support has been lined. The paint surface exhibits heavy, uniform, artist-inflicted abrasion. The paint was applied very thinly, so the dark gray or blackish ground layer remains visible throughout; heavier paint textures in the sitter's head and hands indicate reworking by the artist. When Elizabeth and Joseph Pennell first saw the painting, they wrote that "probably not one other of his portraits of men interested Whistler so much; certainly not one was finer than the picture we saw in the London studio." Yet when they saw it at the Paris Memorial Exhibition in 1905, they pronounced it "a wreck" that "had been worked over too often."<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the picture had been rubbed down by Whistler following their earlier visit to the studio and never worked up again before his death. It was heavily overpainted by Frank Sullivan in 1959, leaving only the face and hands, the dado of the background wall, and the extreme foreground intact.

**Provenance:** Sold 1898 to George W. Vanderbilt [1862–1914], Asheville, North Carolina, but retained in Whistler's studio until 1903; bequeathed 1914 to Vanderbilt's widow, Edith Stuyvesant Dresser Vanderbilt [later Mrs. Peter G. Gerry, d. 1958], Asheville, North Carolina, and Providence, Rhode Island.

**Exhibited:** *Oeuvres de James McNeill Whistler*, Palais de l'École des Beaux-Arts, Paris, 1905, no. 22, as "Inachevé—(Le dernier portrait en pied que Whistler ait peint)." *James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903)*, Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen, Berlin, 1969, no. 52. Biltmore House and Gardens, Asheville, North Carolina, 1972–1974. *Post-Impressionism: Cross-currents in European and American Painting 1880–1906*, NGA, 1980, no. 255. *Ameri-*

*can Portraiture in the Grand Manner: 1720–1920*, LACMA; NPG, 1981–1982, no. 65.

GEORGE WASHINGTON VANDERBILT II (1862–1914) was the youngest of eight children born to the financier William Henry Vanderbilt and his wife Maria Louisa Kissam, the daughter of a Brooklyn clergyman; his grandfather was the railroad magnate "Commodore" Cornelius Vanderbilt. His father died when he was twenty-six, leaving him \$6 million and a superbly furnished mansion at 640 Fifth Avenue in New York City. Thereafter, young Vanderbilt devoted himself to travel, the study of languages, scientific farming, and philanthropy. He is best remembered for erecting an enormous château in the French style on his 125,000-acre estate in the wilderness near Asheville, North Carolina. Named Biltmore House, the 250-room building was designed by Richard Morris Hunt; its grounds were landscaped by Frederick Law Olmsted. On the surrounding land Vanderbilt planned a self-sufficient community that included a dairy farm, stockbreeding facilities, farms, and nurseries. Interested in scientific forestry, he employed Gifford Pinchot, later the founder and first head of the U.S. Forest Service, to manage the rich woodlands.

In 1898 Vanderbilt married Edith Stuyvesant Dresser in Paris; Whistler also painted portraits of her and the couple's infant daughter Cornelia.<sup>2</sup> Like his father and older brother Cornelius, Vanderbilt was a noted art collector who acquired etchings and engravings by Rembrandt, Albrecht Dürer, Joshua Reynolds, and Whistler. He commissioned oil paintings from fashionable portraitists, such as John Singer Sargent, Giovanni Boldini, and Anders Zorn. During the late 1890s Vanderbilt became a close friend of Whistler, who called him "The Modern Philip," a reference to the Spanish king Philip IV, for whom Diego Velázquez was court painter.<sup>3</sup> Vanderbilt served as a pallbearer at Whistler's funeral.<sup>4</sup>

The complex early history of this full-length portrait is well documented.<sup>5</sup> Vanderbilt wanted a portrait of himself for Biltmore House and on 18 May 1897 wrote to Whistler asking him to undertake the commission.<sup>6</sup> Two days later the artist responded, "I could not ask for a more sympathetic subject than yourself and therefore am greatly pleased at the prospect of painting your portrait."<sup>7</sup> He commenced painting it in London in June, where work continued until August; a preparatory pencil drawing (Hunterian Art Gallery, Glasgow) probably

dates from this time. In December 1897 Whistler took the painting to Paris, where he intended to finish it as soon as possible. During that month he informed Vanderbilt that the “great work” was near completion and asked 2,000 guineas for it, half to be paid at once and the remainder upon delivery, “after we have put the very last dainty polish upon it.”<sup>8</sup> Vanderbilt agreed to these terms.<sup>9</sup> He sat for a few “last touches” in Whistler’s Paris studio in August 1898 and, believing that he would imminently “take possession of ‘the masterpiece,’” he sent the final payment on 25 August 1898. Whistler still considered the portrait unfinished and did not relinquish it. Early in 1899 he complained to a friend of “Vanderbilt and completions of portraits ‘while you wait!’—maddening!”<sup>10</sup>

Over the next few years Vanderbilt’s repeated attempts to sit were frustrated by Whistler’s illness.

Fig. 1. James McNeill Whistler, *Sketch for Portrait of George Vanderbilt*, pencil on paper, ©Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow, Bequeathed by Miss Rosalind Birnie Philip



He posed again in 1902,<sup>11</sup> but despite requests for further sittings, the work remained unfinished; it was still in Whistler’s studio when the artist died in 1903. The artist’s executrix showed the portrait to Vanderbilt and his wife in January 1904, when he finally took possession of it.<sup>12</sup> It was perhaps out of exasperation that Vanderbilt commissioned a portrait of himself from Sargent; executed around 1900, it now hangs in Asheville.

Whistler presented Vanderbilt as a fashionable aristocrat dressed in riding attire and holding a crop; Richard Dormet quoted an etiquette book that recommended such a costume as appropriate for riding in town.<sup>13</sup> Vanderbilt exudes a sense of refined elegance typical of “the kind of cultivated aristocrat whom poets and painters of the Symbolist movement particularly admired.”<sup>14</sup> The effect is much like the carefully orchestrated “dandyism” that characterizes Whistler’s better-known *Arrangement in Black and Gold: Comte Robert de Montesquiou-Fezensac* (1891–1892, Frick Collection, New York). Despite the wealthy aesthete’s relaxed pose, his attenuated, seemingly insubstantial form imbues him with a fragile, tentative quality that is intensified by the emphasis on his expressive eyes and the imbalance created by the distorted perspective of the floor. The austere palette, consisting almost entirely of black, gray and brown, is reminiscent of Velázquez.

An anecdote related by Théodore Duret belies the statement made by many art historians that in his portraiture Whistler strove to capture the psychological dispositions of his subjects rather than to accurately represent their physical qualities. When Duret saw this portrait in Whistler’s Paris studio, he was struck by Vanderbilt’s unusually slim legs, which led him to observe that “usually painters arrange parts of the body which seem to them irregular and make them conform to the common type, but Whistler had evidently given their real slimness to the legs of his model.” Some years later he saw Vanderbilt, whom he had never met, and after remembering the portrait identified him by the thin legs. When Duret related the incident to Whistler, the delighted artist explained it as proof “that his color research did not hinder him from rendering in all truth the living model.”<sup>15</sup> Indeed, Vanderbilt looks exactly as his niece described him: “With his dark hair and eyes, he might have been a Spaniard. He had a narrow sensitive face, and artistic and literary tastes.”<sup>16</sup>

A preparatory sketch for this painting, in which



James McNeill Whistler, *George W. Vanderbilt*, 1959.3.3

Vanderbilt's legs are set in a slightly different position, is owned by the Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow (fig. 1).<sup>17</sup>

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## Notes

1. Pennell and Pennell 1908, 2: 203.
2. The portrait of his wife is titled *Ivoire et or: Portrait de Madame Vanderbilt* (1899–1902, private collection [Young et al. 1980, 515]); the unfinished portrait of their daughter may be *Portrait of a Baby* (1902, private collection [Young et al. 1980, 549]).
3. Pennell and Pennell 1908, 2: 203.
4. In the absence of a biography of Vanderbilt, see *DAB*, 19: 174–175; Susan M. Ward and Michael K. Smith, eds., *Biltmore Estate: House, Gardens, Winery* (Asheville, North Carolina, 1989); and Edwin P. Hoyt, *The Vanderbilts and Their Fortunes* (Garden City, New York, 1962).
5. Ten letters between the artist and his patron survive in which this portrait is mentioned: seven are in the Birnie Philip Collection, University of Glasgow Library, and three are in the Biltmore House and Gardens collection, Asheville, North Carolina. For a more complete list of the documents pertaining to this painting, see Young et al. 1980, 208–209.
6. Vanderbilt, letter to Whistler, 18 May 1897, Glasgow University Library.
7. Whistler, letter to Vanderbilt, 20 May 1897, Vanderbilt Archive, Biltmore House, Asheville, North Carolina.
8. Whistler, letter to Vanderbilt, December 1897, Glasgow University Library.
9. Vanderbilt, letter to Whistler, 31 December 1897, Glasgow University Library.
10. Whistler, letter to William Heinemann, January or February 1899, Pennell Collection, Library of Congress, Washington.

## Irving R. Wiles

1861–1948

BORN IN UTICA, New York, on 8 April 1861 the portraitist Irving Ramsay Wiles first studied art with his father, the landscape painter Lemuel Maynard Wiles (1826–1905). In 1879 he followed his father's advice and moved to New York. He entered the Art Students League, where he spent two years studying with Thomas W. Dewing, J. Carroll Beckwith (1852–1917), and William Merritt Chase. Chase became the young artist's friend and mentor.

Wiles went to Paris in 1882 and spent his first

11. Whistler, letter to Charles Lang Freer, 2 June 1902, FGA. Vanderbilt wrote to Whistler requesting a sitting as late as 8 May 1903, University of Glasgow Library.

12. Note by Rosalind Birnie Philip, 14 January 1904, Glasgow University Library.

13. Dorment and MacDonald 1994, 280.

14. Dorment and MacDonald 1994, 280. Michael Quick, "Achieving the Nation's Imperial Destiny: 1870–1920," in *LACMA* 1981, 67–68, remarked that Vanderbilt appears here as "the very image of the aesthete, poised and nonchalant." For the Montesquiou portrait, see Edgar Munnhall, *Whistler and Montesquiou: The Butterfly and the Bat* [Exh. cat. Frick Collection.] (New York, 1995).

15. Duret 1917, 116–117.

16. Consuelo Vanderbilt Balsan, *The Glitter and the Gold* (Maidstone, Kent, 1973), 3, quoted in Dorment and MacDonald 1994, 279.

17. For a discussion of this drawing, see MacDonald 1995, no. 1505.

## References

- 1907 Cary: no. 191, 188.  
1908 Pennell and Pennell: 2: 203.  
1917 Duret: 116–117.  
1963 Sutton: 134, fig. 56.  
1966 Sutton: 38, 197, pl. 123.  
1969 MacInnes: 330.  
1970 NGA: 122, repro.  
1973 McMullen: 268.  
1980 NGA: 259, repro.  
1980 Young et al.: 208–209, repro. 310.  
1981 LACMA: 67–68, 194–195, color pl. 65.  
1981 Williams: repro. 131, 133, 135.  
1994 Dorment and MacDonald: 279–280, color pl. 199. [Catalogue entry notes incorrectly that the painting was exhibited in Washington only; it was not included in the exhibition.]

months there at the Académie Julian under the direction of Gustave Boulanger and Jules-Joseph Lefebvre, before being admitted to the private atelier of Carolus-Duran. After returning to the United States in 1884, he resumed study at the Art Students League and also began to exhibit at the National Academy of Design, the American Water Color Society, and, from 1886 until 1906, the Society of American Artists. Wiles supplemented his income by producing illustrations for *Harper's Magazine*, *Century Magazine*, and *Scribner's Monthly*.



From 1884 to 1894 he spent summers operating the Silver Lake Art School at Ingham, New York, with his father. Shortly after his return to America, Wiles won several prestigious awards, including a bronze medal at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. He was elected an associate member of the National Academy of Design in 1889 and became a full member in 1897.

In 1887 Wiles married May Lee; their daughter Gladys, who was taught by her father, became an artist of some note. Wiles died in Peconic, Long Island, New York, on 29 July 1948.

Beginning in the early 1890s, Wiles achieved recognition for his fashionable interior genre scenes and society portraits of women and children. His professional reputation was assured after 1902, when his portrait of the actress Julia Marlowe [1951.6.1, p. 265] was exhibited at the National Academy. From then until the late 1920s, when old age and ill health forced him to retire, Wiles received portrait commissions from America's wealthiest and most socially prominent citizens. Highly skilled in the art of male portraiture, he was one of eight American artists selected in 1919 by the National Art Committee to paint portraits for a pictorial history of World War I. Toward the end of his career, Wiles was noted for the plein-air landscapes and seascapes he painted at his home in Peconic, Long Island.

Along with John White Alexander (1856–1915) and Cecilia Beaux (1863–1942), Wiles was one of the most popular American portraitists active during the early twentieth century. He was an exponent of grand manner portraiture as it had been redefined during the late nineteenth century by John Singer Sargent, Giovanni Boldini, and James McNeill Whistler. The critic Charles H. Caffin classified him as a painter of “esprit portraits,” which he defined as those “distinguished by manifest dexterity of brushwork and by animated and piquant rendering of the sitter's exterior.”<sup>1</sup> Wiles' portraits did not exhibit the stylized, vapid idealization characteristic of those of many of his contemporaries. He produced convincing likenesses without placing undue emphasis on technical virtuosity. Like Sargent, he was influenced by the expressive painterly technique of Frans Hals and Diego Velázquez, and his style bears the strong imprint of Chase. Although he

freely incorporated impressionist color and brushwork into his technique, Wiles remained a conservative artist who never became associated with any of the avant-garde movements that developed during his lifetime.

RWT

#### Notes

1. Caffin 1907, 254.

#### Bibliography

White 1967.  
Reynolds 1988.

1951.6.1 (1064)

### *Miss Julia Marlowe*

1901  
Oil on canvas, 188.6 × 140.4 (74 1/4 × 55 1/4)  
Gift of Julia Marlowe Sothorn

#### Inscriptions

At upper left: *Miss Julia Marlowe / Irving R. Wiles 1901*  
At lower left: *Copyright 1901 / by Irving Ramsay Wiles*

**Technical Notes:** The unlined medium-weight plain-weave fabric support remains mounted on its original five-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher. The bottom tacking margin is a selvage. The smoothly applied ground layer is off-white. The paint was applied quickly, with colors blended mostly wet-into-wet, in layers that range from an almost watery thin consistency to high impasto. The paint layer is in very good condition, apart from small areas of tiny losses, abrasion, and sigmoid cracks. The varnish is clear.

**Provenance:** The sitter, Julia Marlowe Sothorn [1866–1950], New York; her estate.

**Exhibited:** *71st Annual Exhibition*, NAD, New York, 1902, no. 317. *72nd Annual Exhibition*, PAFA, 1903, no. 74. *Universal Exposition* [commemorating the Louisiana Purchase], St. Louis, 1904, no. 865. *Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte della Città di Venezia* [Venice Biennale, 8th Exhibition], Venice 1909, no. 43 in Room 17, as *Ritratto*.<sup>1</sup> *Stars of Yesterday and Today: A Loan Exhibition of Portraits of Famous Personalities of the Opera, Stage and Screen and Portraits by Distinguished Contemporary Artists*, Wildenstein Galleries, New York, 1944, no. 62 (see errata in catalogue).<sup>2</sup> Loan for display with permanent collection, NPG, 1967–1981. *Portraits of the American Stage 1771–1971*, NPG, 1971, no. 40. *Shakespeare in America 1776–1976*, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C., 1976, no cat. *American Portraiture in the Grand Manner, 1720–1920*, LACMA; NPG, 1981–1982, no. 68. *Irving R. Wiles*, NAD; Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio; Fine Arts Center,

Cheekwood, Nashville, 1988, pl. X (shown only in New York). Loan for display with permanent collection, NPG, 1992–present.

SARAH FRANCES FROST, who assumed the professional name Julia Marlowe (1866–1950), was born at Upton Caldbeck, Cumberland, England, and moved to America at an early age. She made her debut on the New York stage in 1887 and established a reputation as a noted performer of historical dramas and Shakespeare. Her marriage in 1894 to the actor Robert Taber ended in divorce after six years. By the turn of the century Marlowe had become “one of the top box office attractions in the country, both for her acting and her portrayal of virtuous characters.”<sup>3</sup> In 1911 she married the well-known actor Edward Hugh Sothorn, with whom she acted in and produced numerous plays; from 1914 until her retirement from the stage in 1924, the couple were the leading exponents of American Shakespearean drama. Marlowe was awarded a gold medal by the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1929. She went into seclusion following the death of her husband in 1933 and died in New York City.<sup>4</sup>

This full-length painting was an immense popular success that established Wiles as a portraitist of international repute. When it was exhibited at the National Academy of Design in 1902, John La Farge commented that it “made the exhibition.” The landscape painter Carleton Wiggins pronounced it “the best thing ever done in this country.” A writer claimed that John Singer Sargent had “never shown anything more just in rendering, more sympathetic in quality or more distinguished in composition.” *Art Interchange* announced that it was “as good a thing as this brilliant artist has ever done. In composition, color harmony, dignity, and vivacity of portraiture there is little to be desired. . . . It very worthily occupies the place of honor in the exhibition.”<sup>5</sup>

Charles H. Caffin may have had this painting in mind when he wrote that Wiles’ female portraiture was appealing because of “the added charm of attractive costumes and of surroundings that are pervaded with the atmosphere of refined elegance.”<sup>6</sup> The artist portrayed the glamorous thirty-six-year-old actress dressed in a flowing white gown, seated on an upholstered sofa next to several embroidered pillows, and resting her feet on an oriental rug; the furnishings and fabrics are very adeptly painted. Michael Quick has pointed out that *Julia Marlowe*

exemplifies Wiles’ ability to achieve “literal truthfulness” because “the face is unmistakably that of a particular human being, seen without flattering idealization.”<sup>7</sup>

In this instance the artist may have felt it necessary to make an especially accurate reproduction of a countenance that was familiar to numerous theater enthusiasts and critics. William Winter, who equated physical characteristics with desirable personality traits, observed that Marlowe is “perfectly attractive”: Her “face is large and handsome; the forehead is wide; the brows are strong; the eyes, large, dark and brilliant, are now suffused with soft languor, now momentarily lit with the sparkle of glee and strikingly expressive in passages of sentiment. The nose is straight, moderately large, clear cut, and well shaped. The mouth is large, shapely, and indicative of kindness. The chin, in the center of which is a deep dimple, is massive, yet it denotes extraordinary sensibility.”<sup>8</sup> Wiles’ portrait constitutes the visual counterpart of Winter’s verbal description, even to the way in which the actress’ slightly upturned head directs the viewer’s attention to her cleft chin. Marlowe’s informal pose and the way her brilliantly painted dress casually spreads across the sofa remind one of Winter’s observation that “in her demeanor there is a buoyant, hoydenish grace that, together with a careless manner of wearing her apparel . . . gives her something of a gipsy seeming.”<sup>9</sup>

Wiles painted the actress at the apex of her career, when she performed the role in which she achieved her greatest popular success, Mary Tudor (sister of King Henry VIII of England), in Paul Kester’s adaptation of Charles Major’s novel *When Knighthood Was in Flower*. The play, which ran from 1901 to 1902, made Marlowe wealthy; she later recalled that “my first season of *Knighthood* made me a fortune and sufficient to render me independent for the rest of my life. The second season I more than doubled it.”<sup>10</sup>

Marlowe was an exponent of the personality school of acting, a turn-of-the-century phenomenon in which a performer’s basic appeal arose from his or her individual personality, rather than an ability to impersonate a specific dramatic character. This is exactly the quality Garff Wilson singled out when he described how the actress performed the role of Mary Tudor: She “exhibited her ideal of womanhood, and was little, if at all, removed from a revelation of her actual self: it certainly was a winning image of feminine variety, integrity, fidelity, romantic ardor, and ingenuous charm.”<sup>11</sup> One the-



Irving R. Wiles, *Miss Julia Marlowe*, 1951.6.1



Fig. 1. Attributed to Irving Ramsay Wiles, preparatory watercolor for *Miss Julia Marlowe*, c. 1901, Washington, National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, NPG.95.024

ater historian characterized Marlowe as “a deft and artful performer with unusual personal magnetism who used the stage as a means of projecting her feminine charms to inspire her audience with a feeling of purity and optimism.”<sup>12</sup> Marlowe, who was hailed as “all that is most wholesome and winsome in American womanhood,”<sup>13</sup> was so morally punctilious that she refused to say the word *damn* during performances of *When Knighthood Was in Flower* even though it was written in the script.<sup>14</sup>

Clearly, Wiles’ coup was greatly indebted to his sitter’s popularity, charisma, and theatrical style. Further, Wiles was admired by his patriotic contemporaries as an American who had convincingly demonstrated his mastery of international society portraiture and the bravura technique, both qualities that had usually been associated with European or, in the case of James McNeill Whistler and Sargent, American expatriate painters.

Wiles’ small watercolor-and-pencil preparatory sketch for this portrait is now owned by the National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C. (fig. 1).

RWT

#### Notes

1. William B. McCormick, “Portraits of Irving R. Wiles,” *International Studio* 77 (June 1923): 252–262; Ethel Gillespie, “Irving Wiles: Painter of Youth and Beauty,” *The Mentor* 11 (December 1928): 41–47; and Schweizer 1975, 86, all repeat the information that after its 1902 debut the painting was exhibited widely in America and “in Venice and Berlin,” to which Gillespie adds London. However, none of the references indicates in what exhibition or when. A label on the back of the painting confirms that it was included in the Venice Biennale of 1909, but a search of exhibitions of American paintings in Berlin and London has not located one that included the painting of Miss Marlowe (see notes in NGA curatorial files).

2. This citation was kindly provided by Lydia Dufour of the FARL (letter of December 1996, in NGA curatorial files); the errata sheet in the catalogue indicates that the National Gallery painting replaced another portrait of Miss Marlowe by Wiles, one that depicts her as Viola in “Twelfth Night.”

3. *Notable Women in the American Theatre* (New York, 1989), 593.

4. For additional biographical information, see Charles Edward Russell, *Julia Marlowe: Her Life and Art* (New York, 1926); and E. H. Sothern, *Julia Marlowe’s Story*, ed. Fairfax Downey (New York, 1954). For selected reviews of her performances, see William C. Young, *Famous Actors and Actresses on the American Stage: Documents of American Theater History*, 2 vols. (New York, 1975), 2: 752–756.

5. All quoted in Gillespie 1928, 42; “The Academy Exhibition,” *Art Interchange* 47 (February 1902): 35.

6. Caffin 1907, 254.

7. Michael Quick, “Achieving the Nation’s Imperial Destiny: 1870–1920,” in LACMA 1981, 71.

8. William Winter, *Vagrant Memories* (New York, 1915), 468.

9. Winter 1915, 470.

10. Sothern 1954, 159.

11. William Winter, *The Wallet of Time*, 2 vols. (New York, 1914), 2: 86.

12. Garff B. Wilson, *A History of American Acting* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1966), 140–141.

13. C. B., “Julia Marlowe,” *The Critic* 42 (February 1903): 98.

14. Wilson 1966, 149.

#### References

- 1902 Howard: 286.  
 1971 NPG: 90, pl. 40.  
 1975 Schweizer: 84, 86, pl. 78.  
 1981 Quick, Michael. “Achieving the Nation’s Imperial Destiny: 1870–1920.” In LACMA: 71, 200, pl. 68.  
 1988 Reynolds: 19, pl. X.

# Alexander Helwig Wyant

1836–1892

ALEXANDER HELWIG WYANT was born 11 January 1836 at Evans Creek, Tuscarawas County, Ohio. Before he was two, his family moved to Defiance, Ohio, where he attended school and was apprenticed to a local harnessmaker. In the 1850s, while working as a sign painter in Port Washington, Ohio, Wyant decided to pursue a career as an artist.

In 1857 Wyant visited Cincinnati, where he saw landscape paintings by George Inness. He was greatly impressed and resolved to meet the artist, which he did in New York in 1859. Inness apparently encouraged Wyant in his aspirations to be a landscape painter. He helped arrange financial support for the young artist from Nicholas Longworth, an important Cincinnati patron. Longworth funded Wyant's studies in New York in 1860 and in Cincinnati in 1861–1862.

Wyant moved to New York in 1863 and exhibited a painting at the National Academy of Design in 1865. While in New York he saw works by some Düsseldorf-trained artists and was particularly drawn to the landscapes of the Norwegian painter Hans Friedrich Gude (1825–1903). In 1865 Wyant arranged to study with Gude, who was then teaching at Karlsruhe, Germany, but he departed within the year. On his way back to the United States, he visited Paris and London and traveled in Ireland. He admired the landscapes of both J.M.W. Turner and John Constable, and was especially influenced by Constable's fluid handling of paint.

Wyant resettled in New York in 1866 and began to develop a looser, more atmospheric style that was less detailed and more suggestive than those of Düsseldorf artists or the landscape painters of the Hudson River School. In 1867 he joined the American Society of Painters in Water Colors. The following year he was elected an associate member of the National Academy of Design; he became a full member in 1869. In these years he exhibited regularly in New York and elsewhere, and made many sketching trips. He also renewed his friendship with Inness, whose work continued to be a major influence.

Wyant joined a government expedition to explore Arizona and New Mexico in 1873, but declining health and the hardships of travel forced him to abandon the trip and return east. He later suffered a stroke that left his right arm paralyzed, forcing him to learn to paint with his left hand. He became a member of the Society of American Artists in 1878 and also joined the Century Association.

Between 1874 and 1880 Wyant occupied a studio in the YMCA building on 23rd Street in New York and spent his summers in the Adirondacks. In 1880 he married Arabella Locke, one of his students, and the couple began spending more time away from the city, especially in Keene Valley in the Adirondacks.

In 1886 Wyant's entire right side became paralyzed, and he and his wife moved to a house in Arkville, in the Catskill Mountains. Although his limited mobility now made sketching trips impossible, Wyant continued to paint, creating atmospheric, freely brushed landscapes composed largely from memory. He died in New York on 29 November 1892. By the time of his death, he was considered one of the foremost American landscape painters. During the early decades of the twentieth century, Wyant's reputation in American art soared, but his standing has declined dramatically since then.

FRANKLIN KELLY

## Bibliography

- Caffin 1903: 143–152.
- Clark 1916.
- Clark 1920.
- Olpin 1968.
- Olpin 1971.



1965.10.1 (1946)

## *Peaceful Valley*

c. 1872

Oil on canvas, 17.7 × 31.1 (6 <sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 12 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>)

Gift of James C. Stotlar

### Inscriptions

At lower right: A H. Wyant

**Technical Notes:** The support is a medium-weight plain-weave fabric that was relined in 1965. Faint cusping along all trimmed edges suggests that the dimensions have not been reduced. The stretcher, possibly original, consists of five members, one of which is a central vertical crossbar; all the joints are mortise and tenon. There is a cream-colored, moderately thin ground layer. Under the sky and in part of the middle distance there is an orange-pink imprimatura. Under the foreground there is a warm brown imprimatura. The sky and mountains are painted with low, fine brushwork; the clouds have low impasto. The middle distance and foreground are more thickly painted and have higher impasto. The tops of the trees are painted over the mountains, suggesting that the foreground and middle ground were completed after the sky and mountains. There are scattered areas of abrasion and some small losses, but overall the paint is in good condition. The present varnish is slightly yellowed, but remnants of an earlier, partially removed varnish layer have discolored and now somewhat obscure details of the foreground.

**Provenance:** Private collection, Indianapolis, Indiana, until 1919;<sup>1</sup> acquired 1919 by (M. A. Newhouse and Son, St. Louis, Missouri); sold 1920 to Harry Stotlar, Benton, Illinois;<sup>2</sup> his son, James C. Stotlar, Bethesda, Maryland.

**Exhibited:** *Springfield Art Festival*, Drury College, Springfield, Missouri, 1968, no cat. *19th Century American Topographic Painters*, Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, Florida, 1974–1975, no. 149.

IN THE DECADES immediately following Wyant's death in 1892, critical and popular interest in his work increased dramatically, and by 1920 he was widely considered, along with George Inness, to be one of the greatest of American landscape painters. In 1919 one writer stated that

If one were to ask the average person who were the three greatest American landscape painters, the answer would probably be: Inness first; Wyant second; and after that any one of a dozen others, no two persons agreeing on the third. . . .

If there is a Gallery of American art anywhere that does not contain a Wyant, it is doubtless because they could not get one—not because they did not want one. Inness has become a household word . . . and the name of Wyant is rapidly becoming a rival in popularity.

It is probably safe to say that the average person . . . has never heard of West, Cropsey, Cole, Church, Martin, Ranger, Minor, Homer and the like. But who has not heard of Inness and Wyant? The answer is: Only those who have not heard of Rosa Bonheur, Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, Whistler, and so on.<sup>3</sup>

It was Wyant's late works that generally inspired such extravagant praise, but admiration (and demand from collectors) also extended to virtually everything he painted, including relatively early works, such as this example.<sup>4</sup>

The lower right corner of *Peaceful Valley* has traces of what was presumably once a date following Wyant's signature, but the digits are no longer legible. Accordingly, the work can only be dated based on stylistic comparison to other works by the artist.<sup>5</sup> Works from early in his career (before his study abroad with Hans Gude), such as *Falls of the Ohio and Louisville* (1863, J. B. Speed Art Museum, Louisville, Kentucky), are generally composed following the conventions of Hudson River School painting and are relatively tightly brushed. A painting of 1865 known simply as *Landscape* (LACMA), which was presumably, though not certainly, executed before Wyant left the United States, is even more highly finished. The meticulous handling of that painting and its clear atmosphere and bright colors suggest that Wyant may have been briefly influenced by American followers of the English pre-Raphaelites, whose works he could have easily seen in New York.<sup>6</sup> During the later 1860s and early 1870s, following his return to America, Wyant gradually moved toward a looser and more fluid handling of paint and a more unified, tonal sense of light and atmosphere. The final phase of his career, which began in 1874 when he learned to paint with his left hand, was marked by even greater painterly effects and a preference for more somber colors.

*Peaceful Valley* must have been executed before 1874, because it bears none of the hallmarks of Wyant's late style. The question remains of how early in the artist's career it might have been painted. It may have been executed as early as 1860, because it retains some of the compositional elements of Hudson River School paintings.<sup>7</sup> Alternatively, its bright colors and rather intense lighting might indicate a date closer to the 1865 date of *Landscape*. Robert S. Olpin has associated *Peaceful Valley* with works from c. 1872, including the signed and dated *Mouth of the Ausable River* (1872, location unknown)<sup>8</sup> and *Mountain Landscape* (c. 1872, Currier Gallery of Art, Manchester, New Hampshire). In Olpin's



Alexander Helwig Wyant, *Peaceful Valley*, 1965.10.1

opinion, *Peaceful Valley*, even though retaining an elaborate foreground more typical of earlier works, has the loose brushwork found in works of the early 1870s.<sup>9</sup>

FRANKLIN KELLY

#### Notes

1. B. M. Newhouse, letter to Harry Stotlar, 19 November 1919 (in NGA curatorial files), stating that he had just acquired the painting from an unnamed individual in Indianapolis.

2. Bill of sale, M. A. Newhouse & Son, dated 22 January 1920 (in NGA curatorial files).

3. Eugene V. Brewster, "Wyant—the Nature-Painter," *Arts and Decoration* 10 (February 1919): 197; quoted in MMA 1987, 320.

4. As B. M. Newhouse observed to the collector Harry Stotlar (letter, 19 November 1919) of this picture: "As you of course know, Wyant ranks next to Inness in American Art; in fact many of our American connoisseurs consider him as great as Inness. I know that you

want an example of Wyant and this is just the kind and size that you can use. . . . [It] is undoubtedly one of the finest little Wyants in America." Wyant's widow destroyed many of the early works in Wyant's estate, believing that they were inferior to his late paintings.

5. The only modern attempts to analyze Wyant's stylistic development are found in Olpin 1968 and Olpin 1971; the comments in this entry summarize Olpin's conclusions.

6. See the entry on *Landscape* in Fort and Quick 1991, 142–144.

7. William P. Campbell, undated notes (in NGA curatorial files).

8. Sold at Christie's, New York, 24 October 1979, *American Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture of the 18th, 19th and 20th Centuries*, no. 67.

9. I am grateful to Professor Olpin for sharing with me material relevant to *Peaceful Valley* from his extensive files on Wyant (in NGA curatorial files).

#### References

1968 Olpin: 16.

1971 Olpin: 287, no. 63.

## Unknown American Artists

1947.17.44 (952)

### *Portrait of a Man*

c. 1810

Oil on wood panel, 76.5 × 61.6 (30 1/8 × 24 1/4)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The support consists of two tangentially cut pieces of Eastern white pine, glued with a butt-joint and with the grain oriented vertically.<sup>1</sup> The back of the panel has patches of gray paint, the edges are abraded, and there are several minor checks at the top and bottom. The face, hands, and coat were underpainted with a thin layer of off-white paint. The paint was applied in thin, dry opaque layers in the background. Thicker paint was used in the flesh tones, and the white paint on the lapel retains some texture. The artist's technique can be characterized as constrained, tentative, and deliberate. Infrared examination reveals no underdrawing but shows that the artist changed the shape of the head from circular to more oval. Small areas of inpainting in the background, the shadows of the hand and face, the bridge of the nose, and the lips cover residues of discolored varnish and areas of traction crackle. The surface coating is uneven and discolored.

**Provenance:** (Rose M. de Forest [Mrs. Augustus de Forest], New York); purchased 15 January 1917 by

Thomas B. Clarke [1848–1931], New York; (his sale, American Art Galleries, 7 January 1919, no. 20);<sup>2</sup> Charles A. Munn, New York; repurchased 1920 by Clarke; 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:** *Portraits by Early American Artists of the Seventeenth, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries Collected by Thomas B. Clarke*, PMA, 1928–1931, unnumbered, as *Samuel Stanhope Smith* by Ralph Earl. Loan for display with permanent collection, Boyhood Home of Robert E. Lee, Alexandria, Virginia, 1968–1986.

**THIS PAINTING** was formerly attributed to Ralph Earl (1751–1801) and thought to represent the Presbyterian minister Samuel Stanhope Smith (1750–1819), the founder and first president of Hampden-Sydney College, who was also the seventh president of the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University) from 1795–1812. The attribution and sitter identification were made on the basis of the signature that once appeared on the lower left of the painting, a provenance that was unusually convoluted even by De Forest standards,



Unknown American artist, *Portrait of a Man*, 1947-17-44

and the presence of a spurious receipt and testimonial.<sup>3</sup>

The sitter's identity was first questioned in 1920 when Thomas B. Clarke sold the portrait to a Charles A. Munn, who had intended to donate it to Princeton University. Munn determined that the painting did not represent Princeton's former president Smith, and he wrote to Clarke in the hope that he would "adjust this matter." Shortly thereafter Clarke refunded the purchase price of the picture.<sup>4</sup> Directly after this episode Rose de Forest tried to validate her false identification by quoting early nineteenth-century descriptions of the famous minister written by colleagues who singled out his blue eyes, ruddy complexion, and prominent forehead, all distinguishing characteristics of the man in Clarke's painting.<sup>5</sup> When Clarke's Art House associate Charles X. Harris later visited Princeton and investigated the affair, he examined Charles Lawrence's portrait of Smith, a poor-quality copy of it by Edward Ludlow Mooney, and a pastel portrait by James Sharples (all three, Art Museum, Princeton University, New Jersey). He either rejected or had reservations about the latter two portraits, but saw some similarities between the "Earl" portrait and Lawrence's *Smith*. Harris discovered that Clarke's painting had only been compared to the Mooney and that the primary objection to it was that the sitter was not dressed in clerical attire and so "looked more like a 'sport' than a minister."<sup>6</sup> Evidently this information convinced Clarke that his portrait was genuine, because it was exhibited as Earl's *Samuel Stanhope Smith* at the 1928 Clarke collection exhibit at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the full text of the "receipt" was quoted in the catalogue.<sup>7</sup>

The authorities, however, unanimously rejected both the attribution to Earl and the sitter identification. William Sawitzky declared the signature a forgery and correctly noted that Lawrence's portrait of Smith, which was engraved and illustrated in *Port Folio* (fig. 1), "shows a man of entirely different appearance." John Hill Morgan said that he had seen Clarke's painting at Munn's house and advised him that it was not by Earl. Alan Burroughs remarked that the sitter's costume dated from the early 1800s and was thus inconsistent with the 1798 date. He also observed that the picture had been "painted in Earl's tradition of hard, naive realism" by an artist who was "vigorous, essentially American, and typical of those graduates of coach painting who took over portraiture in the early

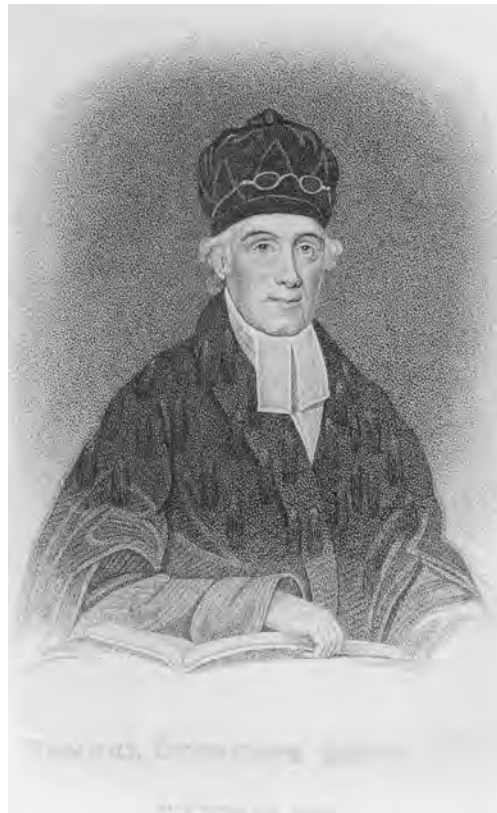


Fig. 1. Anonymous after Charles Lawrence, *Samuel Stanhope Smith*, engraving from *Port-Folio* series 5, vol. 9, no. 1 (1820) Baltimore, The Enoch Pratt Free Library

eighteen hundreds." Anna Rutledge and James Lane found that the provenance could not be substantiated because the Lyman family was probably fictitious, and they were confident that the signature and receipt were forgeries.<sup>8</sup> In 1964 William Campbell, who suspected that the painting was of European origin, weighed all the evidence and recommended that the attribution and sitter identification be changed to their present status.<sup>9</sup>

The portrait represents a man in late middle age whose hair is brushed forward over his receding hairline. Seated before a brown drapery and looking directly at the viewer, he wears a double-breasted gray coat over a white waistcoat and cravat, and holds a riding crop in his right hand. Two leather-bound books are set on a shelf at the sitter's right; the spine of the one closest to him bears the title "History / America." This title, which was curiously ignored by the authorities, would have been inappropriate for a doctor of divinity such as Smith, whose image would more likely have been



accompanied by an allusion to his widely read treatises on theology and moral philosophy.<sup>10</sup> Apparently the sitter, who does indeed look more like a "sport" than a minister, was a prosperous and educated landowner who wanted the painter to document his interest in American history. This portrait was probably painted by an anonymous artist in New England who worked in the linear style of Ralph Earl and whose origins Burroughs described quite well.

RWT

## Notes

1. This portrait was among four Clarke collection paintings submitted for wood analysis by the U.S. Forest Service. B. F. Kukachka, 4 June 1968 (in NGA curatorial files), identified the wood as the native American species Eastern white pine, or *Pinus strobus*.

2. The portrait was listed in the sale catalogue, *De Luxe Illustrated Catalogue of Early American Portraits Collected by Mr. Thomas B. Clarke* (American Art Association, New York, 1919), no. 20.

3. The signature, "R. Earl Pinx / 1798," was probably removed by conservators during the late 1960s. The fictitious De Forest provenance was as follows: The sitter's daughter Susan Smith Solomons (1785–1849) gave the portrait to Reverend Smith's biographer, Reverend Frederick Beasley (1777–1845), in 1821; his second wife Maria Beasley (d. 1852) sold it to Edward Hutchinson Robins Lyman (b. 1819) of Brooklyn in 1847; and it remained in that family until Caroline E. Lyman of Greenwich, Connecticut, supposedly sold it to De Forest in 1918. The spurious receipt, signed by Maria Beasley and dated 25 September 1847, very conveniently documented both the portrait's pedigree and its sale to Lyman: "Received of Edward R. Lyman the sum of one hundred dollars for the portrait of Dr. Samuel Stanhope Smith painted by Ralph Earl, the same being the one which in 1821 was given to my husband, the late Dr. Frederick Beasley, by Mrs. Susan Solomons, daughter of Dr. Smith." The text of the receipt was cited in *Clarke* 1928. A certification of provenance, dated 10 August 1920 and signed by Caroline Lyman and cosigned by Rose de Forest, is also on file.

4. See the copies of Munn's two letters to Clarke of 17 June and 6 July 1920 (in NGA curatorial files).

5. NGA curatorial files contain a typed transcript of a handwritten report by Rose de Forest, dated 11 August 1920, that was addressed to an Art Bruse in New York City.

6. Charles X. Harris, letter to Thomas B. Clarke, 9 October 1920 (in NGA curatorial files). For Harris' relationship with Clarke and Art House, see Richard H. Saunders, "The Eighteenth Century Portrait in American Culture of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," in Ellen G. Miles, ed., *The Portrait in Eighteenth-Century America* (Newark, Delaware, 1993), 144–146. The three portraits of Smith at Princeton are listed in Donald Drew Egbert, *Princeton Portraits* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1947), 53. Another copy of Lawrence's portrait of

Smith, owned by Hampden-Sydney College, Virginia, is discussed and illustrated by William H. Whiting in Alexander Wilbourn Weddell, ed., *A Memorial Volume of Virginia Historical Portraiture* (Richmond, Virginia, 1930), 273–274.

7. The portrait was illustrated as Earl's *Samuel Stanhope Smith* in a review of the exhibition by Cuthbert Lee, "The Thomas B. Clarke Collection of Early American Portraits," *The American Magazine of Art* 19, no. 6 (June 1928): 301.

8. The scholarly opinions are summarized by Rutledge and Lane 1952, 77–79.

9. William P. Campbell, memorandum, 10 March 1964 (in NGA curatorial files). Campbell rejected the theory that this painting was European when wood analysis revealed the panel to be the native American species Eastern white pine, or *Pinus strobus* (see note 1, above). However, the presence of white pine is inconclusive in determining the painting's origin because it was exported to Europe and is commonly found in British looking-glass frames and furniture made after 1800. See Charles F. Montgomery, *American Furniture: The Federal Period, in the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum* (New York, 1966), 276.

10. Smith's substantial addition to the first history of America written by an American, Dr. David Ramsay's *History of the United States*, was not published until it appeared in the third volume of an edition printed in Philadelphia in 1817, well after the putative date of this portrait. Ramsay had covered events up to the year 1808, while Smith and others wrote on the period up to the Treaty of Ghent (1814). The anonymous author of the "Life of Samuel Stanhope Smith, D.D.L.L.D.," *Port Folio* 9, no. 1 (1820): 153–156, made no mention of Smith's activity as a historian and instead singled out for praise his religious and philosophical works, placing special emphasis on *An Essay on the Causes of Variety, in the Complexion and Figure in the Human Species* (Philadelphia, 1787).

## References

1928 Philadelphia: n.p.

1947.17.72 (980)

*Eliab Metcalf* (?)

c. 1815

Oil on canvas, 68.1 × 53.5 (26<sup>13</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 21<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support was lined in January–February 1950. All four tacking margins were removed, presumably at that time. Cusping indicates that the dimensions of the painting have not been altered. Before lining, an inscription was visible on the reverse of the support: "Dr. Alexander Anderson / Eliab Metcalf Pinxt<sup>2</sup>"; a tracing made of it has been lost. During the 1950 treatment, it was discovered that the sitter's left hand had been painted out, and it was restored to view. The thin white ground layer bare-

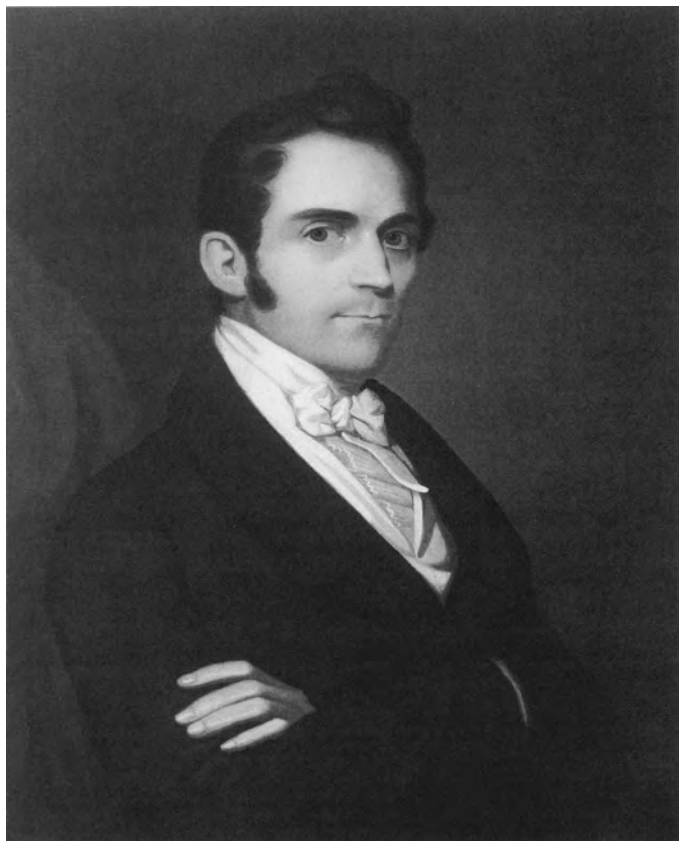
ly fills the interstices of the open weave of the support. The paint was applied in thin, fluid brushstrokes meticulously modeled and blended to achieve a smooth surface; there is a slight loosening of the brushwork in the sitter's hair, cravat, and hand, and the curtain in the background. There are scattered areas of inpainting, including two repaired tears in the support. One tear, 4.3 cm long, is near the shoulder; the other, 2.7 cm long, is just under the ear. The moderately thick surface coating has become yellowed.

**Provenance:** (Rose M. de Forest [Mrs. Augustus de Forest], New York); purchased 22 March 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, December 1921, no. 17, as *Alexander Anderson* by Eliab Metcalfe [sic]. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered, as *Alexander Anderson* by Eliab Metcalfe [sic]. Loan for display with permanent collection, Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia, Athens, 1972–1974.

THOMAS B. CLARKE acquired this painting under the mistaken impression that it was Eliab Metcalf's portrait of the noted American wood engraver Alexander Anderson (1775–1870), painted in 1816.

Unknown American artist, *Eliab Metcalf* (?), 1947.17.72



The attribution and erroneous sitter identification were based on the De Forests' fraudulent allegation that the painting had been acquired from descendants of the artist, and on the inscription that formerly appeared on its reverse.

William Sawitzky accepted both the attribution and sitter identification, Harry MacNeill Bland doubted the latter for unspecified reasons, and Alan Burroughs was dubious because the painting was "sharper" in style than Metcalf's *Asher B. Durand* (c. 1830, NYHS). Anna Rutledge and James Lane determined that the portrait bore no resemblance to Metcalf's work and that the sitter did not resemble Jarvis' *Alexander Anderson* (1804–1806, MMA); they further noted that the sitter appeared significantly younger than forty-one, Alexander's age in 1816, when Metcalf had supposedly painted the portrait.<sup>1</sup>

William Campbell compared the picture with photographs of other portraits by Metcalf at the Frick Art Reference Library and concluded that it resembled the artist's style in 1816, which he characterized as "hard, shiny, and with little modeling."<sup>2</sup> He consulted Martin Soria, an authority on Metcalf, who initially rejected the sitter identification but agreed with the attribution, before changing his mind and asserting that both were implausible.<sup>3</sup> On 27 July 1965 Campbell prepared a curatorial memorandum in which he recommended a disattribution and stated that the title should be changed to "Portrait of a Man." He also changed his mind, however, and deferred final judgment to a future date.

Campbell began to suspect that the painting was a self-portrait by Metcalf after he saw an illustration of a self-portrait<sup>4</sup> that was owned by the artist's great-grandson. Its owner was unable to verify the De Forest provenance of the Clarke collection portrait, and he did not find it documented in Metcalf's notebook.<sup>5</sup> Campbell located another of the artist's descendants who owned two portraits of Metcalf, one reputed to be a self-portrait and the other a miniature attributed to an unknown American artist.<sup>6</sup> Apparently the discovery of these three comparative images of Metcalf, which all shared impeccable family provenances, led Campbell to ultimately accept the Clarke collection painting as the artist's self-portrait.

The two Metcalf self-portraits owned by the artist's descendants are clearly related to each other and represent the same person. The Clarke collection picture, however, is an artistically inferior work that was executed in a far more linear style,

and it has no stylistic affinity to the self-portraits. The sitter's features only vaguely resemble Metcalf, and the romantic quality of the authentic likenesses—where Metcalf represented himself attired in a cloak, with a penetrating stare, heavy shadows under his eyes, and a slightly frowning expression—is absent. The miniature portrait of Metcalf was executed in a linear style comparable to that of the Clarke collection painting, and the sitter closely resembles Metcalf as he appears in his two self-portraits. The De Forests' claim that the Clarke picture represented Alexander Anderson was obviously fraudulent (which indicates that the inscription was certainly forged), and the attribution to Metcalf rests solely on a doubtful and unsubstantiated provenance. There is thus no logical reason to associate Metcalf's name with this portrait. In the absence of any documentation pertaining to the true origin of the portrait and the identity of the sitter or artist, no alternative attribution suggests itself.

RWT

#### Notes

1. Rutledge and Lane 1952, 90.
2. William P. Campbell, curatorial notes, April 1961 (in NGA curatorial files).
3. Martin Soria, letters of 13 October 1958 and 11 May 1959 (in NGA curatorial files).
4. *ArtN* (May 1968), 32.
5. John T. Metcalf, letter, 3 June 1968 (in NGA curatorial files).
6. Bryce Metcalf Jr., letter, 10 December 1968 (in NGA curatorial files).

1947.17.109 (1017)

### *Portrait of a Man*

c. 1820

Oil on canvas, 44.5 × 35.6 (17½ × 14)  
Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support remains unlined and attached to its original four-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher with outside keys in open slots. The reverse of the fabric bears a partially legible excise duty stamp with the number "587" at the top right, and the monogram and date "T.S. 1820" appears at the lower right. Paint was applied over a preprimed smooth and thick white ground layer. The portrait was painted mostly wet-into-wet and smoothly, with high impasto in the whites. The background, as well as wide traction cracks and paint blisters, has been extensively overpainted. The thick and exceptionally glossy surface coating is moderately discolored.

**Provenance:** (Rose M. de Forest [Mrs. Augustus de Forest], New York); purchased 5 April 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. 20, as *Doctor William Gibson* by Thomas Sully; Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered, as *Doctor William Gibson* by Thomas Sully.

WHEN ACQUIRED by Thomas B. Clarke, this painting was identified as Thomas Sully's portrait of the noted Philadelphia physician, Dr. William Gibson (1788–1868), who had taught surgery at the Medical School of the University of Pennsylvania from 1819 until 1855. Augustus de Forest alleged that this was the "head"-size portrait of Gibson that Sully recorded in his "Account of Pictures" as having been painted between 1 and 8 June 1820 "for Charles Bell of London," a British surgeon who was an intimate friend of Gibson.<sup>1</sup> Although there was no evidence that the portrait had ever been sent to London, De Forest made the unsubstantiated claim that in 1847 Bell's widow brought it to the United

Unknown American artist, *Portrait of a Man*, 1947.17.109





Fig. 1. Joseph Wood, *Dr. William Gibson*, oil on canvas, 1819, Philadelphia, Mütter Museum, photograph courtesy of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, PA-54

States and presented it to Gibson. It was said to have remained in possession of the doctor's descendants until De Forest purchased it from them.<sup>2</sup>

William Sawitzky cast doubt on the attribution by observing that the artist's "approach and technique [are] so utterly different from Sully's style that it cannot be accepted as his work." He further speculated that "there is something in the painting that suggests John W. Jarvis, of whom it could be a quick sketch." John Hill Morgan and Harry MacNeill Bland observed that this portrait was the same size as the one listed in Sully's account book, but remained suspicious of its provenance and recommended further investigation.<sup>3</sup> Bland found the "realism and roughness of the modelling" unlike Sully. Anna Rutledge and James Lane failed to detect any similarity between this sitter and known likenesses of Gibson that they did not specify. The authorities were unanimous in their opinion that the monogram signature and date had been forged. In 1966 William Campbell reviewed these opinions and recommended that the attribution and sitter identification be changed to their present status.<sup>4</sup>

Sawitzky and Bland were correct in their observation that this portrait is not representative of Sully's style. The bluntly direct presentation of the sitter's character is uncharacteristic of an artist whose images of men were generally somewhat remote and idealized. The subject of this painting does not resemble Gibson as he appears in the signed and dated portrait by Joseph Wood (fig. 1).<sup>5</sup> In 1951 a painting identified as Sully's authentic 1820 portrait of Gibson, owned by his descendants, was exhibited in Virginia. According to the exhibition catalogue Gibson "had Sully paint this portrait with the idea of giving it to Dr. Bell, for whom he named his first son, Dr. Charles Bell Gibson, later surgeon-general of the Confederate Armies of Virginia."<sup>6</sup> The unknown sitter's attire and hairstyle indicate a date of c. 1820. In the absence of any information regarding the sitter's true identity and the painting's provenance, it is not possible to offer an alternative attribution.

RWT

#### Notes

1. The Gibson portrait is listed in Hart 1909, no. 617, 69; and Biddle and Fielding 1921, no. 645, 159. Neither source provided the name of the portrait's owner or its location.

2. In a journal entry of 2 June 1820 the artist recorded that his portrait of Gibson had been delivered to the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and it may thus have been the "Portrait of a Gentleman" listed in the *Ninth Annual Exhibition of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts* (Philadelphia, 1820), no. 49, 6.

3. Morgan seems to have mistakenly believed that the portrait was painted in 1847 and not 1820, because he commented that "in 1847 Sully was going down hill."

4. The scholarly opinions are derived from Rutledge and Lane 1952, 105; and William P. Campbell, memorandum, 13 January 1966 (in NGA curatorial files).

5. Wood's portrait of Gibson is discussed in Julie S. Berkowitz, *The College of Physicians of Philadelphia Portrait Catalogue* (Philadelphia, 1984), 52–53.

6. This portrait was included in *An Exhibition of Portraits Owned in Albemarle County, Virginia, Painted before the Year 1830* [Exh. cat. Museum of Fine Arts, University of Virginia.] (Charlottesville, 1951), no. 25, 6, where its owner was listed as Mrs. George E. Walker (location unknown).

1943.1.5 (706)

## *Portrait of a Lady*

c. 1825

Oil on canvas, 76.3 × 63.5 (30 1/16 × 25)

Chester Dale Collection

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support has been lined. The tacking edges have been removed, but the presence of shallow cusping suggests that the dimensions have not been altered. The thickly applied ground layer is creamy white. Paint was applied in several wet-over-dry layers. The artist used stippled impasto and light scumbling to achieve textural effects in the highlights of the clothing and red drapery. Two losses along the top edge have been inpainted. In-painting over cracks in the sitter's right shoulder has turned white. The surface is coated with a thick varnish that has become discolored.

**Provenance:** Purchased at auction by (Albert du Vannes, New York); (sale, Silo's, New York, 19–20 April 1929, 2d day, no. 346, as *Mrs. Rob. N. Auchmuty* by John Trumbull); Chester Dale [1883–1962], New York.

**Exhibited:** *An Exhibition of American Paintings from the Chester Dale Collection*, Union League Club, New York, 1937, no. 15, as *Mrs. Robert Nicholl Auchmuty* by Samuel F. B. Morse. *Paintings of Life in America*, MMA, 1939, no. 102, as *Mrs. Henry John Auchmuty* by Samuel F. B. Morse.

THIS PORTRAIT was acquired by the Dales at a Silo's auction in 1929, where it was erroneously identified in the catalogue as John Trumbull's "Mrs. Rob. N. Auchmuty."<sup>1</sup> The Dales then gratuitously attributed it to Samuel F. B. Morse and, after consulting a genealogical history of the Auchmuty family, identified the sitter as the wife of Henry John Auchmuty (1804–1835), née Louise Ludlow.<sup>2</sup> Both the attribution and the sitter identification can be summarily dismissed as pure speculation. The Auchmutys were not married until 1828, three years after the supposed date of this painting, and the sitter here is at least forty-five years old, so she would have had to have been considerably older than her husband.<sup>3</sup> William Campbell recognized that the attribution to Morse was implausible because the very painterly technique evident here was very different from the artist's style in the mid-1820s, as represented in the National Gallery's pendants of Eliphalet Terry and his wife [1981.46.1, p. 15, and 1981.46.2, p. 18]. There is no documentary evidence to support the attribution in any of Morse's surviving manuscript materials, and it was rejected by the leading authority on his work.<sup>4</sup>

Campbell consequently recommended that the attribution and sitter identification be changed to their present status, which was done in 1969.<sup>5</sup>

This bust portrait represents a middle-aged woman seated before a neutral background. Her unidealized countenance has a tentative expression as she returns the viewer's gaze. She wears a pink and gray dress with white gauze trimmings, and an ornate matching bonnet surmounted by a blue ribbon rosette. The date of the portrait is based on the sitter's attire, which was fashionable in the late 1810s and early 1820s. A gray wrap with a brightly embroidered border covers the lower part of her body and conceals her forearms and hands. This portrait seems to have been executed by a competent artist whose painterly style indicates British training.

RWT

### Notes

1. *Modern and Antique Oil Paintings and Water Colors*, Silo's, 19–20 April 1929, no. 346.

2. Annette Townsend, *The Auchmuty Family of Scotland and America* (New York, 1932), 140.

3. When previous investigators tried to push the portrait's date up to accommodate the sitter's age, they encountered two new and insuperable problems. First, Morse ceased to paint in the mid-1830s. Second, after her husband's death in 1835 the proposed sitter was mar-

Unknown American artist, *Portrait of a Lady*, 1943.1.5





ried again, to a man named Henry Allen Wright, and after that she would not have continued to use her former husband's surname, by which she was identified in the portrait.

4. Campbell recorded Paul J. Staiti's comments in a memo of 23 April 1976 (in NGA curatorial files).

5. Campbell, memorandum, 8 April 1969 (in NGA curatorial files).

#### References

1939 MMA: 74, fig. 102.

1965 Dale: 31, repro.

1943.1.6 (707)

### *Portrait of a Lady*

c. 1825

Oil on canvas, 76 × 64 (29<sup>15/16</sup> × 25<sup>3/16</sup>)

Chester Dale Collection

**Technical Notes:** The unevenly spun twill-weave fabric support was relined in 1953. The original tacking margins were removed. The absence of cusping indicates that the painting's present dimensions are probably not original. Faint underdrawing in the form of a few contour lines along the chin and cheekbone delineate the sitter's face. The portrait appears to have been painted rapidly, with overlying areas applied wet-into-wet. The consistency of the colors varies from thin to low-impasted for the flesh tones and whites. A red-orange imprimatura was applied over the white ground layer in such a way as to leave the white reserve for the head and chest areas. The black dress and green cloth were added next, with highlights, shadows, and other accents applied last. The sitter's face was executed with a higher degree of finish to achieve a lifelike quality. Minor inpainting appears along the edges and in the background. The varnish applied in 1953 has become moderately discolored; however, the contrasts between light and dark have become exaggerated by the partial removal of an earlier discolored varnish from the sitter's face and chest.

**Provenance:** Julius Weitzner; (Ehrich Galleries, New York); (their sale, American Art Association, Anderson Galleries, Inc., New York, 18–19 April 1934, 2d day, no. 126)<sup>1</sup>; Chester Dale [1883–1962], New York.

**Exhibited:** *An Exhibition of American Paintings from the Chester Dale Collection*, Union League Club, New York, 1937, no. 16, as by Samuel F. B. Morse.

**UNTIL RECENTLY** this painting was considered, without any apparent justification, to be Samuel F. B. Morse's portrait of an unknown woman. William Campbell, the only authority who studied the picture, reviewed the scant information available and accepted the attribution. After Paul Staiti remarked that "the picture just cannot be considered to be in Morse's style,"<sup>2</sup> it was compared with the artist's nearly contemporary *Lydia Coit Terry* [1981.46.2, p. 18] in the National Gallery's conservation department. The rather clumsy handling of the sitter's dress and the detail-oriented treatment of her face contrast markedly with the fluid and nervous painterly brushwork that characterizes Morse's authentic work. It became evident that the portraits were not painted by the same hand.

The apparently well-to-do young sitter appears to be absorbed in a reverie as she looks wistfully to her left. Her slightly raised eyebrows and faint smile indicate that the object of her thoughts is pleasant. She rests the index finger of her raised left hand on her cheek so that her gold wedding ring is visible. The unusually ornate bonnet—a panoply of satin ribbons and lace that covers her short curled hair—enhances her feminine charm and complements her expression. The young woman's fashionably low-cut black dress is trimmed with white lace, and she wears a jeweled pendant earring in her right ear. Such attire was in fashion c. 1825 and provided the basis for the approximate date suggested for the portrait.

The appearance of this portrait is marred by the presence of the sitter's handless thumb at the bottom center of the lower border. This does not nec-

Unknown American artist, *Portrait of a Lady*, 1943.1.6



essarily represent the artist's original composition because (as described in the Technical Notes) the portrait was probably cut down from a larger size. Although there is no proof that the dimensions were altered beyond the removal of the tacking margins, the visual evidence—particularly the similarly truncated ornamental gold tassel that hangs at the upper left—suggests that the painting was originally of larger dimensions, perhaps 35 by 28 inches, and was cut down to the standard bust size of 30 by 25 inches. It is possible that this portrait was once accompanied by a pendant representing the sitter's husband.

RWT

### Notes

1. According to the Dale collection records (in NGA curatorial files), Walter Ehrich had purchased the portrait from Weitzner, who in turn had bought it in Philadelphia from an owner whose name was unknown.

2. Paul F. Staiti, letter to Robert W. Torchia, 8 June 1993 (in NGA curatorial files). There seems to have been some confusion on this point because Campbell, in a memorandum of 23 April 1976 (in NGA curatorial files), was apparently mistaken when he quoted Staiti as saying there was "no question about this being a Morse, indeed, about one of the best."

### References

1965 *Dale*: 30, repro.

1947.17.61 (969)

### *Portrait of a Man*

c. 1825

Oil on canvas, 76.8 × 63.8 (30<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 25<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The unlined support consists of a fine twill-weave fabric estimated to be cotton, with thin blue and black stripes made from dyed fibers that are characteristic of mattress ticking. The support remains mounted on its original stretcher of the type that was patented by Pflieger in 1886, having four members with double mortise-and-tenon, double-mitered joints with central wooden keys. X-radiography reveals that the artist applied, with broad sweeps, an uneven light gray ground layer. The paint was applied wet-into-wet, in a single opaque layer. Any attempt to define the painter's modeling technique by X-radiography is frustrated by the density of the ground and the uniform application of paint with dense pigments in the sitter's face. The appearance of the painting is disfigured by two types of overpaint in the face: Thin lines were used to conceal craquelure, and extensive overpainting covers abrasion of the cheek and



Unknown American artist, *Portrait of a Man*, 1947.17.61

sideburn. The eyes have also been reinforced. The varnish is slightly discolored.

**Provenance:** (Rose M. de Forest [Mrs. Augustus de Forest], New York); purchased 5 April 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, December 1921, no. 4, as *James Lawrence* by John Wesley Jarvis. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered, as *James Lawrence* by John Wesley Jarvis.

THE DE FORESTS promoted this painting as John Wesley Jarvis' 1807 portrait of Captain James Lawrence (1781–1813), the distinguished American naval hero and originator of the expression "Don't give up the ship." This identification was based on an especially suspicious provenance that proved impossible to substantiate.<sup>1</sup> William Sawitzky, John Hill Morgan, Harry MacNeill Bland, and Anna Rutledge and James Lane were unanimous in their rejection of the attribution and sitter identification; only Alan Burroughs gave it some credence because

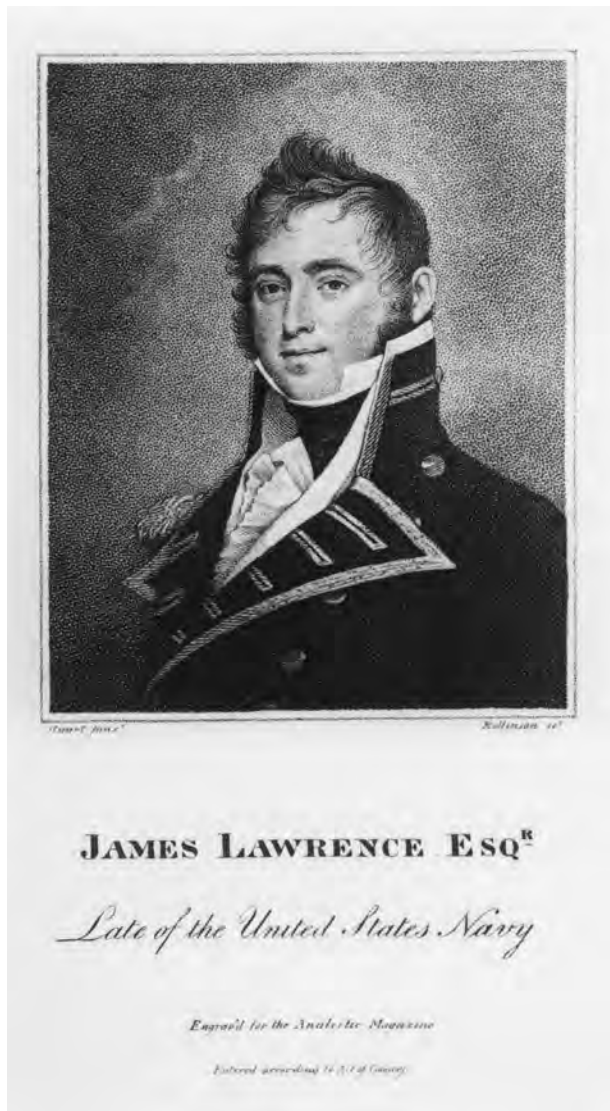


Fig. 1. William Rollinson after Gilbert Stuart, *Captain James Lawrence*, engraving from *Analectic Magazine*, reproduced in David McNeely Stauffer, *American Engravers Upon Copper and Steel* vol. 1 (New York, 1907), opp. p. 254, Washington, Library of Congress

of the reputedly uneven quality of Jarvis' work Harold E. Dickson, author of a study of Jarvis, noted "some Jarvis-like brushwork around the head, and the pose seems characteristic of him, but the whole thing is so wooden as to lead me to think that it may be a copy, *possibly* after Jarvis."<sup>2</sup> Rutledge and Lane suspected that this painting "might have been worked into a likeness of Lawrence" with the aid of William Rollinson's engraving (fig. 1) after Gilbert Stuart's portrait of the captain (1812, U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland).<sup>3</sup> William

Campbell weighed the evidence and recommended that the attribution and sitter identification be changed to their present status, which was done in 1965.<sup>4</sup>

Although the sitter's original appearance is basically intact, the extensive overpainting makes it difficult to venture an alternative attribution. In view of the picture's poor quality, it is very unlikely that it was painted by an accomplished portraitist such as Jarvis. If this were a copy after Stuart's *Lawrence*, or another portrait of the captain, the famous sitter would certainly have been represented in his navy uniform rather than a double-breasted blue-green jacket. Although this sitter's features bear a slight resemblance to the Stuart-Rollinson portrait of Lawrence, this similarity could have been enhanced, as Rutledge and Lane suggested, by some deliberately creative inpainting.

RWT

#### Notes

1. According to the De Forests, after Lawrence's death during the famous encounter between the *Chesapeake* and the *Shannon* in Boston Harbor, the portrait came into possession of the captain's widow Julia Montandevert Lawrence. The De Forests claimed to have purchased it from her grand-nephew James L. Montandevert, Brooklyn, New York, in 1921. M. A. Hamm, *Famous Families of New York*, 2 vols. (New York, 1902), 1: 239, recorded that Lawrence and his wife Julia had a daughter named Mary who married a Lieutenant William Preston Griffin of Virginia. No connection, however, can be established between Griffin and James Montandevert. De Forest also used the Griffin family in her falsified provenance for the portrait she claimed was Gilbert Stuart's *Cyrus Griffin*, a painting that was later identified as a copy of Stuart's *William Seton* [1947.17.106]; see Ellen G. Miles, *American Paintings of the Eighteenth Century*, National Gallery of Art, Systematic Catalogue (Washington, 1995).

2. Harold E. Dickson, letter to Anna Rutledge, 17 June 1952 (in NGA curatorial files).

3. The engraving, which originally appeared in the *Analectic Magazine* 2 (August 1813): opp. 12, was reproduced in David McNeely Stauffer, *American Engravers upon Copper and Steel*, 2 vols. (New York, 1907), 1: opp. 254.

4. The scholarly opinions are drawn from Rutledge and Lane 1952, 88; and William P. Campbell, memorandum, 20 July 1965 (in NGA curatorial files).

1954.1.6 (1190)

## *Portrait of a Man*

c. 1825

Oil on canvas, 76.1 × 63.3 (29<sup>15/16</sup> × 24<sup>15/16</sup>)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support was relined in 1948. The tacking margins have been removed. X-radiography reveals cusping on all four sides, as well as extensive tears in the original support, particularly in the area of the sitter's face. The thin, carefully blended and smoothly applied paint was laid over a thick white ground. Traction crackle in the brown background and the sitter's hair has been inpainted, and additional areas of discolored inpainting appear in the sitter's face, hair, and jacket, and in the background. The surface coating, including varnish applied in 1948, has yellowed significantly.

**Provenance:** (Rose M. de Forest [Mrs. Augustus de Forest], New York); purchased 16 March 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.

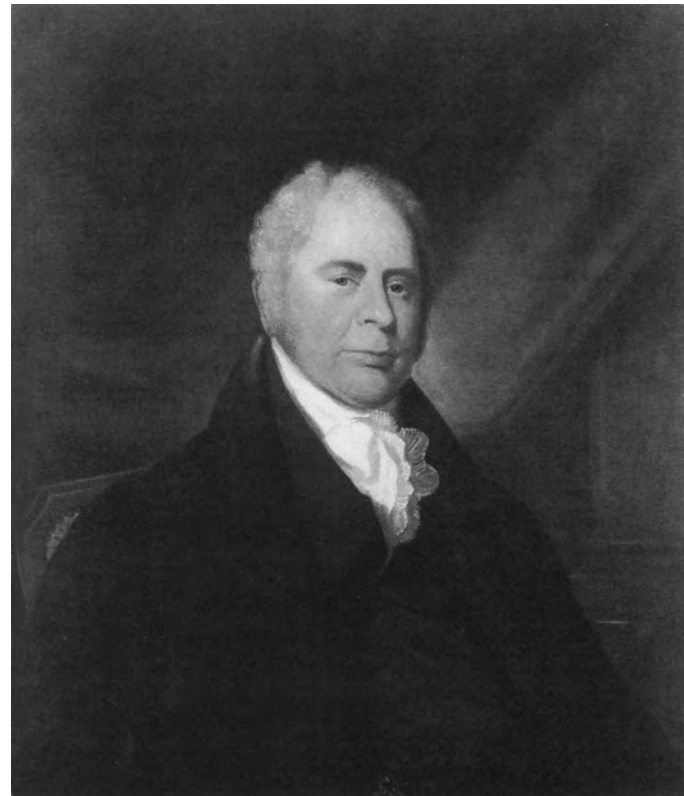
**Exhibited:** *Exhibition of Paintings by Early American Portrait Painters*, Union League Club, New York, December 1921, no. 6, as *Levi Lincoln* by Samuel F. B. Morse. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered, as *Levi Lincoln* by Samuel F. B. Morse.

THIS PAINTING was formerly thought to be Samuel F. B. Morse's 1816 portrait of Levi Lincoln (1749–1820), a senator from Massachusetts who served as attorney general of the United States under Thomas Jefferson from 1801 to 1805. The De Forests alleged that it had been commissioned by Lincoln's daughter Martha Lincoln Parker (1785–1822) of Charlestown, Massachusetts, shortly after her marriage, and they claimed to have acquired it from her descendants. This unlikely attribution and sitter identification were further based on the contents of a receipt that Morse had purportedly signed and dated.<sup>1</sup>

Frederic Sherman included this painting in his list of authentic Morse portraits.<sup>2</sup> The attribution was first questioned by H. Wehle when he reviewed a photograph of the painting at the Frick Art Reference Library in February 1932. William Sawitzky unequivocally stated that this portrait was not by Morse, and that it was "so much fixed up that it is worthless." John Hill Morgan declared it "doubtful," and Harry MacNeill Bland simply dismissed

it with the word "out." Only Alan Burroughs, whose opinions were occasionally wrong, agreed with the attribution and went so far as to call it an "admirable portrait." Anna Rutledge and James Lane pointed out that the portrait in question was stylistically inconsistent with Morse's accepted oeuvre and that there were no references to it in the artist's manuscripts or the scholarly studies on his career. In addition, Levi Lincoln's great-grandson was a professional genealogist who had written extensive family histories in which he mentioned portraits whenever they existed, yet he said nothing about this painting. Moreover, they thought that this sitter did not resemble Lincoln as he appears in J. H. Daniels' engraving after the portrait by James Sullivan Lincoln (Worcester County Law Library Association).<sup>3</sup> Rutledge and Lane also demonstrated that the contorted De Forest provenance had been used in an attempt to substantiate other spurious attributions.<sup>4</sup> After careful analysis of the receipt, they concluded that it was "an attempt to copy Morse's handwriting in faded ink on old paper."<sup>5</sup> William Campbell thought that this sitter appeared somewhat similar to the reproductions of James Lincoln's *Levi Lincoln* as they were reproduced in Waldo Lincoln's genealogies, and that these similarities were more discernible in the

Unknown American artist, *Portrait of a Man*, 1954.1.6



Daniels engraving.<sup>6</sup> He had reservations about the objectivity of this likeness, however, because it could not have been painted from life: The artist was only nine years old when Lincoln died. Ultimately he came to the conclusion that the attribution and sitter identification were false, and he recommended that they be changed to their present status, which was done in 1964.<sup>7</sup>

The sitter is an elderly, heavy-set man with curly gray hair and blue eyes. Clad in a dark coat worn over a brown waistcoat and white frilled stock, he looks directly at the viewer with a dignified but slightly humorous expression. He is seated before a scarlet drapery, and the base of a column is visible in the right background. This very conventional portrait of the mid-1820s has no stylistic affinity with Morse's oeuvre.

RWT

#### Notes

1. The receipt read, "Received of L. M. Parker, fifty dollars for a portrait of Levi Lincoln, Saml. F. B. Morse, Boston, May 8, 1816."

2. Sherman 1930, 37.

3. The inscription that accompanies this engraving erroneously states that the original portrait was painted by a William S. Lincoln, when it in fact was painted by James S. Lincoln (1811–1888).

4. The De Forest provenance alleged that the portrait passed at the death of Martha Lincoln Parker (1822) to her husband Leonard Moody Parker (d. 1854), to his nephew James Parker Longley (b. 1814), and then to his son Harriman Longley (b. 1843). Rutledge and Lane found this pattern of descent peculiar because "it is unlikely that a portrait of his father-in-law (for which he had paid) should at the death of the owner's wife go to his nephew when his daughters married and had descendants." De Forest used this same provenance to validate a painting he claimed to be Neagle's portrait of Lincoln's partner John Davis (1787–1854), which has since been determined to be of British origin. For a thorough discussion of the paintings said to have descended through the Martha Lincoln Parker pedigree, see Rutledge and Lane 1952, 16–21.

5. Rutledge and Lane 1952, 16–19.

6. Waldo Lincoln, *Genealogy of the Lincoln Family* (Worcester, Massachusetts, 1902), I, opp. 272; and Lincoln, *History of the Lincoln Family* (Worcester, Massachusetts, 1923), opp. 157.

7. William P. Campbell, memorandum, 2 April 1964 (in NGA curatorial files). Evidently there were still some lingering doubts about the disattribution because National Gallery curator Dorinda Evans made some further inquiries concerning the portrait in 1968, but no new information was obtained.

#### References

1930 Sherman: 37.

1961.8.1 (1651)

### *John Smith Warner (?)*

c. 1827

Oil on canvas, 76.5 × 63.3 (30<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 24<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)

Gift of Martha E. Warner

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support is lined. An inscription in red-brown paint on the lining was ostensibly written by the sitter: "PAINTED BY OTIS 1827 / IN THE 30 YEAR / OF MY AGE." The thickly applied ground layer is creamy white. Infrared reflectography reveals a portrait of another man in a different pose that was painted beneath the present work and bears little or no resemblance to it. The paint was applied wet-into-wet with thick brushstrokes. Extensive modeling is evident only in the sitter's face, which was painted over a light-colored underlayer. The paint surface is smooth, and with the exception of the shirt pin, there is little or no impasto. Sigmoid cracks resulting from blows to the surface are visible throughout. Inpainting appears in scattered minor losses, mainly in the sitter's coat and shirt. The varnish is only slightly discolored, but an underlying earlier varnish was partially removed from the sitter's face and shirt.

**Provenance:** The sitter's daughter, Georgian Warner [Mrs. David] Woodburn, Baltimore; her brother, John Smith Warner Jr.; his daughter, Martha E. Warner, Philadelphia.

**Exhibited:** *Bass Otis, Painter, Portraitist and Engraver*, Historical Society of Delaware, Wilmington, 1976, no. 50.

THIS PAINTING descended through the family of the sitter, the silversmith and clockmaker John Smith Warner (1796–1868), where it was traditionally attributed to Bass Otis (1784–1861). A member of a famous Baltimore family of silversmiths, Warner succeeded his brother Thomas and served a one-year term as the city's assayer of silver in 1822. Thereafter Warner moved to Philadelphia, where he was listed in the city directories for 1825–1839 and 1844–1846 as a watchcase maker.<sup>1</sup>

Neither documentary evidence nor longstanding Warner family tradition indicates that Otis painted this portrait. The attribution seems to have originated with the donor in the late 1950s, when she became interested in Otis; genealogical information has surfaced recently that suggests Otis may have been related to the Warner family by marriage.<sup>2</sup> The portrait was first discussed by Gordon Hendricks, who identified it as a painting by Otis that had been "retouched" by Thomas Sully; as such, it "looked rather more Sully than Otis, an improve-



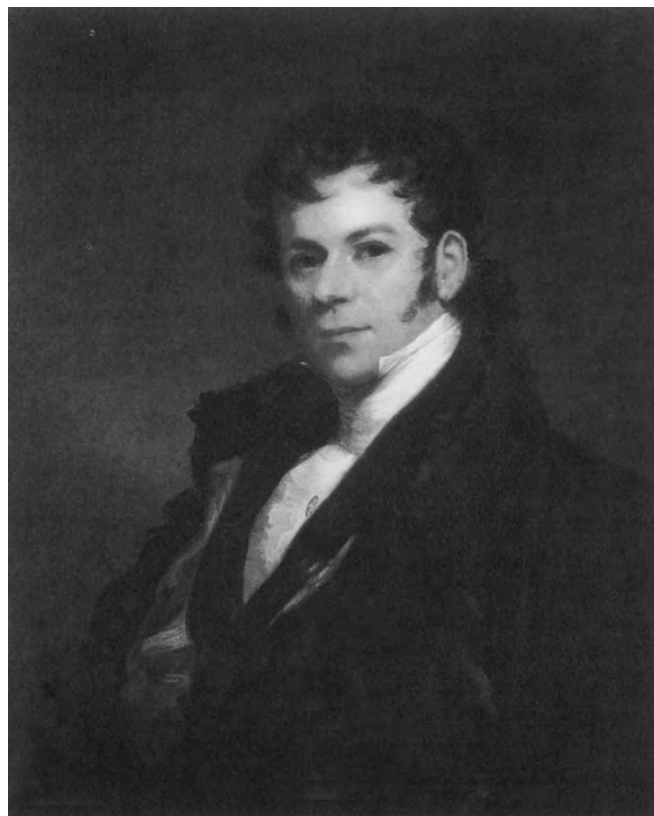
ment or retrogression, according to one's viewpoint." Noting that Sully did not leave any documentary record of having worked on this portrait, Hendricks nevertheless contended that "the touch of Sully is obvious."<sup>3</sup> Gainor Davis and Wayne Craven, the authors of the exhibition catalogue that accompanied the 1976 Bass Otis retrospective, agreed with Hendricks' theory.<sup>4</sup> Technical examination at the National Gallery's conservation department, however, showed that this portrait was painted by one artist during a single session and was never significantly reworked. To complicate matters further, the same examination revealed that the present image was painted over a portrait of another man.

The sitter identification is by no means certain. Davis and Craven reproduced a small profile portrait (fig. 1) of the same provenance as the National Gallery picture, which the donor had also identified as John Smith Warner and gratuitously attributed to Otis.<sup>5</sup> The paintings are stylistically dissimilar, and the sitters do not bear a particularly striking resemblance to each other.

Without documentation it is difficult to either confirm or deny the attribution to Otis because lit-



Fig. 1. Attributed to Bass Otis, *John Smith Warner* (?), oil on panel, Baltimore, Maryland Historical Society, 63.73.<sup>1</sup>



Unknown American artist, *John Smith Warner* (?), 1961.8.1

tle is known about his style. Hendricks summed up the situation when he wrote that "Otis has been blamed for being worse than he usually was," and that portraits have been attributed to him merely because they were "dull and that the period was right."<sup>6</sup> *John Smith Warner* appears to exhibit a level of artistic quality well beyond Otis' ability. Although Otis associated with Sully and aspired to his painterly and fluid technique,<sup>7</sup> his style remained basically linear, his draftsmanship was often deficient, and his portraiture was characterized by an almost awkwardly literal quality. One historian has aptly described his work as having "neither the sophistication of Sully nor the consistent quality of Jacob Eichholtz."<sup>8</sup> Otis did not record painting a portrait of Warner in his account book, but most of the entries in the manuscript date from 1819 to 1826.<sup>9</sup> Although it is unlikely that Sully painted this portrait, its implicit romanticism, the sitter's slightly feminized appearance, and the fluid rendition of his costume are all indicative of his influence. Hendricks' hypothesis that Sully inpainted this picture was a reasonable attempt to account for the presence of an artistic style and quality not normally associated with Otis. This painting bears no pro-

nounced stylistic affinity with the oeuvre of any other portraitist who was active in the mid-Atlantic area during the mid- to late 1820s, so no plausible alternative attribution arises.

RWT

#### Notes

1. For biographical information on Warner and his family, see *The Warner Family, Silversmiths of Baltimore* [Exh. cat. Peale Museum.] (Baltimore, 1971); the sitter's granddaughter Martha E. Warner furnished additional material in her letter to William P. Campbell, 9 January 1959 (in NGA curatorial files).

2. Joan H. Wroten, letter, 15 January 1994 (in NGA curatorial files). Otis' sister-in-law Maria Pierie married a William Warner, and one of their sons, Ralph N. Warner, wrote genealogical notes on the Otis family (Bass Otis file, NYHS); Otis taught Ralph's brother William Warner Jr. how to paint. It should be noted that William and Maria named their tenth child Otis (he was born in 1827, the approximate date of the National Gallery portrait). The relationship between this branch of the Warner family and the putative sitter John Smith Warner remains unclear.

3. Hendricks 1970, 18.

4. Davis and Craven 1976, 52.

5. According to Davis and Craven 1976, 52, its reverse is inscribed "My Grandfather—John S. Warner. Portrait by Bass Otis. Martha E. Warner." However, it actually reads "My Grandfather / John S. Warner / Probably by Bass Otis / Martha Warner."

6. Hendricks 1970, 18.

7. In a journal entry of 28 April 1827 (HSP), Sully included Otis among a list of "persons to visit occasionally or regularly" at his home.

8. Dorinda Evans, in PMA 1976, 269.

9. For a transcription of this manuscript, see Thomas Knoles, "The Notebook of Bass Otis, Philadelphia Portrait Painter," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 103, no. 1 (April 1993): 179–246.

#### References

- 1970 Hendricks: 18.  
1976 Davis and Craven: 52.

1947.17.55 (963)

### *Junius Brutus Booth*

c. 1830

Oil on canvas mounted on cardboard, 50.5 × 37.5  
(19<sup>7/8</sup> × 14<sup>3/4</sup>)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** This portrait was painted on a fabric that was mounted onto a cardboard support. The reverse of the cardboard is coated with a red-brown material. The paint was applied with strong brushwork and low

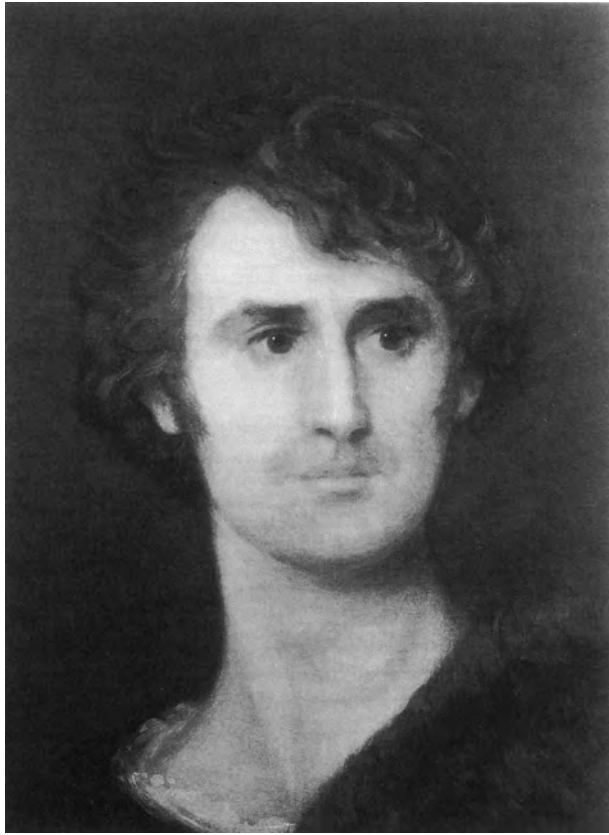
impasto in the highlights over a smooth white ground layer. Because the image has been extensively reworked, perhaps by the artist, and has large areas of both inpainting and overpainting, it is difficult to recognize the artist's original image. The surface coating was made exceptionally uneven during a past restoration when selected areas of varnish were removed; the varnish is severely discolored.

**Provenance:** Evert Jansen Wendell; (sale, Grahaeme's Auction Room, New York, 12 April 1922); 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 Portrait Painters*, Union League Club, New York, 1923, no. 20, as *William Augustus Conway* by James Herring. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered, as *William Augustus Conway* by James Herring. Loan for display with permanent collection, NPG, 1967–1980.

THIS PAINTING was formerly identified as a portrait of the tragedian William Augustus Conway (1789–1828) by James Herring (1798–1867). William Sawitzky, John Hill Morgan, Harry MacNeill Bland, Anna Rutledge and James Lane, and William Campbell all agreed that it was in fact a copy, of reduced size and inferior quality, of a bust representing the celebrated tragedian Junius Brutus Booth (fig. 1) that has been attributed to Robert Matthew Sully (1803–1855, a nephew of Thomas Sully).<sup>1</sup> Alan Burroughs, however, thought that the sitter was Conway "posed in a free imitation" of Sully's *Booth*.<sup>2</sup> Campbell confirmed the sitter identification by locating two likenesses of Booth that bear a strong resemblance to the sitter of the National Gallery portrait.<sup>3</sup> Born in London, Booth (1796–1852) emigrated to the United States in 1821, where he soon became "the foremost tragedian of his day in America"<sup>4</sup> and the founder of one of America's great theatrical families. One of his sons, the noted actor John Wilkes Booth, assassinated President Abraham Lincoln in 1865.

The extremely poor state of preservation of this portrait frustrates any objective attempt to identify the artist who painted it. The painterly technique suggests an artist influenced by the British style of portraiture who sought to emulate the work of Sir Joshua Reynolds and Sir Thomas Lawrence; it was for this reason that the attribution to Robert Sully was once considered feasible. Sully was still under his uncle Thomas Sully's tutelage in the early 1820s and studied art in London from 1824 to 1828; the



Unknown American artist, *Junius Brutus Booth*, 1947.17.55

Art Institute of Chicago's original portrait is thought to have been painted shortly after his return to America.<sup>5</sup> This date gains further credence because Booth appears to be in his early thirties. A firm terminus ad quem of 1838 can be established because Booth's nose was broken that year during a brawl, and the accident permanently altered his appearance; since his nose remains intact in Sully's portrait, the image was painted before that event.

This small type of theatrical portrait was in vogue during the late 1820s, after Thomas Sully's son-in-law John Neagle completed his series of similar images that were ultimately engraved and published in *The Acting American Theatre* and Henry Inman was acclaimed for his full-length *William Charles Macready as William Tell* (1827, location unknown).<sup>6</sup> Robert Sully was certainly familiar with the two portraits Neagle had painted of Booth, namely, *Mr. Booth as Sir Edward Mortimer in the Iron Chest* (1825, Museum of the City of New York) and *Junius Brutus Booth in the Title Role of John Howard Payne's 'Brutus'* (1827, Museum of the City of New

York). Such images of well-known actors performing favorite roles attracted portraitists as a kind of semi-history painting that afforded an opportunity to experiment with reproducing a wide range of human emotions and psychological states that would have been inappropriate for conventional portraiture. Although it is not known what theatrical character Booth is represented as performing in the portrait, his subdued expression indicates that the unknown artist avoided representing him in the exaggerated histrionic manner characteristic of the other American artists who worked in this genre.

RWT

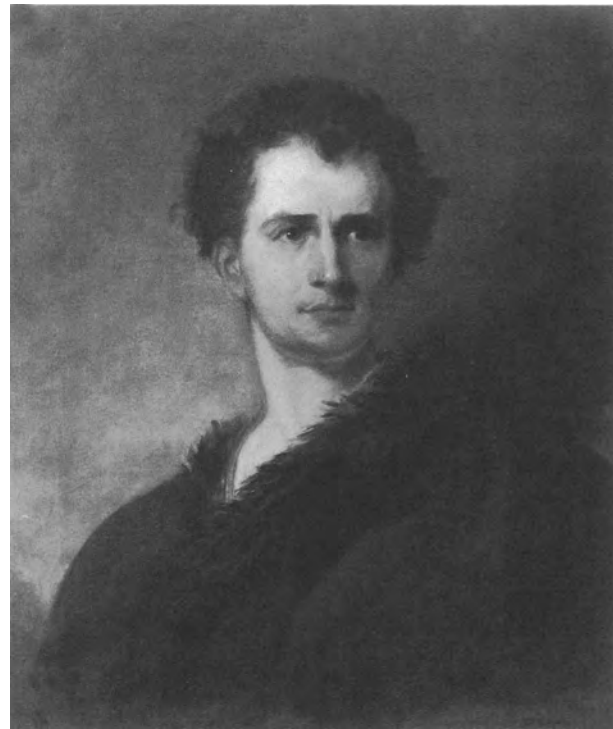
#### Notes

1. This painting, which was once erroneously attributed to Robert's uncle Thomas Sully, was purchased in 1923 by William Owen Goodman, Chicago, from Ehrich Galleries, New York; he donated it to the Art Institute of Chicago in 1925.

2. The scholarly opinions are drawn from William P. Campbell, memorandum, 14 July 1965 (in NGA curatorial files).

3. They are the photograph of a marble bust sculptured by Thomas R. Gould that appears as the front

Fig. 1. Attributed to Robert Matthew Sully, *Junius Brutus Booth*, oil on canvas, 1829/1830, The Art Institute of Chicago, Erna Sawyer Goodman Fund, 1923.384



tispiece in his *Tragedian: An Essay on the Histrionic Genius of Junius Brutus Booth* (New York, 1868) and the engraved frontispiece portrait by an unidentified artist that appears in Laurence Hutton, *Curiosities of the American Stage* (New York, 1891).

4. *DAB*, 1: 454.

5. For biographical data on Sully, see Dunlap 1834, 2: 396–398.

6. Mathias Lopez and Francis Courtney Wemyss, eds., *The Acting American Theatre*, 4 vols. (New York, 1827). For a discussion of Neagle's theater portraits executed for this work, and their relationship to Inman's *Macready*, see Torchia 1989, 130–131.

1947.17.75 (983)

### *Portrait of a Lady*

c. 1830

Oil on canvas, 91.8 × 71.4 (36<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 28<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support has been lined and remounted on what may be its original four-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher with deep inside bevels. The tacking margins have been removed. The white ground layer has granu-

lar inclusions. The artist applied paint in layers, both wet-into-wet and wet-over-dry, with final highlights in low impasto. X-radiography reveals that the sitter originally held between the thumb and index finger of her right hand a chain that was attached to the bodice of her dress. There are various alterations in the fingers, and an attempt was made to lower both hands. The paint surface is in poor condition. Paint losses associated with the extensive cupping have been coarsely overpainted. The surface is coated with a thick, glossy varnish.

**Provenance:** Charles Henry Hart [1847–1918], New York; purchased 1920 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. 15, as *Katharine Augusta Rhodes Ware* by Samuel F. B. Morse. *A Loan Exhibition of Paintings by Early American Portrait Painters*, Century Association, New York, 1926, no. 18, as *Katharine Augusta Rhodes Ware* by Samuel F. B. Morse. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered, as *Katharine Augusta Rhodes Ware* by Samuel F. B. Morse.

THOMAS B. CLARKE acquired this painting in the belief that it was Samuel F. B. Morse's portrait of the poet Katharine Augusta Rhodes Ware (1797–1843), painted in 1828. It was accompanied by a spurious certificate of provenance alleging that it had belonged to Ware's great-niece Katherine Smith, from whom Charles Henry Hart was alleged to have purchased it in 1917.<sup>1</sup> With the sole exception of Frederic Sherman,<sup>2</sup> who included this painting in his list of authentic Morse portraits, the attribution was unanimously rejected by the authorities. H. Wehle, who knew only a photograph of the portrait he had seen at the Frick Art Reference Library, questioned the attribution in February 1932.<sup>3</sup> William Sawitzky bluntly opined that it is "not by Morse, but the work of a sign painter of little ability and even less taste." John Hill Morgan and Harry MacNeill Bland dismissed it with the single word "out." Alan Burroughs speculated that "this stiff and stylish figure" was by Morse's pupil Robert M. Pratt (1811–1880). Anna Rutledge and James Lane rejected the painting for several reasons: They were unable to substantiate its provenance, it did not resemble Morse's style, and the certificate was related to other spurious manuscript materials that had been used to authenticate Clarke collection paintings.<sup>4</sup> William Campbell reviewed all the evidence and recommended that the attribu-

Unknown American artist, *Portrait of a Lady*, 1947.17.75



tion and identification be changed to their present status, which was done in 1964.<sup>5</sup>

This three-quarter-length portrait represents a rather plain young woman, who wears a black dress with puffed sleeves and modest décolletage, seated in a red-upholstered chair. Her head is set against a red drapery background, next to which the base of a stone column and part of a tree are also visible. She leans on an ermine mantle whose fur pattern is primitively delineated with large flat brushstrokes. The artist's linear style, the two-dimensional rendering of space, and the unskilled handling of anatomical details, such as the sitter's foreshortened right arm, indicate that this portrait was painted not by Morse but rather by an artist of considerably inferior talent and training. There are no known likenesses of Ware to substantiate the sitter identification, but it can almost certainly be dismissed as fictitious because of the false certificate of provenance and the nature of Hart's professional relationship with Clarke and the American Art Association.<sup>6</sup> In the absence of documentation about the painting, it is impossible to offer an alternative attribution.

RWT

#### Notes

1. The undated certificate (in NGA curatorial files) reads, "This portrait of my great aunt Katherine Augusta Rhodes Ware was painted by S.F.B. Morse in 1828 and has never been out of the family possession."

2. Sherman 1930, 37.

3. Wehle's opinion was recorded in a note by William P. Campbell, November 1957 (in NGA curatorial files).

4. Rutledge and Lane 1952, 135.

5. Campbell, memorandum, 2 April 1964 (in NGA curatorial files).

6. See Richard H. Saunders, "The Eighteenth-century Portrait in American Culture of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," in Ellen G. Miles, ed., *The Portrait in Eighteenth-Century America* (Newark, Delaware, 1993), 144.

#### References

1930 Sherman: 37.

1943.1.7 (708)

### *Portrait of a Man*

c. 1830

Oil on canvas, 76.5 × 66 (30 1/8 × 26)

Chester Dale Collection

**Technical Notes:** The slightly coarse, medium-weight plain-weave fabric support was relined during conservation treatment in 1962. The original tacking edges have been removed but mild cusping of the support suggests that the original dimensions have not been altered. The thick and smoothly applied ground layer is creamy white; it conceals the weave texture of the fabric. The paint was applied smoothly. The flesh tones of the face were modeled wet-into-wet over a dry white or light-colored underlayer. Low impasto was employed in the highlights of the shirt. A hole in the left shoulder and a tear to the right of the right shoulder have been inpainted. Inpainting was also used to reinforce the darks in the lapels of the coat. Despite moderate abrasion, especially in the sitter's hair and in parts of the red drapery, the painting has not been heavily overpainted. The varnish is moderately discolored.

**Provenance:** (Augustus W. Oberwalder [Augustus de Forest], New York); Charles X. Harris, New York; Hiram Burlingham, New York; (his estate sale, American Art Association, Anderson Galleries, Inc., New York, 11 January 1934, no. 35); Chester Dale [1883–1962], New York.<sup>1</sup>

**Exhibited:** *Gallery of National Portraiture*, PAFA, 1926, no. 97, as *John Rush* by John Neagle. *Exhibition of American Painting*, M. H. de Young Memorial Museum, California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, 1935, no. 182, as *John Rush* by John Neagle. *An Exhibition of American Paintings from the Chester Dale Collection*, Union League Club, New York, 1937, no. 19, as *John Rush* by John Neagle. *Masterpieces of Art*, New York World's Fair, 1940, no. 293, as *John Rush* by John Neagle.

CHESTER DALE acquired this painting in the belief that it was John Neagle's 1831 portrait of John Rush (1782–1852), son of the famous American sculptor William Rush.<sup>2</sup> It shares the same falsified provenance as the National Gallery portrait [1942.8.8, p. 294] that was formerly identified as Neagle's likeness of William Rush: Both paintings allegedly descended from William Rush through his fictional granddaughter Martha Sturges. As in the case of the former "William Rush," the identities of the artist and sitter were based on a photograph of an inscription that supposedly had been visible on the reverse of the canvas before its relining.<sup>3</sup>





Unknown American artist, *Portrait of a Man*, 1943.1.7

This half-length bust represents a man with a long thin face and aquiline features who is seated facing the viewer, with his head turned slightly to his right. He wears a brown coat and vest over a white stock and tie, and his high-standing collar covers the lower part of his face. The sitter's pose, with his poorly drawn arms almost symmetrically splayed outward, is unusual. His blue eyes are focused toward the viewer and are accented by their contrast with the red drapery background, creating a very striking effect. Harry Wehle verbally attributed the picture to Jacob Eichholtz, but Rebecca J. Beal had strong reservations because of the odd positioning of the arms.<sup>4</sup> Ransom Patrick included the painting in his checklist of Neagle's portraits, but noted that there was no evidence for the attribution.<sup>5</sup> When William Campbell concluded his investigation of the two "Rush" pictures in 1968, he recommended the disattribution but retained the sitter identification.<sup>6</sup>

The meticulous and linear technique evident here is completely unlike Neagle's style. Moreover, the thickly applied red background is especially uncharacteristic of Neagle, who invariably painted his backgrounds thinly. Because this painting was executed in a different style than, and is of inferior

quality to, its former putative companion, the so-called "William Rush," it is unlikely that the two portraits had a common source. Further, because of its suspicious provenance and the absence of documentary evidence, there is no logical reason to believe that this portrait represents John Rush. Both pictures were painted by unknown, minor portraitists during the early 1830s and were later furnished with spurious sitter identities in a deliberate effort to deceive.

RWT

#### Notes

1. It is listed in the sale catalogue *American Portraits . . . Property of the Estate of the Late Hiram Burlingame* (American Art Association, Anderson Galleries, Inc., New York, 11 January 1934), no. 35, 16.

2. The portrait was illustrated in *William Rush, American Sculptor* [Exh. cat. PAFA.] (Philadelphia, 1982), fig. 13, 25, where it was tentatively identified as John Rush by an unknown artist.

3. The photograph of the inscription reads "Portrait of John Rush / Son of W Rush / John Neagle Pinxit."

4. Wehle's statement comes from an anonymous note dated 5 December 1929 (in NGA curatorial files); Rebecca J. Beal, letter to Dorinda Evans, 13 August 1968 (in NGA curatorial files).

5. Patrick's no. 316 (copy of checklist in NGA curatorial files).

6. William P. Campbell, memorandum of 8 November 1968 (in NGA curatorial files).

#### References

1965 *Dale*: 32, repro.

1947.17.51 (959)

### *Portrait of a Man*

c. 1830

Oil on canvas, 76.2 × 61.3 (30 × 24 1/8)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The coarse plain-weave fabric support is unlined. The reverse bears a nonoriginal inscription: "Mahlon Dickerson / Painted by his friend / Robert Fulton 1814." The artist applied the slightly textured, gray-white ground layer thinly and unevenly. The paint was applied very thinly wet-into-wet and carefully blended in the flesh tones of the face. Final touches of the flesh tones consisted of thin scumbles of opaque red over the dry surface. There is inpainting at the lower edge and over small paint losses in the background and the sitter's right shoulder; a dark line reinforcing the lapel of the sitter's coat also appears to be overpaint. Slight abrasion of the thin paint surface in

some areas has exposed peaks of the fabric weave. The varnish is slightly discolored.

**Provenance:** (Rose M. de Forest [Mrs. Augustus de Forest], New York); purchased 24 March 1926 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:** *A Loan Exhibition of Paintings by Early American Portrait Painters*, Century Association, New York, 1926, no. 19, as *Mahlon Dickerson* by Robert Fulton. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered, as *Mahlon Dickerson* by Robert Fulton. *Two Centuries of American Portraits*, University of Kentucky Art Gallery, Lexington; Paducah Art Gallery, Kentucky; J. B. Speed Museum of Art, Louisville, Kentucky, 1970, no cat.

THOMAS B. CLARKE acquired this painting in the belief that it was a portrait Robert Fulton (1765–1815) had executed of the attorney and politician Mahlon Dickerson (1770–1853) in 1814, one year before Dickerson was elected governor of New Jersey. The attribution was based on the forged inscription on the reverse of the canvas and a falsified



Unknown American artist, *Portrait of a Man*, 1947.17.51

Fig. 1. James B. Longacre and James Herring, engraving after John Vanderlyn, *Mahlon Dickerson*, c. 1836, Washington, National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Graphics Division



provenance that had been supplied by the De Forests.<sup>1</sup> Cuthbert Lee, who was followed by Frederic Sherman, regarded the portrait as authentic and mentioned it in his study of early American painting.<sup>2</sup> William Sawitzky rejected both the attribution and the sitter identification, found the inscription “most doubtful,” and noted that the sitter bore no resemblance to John Vanderlyn’s portrait of Dickerson (c. 1820, Harvard University Law School, Cambridge, Massachusetts), which was engraved by George Parker and reproduced in James B. Longacre and James Herring’s *National Portrait Gallery of Distinguished Americans* (fig. 1).<sup>3</sup> John Hill Morgan refused to offer an opinion because little was known of Fulton’s style, and Harry MacNeill Bland simply said, “out.” Alan Burroughs accepted the attribution and sitter identification because he thought the sitter resembled Vanderlyn’s *Dickerson*, and he thought the inscription was genuine. Anna Rutledge and James Lane corrected Burroughs’ misapprehension by observing that in Vanderlyn’s authentic likeness Dickerson has blue eyes, whereas the man in the National Gallery painting has brown eyes. They further pointed out that Dickerson was born in 1770, but “the figure here shows a man much under forty wearing clothes not in

vogue until the middle to late 1820's, when he would have been about sixty years of age." Fulton died in 1814, so he could not have painted the portrait. Rutledge and Lane ventured a comparison between this portrait and known works by Fulton, and found it stylistically inconsistent with them. Finally, they noted that the inscription closely resembled three others in the Clarke collection that had all been determined to be forgeries.<sup>4</sup> In 1964 William Campbell reviewed all the evidence and recommended that the attribution be changed to its present status.<sup>5</sup>

The unknown man is seated against a plain green-brown background, with his body oriented to his left. He has turned his head to face the viewer, and he holds a closed book in his right hand, with a finger keeping a place between its pages. He wears a dark green coat with brass buttons over a black waistcoat and white stock. As Rutledge and Lane suggested, it is very likely that the De Forests saw an opportunity to invent the Dickerson attribution when they saw an illustration of Parker's engraving of Vanderlyn's *Dickerson* that accompanied an article in a magazine called the *Green Bag*.<sup>6</sup> They were probably unaware that Dickerson had blue eyes, or else they sought to circumvent the problem by falsely claiming that the author of the article had described Dickerson as being "of dark complexion, and with a kindly dark eye."<sup>7</sup> This competent portrait is very typical of its period. Without any documentation it is impossible to suggest an alternative sitter identification or plausible attribution.

RWT

#### Notes

1. The De Forests alleged that the portrait descended from the inventor's wife Mrs. Robert Fulton, who gave it after her husband's death in 1814 to Thomas Barlow, Redding, Connecticut, the adopted son of Fulton's friend Joel Barlow; his sister Rebecca Barlow Olmsted (1788–1861), Moreau, Saratoga County, New York; her son Lemuel Gregory Olmsted (1808–1880), Fort Edward, New York; the nephew of his second wife (Maria Chase, Stillwater, New York) John Chase, Brooklyn, from whom it was supposedly purchased. Rutledge and Lane 1952, 81, noted that part of the Barlow-Olmsted-Chase pedigree had been used for two other doubtful portraits: the first, owned by the National Gallery, was formerly thought to be Samuel Waldo's *Rebecca Sanford Barlow* [1942.8.37] and is now considered to have been painted by an unknown French artist; second, the so-called *Joel Barlow* by William Dunlap, which was sold as no. 51 at the Hiram Burlingham sale, American Art Association, 11 January 1934.

2. Lee 1929, 310; Sherman 1930, 96.

3. James B. Longacre and James Herring, *National*

*Portrait Gallery of Distinguished Americans*, 4 vols. (Philadelphia, 1836), 3: 353.

4. Rutledge and Lane 1952, 81–82.

5. William P. Campbell, memorandum, 13 April 1964 (in NGA curatorial files).

6. John Whitehead, "The Supreme Court of New Jersey," *Green Bag* 3, no. 9 (September 1891): 413.

7. De Forest Clarke collection data sheet (in NGA curatorial files).

#### References

1929 Lee: 310.

1930 Sherman: 96.

1947.17.46 (954)

### *Miss Robinson*

c. 1835

Oil on canvas, 73.3 × 59.1 (28<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 23<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The very fine plain-weave fabric support is lined. The original tacking margins have been removed, but cusping suggests the dimensions have not been altered. The paint was applied over a white ground layer in two techniques: The sitter's head and shoulders were painted wet-into-wet, and the green drapery background was executed wet-over-dry. Infrared reflectography and X-radiography reveal the face of another portrait of a woman beneath the final image, whose face is turned more toward the viewer (fig. 1). This first portrait may never have been completed; X-radiography shows a relative lack of density in the light areas of the face, and the presence of damaged areas and crackle suggests that it was already quite old when the present image was painted. A repaired tear below the sitter's right ear, a small loss in her hair, and another on her right pupil have been inpainted. The varnish is slightly discolored.

**Provenance:** Mary Robinson Benkard [1812–1841], the sitter's sister; her husband, James Benkard [1800–1864]; by descent to their great-grandson, James G. Benkard, New York; purchased 7 April 1926 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.

THIS PAINTING was initially thought to be a portrait that John Vanderlyn executed in 1837 at Newburgh, New York, of a woman identified only as "Miss Robinson," the eldest daughter of Henry Robinson (1792–1866) and his wife Ann Buchan. No biographical information about her survives. Thomas B. Clarke purchased the painting in 1926 from a great-grandson of the sitter's sister Mary



Unknown American artist, *Miss Robinson*, 1947.17.46

Robinson Benkard, so it directly descended through the family that had owned it for almost a century. Vanderlyn's name, however, had never been associated with this portrait until after Clarke had acquired it, and its hard, linear style makes that attribution quite improbable.

Most of the authorities rejected the attribution to Vanderlyn. William Sawitzky, who criticized the picture as "the work of a coach painter," understandably thought the idea "too preposterous for words." Alan Burroughs found *Miss Robinson* "too liney in execution and too elegant for Vanderlyn," and suggested that it was the work of Henry C. Pratt. John Davis Hatch, an authority on Vanderlyn, concluded that although the portrait was not the work of a coach painter, it certainly was not the product of an accomplished artist.<sup>1</sup> Anna Rutledge and James Lane considered the uneven quality of Vanderlyn's late portraiture and decided that the National Gallery picture might indeed have been painted by him.<sup>2</sup> William Campbell had seen some



Fig. 1. X-radiograph composite of 1947.17.46

examples of Vanderlyn's less distinguished work at the Senate House State Historic Site, Kingston, New York. He was initially inclined to accept the attribution, and then briefly toyed with the idea that this was a copy of a lost work by Vanderlyn, before finally recommending that the artist identification be changed to its present status, which was done in 1966.<sup>3</sup>

No documentary evidence exists to support the family tradition that this painting was executed in Newburgh in 1837, although the river view in the background suggests a Hudson Valley locale. To complicate the matter further, the Benkards still own Vanderlyn's oval portrait of Miss Robinson's sister Mary Robinson (fig. 2), a far more skillfully painted work in which the sitter bears such a strong resemblance to the National Gallery picture that one suspects that it represents the same individual. The sitters' identical facial characteristics, especially the long eyelashes and oddly shaped nose, indicate more than a family resemblance, and they also



Fig. 2. John Vanderlyn (?), *Mrs. James Benkard (Mary Robinson)*, oil on canvas, New York, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. James Benkard, photograph courtesy of the Frick Art Reference Library, New York

share distinctive hairstyles and black décolleté dresses. The linear style of the National Gallery painting suggests that it may have been painted by Vanderlyn's nephew and namesake John Vanderlyn Jr. In the absence of any documentation, it is reasonable to hypothesize that this portrait is a variant copy (with the sitter looking to her left rather than directly at the viewer and with a more elaborate background added) of the Vanderlyn original and that it was painted at some later date by an unskilled artist active in the middle Hudson Valley.

RWT

#### Notes

1. William P. Campbell's detailed transcript of Hatch's comments (in NGA curatorial files).
2. Rutledge and Lane 1952, 166.
3. William P. Campbell, memorandum, 25 January 1966 (in NGA curatorial files).

1942.8.8 (561)

## Portrait of a Man

c. 1835

Oil on canvas, 76.9 × 63.2 (30 1/4 × 24 7/8)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support has been lined and remounted on what may be its original four-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher. The tacking margins have been removed. The off-white ground layer is thick and smooth. The artist applied paint thickly and mostly wet-into-wet, so that brushstrokes remain evident. Highlights were somewhat inpasted. This painting is in poor condition with large inpainted losses scattered throughout. The sitter's face has heavy inpainting around the eyes, in the right cheek, and in the chin. Considerable glazing, especially in the red curtain background, conceals serious abrasion. The painting was treated most recently in 1943 when paint blisters were consolidated and several losses were inpainted. The thick, milky varnish is very discolored.

**Provenance:** (Augustus W. Oberwalder [Augustus de Forest], New York); Charles X. Harris; purchased 5 June 1920 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, December 1921, no. 10, as *William Rush* by John Neagle. *Exhibition of Portraits by John Neagle*, PAFA, 1925, no. 119, as *William Rush* by John Neagle.<sup>1</sup> Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered, as *William Rush* by John Neagle. *Early American Portraits and Silver* [Golden Jubilee of the Colonial Dames of America], J. B. Speed Memorial Museum, Louisville, Kentucky, 1947, no cat. *Famous Americans*, Washington County Museum of Fine Arts, Hagerstown, Maryland, 1955, no cat.

FORMERLY identified as John Neagle's portrait of the famous American sculptor William Rush (1756–1833),<sup>2</sup> this painting is related to the portrait formerly thought to be Neagle's likeness of Rush's son, John Rush [1943.1.7, p. 289]. The attribution and sitter identification were based on the De Forests' spurious claims that the paintings descended through Rush's granddaughter Martha Sturges, an individual who never existed, and photographs of inscriptions that had supposedly been on the reverse of the canvases before lining.<sup>3</sup>

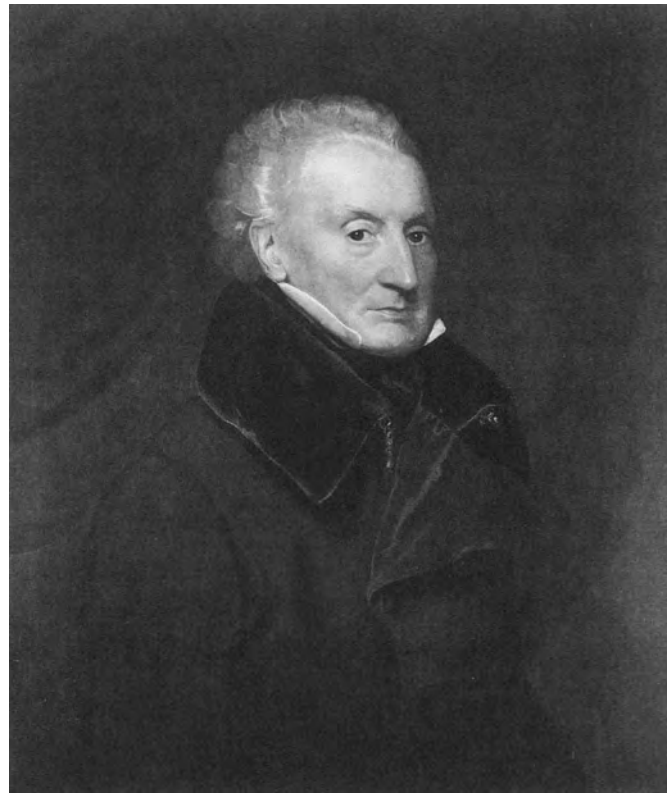
William Sawitzky thought the attribution to Neagle was "probably correct" but pointed out that the sitter resembles neither the portrait of Rush



attributed to Rembrandt Peale (c. 1813, Independence National Historical Park Collection, Philadelphia) nor Rush's terra-cotta self-portrait known as *Pine Knot* (fig. 1). John Hill Morgan questioned the identification of both artist and sitter. James Lane supported the attribution, as did Mantle Fielding, who included it in the 1925 Neagle exhibition held at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Ransom Patrick included the portrait in his checklist of Neagle's paintings.<sup>4</sup> Serious doubts were raised in 1966 when William Campbell attempted to trace the provenance and discovered that "no one in the family in which the painting supposedly descended ever heard of the individuals who supposedly owned it." After examining the X-radiographs, he concluded that it was in "wretched condition," that it was "not worth taking off the overpaint to see what would be left," and that it was consequently unworthy of exhibition.<sup>5</sup>

The bust portrait represents an elderly man, wearing a heavy brown topcoat with a large velvet collar, seated before a red drapery. He looks directly at the viewer, and his long gray hair is brushed backward to reveal a receding hairline. The extremely poor condition of the portrait frustrates any attempt to identify the artist. Even taking into con-

Fig. 1. William Rush, *Self-Portrait*, terra cotta, c. 1822, Philadelphia, The Museum of American Art of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1849.1



Unknown American artist, *Portrait of a Man*, 1942.8.8

sideration the overpainting of the face, the detail-oriented treatment and painstaking delineation of the sitter's features are totally uncharacteristic of Neagle's style. The uniformly thick application of paint with brushstrokes evident throughout the picture surface is also unlike Neagle, who painted everything but the head and highlights sparingly. The overpainting also makes it impossible to speculate as to the identity of the sitter, although one suspects that his features were deliberately altered in an unsuccessful attempt to make him resemble the known portraits of William Rush.

RWT

#### Notes

1. It was listed in the exhibition catalogue as the property of William Kane, New York City.

2. It was illustrated as such by Alfred Cox Prime, *The Arts and Crafts in Philadelphia, Maryland, and South Carolina*, 2 vols. (Topsfield, Mass., 1929), 1: opp. 224.

3. The provenance was given as Elizabeth Rush (1801–1878), the sitter's daughter; her brother William Rush (d. 1854); his granddaughter Martha Sturges. The De Forests actually offered to sell both of the portraits to Rush's descendant Rush Sturges in June 1920; see Rut-

ledge and Lane 1952, 18–19. The photographed inscription reads “William Rush, Modeller, Age 75 Painted at Philada 1831. John Neagle.”

4. Patrick’s no. 317 (copy of checklist in NGA curatorial files).

5. This summary of the scholarly discussion of the portrait is drawn from Campbell’s memorandum of 9 June 1966 and miscellaneous documents (in NGA curatorial files).

#### References

1925 PAFA: no. 119, 146.

1947.17.37 (945)

### *Portrait of a Man*

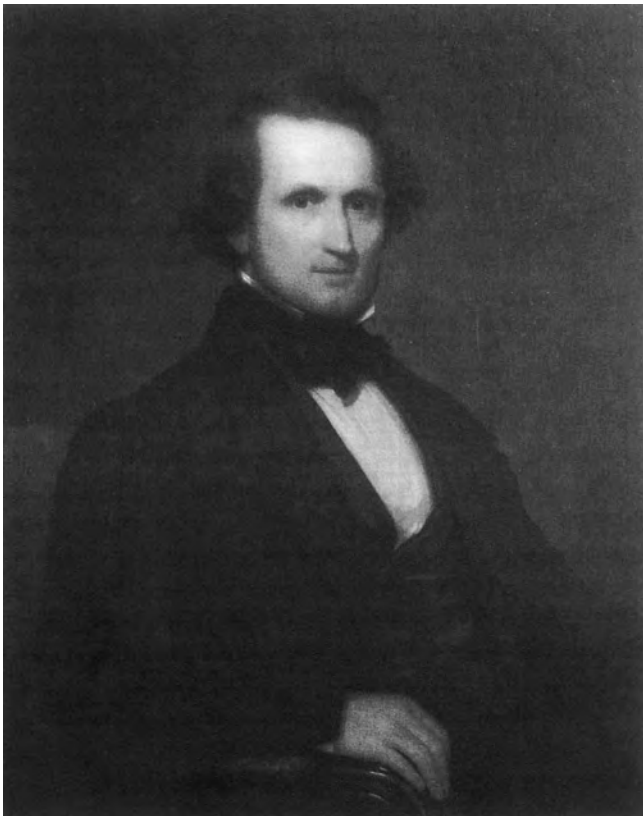
c. 1840

Oil on canvas, 86.5 × 68.7 (34 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 27 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The fine-weight plain-weave fabric has been lined. The thick white ground layer was toned with a thin red imprimatura applied under the figure. Green paint was used in the underlayers to model the flesh tones and in the upper layers to model the black coat. The thinly but fluidly applied paint is slightly thicker in the face and shirt. There are losses at the bottom edge that correspond to the width of the stretcher bar.

Unknown American artist, *Portrait of a Man*, 1947.17.37



There is a 10 cm loss in the right shoulder, a 5 cm loss to the right of the head, and another at the left edge. A tear at the right edge has been repaired. Traction cracks in the face have been inpainted, as well as numerous small losses at the edges and throughout the background. The vest and right shoulder have been overpainted. There is extensive abrasion throughout the blacks of the coat. The thick varnish is discolored and scratched.

**Provenance:** (Rose M. de Forest [Mrs. Augustus de Forest], New York); purchased 11 March 1922 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 Portraits by Early American Portrait Painters*, Union League Club, New York, February 1924, no. 16, as *Christian Gobrecht* by Asher Brown Durand. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered, as *Christian Gobrecht* by Asher Brown Durand.

THIS PAINTING was first identified as Asher B. Durand’s portrait of the artist, engraver, and inventor Christian Gobrecht (1785–1844). The attribution and sitter identification were based on two typical deceptions by the De Forests: First, they made the unsubstantiated claim that they had acquired the painting from the estate of Gobrecht’s son, Dr. William H. Gobrecht; second, the work was furnished with a photograph of an inscription that had supposedly been visible on the reverse of the canvas before lining. The inscription supposedly read: “Portrait of Christian Gobrecht / From his Friend / A. B. Durand Pinxt.”<sup>1</sup> The early authorities unanimously accepted the attribution to Durand. Frederic Sherman included this work in his list of the artist’s portraits. William Sawitzky and Harry MacNeill Bland were convinced that it was by Durand but had no way to confirm the sitter identification. Alan Burroughs thought it a weak example of Durand’s work. Anna Rutledge and James Lane found it similar to the artist’s style, but did not believe that it represented Gobrecht even though they had no comparative likenesses of him.<sup>2</sup>

A major breakthrough occurred when William Campbell located two miniature portraits and one drawing of Gobrecht that had descended through his family. These authentic likenesses (locations unknown) revealed that Gobrecht’s eyes were brown, not dark gray-blue as in this portrait, and his hair was considerably different in type and styling. Moreover, because the sitter’s hairstyle and dress here indicate a terminus a quo of the early 1840s, he appears too young to be Gobrecht. These findings

led Campbell to change the sitter identification to its present status, but he retained the attribution to Durand.<sup>3</sup>

More recent scholarship has discredited the attribution. David P. Lawall, the authority on Durand, wrote that there was neither stylistic nor documentary evidence to connect this portrait with the artist.<sup>4</sup> When conservators examined the painting in 1990 and compared it to known Durand portraits in Smithsonian Institution collections, including the National Gallery's *Gouverneur Kemble* [1947.17.2], they concluded that "the rather fussy detail, smooth surface, and generally unspontaneous handling is noticeably different from the style of these other portraits."<sup>5</sup> The red and green underlayers, mentioned above in the technical notes, were also determined to be uncharacteristic of Durand's working methods. The portrait was officially disattributed in May 1992.

The half-length painting represents a man in his late thirties seated in a red-upholstered chair and set against a green-brown background. He wears a black coat and waistcoat, a white shirt, and a black cravat. His body is oriented to his left, and he has turned his face toward the viewer. The man rests his rather poorly drawn right forearm and hand on the arm of the chair. This conventional and average-quality painting is similar to many American portraits of the mid-nineteenth century.

RWT

#### Notes

1. Rutledge and Lane 1952, 72, noted that the inscription was false. They pointed out that the capital "F" in the words "From" and "Friend" in the inscription closely resembled the same letter in the signatures of Augustus and Rose de Forest. They also speculated that the inscription "to McM" on the Beers Bros. certification of the photograph (dated 21 March 1922) alludes to one of the aliases used by a woman who "sold and peddled spurious works from Charleston through Boston and is thought to be a 'fence' operating for a 'ring' which goes back into the personnel and pattern in the Clarke Collection." Although Gobrecht and Durand may have known of each other because they both worked for firms that produced plates for engraving banknotes, there is no documentary evidence that they were friends.

2. Sherman 1930, 41; the other scholarly opinions are derived from Rutledge and Lane 1952, 71-73.

3. William P. Campbell, undated memorandum (in NGA curatorial files).

4. Lawall 1966, 3: appendix 2, no. 7, 209.

5. Memorandum, 2 March 1992 (in NGA curatorial files).

#### References

1930 Sherman: 41.

1966 Lawall: 3: appendix 2, no. 7, 209.

1947.17.79 (987)

*Ann Crook Dyer Rudman*  
(*Mrs. William Crook Rudman, Sr.*)

c. 1845

Oil on canvas, 76.2 × 63.8 (30 × 25 1/8)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave support was lined in 1954. The original tacking margins have been removed. Photodocumentation shows that the lower right corner of the fabric support bears a colorman's stencil mark, now concealed by the lining: "W.E. ROGERS / 16 / ARCADE / PHILAD."<sup>1</sup> The lining also covers an inscription that was probably not written by the artist: "Portrait of M<sup>rs</sup> Rudman / painted by John Neagle / april 1845 / Philad<sup>a</sup>. Penn<sup>a</sup> U.S." The commercially applied light ocher-colored ground layer was applied with a combed tool that imparted a vertically ridged pattern to the paint layer. The paint was applied very thinly in layers, generally wet-over-dry; brush-marking and impasto are present in the whites and highlights. No evidence of underdrawing was found with infrared reflectography. The abraded paint surface has been heavily restored, with large areas of overpainting in the nose, mouth, shadows, and background. The varnish has not discolored since the 1954 treatment.

**Provenance:** Carlotta Herring Broune, the sitter's granddaughter, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania; (sale, Stan V. Henkels, Philadelphia, 30 June-1 July 1921, no. 47);<sup>2</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 Paintings by Early American Portrait Painters*, Union League Club, New York, December 1921, no. 13, as by John Neagle. *Exhibition of Portraits by John Neagle*, PAFA, 1925, no. 99. *A Loan Exhibition of Paintings by Early American Portrait Painters*, Century Association, New York, 1928, no. 8, as by John Neagle. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered, as by John Neagle.

THIS PAINTING is one of three portraits depicting the Philadelphia brewer William Crook Rudman Sr., his wife Ann Crook Dyer Rudman, and his son William Crook Rudman Jr. that were all sold by auction at Henkels in 1921 as the work of John Neagle. The portrait of Rudman Sr. (fig. 1) is of considerably higher artistic quality than its compan-

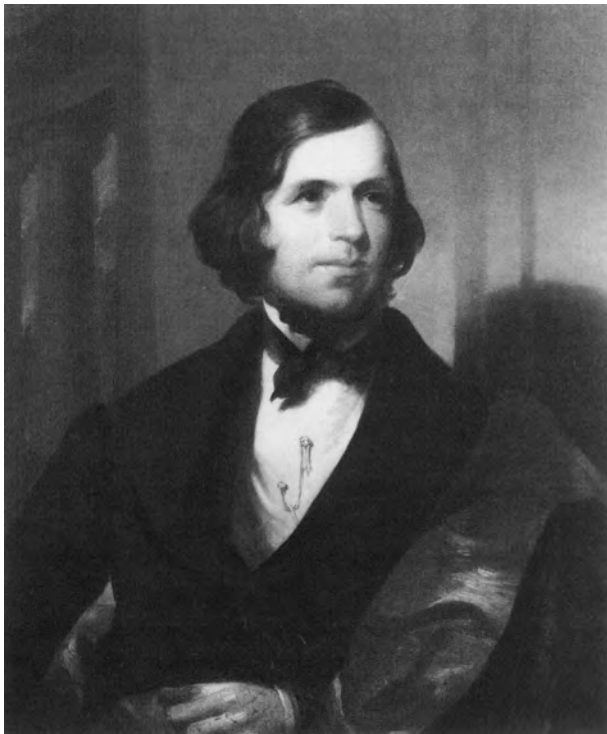


Fig. 1. John Neagle, *William Crook Rudman, Sr.*, oil on canvas, 1845, Philadelphia, The Museum of American Art of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Gift of John Frederick Lewis, 1923.8.4

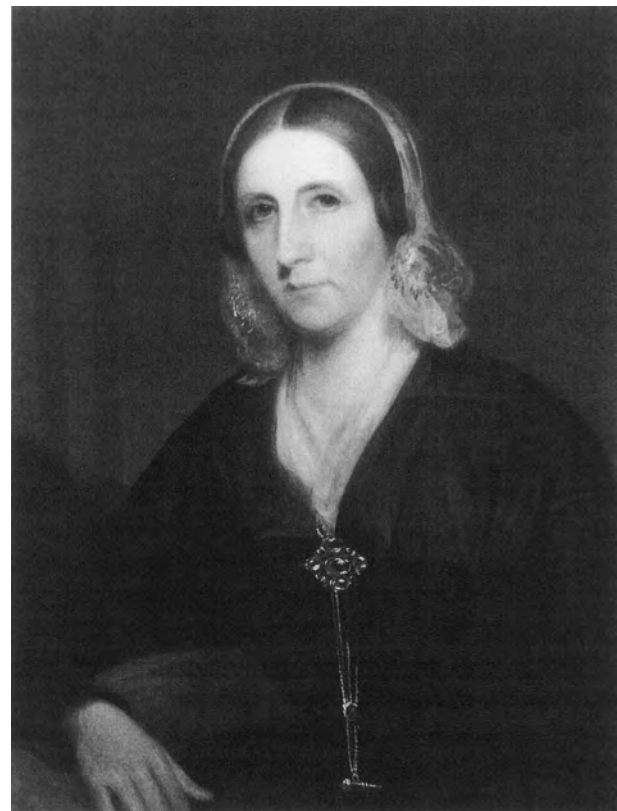
ions and thus indisputably by Neagle; it was purchased by the collector John Frederick Lewis.<sup>3</sup> Clarke bought this inferior portrait of Ann Crook Dyer Rudman (1804–1881) and the very poorly executed *William Crook Rudman, Jr.* [1947.17.80, p. 304]. Like Neagle's 1852 pendant portraits of George Dodd and his wife Julia [1957.3.1, p. 33, and 1957.3.2, p. 36], all three Rudman paintings bear the stencil mark of the Philadelphia colorman William E. Rogers. The 1845 date is derived from the inscription on the reverse of this painting and a similar one that was visible on the Academy's *Rudman* before it was relined.<sup>4</sup> The appearance of the sitters conforms to their respective ages, so a date in the mid-1840s is feasible.

The portraits were envisioned as an ensemble because they are approximately the same size and share certain design elements. When they are viewed together, Rudman's diamond tie clip, his wife's gold brooch from which a pencil hangs by a gold chain, and his son's gold pendant stand out and serve to unify the group. They share the thinly painted olive green and olive brown backgrounds.

Visual evidence suggests that the paintings of Rudman and his wife hung together as pendants: The sitters' bodies are inclined toward each other (although he looks off to his left and she looks directly at the viewer), their poses are symmetrical, and a matching architectural element in the background separates their figures. *Rudman, Jr.* was probably a tentative attempt by another artist to follow Neagle's composition for his portrait of the boy's father [1947.17.80, p. 304].

William Sawitzky found *Ann Crook Dyer Rudman* deficient when compared to the "vastly superior" portrait of the sitter's husband at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and thought that it was so "timid, weak, and thin that it could not be accepted as the work of Neagle who in 1845 was at his peak." John Hill Morgan was prepared to accept it as a poor Neagle, Harry MacNeill Bland agreed with Sawitzky, and Alan Burroughs thought it "more bland" than the other two Rudman portraits. Anna Rutledge and James Lane observed that "this hardly suggests the able work of Neagle,"

Unknown American artist, *Ann Crook Dyer Rudman (Mrs. William Crook Rudman, Sr.)*, 1947.17.79



and concluded that the painting is “possibly not authentic as to subject and probably not authentic as to artist.”<sup>5</sup> The two earlier authorities on Neagle supported the attribution and sitter identification: Mantle Fielding included it in the 1925 exhibition of Neagle’s work, and Ransom Patrick included it in his checklist. When William Campbell investigated the painting, he weighed the various opinions and decided that it was not by Neagle; after determining that its provenance was “incomplete, but not suspicious,” he retained the sitter identification.<sup>6</sup>

Because of the poor state of preservation of this painting, it is very difficult to reach a conclusion regarding the attribution to Neagle. The Academy’s *Rudman* is indisputably by Neagle, so two possibilities must be considered: that Neagle painted the husband and wife while another artist painted the son, or that Neagle only painted Rudman and an unknown artist painted the wife and son. It is peculiar that Neagle would have painted the senior Rudman (his friend, fellow whist enthusiast, and Freemason)<sup>7</sup> and not his family members, but the obvious disparity in quality renders that theory plausible. It is inconceivable that he painted the amateurish *William Crook Rudman, Jr.*, and the heavy overpainting here may conceal evidence of another artist’s incompetence.

Far from being at the peak of his ability in 1845, as Sawitzky asserted, Neagle was at the beginning of his decline, which was precipitated by the death of his beloved wife on 4 March of that year. After suffering this crushing emotional blow, the artist gradually withdrew from society and his health began to deteriorate. Further, he ceased keeping his diary, so there is no documentary record of any of the Rudman portraits. It is possible that a causal connection exists between the artist’s bereavement and the poor quality of the National Gallery Rudman portraits, because the rather questionable inscription on this picture indicates that it was painted in April, only a month after Neagle became a widower. *Ann Rudman* is a more convincing likeness than her son’s, and allowances must be made for the fact that Neagle’s images of women were generally quite inferior to those he painted of men. Furthermore, the figures of Rudman and his wife cast strong shadows in their portraits, a feature that is absent in *Rudman, Jr.* Although these observations support the theory that Neagle painted this portrait, the distinctive ornamental speckles of pink and green on *Ann Rudman*’s lace cap are painted in a manner unlike any other work by Neagle. Tak-

en together, these considerations suggest that Neagle did paint *Ann Rudman*, but the portrait’s poor condition and stylistic deviations, along with the strong probability that another artist was responsible for *Rudman, Jr.*, constitute objections serious enough to cast doubt on the attribution.

RWT

#### Notes

1. The stencil is identical to the example illustrated in Katlan 1992, 430. According to the same source, 428, Rogers had a different address in 1845 and was not listed as having his shop at 16 Arcade Street until 1846. This difference of only one year does not necessarily invalidate the inscribed date because Rogers could have used the Arcade Street stencil then, anticipating his change of location.

2. It was listed in the sale catalogue “Fine Old Paintings, Estate of Julia Bailey . . . and from Other Sources,” as by John Naegle [*sic*].

3. Rudman, a native of Crediton, Devon, England, emigrated to Philadelphia in 1821 and became the proprietor of the Eagle Brewery at 317 Green Street. A successful businessman, he was a prominent citizen who was noted for his philanthropy. For his portrait, see PAFA 1925, no. 37, 57; in 1924 Lewis donated it to the Summer School of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts at Chester Springs, Chester County, Pennsylvania.

4. According to a conservation report by Joseph Amarotico, 18 January 1971, PAFA curatorial file, the Academy’s *Rudman* bore the Rogers stencil and was inscribed “Wm. C. Rudman / by Jno. Neagle / 1845.”

5. Rutledge and Lane 1952, 140.

6. William P. Campbell, memorandum of 21 October 1968 (in NGA curatorial files).

7. PAFA 1925, 15. In 1850 Neagle loaned Rudman two virulently anti-Catholic treatises by William Hogan; see “Memoranda of Articles Loaned,” entry of 16 January 1850, MS, HSP.

#### References

1925 PAFA: no. 99, 124.

1947.17.59 (967)

### *Portrait of a Man*

c. 1845

Oil on canvas, 86.4 × 68.6 (34 × 27)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The coarse-weave fabric support is unlined and remains mounted in its original mortise-and-tenon stretcher. The tacking margins are not primed. The artist applied paint smoothly and evenly in layers, wet-over-dry, over a thin ivory-colored ground layer. Very low impasto is present in the white areas. Other than inpainting applied to conceal a small tear



just below the lapel of the sitter's jacket, the paint surface is in very good condition. The false inscription ("H. Inman / 1841") that appears on the bottom of the book is written in the same handwriting and red paint as those of fourteen other De Forest paintings from the Clarke collection.<sup>1</sup> The thin surface coating is slightly discolored.

**Provenance:** (Rose M. de Forest [Mrs. Augustus de Forest], New York); purchased 12 April 1922 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 Portraits by Early American Portrait Painters*, Union League Club, New York, 1923, no. 19, as *Charles Fenno Hoffman* by Henry Inman. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered, as *Charles Fenno Hoffman* by Henry Inman.

FORMERLY considered to be Henry Inman's portrait of the eminent New York attorney, journalist, and author Charles Fenno Hoffman (1806–1884), this painting shares the spurious provenance of *Portrait of a Lady* [1947.17.58, p. 306], which the De Forests claimed to have acquired from the estate of the artist's son John O'Brien Inman.<sup>2</sup> The De

Forests also promoted another Clarke collection painting as Edward Dalton Marchant's portrait of Hoffman [1947.17.70, p. 302], an identification that has also been conclusively refuted.

Although he recognized that the signature was false, William Sawitzky thought that the portrait was an early work by Inman. He had strong reservations about the sitter identification because an engraving dated 1834 by Archibald L. Dick after Inman's pencil sketch of Hoffman (private collection, New York) shows the author wearing glasses and looking noticeably older than twenty-eight, whereas the 1841 date on the National Gallery portrait meant that the sitter, if he were indeed Hoffman, would have been thirty-five.<sup>3</sup> Sawitzky was unaware that the original Inman drawing is dated March 1843, so that the Dick engraving is misdated and was probably done in 1844. Thus Hoffman was actually thirty-seven when Inman sketched him, and the likeness was nearly contemporary with the putative date of this painting. In short, Sawitzky's objections to the identification were founded on a misapprehension. All this is a moot issue because, as Anna Rutledge and James Lane observed later, the sitter in this painting bears no resemblance to Hoffman as he appears in Dick's engraving.

Theodore Bolton repeated Sawitzky's opinion, but included the painting in his list of portraits that had been incorrectly attributed to Inman.<sup>4</sup> Harry MacNeill Bland agreed with the attribution but rejected the sitter identification. Alan Burroughs found the portrait typical of Inman's "early work under the influence of Jarvis." Rutledge and Lane agreed that "the painting bears stylistic resemblance to Inman's work," but they invalidated Sawitzky's hypothesis that this is an early Inman by noting that the sitter's youthful appearance, beard, and clothing style pointed to a date of 1845–1860. They further observed that the three known likenesses of Hoffman all show him wearing glasses and very clearly represent a different man than the one in the National Gallery portrait.<sup>5</sup> When the National Gallery painting is compared to Cephas G. Thompson's (1809–1888) *Charles Fenno Hoffman* (fig. 1), it becomes obvious that the portraits depict different sitters.<sup>6</sup> William Campbell consulted William Gerdts, who raised various objections before concluding that if this picture was painted by Inman, it was neither a typical nor a good example of his work.<sup>7</sup> Because of the false provenance and signature, Rutledge and Lane's information, and Gerdts' comments, in 1966 Campbell recommend-

Unknown American artist, *Portrait of a Man*, 1947.17.59





Fig. 1. Cephas G. Thompson, *Charles Fenno Hoffman*, oil on canvas, 1843, The New-York Historical Society, 186o.1

ed that the attribution and sitter identification be changed to their present status.<sup>8</sup>

The portrait represents a fashionably dressed young man with a thin beard, seated in a red-upholstered armchair of carved wood whose back is partially covered by a green drapery. The sitter's body is angled toward his left, and he turns his head to face the viewer. He wears a black coat, an indigo satin waistcoat from which hangs a gold watch chain, and a white shirt and gray cravat. He leans his right elbow on a leatherbound book and holds a gold pencil in his right hand; his left hand rests on the left arm of the chair. The background is enlivened by wallpaper of the "vine and stripe" pattern that was in vogue in America and Europe during the 1840s. The luxuriously furnished interior, along with the sitter's attire and personal accessories, suggest that he was wealthy. The book and pencil may allude to a learned or literary profession. The proportions of the young man's body and the drawing of his hands reveal that the artist was a better than average draftsman. This portrait was probably painted in New York sometime in the late 1840s or early 1850s by one of Inman's many imitators.

RWT

## Notes

1. According to a report of 4 December 1968 (in NGA curatorial files), a conservator determined that the signature "is obviously not contemporary with the portrait." For a list of the other forged red signatures, see Rutledge and Lane 1952, 14.

2. See Rutledge and Lane 1952, 12–13.

3. Dick's engraving had been reproduced in Donald G. Mitchell, *American Lands and Letters: Leather-stocking to Poe's "Raven"* (New York, 1899), 119.

4. Bolton 1940, 417. Bolton 1933, 123, had previously included this painting in his "Tentative Catalogue of Portraits in Oil Painted by Henry Inman."

5. Rutledge and Lane 1952, 14.

6. Thompson's portrait of Hoffman is discussed in *Catalogue of American Portraits in The New-York Historical Society, Volume I, A–L* (New York, 1974), 353.

7. In a letter to Campbell of 29 August 1956, Gerdts expressed greater doubts about the portrait; see also Campbell's transcript of Gerdts' comments, 24 March 1956 (both in NGA curatorial files).

8. Campbell, memorandum, 17 February 1966 (in NGA curatorial files).

## References

1940 Bolton: 417.

1947.17.70 (978)

## *Portrait of a Man*

c. 1845

Oil on canvas, 76.2 × 63.5 (30 × 25)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support has been lined and remounted on what may be its original four-member, half-mitered, mortise-and-tenon stretcher. Tacking margins have been removed, but the presence of shallow fabric cusping along all four edges, as well as the original tacking fold on the bottom edge, indicates that its dimensions have not been altered. X-radiography reveals an underlying portrait of the same sitter with his head turned toward the viewer and his eyes averted to the right; he holds a glove in his right hand (fig. 1). Costume details in this first image differ from those of the final version: The vest is either closed or has a shawl collar and narrow lapels, and the sleeve is unbuttoned at the wrist. The artist did not cover the lower image with an isolating layer when he commenced painting the present image. Infrared examination reveals a boldly brushed underdrawing for the present portrait that outlines the sitter's facial features (fig. 2). The paint was applied smoothly over a white ground layer and was built up with heavy brushmarked texture in the sitter's face and shirt. The whiskers have been reinforced, and much of the wide-aperture traction crackle has been inpainted, probably during conservation in 1954–1955. The surface is coated with a thick, yellowed varnish.



Unknown American artist, *Portrait of a Man*, 1947.17.70

**Provenance:** (Augustus W. Oberwalder [Augustus de Forest], New York); purchased 13 December 1920 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.

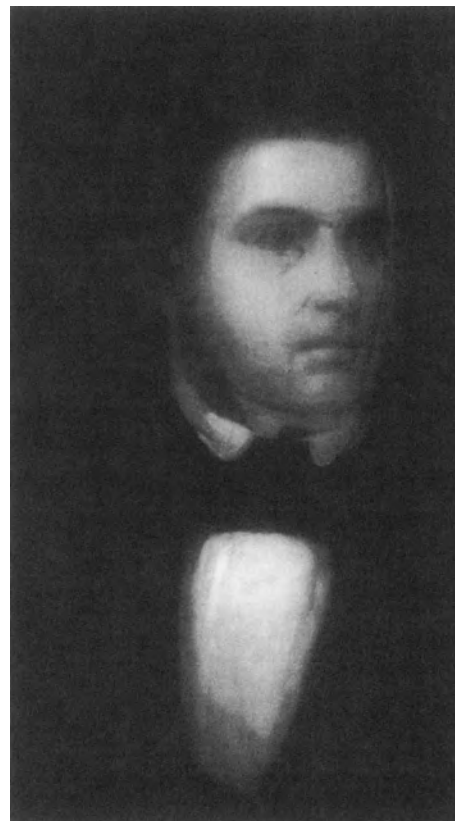
**Exhibited:** *Exhibition of Paintings by Early American Portrait Painters*, Union League Club, New York, November 1921, no. 14, as *Charles Fenno Hoffman* by Edward D. Marchant. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered, as *Charles Fenno Hoffman* by Edward D. Marchant.

THIS PORTRAIT was formerly attributed to Edward Dalton Marchant (1806–1887), and was thought to represent the eminent New York attorney, journalist, and author Charles Fenno Hoffman (1806–1884). William Sawitzky, who was quite familiar with Marchant’s portraiture (having catalogued the many examples at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia) found the “poor draftsmanship, and rough slip-shod brushwork” evident here uncharacteristic of the portraitist “who, though a minor artist, painted in a smoother and much more competent manner.” Harry MacNeill Bland rejected it, Alan Burroughs

Fig. 1. X-radiograph of 1947.17.70



Fig. 2. infrared reflectogram composite (1.5–2.0 microns) of 1947.17.70



thought it “typical of Marchant’s work,” and John Hill Morgan was noncommittal. Anna Rutledge and James Lane compared this painting with photographs of genuine portraits by the artist and decided that “the style compares unfavorably with the work of Marchant.” Since the sitter did not resemble any of the known likenesses of Hoffman, they concluded that the portrait was “not authentic as to either subject or artist.”<sup>1</sup> After reviewing these opinions, William Campbell recommended that the attribution and sitter identification be changed to their present status, which was done in 1965.<sup>2</sup>

This half-length bust represents a man with blue eyes, long brown hair, and a thin beard, who appears to be in his late twenties. He wears a black coat and waistcoat over a white shirt and black cravat. The man’s beard and attire date the portrait to c. 1845, so he is clearly too young to be Hoffman. The De Forests evidently tried to take advantage of this unknown sitter’s vague resemblance to the subject of another painting, which they tried to pass off as a portrait of Hoffman by Henry Inman [1947.17.59, p. 299], but because of this painting’s manifestly inferior quality they ascribed it to a less prominent portraitist.<sup>3</sup> The National Gallery portrait was executed in an undistinguished and abbreviated manner that is quite unlike Marchant’s polished and fairly detail-oriented style, and it does not possess any stylistic similarity to portraits he painted in the 1840s.<sup>4</sup>

RWT

#### Notes

1. These opinions are drawn from Rutledge and Lane 1952, 89.

2. William P. Campbell, memorandum, 26 July 1965 (in NGA curatorial files).

3. For a brief discussion of the genuine likenesses of Hoffman, see the entry for 1947.17.59 (p. 300).

4. Robert W. Torchia compared the National Gallery portrait to Marchant’s *William Meade* (1843) and *Thomas Wheeler Williams* (c. 1849), which are both owned by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

1947.17.80 (988)

### *William Crook Rudman, Jr.*

c. 1845  
Oil on canvas, 76.4 × 64 (30<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 25<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)  
Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** Like its companion *Ann Crook Dyer Rudman* (*Mrs. William Crook Rudman, Sr.*) [1947.17.79, p. 000], this portrait was painted on a medium-weight plain-weave fabric support. It is unlined and remains on its original four-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher, so that the stencil mark of the Philadelphia colorman William E. Rogers can still be seen on the lower right corner of the reverse: “W.E. ROGERS / 16 / ARCADE / PHILAD.” A 1 cm tear in the fabric to the right of the sitter’s head has been patched from the reverse and filled on the front covering original paint. The commercially prepared light ochre-colored ground layer was applied with a combed tool that imparted a vertically ridged pattern to the paint layer. The paint was applied very thinly in layers, generally wet-over-dry, with brushmarking and impasto present in the whites and highlights. No evidence of underdrawing was found with infrared reflectography. Other than the overpainted area of the fill, the paint layer is in good condition. The surface coating is slightly yellowed.

**Provenance:** Carlotta Herring Broune, the sitter’s niece, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania; (sale, Stan V. Henkels, Philadelphia, 30 June–1 July 1921, no. 48, as by John Neagle); 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 Portrait Painters*, Union League Club, New York, 1923, no. 16, as *William C. Rudman* by John Neagle. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered, as *William C. Rudman* by John Neagle.

THIS PORTRAIT represents William Crook Rudman Jr. (1829–1861), son of the Philadelphia brewer William Crook Rudman Sr. and his wife Ann C. Rudman. Little is known about his brief life other than that he entered his father’s business at the Eagle Brewery. The leatherbound tome *Shanon on Brewing*, on which the youth rests his left elbow, alludes to his continuity with his father’s profession; considering its significance and prominence, it is odd that the author’s name is misspelled.<sup>1</sup> Both Rudmans must have taken considerable pride in their business because Philadelphia was noted for the quality of its beer; one writer in 1867 quoted an early nineteenth-century source to support his claim that “to say that it is equal to any of London, the usual standard of excellence, would undervalue it, because, as regards wholesome qualities and palatableness, it is much superior.”<sup>2</sup> At the outbreak of the Civil War young Rudman enlisted in the Philadelphia City Militia, completed his training, and anticipated being dispatched to the front within days. On 18 September 1861, however, he was accidentally thrown from his horse and killed;

he was buried at Philadelphia's Monument Cemetery.

The opinions of the authorities cited in the entry on *Ann Crook Dyer Rudman* [1947.17.79, p. 297] also apply to this painting. Alan Burroughs, noting the badly drawn nose, remarked that this was the poorest in quality of the three Rudman portraits.<sup>3</sup> Mantle Fielding evidently doubted the attribution to Neagle because he did not include this painting along with those of the other two Rudmans in the 1925 exhibition of the artist's work. This painting's numerous deficiencies—which unlike those of *Ann Rudman* cannot be ascribed to poor condition—exclude the possibilities that Neagle painted it or that it was produced by one of his pupils or followers. The unknown painter was attempting to imitate, within the scope of his limited talent, Neagle's portrait of the boy's father (see 1947.17.79, p. 298, fig. 1).

Despite disconcerting elements, such as the clumsy nose, oddly drawn mouth, and unusually large eyes, the sitter bears a strong family resemblance to the far better delineated features of the senior Rudman; the only obvious difference between the two is that their long hair is parted on different sides.<sup>4</sup> Father and son are set in almost identical poses and look off to their left, but the draftsmanship of the son's body is distinctly inferior to that of his father. Their faces are both illuminated by a strong source

of light that originates from the right, but here the sitter's head does not cast a shadow as it does in the portraits of his parents. The window in the left background through which a landscape is visible is a simplified version of the more elaborate background in the father's portrait. The sketchy treatment of the diagonal stripes on the youth's blue bow tie, the brocaded blue designs on his yellow vest, and the dull handling of his white shirt are evidence of a far less talented hand than Neagle's. The iconography of this portrait is more complex than that of the father: In addition to the presence of the manual on brewing, the boy holds a wide-brimmed hat that may allude to a military affiliation before his joining the militia. Unlike the portraits of his parents, this picture was never inscribed, but the putative date of 1845 is feasible because the sitter appears to be about sixteen years old.

RWT

#### Notes

1. The full title of this comprehensive professional manual is Richard Shannon, *A Practical Treatise on Brewing, Distilling, and Rectification, with the genuine process of making brandy*. . . (London, 1805).

2. Edwin T. Freedley, *Philadelphia and its Manufactures, a Hand-book of the Great Manufactories and Representative Mercantile Houses of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1867), 181.

3. Rutledge and Lane 1952, 141.

4. This similarity led Ransom Patrick, in his checklist of Neagle's paintings (in NGA curatorial files), to believe that this portrait represented the elder Rudman as a young man.

Unknown American artist, *William C. Rudman, Jr.*, 1947.17.80



1993.64.1

#### *View at West Point*

c. 1852/1858

Oil on canvas, 66.6 × 91.9 (26 1/4 × 36 3/16)

Gift of Mrs. Rudolf J. Heinemann

**Technical Notes:** The support is a medium-weight plain-weave fabric that has been lined. Although the tacking margins have been removed, cusping suggests the dimensions have not been altered. The white ground layer was toned with a transparent brown paint beneath the foliage in the middle landscape. Infrared examination reveals underdrawing, probably in pencil, including a gridwork in the lower half of the scene, outlines of hills and trees, and additional architectural details not apparent in the finished painting. The paint was smoothly applied, with foliage texture created from a low impasto. Fine details in the foliage were applied in a dark paint that has beaded up, suggesting an aqueous medium. Wide-aperture traction crackle in the area between the





Unknown American artist, *View at West Point*, 1993.64.1

soldier's feet and the dog reveals a lower yellow paint layer. Several paint losses along the bottom edge and the few scattered at the left horizon have been inpainted. The varnish has not discolored appreciably.

**Provenance:** (M. Knoedler & Co., New York), c. 1950.

THE unidentified painter of this peaceful scene appears to have been an artist of some skill and training. The arts were not unknown at the West Point academy, and the cadet seen sketching at the lower left (perhaps the artist?) might well have been the student of such accomplished instructors as Robert Weir (at West Point 1834–1876) or Seth Eastman (at West Point 1833–1840). Topographical drawing, particularly as it related to the disciplines of engineering and surveying, was an important part of the curriculum. Even the renowned James McNeill Whistler, who never completed his education at the U.S. Military Academy, honed his drawing skills there between 1851 and 1854.

The natural beauty of this area overlooking the Hudson River inspired many American painters in the nineteenth century. For some, West Point must have had a special appeal that was aptly described by one cadet writing in 1860:

It would seem as if Nature had specially prepared this place, directing the very forces and adjustment of rock and stone for the purpose of creating a Military Post. Time never dulls the feeling of its overwhelming beauty. I have sometimes thought it conspired to bring to the intellectual vision the spiritual significance of great virtues and great deeds . . . I have a feeling that a noble thought never rises in the heart, that an heroic deed is never performed but the hills with their laurel, the ridges with their strong limbed oaks, feel a responsive thrill, and impart to the winds and streams their secret joy.<sup>1</sup>

The National Gallery painting depicts the area on the west side of the Hudson River, above West Point and below the town of Cornwall, looking to the south.<sup>2</sup> The painting can be roughly dated by the uniform of the figure sketching in the foreground. The shorter frock-coat worn by the cadet is a type adopted in 1852 and the cap is of the shako style, in use from c. 1851 to 1858. The white trousers were worn as a summer uniform from 15 May to 15 October of each year.<sup>3</sup>

*View at West Point* appears to be an image of full summer, given the lush foliage in the foreground and the golden fields where the animals graze below. The distant hills are pale purple, rather than the more dramatic and brilliant hues of autumn. It is an altogether restful, yet grand vista—an appro-

priate setting in which the students of mankind's military struggles might contemplate their place in the world.

DC

#### Notes

1. Morris Schiff, *The Spirit of West Point*, as quoted in Weir 1947, 50.

2. David Meschutt, curator of art, West Point Museum, confirmed this location (letter of 21 July 1994 in NGA curatorial files).

3. Donald Kloster supplied information on the cadet uniform, Armed Forces Collection, NMAH (notes in NGA curatorial files). See also the introduction by Jaques Noel Jacobsen Jr. to the 1973 reprint of *Regulations for the Uniform and Dress of the Army of the United States* (Boston, 1857).

1947.17.58 (966)

### *Portrait of a Lady*

c. 1855/1860

Oil on canvas, 76.2 × 63.8 (30 × 25 1/8)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The preprimed, tightly woven plain-weave canvas support is unlined and remains mounted on its original mortise-and-tenon oval stretcher. Its reverse bears the stencil mark of a New York colorman: "WILLIAMS, STEVENS, WILLIAMS / Looking Glass Ware Rooms / & ART REPOSITORY, / Engravings Art Materials &c / 353 Broadway New York." and beneath "30 × 25."<sup>1</sup> The off-white ground layer was heavily applied and fills the fabric interstices. The artist applied paint fluidly and fairly rapidly, in curvilinear strokes. The sitter's face is highly finished, in contrast with the noticeable brushstroking in the other parts of the composition. Infrared examination reveals minimal underdrawing around the eyes and mouth. X-radiography reveals a change in the neckline. The painting is in fair condition. Heavy inpainting conceals abrasion in the right cheek and in the neck below the chin, and there are two areas of paint loss in the lower right of the shawl. The surface is coated with a varnish that is considerably discolored. The signature ("Henry Inman / 1844") is false.

**Provenance:** (Rose M. de Forest [Mrs. Augustus de Forest], New York); purchased 12 April 1922 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 Portraits by Early American Portrait Painters*, Union League Club, New York, 1923, no. 8, as *Clara Barton* by Henry Inman. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered, as *Clara Barton* by Henry Inman.

THIS PAINTING has a complex and acrimonious history. Thomas B. Clarke acquired it because he believed the De Forests' claim that it was Henry Inman's oval portrait of Clara Barton (1821–1912), the founder of the American Red Cross. The dealer alleged that he had purchased it, along with the supposed Inman portrait of Charles Fenno Hoffman [1947.17.59, p. 299], from the estate of the artist's son John O'Brien Inman—a provenance that was convincingly discredited by Anna Rutledge and James Lane.<sup>2</sup> The forged signature and date by the sitter's left shoulder ("Henry Inman / 1844") are written in the same handwriting and red paint as used in fourteen other De Forest paintings from the Clarke collection.<sup>3</sup> William Sawitzky, whose opinion was later repeated by Theodore Bolton, firmly rejected both the attribution and the sitter identification.<sup>4</sup> Harry MacNeill Bland wondered why the portrait had not been exhibited at the memorial exhibition held in New York after Inman's death and further objected that the sitter appears older than twenty-five, Barton's age in 1844.<sup>5</sup> Alan Burroughs was the only authority who accepted the painting.

The first open suspicions about the portrait were voiced in 1928 when it was shown at the Clarke collection exhibition at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Barton's grandnephew Hermann P. Riccius saw a photograph of it in the *New York Times* (12 February 1928) and immediately questioned the sitter identification on the grounds that the woman did not look like Barton as she appeared in a daguerreotype (fig. 1) that he then owned. It is important to note that the daguerreotype image was formerly thought to have been made c. 1839 because it was reproduced in a biography of Barton with the erroneous caption "at eighteen"; all future efforts by De Forest and Clarke to diminish the comparative value of this daguerreotype (the only likeness of Barton chronologically near the putative date of the National Gallery painting) were based on this misapprehension.<sup>6</sup>

Riccius wrote to Fiske Kimball, director of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, in an effort to set the record straight.<sup>7</sup> Kimball passed Riccius' persistent letters on to Clarke, who responded with a long letter in which he stated that before purchasing the portrait, he had thoroughly investigated all the available images of Barton, including the one her grandnephew had submitted to him for inspection. He felt that Riccius' daguerreotype was a very poor likeness of Barton in which she "certainly looked

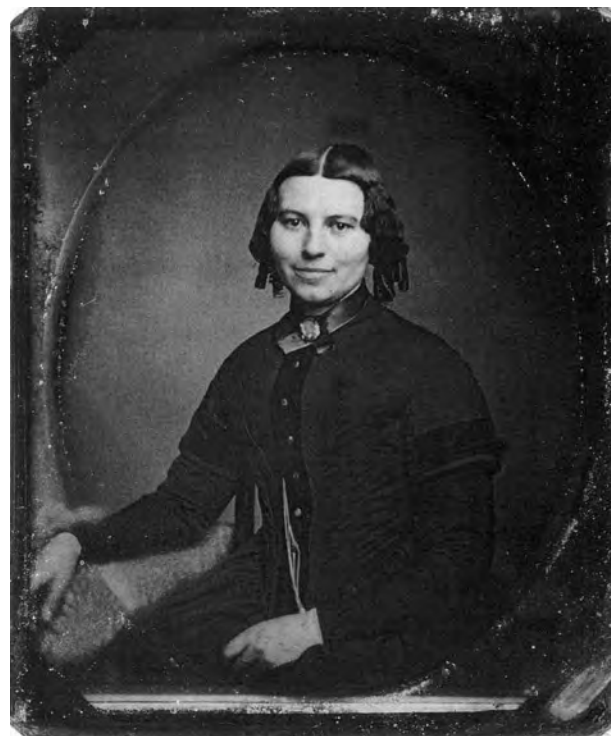


Fig. 1. *Clara Barton*, daguerreotype, c. 1850–1852, Worcester, Massachusetts, American Antiquarian Society, Gift of Hermann Riccius, 1962

much more matured than eighteen," and suggested that the image perhaps had been misidentified and represented another member of her family. Clarke thought that the two later photographs of Clara Barton that appeared as frontispieces for William Barton's *Life of Clara Barton* bore a "considerable resemblance to the Inman portrait," as did the photograph of her in the *National Encyclopaedia of American Biography*. He concluded that he "was completely satisfied that the Inman was a portrait of Miss Barton."<sup>8</sup>

Riccius was not satisfied by these arguments and in 1931 protested to the Red Cross over what he considered a deliberate misrepresentation of the portrait. After his objections were referred to the American Art Association, Riccius received an unsigned letter on De Forest stationery in which the writer threatened, "If you publish anything injurious to the value of the portrait of Clara Barton by Henry Inman, you place yourself in a position to be sued not only by Mr. Clarke's Estate but also by the person who sold the portrait to Mr. Clarke and who is still living."<sup>9</sup>

The threat of legal action silenced Riccius, and no further objections to the portrait were made until Rutledge and Lane commenced their systematic investigation of Clarke's collection and discovered that its provenance was spurious. William P. Campbell initiated his inquiry by consulting William H. Gerdts, the expert on Inman, who also doubted the attribution. Gerdts admired the portrait, however, and opined that "the only artists of the period capable of so lovely a painting were probably Charles Loring Elliott and Daniel Huntington." He went on to express a distinct preference for the latter possibility.<sup>10</sup> Campbell discovered that the colorman's stencil mark on the back of the canvas was first used in 1851, thus proving that Inman could not have painted the portrait. He further showed the painting to several people at the American National Red Cross Headquarters Library who were familiar with all the extant likenesses of Barton, and they unanimously rejected it.<sup>11</sup> In view of this overwhelming evidence, in 1964 the attribution and sitter identification were changed to their present status.

Among all the De Forests' deceptive sitter identifications, this is ostensibly the most plausible because the woman portrayed here does resemble Barton. However, a close comparison of this sitter to Riccius' daguerreotype—or to later images of Barton, such as John Sartain's engraved portrait and Mathew Brady's photograph—demonstrates beyond any doubt that this is not a likeness of the founder of the Red Cross.<sup>12</sup> The unidentified woman, who wears a cameo in her lace collar and has a fashionable Kashmir shawl draped around her shoulders, sits gazing to her right. As Gerdts suggested, this competently executed and attractive painting resembles the work of Henry Inman's follower Daniel Huntington (1816–1906). Although Huntington used canvases prepared by Williams, Stevens, Williams & Co., there is insufficient evidence to sustain an attribution to him. The date of the painting can be estimated on the basis of two factors: first, the colorman used this stencil between 1851 and 1859; second, the sitter's hairstyle and attire were in fashion from the mid-1850s to the early 1860s.

RWT

#### Notes

1. See Katlan 1987, 27–28, 265, 437, fig. 89.
2. See Rutledge and Lane 1952, 12–13. Inman's son had died destitute in 1896 at the Home for Incurables in

the Bronx, and his descendants knew nothing of an estate.

3. According to a report of 4 December 1968 (in NGA curatorial files), a conservator determined that the signature "is obviously a later addition." For a list of De Forest pictures with related forged signatures, see Rutledge and Lane 1952, 14.

4. Sawitzky rejected the sitter identification on the rather inconclusive basis of a statement from *DAB*, 1: 2: 21, where Barton's biographer described her as having "an expressive face, with prominent nose and large mouth." Bolton 1933, 122, at first accepted the "Clara Barton" as genuine and included it in his "Tentative Catalogue of Portraits in Oil Painted by Henry Inman." He later repudiated the attribution and cited Sawitzky's opinion in his list of portraits incorrectly attributed to Inman; see Bolton 1940, 417.

5. It should be noted that the *Catalogue of Works by the Late Henry Inman* (New York, 1846) contains numerous listings identified only as "Portrait of a Lady," so the first objection is not in itself a serious one.

6. William E. Barton, *The Life of Clara Barton* (Boston, 1922), 1: opp. 42. The daguerreotype's correct date is given by Harold Francis Pfister, *Facing the Light: Historic American Daguerreotypes* (Washington, D.C., 1978), 297. It is revealing that when Rose de Forest compiled some circumstantial evidence from secondary sources to advance her unlikely theory that Inman had painted Barton in New York City in 1844, she foresaw that this image would damage her identification and noted that it represented Barton as "far more mature than any girl of eighteen of to-day; and not so attractive as the Inman portrait." See Rose M. De Forest, 10 November 1922 (in NGA curatorial files).

7. Hermann P. Riccius, letters to Fiske Kimball, 18 and 24 February 1928 (copies in NGA curatorial files).

8. Thomas B. Clarke, letter to Fiske Kimball, 29 February 1928 (copy in NGA curatorial files).

9. Quoted from a copy of the letter (in NGA curatorial files).

10. William H. Gerdts, letter to William P. Campbell, 29 August 1956 (in NGA curatorial files).

11. Campbell, memorandum of 25 March 1964 (in NGA curatorial files). Concerning Williams, Stevens, Williams & Co., see Katlan 1987, 265.

12. For the record, it should be noted that this sitter bears a striking resemblance to a photograph (in NGA curatorial files) of a portrait identified as Charles Loring Elliott's *Clara Barton* that was formerly in a private collection in New Jersey (location unknown).

#### References

- 1933 Bolton: 117–123.  
1940 Bolton: 417.





Unknown American artist, *Portrait of a Lady*, 1947.17.58



*Abraham Lincoln*

c. 1864 or after

Oil on canvas, 76.2 × 63.6 (30 × 25 1/16)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support is unlined and remains on its original four-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher. In addition to the stencil mark of the New York colorman Edward Dechaux ("25 × 30 / prepared / by / ED<sup>WD</sup> DECHAUX / New York"),<sup>1</sup> the reverse bears a false inscription: "Painted from Life at / Washington March 1863 / J.R. LAMBDIN." The artist applied paint wet-over-dry on a thin ivory-colored ground layer. The thin paint surface is smooth and devoid of brushmarking, with only slightly raised ridges in the lapels of the sitter's jacket. Infrared reflectography suggests an underdrawn line may have been used to imply the hairline. Other than inpainting to conceal four areas of minor damage in and above the sitter's hair, the paint layer is in good condition. The varnish is slightly discolored. An additional layer of varnish was applied in 1963.

**Provenance:** Hiram Burlingham, New York; (his estate sale, American Art Association, Anderson Galleries, Inc., New York, 11 January 1934, no. 61);<sup>2</sup> purchased by Andrew W. Mellon [1855–1937], Pittsburgh and Washington, D.C.; his estate; deeded 8 March 1938 to the A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

**Exhibited:** *Gallery of National Portraiture*, PAFA, 1926, no. 215.

THIS PORTRAIT of the sixteenth president of the United States, Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865), was advertised and sold at the Burlingham sale as the work of the portraitist James Reid Lambdin (1807–1889). William Sawitzky guardedly thought that the attribution was "possibly all right," and a dubious Alan Burroughs observed that although the likeness had purportedly been taken from life, it was "smooth and soft in a rather idealized way." Anna Rutledge and James Lane suspected the attribution because they felt the portrait was painted in "a somewhat classical and sweet manner" that was incompatible with what they characterized as Lambdin's "more masculine style." They did not detect any similarity between this portrait of Lincoln and an authenticated one that Lambdin had painted of Lincoln (fig. 1). Rutledge and Lane agreed with authorities on Lincoln whom they consulted at the Illinois Historical Library, Springfield, and who suggested that the National Gallery

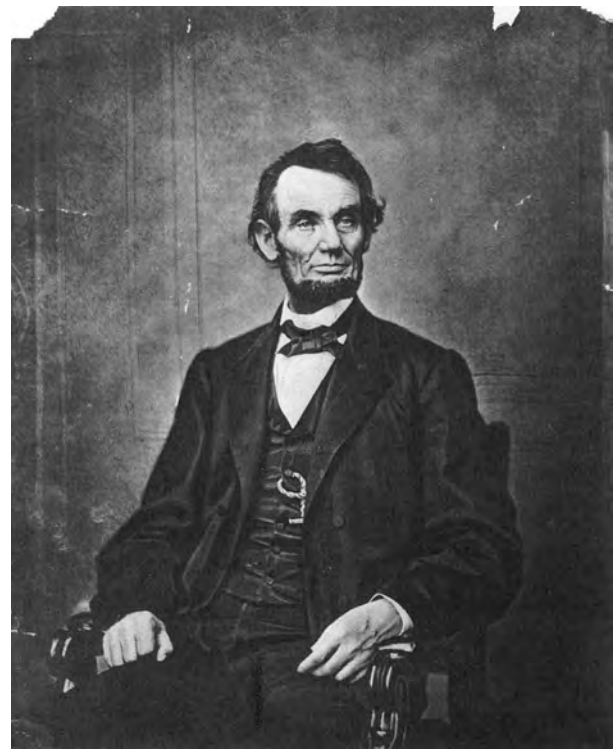


Fig. 1. Anthony Berger, [*Abraham Lincoln*], photograph, 9 February 1864, Fort Wayne, Indiana, The Lincoln Museum, 0-91

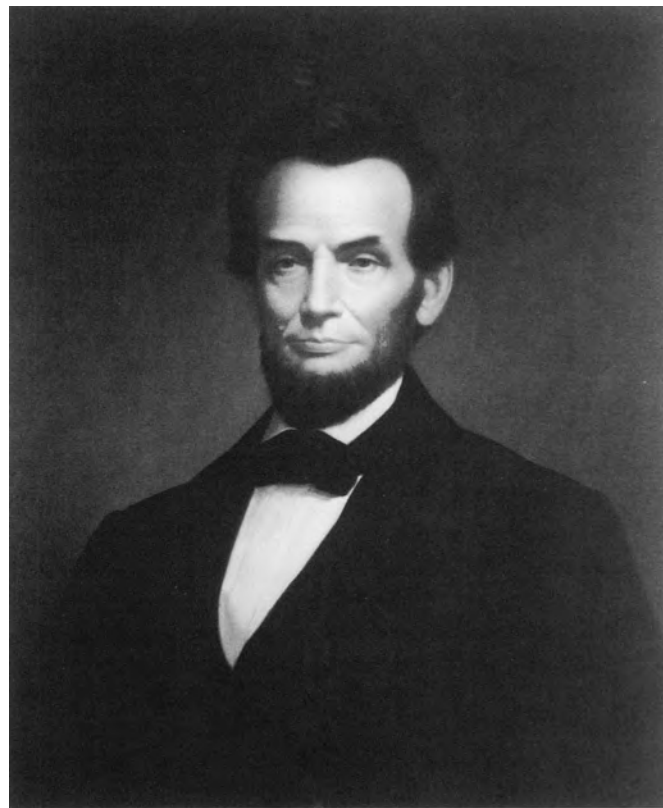
painting resembled portraits of the former president by William T. Matthews (1821–1905) and Alban Jasper Conant (1821–1915) as they were illustrated in Rufus Rockwell Wilson, *Lincoln in Portraiture* (New York, 1935). Finally, they suspected that the inscription had been forged because it appeared similar to two other inscriptions on Clarke collection portraits that had been proven to be false.<sup>3</sup> William Campbell failed to locate documentary evidence of Lincoln's sitting for a portrait in March 1863. He recommended that the attribution be changed to its present status, which was done in 1965.<sup>4</sup>

This painting is executed in a distinctly different manner than Lambdin's portraits as represented in the large collections of his work in Philadelphia at the Union League and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. It bears no stylistic or interpretive similarity to the artist's genuine portrait of Lincoln. The president's detached and wooden appearance indicates that this portrait was not executed from life, but rather was taken from a photograph or another painted or printed likeness. Although the Na-

tional Gallery's portrait could have been painted anytime after late October 1860, when Lincoln allegedly grew a beard at the request of an eleven-year-old girl,<sup>5</sup> it is far more likely that it was executed posthumously. It closely resembles Lincoln as he appears in the series of photographs taken by Anthony Berger in Mathew Brady's Washington studio on 9 February 1864 (fig. 1). Berger's photographs were adapted to a variety of printed memorial portraits that quickly flooded the market after Lincoln's death on 15 April 1865.<sup>6</sup> It is thus very likely that the unknown artist copied Lincoln's features from a source such as the wood engraving *Our Fallen Heroes* (fig. 2), which was published by Charles Lubrecht in New York.

In any case, this nondescript and idealized image is typical of the Lincoln portraits that Walt Whitman derided as "all failures—most of them caricatures. . . . None of the artists or pictures has caught the deep, though subtle and indirect expression of this man's face."<sup>7</sup> In the absence of any further information it is not possible to suggest an alternative attribution.

RWT



Unknown American artist, *Abraham Lincoln*, 1947.17.67



Fig. 2. Hassis & Lubrecht after photograph by Anthony Berger, *Our Fallen Heroes*, wood engraving, published by Charles Lubrecht, New York, 1865, Fort Wayne, Indiana, The Lincoln Museum, 3170

#### Notes

1. Katlan 1987, 18–21.
2. The *Lincoln* portrait was listed as no. 61 in the sale catalogue where Effingham Schieffelin and Samuel P. Avery Jr., both of New York, were listed as its previous owners. It was illustrated in a sale notice in *ArtN* 32 (6 January 1934): 10.
3. Rutledge and Lane 1952, 131. The two other portraits of De Forest provenance with related spurious inscriptions were *Portrait of a Man* [1947.17.84] and *Portrait of a Man* [1947.17.100], a painting that was originally claimed to be Adolph Ulric Wertmüller's *Philip van Cortlandt*, but is now considered an eighteenth-century portrait by an anonymous artist of unknown nationality.
4. William P. Campbell, memorandum, 23 July 1965 (in NGA curatorial files).
5. For the anecdote behind Lincoln's decision to grow a beard, see Rufus Rockwell Wilson, *Lincoln in Portraiture* (New York, 1935), 135–137.
6. See Harold Holzer, *Washington and Lincoln Portrayed. National Icons in Popular Prints* (Jefferson, North Carolina, 1993).
7. Quoted in Roy P. Basler, *The Lincoln Legend: A Study in Changing Conceptions* (New York, 1969), 283.

1947.17.9 (917)

## Charles Loring Elliott

c. 1865

Oil on canvas, 68.9 × 56.2 (27 1/8 × 22 1/8)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support is unlined. Both the white ground and paint layers cover the tacking margins, suggesting that the painting was completed on a larger stretcher. Paint was applied thinly and smoothly with a simple technique, without impasto. The painting is in good condition. There is a vertical line of tiny losses, 17 cm long, in the lower left background and a 1 cm loss in the upper left corner. Minor areas of inpainting are in the sitter's forehead, nose, and hair. The surface is covered with a thick discolored varnish.

**Provenance:** (Cantrell); purchased 14 December 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 Portraits by Early American Artists*, Union League Club, New York, March 1922, no. 6, as by William S. Mount. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered, as by William S. Mount. Loan for display with permanent collection, NPG, 1967–1968, 1969–1980.

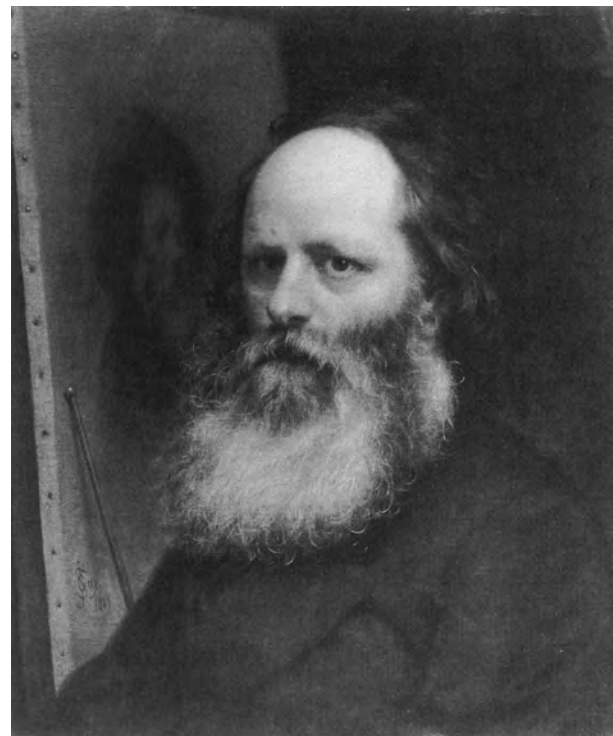
THIS PAINTING was first identified as William Sidney Mount's portrait of his close friend Charles Loring Elliott, the foremost American portraitist following the death of Henry Inman. Mount's biographer Alfred Frankenstein summarized their relationship by writing that Elliott "exercised more influence on Mount than any other artist, especially in the field of portraiture. Mount adored him—he followed him about, recorded his sayings, and copied his methods."<sup>1</sup> Elliott painted several portraits of Mount, one of which is owned by the National Gallery [1947.17.6], and Mount is thought to have painted at least two portraits of his friend.

Despite certain reservations, historians have unanimously supported both the sitter identification and the attribution to Mount: William Sawitzky regarded the portrait as "authentic and competent," and Alan Burroughs observed that it was painted "more softly" than the hard linear style characteristic of Mount's genre subjects. Anna Rutledge and James Lane found it consonant with Mount's style of the late 1850s and concluded that the portrait was "authentic as to subject and prob-

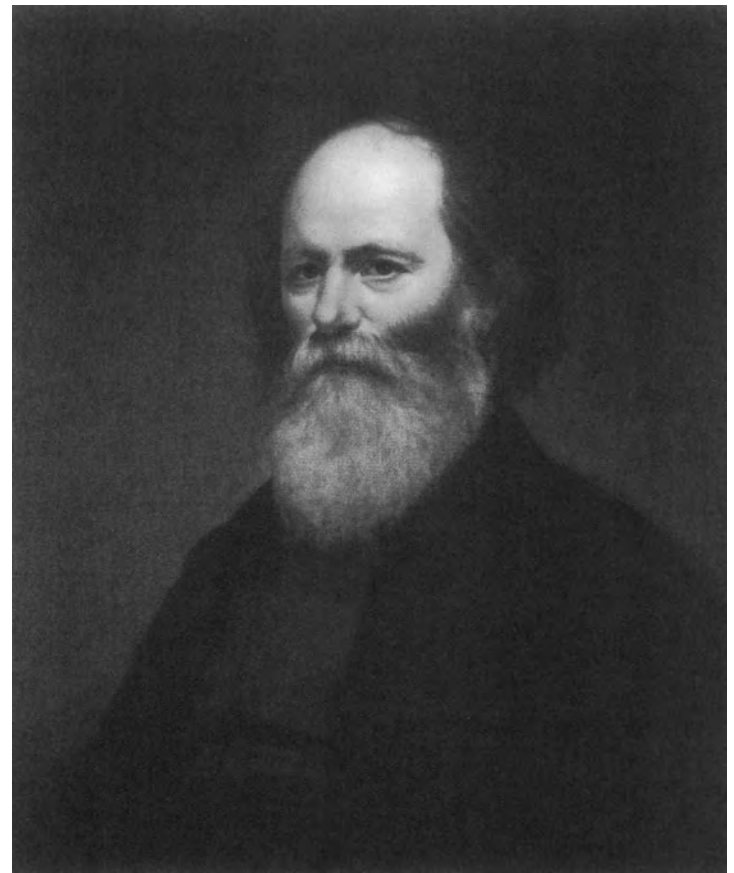


Fig. 1. Edward Perine and Charles T. Giles after George C. Rockwood, *Charles Loring Elliott*, c. 1865, engraving from *Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature, Science, and Art* (November 1868), The Free Library of Philadelphia, Print and Picture Collection

Fig. 2. Seymour Joseph Guy, *Charles Loring Elliott*, oil on canvas, 1868, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. Robert W. de Forest, 03.31



ably authentic as to artist.”<sup>2</sup> William Campbell agreed that the portrait represented Elliott, but he felt that it was too thinly painted to have been executed by Mount. This observation, along with the vaguely delineated buttons on the sitter’s coat, led him to speculate that the portrait was unfinished. Campbell consulted Frankenstein, who opined that the style was more or less typical of Mount’s late work of the 1860s and recommended that the attribution should stand since there were no serious objections to it.<sup>3</sup> In his biography of Mount, however, Frankenstein criticized this work as one of Mount’s “driest and dullest productions,” and identified it as a reciprocal portrait that the artist had painted of his friend at Stony Brook in October 1848.<sup>4</sup> There are two serious objections to this theory: First, in his own list of paintings Mount had described the portrait of Elliott as being a “cabinet portrait” on a panel,<sup>5</sup> whereas the National Gallery picture is of significantly larger dimensions and painted on canvas; second, Elliott appears much older than thirty-six, his age in 1848 when Frankenstein believed the portrait was painted. The fact that Elliott appears here to be in his early fifties, albeit prematurely aged, supports the putative date of c. 1865 that Campbell assigned to the painting.

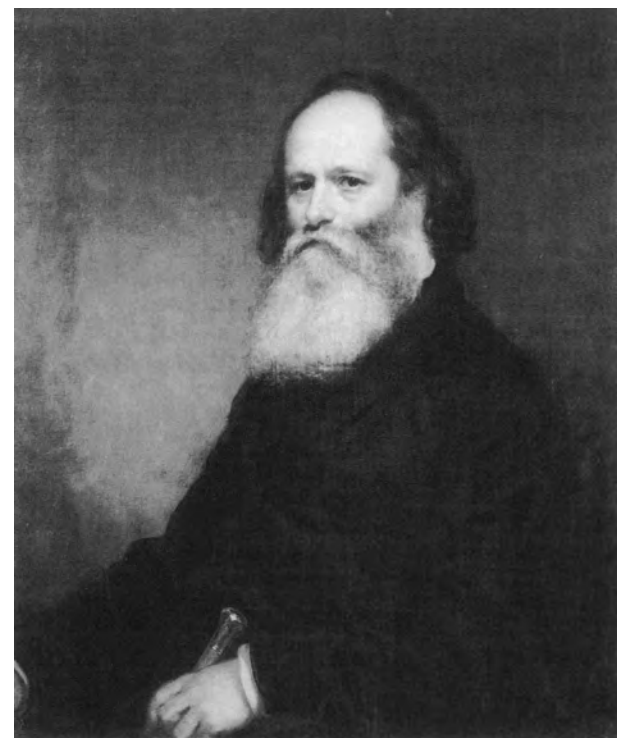


Unknown American artist, *Charles Loring Elliott*, 1947.17.9

Fig. 3. Charles Loring Elliott, *Self-Portrait*, oil on canvas, Baltimore, The Walters Art Gallery, Gift of the Artist 1860, 37.68



Fig. 4. George Baker, *Charles Loring Elliott*, oil on canvas, c. 1865, New York, National Academy of Design



This portrait certainly represents Elliott because the sitter is nearly identical to both the last known self-portrait that the artist presented to his friend William T. Walters (fig. 1)<sup>6</sup> and Rockwood's photograph of him that was engraved for *Eclectic Magazine* (fig. 2). In these likenesses Elliott appears vibrant with an air of bohemian panache, whereas in the National Gallery portrait he is presented as a dour elderly man without any affectations. It is highly unlikely that Mount painted this portrait, for several reasons. It is not documented in any of his writings and does not appear in the early exhibition records, nothing is known about its provenance before it was sold by Cantrell, and it does not possess any discernible stylistic affinity with his oeuvre.<sup>7</sup> Taken together, these objections are serious enough to warrant a disattribution.

The attribution probably arose from the realization that if Mount had really painted this sympathetic image of Elliott around 1865, it would have been executed only several years before the two friends and fellow artists died. Like Seymour Joseph Guy's *Charles Loring Elliott* (fig. 3) and George A. Baker Jr.'s *Charles Loring Elliott* (fig. 4), the National Gallery picture may have been painted around the time of Elliott's death by one of his colleagues in New York; its subdued quality certainly relates it to the Academy portrait. It does not possess any strong resemblance to the work of any particular artist of the period, and in the absence of any documentary evidence no alternative attribution is possible.

RWT

#### Notes

1. Frankenstein 1975, 15. For biographical information on Elliott, see C. E. Lester, "Charles Loring Elliott," *Harper's Monthly Magazine* 38 (December 1868): 42–59; and Theodore Bolton, "Charles Loring Elliott: An Account of His Life and Work," *AQ* 5 (winter 1942): 58–96.

2. Rutledge and Lane 1952, 136.

3. William P. Campbell, memorandum, 28 August 1964 (in NGA curatorial files).

4. Frankenstein 1975, 15. Mount's 1848 portrait of Elliott was exhibited at the National Academy of Design in 1849 as no. 259, "Cabinet Portrait of C. L. Elliott"; see *The National Academy of Design Exhibition Record, 1826–1860*, 2 vols. (New York, 1943), 2: 43.

5. Frankenstein 1975, 472, quotes the relevant section of Mount's own catalogue of his works in which the early portrait of Elliott is documented: "The last of Oct. 1848, Charles Elliott, Esq made us a visit at Stony Brook and kindly painted my portrait, 25 × 30. In return I painted and presented to him a cabinet portrait of himself—on panel. A man with a beard is nature in her glory." See Frankenstein 1975, 30, for Mount's similar account of the

same incident as it appears in his sixth autobiographical sketch of 1854.

6. Around 1860 Elliott painted two replicas of his original self-portrait, which was based on Peter Paul Rubens' famous *Self-Portrait* (1623–1624, Windsor Castle); they are owned by the DIA and the Heckscher Museum, Huntington, New York. He had painted two earlier self-portraits in 1834 (Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse) and c. 1850 (MMA).

7. Two authorities on Mount, David Cassedy of the Schwarz Gallery, Philadelphia, and Deborah Johnson, president of the Museums at Stony Brook, New York, agree that this portrait does not resemble his work.

#### References

1975 Frankenstein: 15–16, ill. 3.

1947.17.5 (913)

### *Portrait of a Man*

c. 1865

Oil on canvas, 64.8 × 54.3 (25 1/2 × 21 3/8)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The very coarse open-weave fabric support was relined during restoration in 1963. The original tacking margins were removed. Although strong evidence of cusping appears on the left side of the painting, none is present on the other three sides. The artist applied paint rapidly and mostly wet-into-wet over a white ground layer; the top half of the painting has an orange-red imprimatura. Brushmarking and low impasto are present in the highlights. X-radiography indicates that the sitter's shirt may have been painted in a different style. Although the unusually thick surface coating frustrates an attempt to assess the extent of inpainting, a considerable amount is present, much of it over wide traction crackle. The varnish is dull and discolored.

**Provenance:** (Rose M. de Forest [Mrs. Augustus de Forest], New York); purchased 5 August 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, December 1921, no. 21, as "Self portrait when a young man" by Charles Loring Elliott. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered, as "Self portrait when a young man" by Charles Loring Elliott.

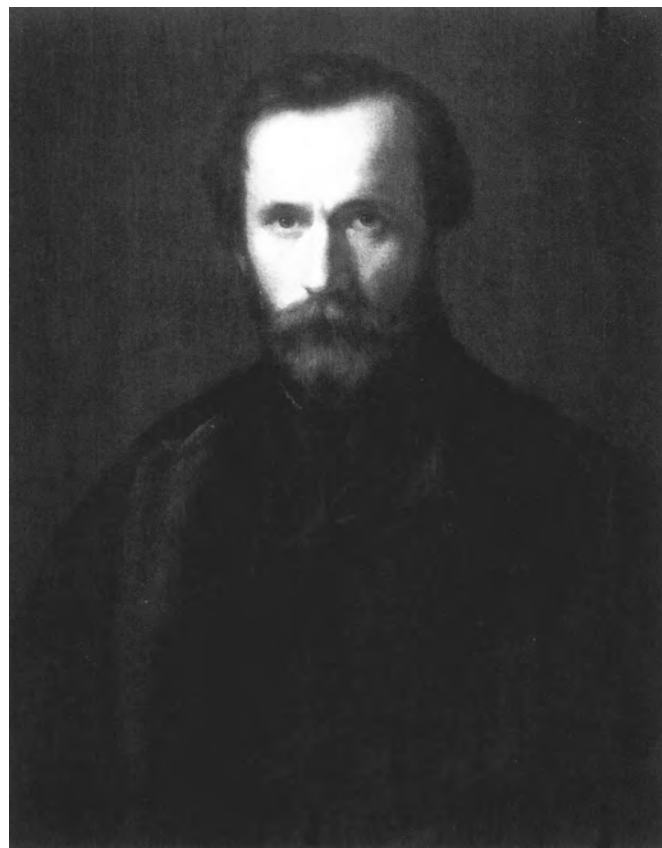
THIS PAINTING was formerly considered a self-portrait by Charles Loring Elliott, the leading American portraitist after the death of Henry Inman. William Sawitzky, who noted the poor condition of the picture, found the identification convincing.



Alan Burroughs also accepted the attribution and characterized the portrait as an “intimate study.” Anna Rutledge and James Lane thought that the style “does not seem overly typical of Elliott,” and they failed to detect any similarity between this sitter and the known likenesses of Elliott, their points of comparison being Mount’s *Charles Loring Elliott* [1947.17.9, p. 312] and Elliott’s *Self-portrait* (c. 1850, MMA). They consulted Theodore Bolton, the authority on Elliott, who doubted both the attribution and the sitter identification, and suggested that the portrait had been painted by William Page (1811–1885).<sup>1</sup> Edgar Richardson agreed with Bolton, and commented that the “general sfumato and the brooding quality is within the possibility of Page’s work, but no more.”<sup>2</sup> Although convinced that it was not a self-portrait and suspicious of the inscription, Rutledge and Lane were reluctant to abandon the theory that the portrait had been painted by Elliott. They concluded that it was “not authentic as to subject; possibly not authentic as to artist.”<sup>3</sup> William Campbell compared this sitter to two other self-portraits by Elliott and decided that it represented a different person.<sup>4</sup> He also noted that the James S. Earle frame label suggested a Philadelphia origin for the portrait, and Elliott was not known to have been active there. This new evidence compounded the earlier authorities’ doubts about the painting, so Campbell recommended that the attribution and identification be changed to their present status, which was done in 1968.<sup>5</sup>

The detail-oriented technique evident here is completely unlike Elliott’s style, and the sitter does not bear any similarity to the known representations of the portraitist, an ideal point of reference being Rockwood’s photograph of c. 1865 [1947.17.9, p. 312, fig. 1].<sup>6</sup> The mysterious-looking bearded man, who looks much younger than Elliott would have appeared around 1860, wears a magenta smoking jacket and a black silk ascot tie. The most striking aspect of the image is the sitter’s unusually serious and almost hypnotic expression. Tilting his head very slightly forward, he frowns and stares intently at the viewer. The artist’s dramatic use of light creates a diagonal across the man’s countenance so that one part is strongly illuminated and the other cast in deep shadow. Because the frame appears to have been used only with this painting, the portrait has a possible terminus a quo of 1855–1857, when the Philadelphia manufacturer James S. Earle employed the label with the 212 Chestnut Street address.<sup>7</sup>

RWT



Unknown American artist, *Portrait of a Man*, 1947.17.5

#### Notes

1. Bolton’s opinion is cited in James W. Lane, letter to Edgar P. Richardson, 31 July 1952 (in NGA curatorial files).

2. Richardson to Lane, 12 September 1952 (in NGA curatorial files). Years later, when his opinion about the portrait was solicited by Campbell, Richardson added that the “stippled, niggling use of paint in the face” of the National Gallery painting was not characteristic of Elliott’s more fluid style; see Richardson, letter to William P. Campbell, 5 August 1966 (in NGA curatorial files).

3. Rutledge and Lane 1952, 80. The inscription was photographed, though it is now hidden by the lining: “To my friend Huntington / Elliott.”

4. Campbell’s two additional points of comparison were the signed and dated *Self-Portrait* (1860, DIA) and the oval *Self-Portrait* that Elliott presented to the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, in 1860.

5. Campbell, memorandum, 3 December 1968 (in NGA curatorial files).

6. An engraving of Rockwood’s photograph made by George Edward Perine and Charles T. Giles appeared in the *Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature, Science, and Art* 8, no. 5 (November 1868): 1293.

7. Katlan 1992, 415; see his fig. 175, 416, for a reproduction of a similar label.

# Unknown Artists, possibly American or British

1963.10.106 (1770)

## *Chrysanthemums*

Fourth quarter nineteenth century

Oil on canvas, 68.4 × 113.7 (26<sup>15/16</sup> × 44<sup>3/4</sup>)

Chester Dale Collection

**Technical Notes:** A white ground layer covers, without concealing its texture, a medium-weight plain-weave fabric support that has been lined. Tack holes through the front of the painting suggest that it was once on a smaller stretcher but has been unfolded to its present, original dimensions. The paint is applied wet-into-wet with extremely thick and high local impasto in some of the white and yellow highlights. The background is thinly applied in areas and built up thickly in the closer elements of the design. The painting is in good condition with losses the size of pinpricks. Stylistic, rather than technical, evidence shows that the signature at the lower left ("Chase") is false. Evidence of abrasion and overpaint is found at the lower right, in the area where paintings are often signed. In 1954, when the painting was re-lined, discolored varnish was removed and losses were inpainted. The varnish has since grayed.

**Provenance:** (Sale, Savoy Art and Auction Galleries, New York, 14 November 1953, as *Vase of Chrysanthemums*);<sup>1</sup> Chester Dale [1883–1962], New York.

**Exhibited:** *William Merritt Chase: A Retrospective Exhibition*, Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, New York, 1957, no. 116. *A Festival of Flowers*, Montclair Art Museum, New Jersey, 1961, no. 9.

THIS PAINTING has been exhibited and published as a work by William Merritt Chase since it was acquired at auction by Chester Dale in 1953.<sup>2</sup> It cannot, however, be considered genuine, since it lacks a provenance before its acquisition by Chester Dale.<sup>3</sup> The signature, although it morphologically resembles authentic signatures by Chase,<sup>4</sup> is too carefully formed and too obviously deliberate to be autograph, and it is located in an area of the painting in which signs of abrasion and repainting are evident. In its application of paint, coloration, and almost explosively expansive crowning of the picture space, the style has no relation to any of Chase's known still lifes.<sup>5</sup>

It has so far been impossible, on either stylistic or technical grounds, to attribute the painting to another American artist, or to an artist of any other nationality (for the painter was not necessarily American).

In the fourth century the chrysanthemum, native to China, was introduced into Japan, where it became so admired that the Japanese flag once bore a stylized chrysanthemum. With the opening of Japan to the West in the mid-nineteenth century, the chrysanthemum entered the consciousness of Western artists, and beginning around 1880 it became a popular still life subject in Europe, England, and America.<sup>6</sup>

NICOLAI CIKOVSKY JR.

### Notes

1. This information is drawn from the Dale collection records (in NGA curatorial files).

2. It is discussed, as by William Merritt Chase, in Wilmerding 1980, 132 (but omitted from Wilmerding, *American Masterpieces*, 1988); Gerdts 1981, 146; Williams 1981, 186, repro. 187; and Foshay 1984, 107, fig. 87. It is illustrated in Sydney H. Pavière, *A Dictionary of Flower, Fruit and Still-Life Subjects*, 3+ vols. (Leigh-on-Sea, England, 1964), 3: 2: pl. 10.

3. It is not listed in the "Check List of Known Works by William Merritt Chase," which was compiled by Wilbur D. Peat in 1949 and published in *Chase Centennial Exhibition* (Indianapolis, 1949). It includes two paintings of chrysanthemums (locations unknown), neither the same size as this one.

4. Compare, for example, *Azaleas* (c. 1882), *Portrait of Virginia Gerson* (c. 1880), or *Priam, The Nubian Ganymede* (1879), illustrated in Pisano 1983, 43, 47, 51. Technical examination neither confirms nor denies the removal of a previous signature in the lower right corner.

5. Ronald G. Pisano, who is compiling the catalogue raisonné of Chase's paintings, twice expressed doubt about its authenticity in letters (in NGA curatorial files).

6. The high point of interest in the subject in the United States, as measured by the number of chrysanthemum still lifes in National Academy of Design exhibitions, was the period 1882–1888, which coincided with the flower's horticultural popularity. See Foshay 1984, 188n.4.

### References

1964 Pavière, Sydney H. *A Dictionary of Flower, Fruit and Still-Life Subjects*. 3+ vols. Leigh-on-Sea, England: 3: 2: 28, repro. pl. 10.

1965 Dale: repro. 39.

1971 Gerdts and Burke: 201, reprints. 194, 199.

1980 NGA: 11, repro. 129.

1980 Wilmerding: 10 and 132, no. 47, color repro.

1933

1981 Gerdts: 151.

1981 Williams: 186, repro. 187.

1984 Foshay: 107, color repro. 114.



Unknown artist, possibly American or British, *Chrysanthemums*, 1963.10.106

1947.17.53 (961)

## *Mother and Child*

c. 1810

Oil on canvas, 153.7 × 105.4 (60 1/2 × 41 1/2)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The construction and handling of this painting are identical to those of its pendant *Portrait of a Man* [1947.17.52, p. 320]. There is extensive overpainting in the background, and the woman's neckline may have been altered. The surface is coated with a very discolored layer of varnish.

**Provenance:** (Rose M. de Forest [Mrs. Augustus de Forest], New York); purchased 20 November 1919 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, December 1921, no. 5, as *Marian (Bedell) Eckford* by Robert Fulton. *A Loan Exhibition of Paintings by Early American Portrait Painters*, Century Association, New York, 1928, no. 7, as *Marian (Bedell) Eckford* by Robert Fulton. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered, as *Marian (Bedell) Eckford* by Robert Fulton.

THIS PAINTING, the pendant to *Portrait of a Man* [1947.17.52, p. 320], was formerly identified as Robert Fulton's 1809 portrait of Eckford's wife Marian Bedell Eckford (1779–1840) and the couple's infant daughter Henrietta (1808–1828).<sup>1</sup> The history, critical comments, and information that ultimately led to the disattribution of both these portraits are provided in the entry for 1947.17.52.

The unknown woman is seated in an unusual, ornately curved, clawfoot Grecian chair of a style, called a klysmos, that is not associated with any American city; this may indicate that the portrait is of European, perhaps British, origin. The sitter's long black dress suggests that she was in mourning at the time she sat for her portrait. She wears a distinctive headdress over her dark curled hair, and her classical features have a pensive cast. The woman supports in her lap an infant of indeterminate sex wearing a long white dress. The infant clasps in its right hand a silver coral and bells. Such devices were generally made in England, owned almost exclusively by wealthy families, used only un-

der supervision, and treasured as family heirlooms.<sup>2</sup>

Although the woman's chair is positioned so that it is oriented toward the pendant of her husband and the drapery behind her mirrors the one in the companion picture, the artist made no attempt to imply that the two figures share the same interior setting. The rugs and chairs are of different designs, a landscape is visible behind the child through a window in the right background, and the wainscotting is absent here. Although the portraits are basically symmetrical, the gilt mirror that hangs in the upper left corner of the man's image interrupts the spatial harmony that is usually a characteristic of pendant portraiture, where such devices usually serve to imply continuity between two separate paintings. These observations indicate that the portraits were probably not designed to hang next to each other, but rather were intended to hang at opposite ends of the room where they were originally displayed.

RWT

### Notes

1. A false inscription on the back of this painting reads "Painted by R F Fulton / for my friend Henry Eckford."

2. These toys are discussed in Bernice Ball, "Whistles with Coral and Bells," *Antiques* 80 (December 1961): 552–555; and George S. Sturtz, M.D., "Early American Baby Rattles," *Clinical Pediatrics* 2 (February 1972): 103–106.

### References

- 1922 Sherman: 217–221, illus. 219.  
1929 Lee: 310–311.  
1930 Sherman: 42–43, repro. opp. 42.





Unknown artist, possibly American or British, *Mother and Child*, 1947.17.53



1947.17.52 (960)

## Portrait of a Man

c. 1810

Oil on canvas, 154 × 105.7 (60<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 41<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

**Technical Notes:** The medium weight twill-weave fabric support has not been lined and remains mounted on its original four-member stretcher with single forked mortise joints that have been dovetailed; no keys were intended in the construction. The off-white ground layer extends onto the tacking margins at the left and right sides. The top and bottom of the painting have been extended by 3 cm by unfolding the unprimed tacking margins and painting on top of them. Paint was applied mostly wet-over-dry and thinly, so that the diagonal fabric weave remains visible. X-radiography indicates that the artist made changes to the sitter's hand and that the sitter may originally have held a different object. There are several repaired tears in the support and a large dent at the top. Traction crackle has developed throughout, and there is blistering in the blacks. There are extensive areas of overpainting in the background. The surface is coated with a layer of very discolored varnish.

**Provenance:** (Rose M. de Forest [Mrs. Augustus de Forest], New York); purchased 20 November 1919 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, December 1921, no. 20, as *Henry Eckford* by Robert Fulton. *A Loan Exhibition of Paintings by Early American Portrait Painters*, Century Association, New York, 1928, no. 14, as *Henry Eckford* by Robert Fulton. Philadelphia 1928, unnumbered, as *Henry Eckford* by Robert Fulton.

THIS PAINTING and its pendant [1947.17.53, p. 318] were acquired by Thomas B. Clarke as portraits Robert Fulton had painted in 1809 of the naval architect Henry Eckford (1775–1832) and his wife Marian Bedell Eckford (1779–1840). They were among the De Forests' most adventurous deceptions, and their history provides valuable insights into the couple's modus operandi. Frederic Sherman, who consistently supported dubious attributions, wrote that "these portraits besides being probably the largest are perhaps the best of his works other than miniatures," and went on to praise them as "sincere and dignified works of real merit."<sup>1</sup> Cuthbert Lee made the questionable statements that they "give evidence of the sound training of West" and "represent a marked achieve-

ment" in consideration of Fulton's limited artistic output.<sup>2</sup> With the single exception of Alan Burroughs, the experts who later studied the Clarke collection were less enthusiastic about the portraits than their predecessors. William Sawitzky criticized them as being "tasteless in composition, and clumsy in draftsmanship and brushwork." He doubted their authenticity because Fulton's artistic activity ended around 1794, when he began to devote himself exclusively to the experiments in submarine warfare and steamboat navigation for which he is best remembered today. John Hill Morgan, noting the often questionable nature of portraits by Fulton as well as the general paucity of information on the inventor's brief career as an artist, declined to offer an opinion. Harry MacNeill Bland rejected both the attribution and the sitter identification.

Anna Rutledge and James Lane subjected the portraits to a thorough investigation. Noting that they did not resemble "the romantic and simple style of Fulton," these authorities cast strong doubts on the De Forests' identification of the sitter by comparing the subject of this painting with an engraving after a small portrait of Eckford (Brook-

Fig. 1. Anonymous after unknown artist, *Henry Eckford*, engraving from *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* vol. 65, no. 386 (July 1882), p. 224, Washington, Library of Congress

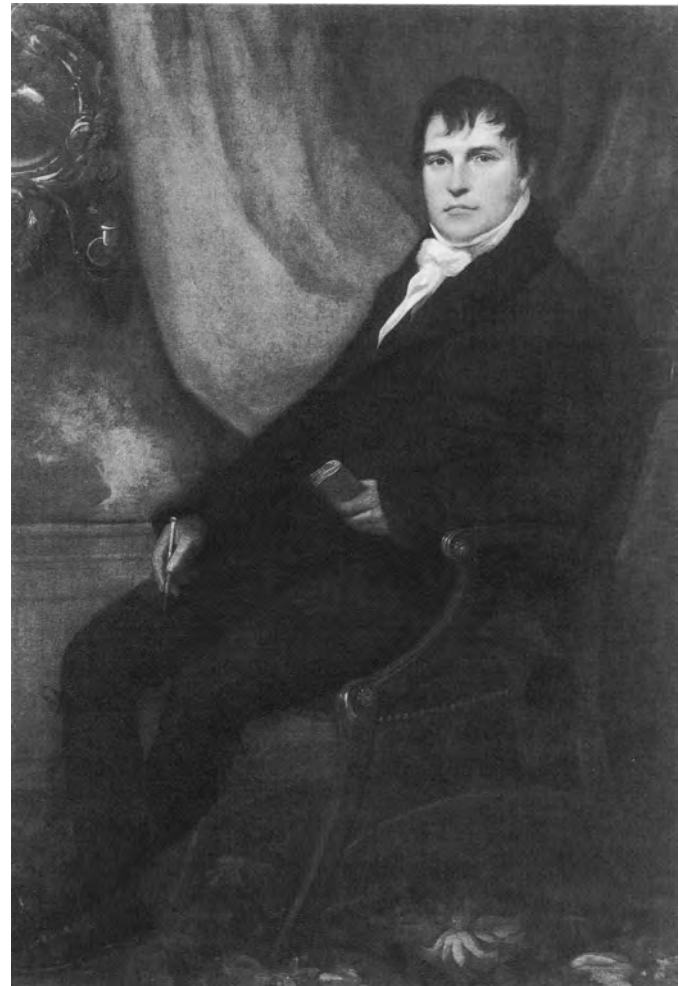


lyn Historical Society) by an unknown artist, which had been reproduced in *Harper's Magazine* (fig. 1).<sup>3</sup> The very slight resemblance between Eckford and the subject of the National Gallery portrait led them to speculate that the latter had "already existed and was given the title Eckford after the Brooklyn Historical Society portrait had been examined and then it was, with its mate, attributed to Robert Fulton."

Rutledge and Lane traced descendants of Eckford who were familiar with the house in which the paintings were alleged to have hung, but none of the people questioned could remember having seen either of them.<sup>4</sup> Rutledge and Lane also discovered that before purchasing the portraits himself, Clarke had unsuccessfully tried to sell them to Eckford's descendants around 1915. When a relative interviewed De Forest, he could not remember where he had acquired the paintings, only that they had fallen "off the top or the back of his car and were pulled in the dust of the road when he was bringing them in." Finally, Rutledge and Lane determined that the signature and inscription resembled those of other discredited De Forest paintings, and were probably a forgery.<sup>5</sup>

William Campbell rejected Rutledge and Lane's suggestion that the portraits were European after determining that the stretcher of the "Henrietta Eckford" was made of the native American species, Eastern white pine (*Pinus strobus*).<sup>6</sup> However, the presence of white pine is inconclusive in determining the origin because the wood was exported and is commonly found in British looking-glass frames and furniture after 1800.<sup>7</sup> In 1964 Campbell reviewed all the evidence and reached a conclusion, and the attribution and sitter identification were changed to their present status.<sup>8</sup>

Through this spurious attribution De Forest was attempting to take advantage of both the lack of information on Fulton's career as an artist and the highly collectible nature of paintings by the famous inventor. Fulton abandoned painting well before 1809, and in both scale and style the Eckford portraits are unrelated to his work. There is no evidence to support the notion, implied by the false inscription, that Eckford and Fulton were friends; the early sources mention only that Eckford constructed a steamboat named *Robert Fulton* that made its first successful voyage in 1822, well after the inventor's death.<sup>9</sup> As Rutledge and Lane suggested, the De Forests probably first arrived at the Eckford identification after viewing the engraving in *Harper's*



Unknown artist, possibly American or British,  
*Portrait of a Man*, 1947.17.52

*Magazine*, and then proceeded to supply the false inscription and provenance.

The unknown man represented here, who wears a black coat, knee breeches, and silk stockings, casually crosses his legs and sits in an empire armchair. His ill-drawn body is oriented toward the left, and he turns his head to face the viewer. The pencil and sheaf of papers he holds in his hands signify a mercantile or literary profession. Such elaborate furnishings as the floral-patterned rug, gilt girandole mirror, elegant Grecian armchair, and wainscoting on the background wall are all emblematic of the sitter's wealth and prestige. The presence of the English regency-style mirror and chair may suggest a British origin.

RWT

#### Notes

1. Sherman 1930, 42. Sherman had discussed the Eckford portraits previously in Sherman 1922, 217–221.

2. Lee 1929, 311.

3. *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 65, no. 386 (July 1882): 224. The Brooklyn Historical Society portrait of Eckford is reproduced in *Journal of Long Island History*, 16, no. 1 (winter–spring 1980): 16, where it is assigned a date of c. 1840, although it was more likely painted during the sitter's lifetime. Two other engraved portraits of Eckford, both by unidentified artists, represent him at a later age. They do not resemble the subject of the National Gallery painting either. One appears in *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* 24, no. 3 (July 1882): 361; the other accompanies Eckford's biography in *Appleton's* 1898, 2: 299.

4. The De Forests alleged that the portraits had belonged to Eckford's daughter Eliza Eckford Irving (1813–1866) and had been purchased from her descendants.

5. Rutledge and Lane 1952, 18, 82–85. The reverse of the lined painting bears a barely legible painted inscription "Painted by R. F. Fulton / for my friend Henry Eckford." The inscription on the companion portrait reads "Painted by R. F. Fulton / for my friend Henry Eckford."

6. The tests were performed by G. K. Saltar, a specialist in wood analysis at the Winterthur Museum, Delaware (copy of report in NGA curatorial files).

7. Charles F. Montgomery, *American Furniture: The Federal Period, in the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum* (New York, 1966), 276.

8. William P. Campbell, memorandum, 13 April 1964 (in NGA curatorial files).

9. Sherman 1930, 42, expatiated on this theme by writing that this portrait had been "painted in New York in 1809 when the artist and sitter were associated in the business of shipbuilding. . . . They are a fitting memorial to the friendship of two outstanding figures in the history of naval development in America, the inventor of the steamboat and the father of naval architecture in this country." Sherman further attempted to substantiate the sitter identification by quoting a description of Eckford derived from an obscure treatise by John McLeod Murphy, *American Ships and Ship-Builders* (New York, 1860), 12, in which the author noted that the naval architect "was a man of moderate stature, but large frame, with a pale but strongly-marked countenance, brown hair and broad forehead." The exact nature of Sherman's professional relationship with De Forest is unclear.

#### References

- 1922 Sherman: 217–221, illus. 219.  
1929 Lee: 310–311.  
1930 Sherman: 42–43, repro.

1963.10.71 (1735)

### *Little Girl in White*

Probably c. 1895

Oil on canvas, 36.5 × 26 (14 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 10 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>)

Chester Dale Collection

**Technical Notes:** The plain-weave fabric support was formerly mounted on an "academy board" on which a seascape had been painted. It was removed in 1962, remounted on a stretcher, and lined. The artist applied a thin red imprimatura over the creamy white ground layer. There is no evidence of cusping. The paint was applied fluidly, in preconceived areas that define the composition. Extensive abrasion appears throughout the whites, along with some stress crackle. Infrared reflectography reveals small areas of damage in the child's face. The varnish remains clear.<sup>2</sup>

**Provenance:** Purchased c. 1916 at auction by (Albert du Vannes, New York); purchased 30 January 1928 by Chester Dale [1883–1962], New York.

**Exhibited:** *Loan Collection, Children—Paintings, Drawings, Prints and Sculpture by Old and Modern Masters*, Marie Sterner Galleries, New York, 1929, no. 36, as *Girl in White* by James McNeill Whistler. *Exhibition of Drawings, Paintings, and Prints of Children*, BMA, 1929, no. 37, as *Girl in White* by James McNeill Whistler. *An Exhibition of American Paintings from the Chester Dale Collection*, Union League Club, New York, 1937, no. 28, as *Girl in White* by James McNeill Whistler.

WHEN Chester Dale acquired this small portrait of an unknown young girl, it was attributed to James McNeill Whistler. Nothing is known of the painting's history before it was purchased by the New York art dealer Albert du Vannes at an unspecified auction c. 1916. The attribution arose from the predominant use of white in the composition, which led some critics to associate it with Whistler's "Symphony in White" series,<sup>3</sup> its vague similarity to the numerous bust portraits of children that he painted in the 1890s, and the erroneous identification of the mark at the lower left center as the artist's butterfly insignia.

During restoration treatment in 1962 conservators discovered that *Little Girl in White* had been mounted on a seascape that was subsequently attributed to Whistler. The following year the Dales donated *Little Girl in White* to the National Gallery and the seascape to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The curatorial staff at the Metropolitan Museum consulted several prominent authorities on Whistler who all doubted the attribu-



Unknown artist, possibly American or British,  
*Little Girl in White*, 1963.<sup>10-71</sup>

tion; since 1967 the seascape has been inventoried as by an unknown American artist.<sup>4</sup> William Campbell began his investigation by consulting Andrew McLaren Young, who initially found the attribution to Whistler plausible.<sup>5</sup> When Young saw the picture early in 1968, however, he thought that it was more likely the work of a close follower of Whistler, possibly Mortimer Menpes. By 1972 Campbell recorded that Young “finally had quite a strong feeling that the picture was not by Whistler,” and he did not offer an alternative attribution.<sup>6</sup> Linda Ayres consulted Margaret MacDonald, Robin Spencer, and David Park Curry, who all doubted the attribution to Whistler. The matter was settled when Young, MacDonald, and Spencer did not include *Little Girl in White* in their 1980 catalogue raisonné of Whistler’s paintings.

The dark-haired young girl is represented facing the viewer, with her eyes averted to the right. Her head is surrounded by bold, clearly defined brush-

strokes of creamy white paint that vaguely delineate her hat and blouse. The image is distinctly two-dimensional, with only a slight indication of spatial depth. Even considering that this was a rapidly executed sketch, the artist failed to achieve a penetrating psychological portrait of the sitter, whose expression is attractive but bland. The anatomical draftsmanship of her facial features is faulty. All these qualities are uncharacteristic of the thinly painted, haunting portraits of children that Whistler painted during the 1890s. Without any evidence pertaining to the early provenance of *Little Girl in White* and the sitter’s identity, one can only conjecture that it was painted around the turn of the century by a possibly American artist who worked in a very painterly style.<sup>7</sup>

RWT

#### Notes

1. William P. Campbell, letter to A. McLaren Young, 24 November 1964 (in NGA curatorial files).

2. Conservation report, 6 December 1990 (in NGA curatorial files).

3. See, for example, F. Kuh, “Portraits of Children / The Artist Looks at Children,” *Saturday Review*, 14 December 1963, 37.

4. Natalie Spassky to Patricia Johnston, 19 July 1983 (in NGA curatorial files). The seascape was not published in the museum’s three-volume collection catalogue of American paintings.

5. Young to Campbell, 25 January 1965 (in NGA curatorial files).

6. Campbell, curatorial notes, January 1968 and 20 April 1972 (in NGA curatorial files).

7. Margaret MacDonald, letter to Linda Ayres, 28 December 1982 (in NGA curatorial files), suggested that the National Gallery painting resembled John Singer Sargent’s *Portrait of Dorothy* (1900), which was auctioned at Sotheby’s on 10 December 1981; it is illustrated in the sale catalogue *American Impressionism and 20th Century Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture* (New York, Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1981), color pl. 25. Despite the questionable attribution and technical deficiencies, the portrait has been popular. It was illustrated or received favorable mention in “Chester Dale: Collector,” *McCall’s Magazine*, November 1963, 123; *ArtN*, 19 October 1929, 11 (the author opined that “Whistler is at his most effective in the striking contrasts of black hair and flimsy white dress in the ‘Girl’ from the Chester Dale collection”); *International Studio* (November 1929); and *New York Sun*, 4 November 1929, 21.

#### References

- 1965 Dale: 41, illus.  
1970 NGA: 122, repro.  
1980 NGA: 258, repro.



Unknown artist, possibly American or British, *Madame G*, 1963.10.64

1963.10.64 (1728)

### *Madame G*

c. 1900

Oil on canvas, 61.3 × 50.8 (24 1/8 × 20)  
Chester Dale Collection

**Technical Notes:** The medium-weight plain-weave fabric support has a relatively open weave. It is unlined and appears to remain on its original four-member, mortise-and-tenon stretcher. The reverse of the preprimed support bears the stencil mark used between 1895 and 1901 by the London colorman and picture framer Charles Henry West: "C. H. West, / 115 Finchley Road / N. W."<sup>1</sup> Stenciled on the left tacking margin are the numbers "24 20." The smoothly applied light gray ground conceals the fabric weave. Paint was applied in layers, mainly wet-over-dry. Brushworking and low impasto are present in the whites. A red undertone appears beneath the dark paint in the background. The painting is in very good condition. The varnish has become slightly discolored.

**Provenance:** (Robinson, Fisher & Harding, London, 3 March 1927, no. 104); Rita de Acosta [Mrs. Philip] Lydig; (sale, Plaza Art Galleries, New York, 27 February 1931, no. 44); Chester Dale [1883–1962], New York.

**Exhibited:** *An Exhibition of American Paintings from the Chester Dale Collection*, Union League Club, New York, 1937, no. 37, as by John Singer Sargent.

ACCORDING to David McKibbin, this painting first appeared on the London art market at Robinson, Fisher & Harding in 1927, where it was catalogued as John Singer Sargent's "Madame Gautreau in Grey Dress," an attribution that arose from the sitter's superficial resemblance to Sargent's famous *Madame X*, *Madame Pierre Gautreau* (1884, MMA). A sister of the woman who first purchased the picture speculated that it represented a school friend, and it was acquired and accessioned by the National Gallery under the dubious title *Madame G*. Because of the poor quality of the painting, the doubtful provenance, the lack of a convincing sitter identification, and the absence of Sargent's signature, the curatorial staff had serious reservations about the attribution. In 1964 William Campbell added a question mark after Sargent's name on the artist's credit line,<sup>2</sup> and *Madame G* was not included in the catalogue of the Chester Dale Collection published that same year.

William Campbell consulted the two leading Sargent authorities, Charles M. Mount and McKibbin. When Mount had first studied a photograph of the portrait at the Frick Art Reference Library while working on his monograph on Sargent, he had determined that it was a deliberate forgery. Later he theorized that it was more likely a poor copy after Sargent's unfinished, presumably second version of *Madame X* at the Tate Gallery, London (c. 1884), which an amateur artist painted sometime between 1925 and 1930.<sup>3</sup> McKibbin, who had listed the portrait in his published checklist of Sargent's paintings, expressed strong doubts about the attribution and remarked that "it seems scarcely possible that he would paint a figure so wholly lacking in *esprit*."<sup>4</sup> Campbell weighed all the facts and recommended that the attribution be changed to its present status; based on McKibbin's comment that the unknown sitter's rather unfashionable dress dated from 1903–1906, he assigned it a date of c. 1910.<sup>5</sup>

John Wilmerding made further inquiries about *Madame G* after Julius Held saw the painting in 1977 and verbally suggested that it was an early work by



Alfred Maurer, but Sheldon Reich, the authority on that artist, rejected the attribution.<sup>6</sup> Milton Brown commented that “there is something pretty, soft, and superficial about the brushwork that seems more like Henri and his circle, especially the early John Sloan, than Maurer,”<sup>7</sup> but this suggestion was never pursued.

Because of its manifestly poor quality, this portrait was probably painted by an amateur, and it may well be of British rather than American origin. Whether it was executed as a deliberate forgery of Sargent’s original *Madame X* or as a copy of the Tate Gallery version is a moot point; the vague similarity between *Madame G* and these two paintings has been greatly overstated. The mysterious sitter identification probably originated as a shallow attempt to bolster an implausible attribution by providing

the portrait with a title similar to that of Sargent’s famous painting.

RWT

#### Notes

1. Information about West was supplied by Tom Learner, Conservation Department, Tate Gallery, London.

2. William P. Campbell, memorandum, 16 December 1964 (in NGA curatorial files).

3. Charles M. Mount, letters of 7 December 1964 and 21 January 1973 (in NGA curatorial files).

4. McKibbin 1956, 97; McKibbin, letters of 7 December 1964 and 22 July 1968 (in NGA curatorial files).

5. Campbell, memorandum, 25 July 1968 (in NGA curatorial files).

6. Julius S. Held, letter, 2 June 1980; Sheldon Reich, letter, 23 January 1978 (in NGA curatorial files).

7. Milton W. Brown, letter, 24 February 1978 (in NGA curatorial files).

## Appendix

1991.144.1

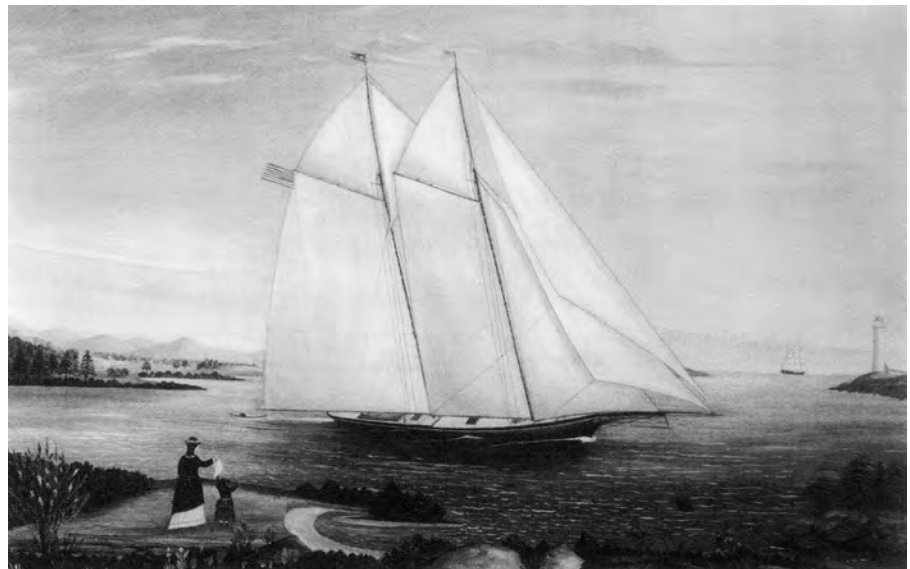
### *Schooner*

Nineteenth century

Oil on canvas, 58.7 × 91.4 (23 1/8 × 36)

Gift of Lucy Galpin Moorhead in memory of William S. Moorhead and the Honorable William S. Moorhead, Jr., and in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art

Unknown American artist, *Schooner*, 1991.144.1



## *Abbreviations for Frequently Cited Institutions*

AAA	Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington
AIC	Art Institute of Chicago
APS	American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia
BMA	Baltimore Museum of Art
CGA	Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington
DIA	Detroit Institute of Arts
FAMSF	Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco
FARL	Frick Art Reference Library, New York
FGA	Freer Gallery of Art, Washington
HSP	Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
LACMA	Los Angeles County Museum of Art
MFA	Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
MHS	Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore
MMA	Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
MWPI	Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica
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
PM	Peale Museum, Baltimore
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>AAm</i>	Art Amateur
<i>AB</i>	The Art Bulletin
<i>AM</i>	Arts Magazine
<i>AQ</i>	The Art Quarterly
<i>ArtN</i>	Art News
<i>GBA</i>	Gazette des Beaux-Arts

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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>
Samuel F. B. Morse	1981.46.2	Lydia Coit Terry	Lydia Coit Terry (Mrs. Eliphalet Terry)
John Neagle	1947.17.77	Mrs. John Dickson	Amy Taylor Dickson (Mrs. John Dickson)
John Neagle	1957.3.2	Mrs. George Dodd	Julia Dodd (Mrs. George Dodd)
Attributed to John Neagle	1947.17.82	Miss Ryan (?)	Portrait of a Lady
John Wesley Paradise	1963.10.188	Mrs. Elizabeth Oakes Smith	Elizabeth Oakes Prince Smith (Mrs. Seba Smith)
Theodore Robinson	1990.70.1	Drawbridge—Long Branch Rail Road, Near Mianus	Drawbridge—Long Branch R. R.
John Singer Sargent	1948.16.1	Repose	Nonchaloir (Repose)
John Singer Sargent	1951.20.1	Mrs. William Crowninshield Endicott	Ellen Peabody Endicott (Mrs. William Crowninshield Endicott)
John Singer Sargent	1952.3.1	Mathilde Townsend	Miss Mathilde Townsend
John Singer Sargent	1958.2.1	Mrs. Joseph Chamberlain	Mary Crowninshield Endicott Chamberlain (Mrs. Joseph Chamberlain)
John Singer Sargent	1964.13.1	Mrs. Adrian Iselin	Eleanora O'Donnell Iselin (Mrs. Adrian Iselin)
Frederick R. Spencer	1947.17.96	Frances Ludlum Morris	Frances Ludlum Morris (Mrs. Robert Morris) (?)
Thomas Sully	1942.8.32	Ann Biddle Hopkinson	Ann Biddle Hopkinson (Mrs. Francis Hopkinson)
Thomas Sully	1945.12.1	Governor Charles Ridgely of Maryland	Charles Carnan Ridgely
Thomas Sully	1948.13.1	The Sicard-David Children	The David Children
James McNeill Whistler	1942.9.99	Chelsea Wharf: Grey and Silver	Grey and Silver: Chelsea Wharf
James McNeill Whistler	1943.6.2	The White Girl (Symphony in White, No. 1)	Symphony in White, No. 1: The White Girl
James McNeill Whistler	1948.16.2	Head of a Girl	Alice Butt
James McNeill Whistler	1959.3.2	Brown and Gold: Self-Portrait	Gold and Brown: Self-Portrait



<i>Artist</i>	<i>Accession Number</i>	<i>Old Title</i>	<i>New Title</i>
James McNeill Whistler	1982.76.8	Wapping on Thames	Wapping
Unknown American artist	1943.1.7	Possibly John Rush	Portrait of a Man
Unknown American artist	1947.17.79	Ann C. Rudman	Ann Crook Dyer Rudman (Mrs. William Crook Rudman, Sr.)
Unknown American artist	1947.17.72	Self-Portrait	Eliab Metcalf (?)
Unknown American artist	1947.17.80	William C. Rudman, Jr.	William Crook Rudman, Jr.
Unknown American artist	1961.8.1	John Smith Warner	John Smith Warner (?)

## *Concordance of Old-New Attributions*

Attributions changed since publication by the National Gallery of Art of *American Paintings: An Illustrated Catalogue* (Washington, 1992).

<i>Accession Number</i>	<i>Old Attribution</i>	<i>New Attribution</i>
1963.10.106	William Merritt Chase	Unknown artist, possibly American
1947.17.72	Eliab Metcalf	Unknown American artist
1943.1.6	Samuel F. B. Morse	Unknown American artist
1947.17.9	William Sidney Mount	Unknown American artist
1947.17.82	Unknown American artist	Attributed to John Neagle
1961.8.1	Bass Otis	Unknown American artist
1963.10.71	James McNeill Whistler	Unknown artist, possibly American or British
1947.17.52	Anonymous American	Unknown artist, possibly American or British
1947.17.53	Anonymous American	Unknown artist, American or possibly British
1963.10.64	Anonymous American	Unknown artist, American or possibly British

## Concordance of New-Old Accession Numbers

1942.8.8	561	Unknown American artist, <i>Portrait of a Man</i>
1942.8.10	563	John Quidor, <i>The Return of Rip Van Winkle</i>
1942.8.30	583	Thomas Sully, <i>John Quincy Adams</i>
1942.8.31	584	Thomas Wilcocks Sully and Thomas Sully, <i>Major Thomas Biddle</i>
1942.8.32	585	Thomas Sully, <i>Ann Biddle Hopkinson (Mrs. Francis Hopkinson)</i>
1942.8.33	586	Thomas Sully, <i>Francis Hopkinson</i>
1942.8.34	587	Thomas Sully, <i>Andrew Jackson</i>
1942.8.35	588	Thomas Sully, <i>Abraham Kintzing</i>
1942.8.36	589	John Vanderlyn, <i>Zachariah Schoonmaker</i>
1942.8.38	591	Samuel Lovett Waldo, <i>Robert G. L. De Peyster</i>
1942.7.1	596	Rembrandt Peale, <i>George Washington</i>
1942.9.99	695	James McNeill Whistler, <i>Grey and Silver: Chelsea Wharf</i>
1942.9.101	SP-5	John Singer Sargent, <i>Peter A. B. Widener</i>
1942.13.1	696	Thomas Sully, <i>Henry Pratt</i>
1943.1.5	706	Unknown American artist, <i>Portrait of a Lady</i>
1943.1.6	707	Unknown American artist, <i>Portrait of a Lady</i>
1943.1.7	708	Unknown American artist, <i>Portrait of a Man</i>
1943.1.8	709	Thomas Sully, <i>Mrs. William Griffin</i>
1943.6.1	749	James McNeill Whistler, <i>Mother of Pearl and Silver: The Andalusian</i>
1943.6.2	750	James McNeill Whistler, <i>Symphony in White, No. 1: The White Girl</i>
1943.11.7	758	James McNeill Whistler, <i>Alexander Arnold Hannay</i>
1945.17.1	778	Thomas Sully, <i>Joseph Dugan</i>
1945.9.1	831	Thomas Sully, <i>Lady with a Harp: Eliza Ridgely</i>
1945.12.1	832	Thomas Sully, <i>Charles Carnan Ridgely</i>
1946.1.1	886	Albert Pinkham Ryder, <i>Siegfried and the Rhine Maidens</i>
1947.4.1	893	Thomas Sully, <i>Captain Charles Stewart</i>
1947.9.3	905	Thomas Sully, <i>The Coleman Sisters</i>
1947.17.5	913	Unknown American artist, <i>Portrait of a Man</i>
1947.17.9	917	Unknown American artist, <i>Charles Loring Elliott</i>
1947.17.10	918	Attributed to Rembrandt Peale, <i>Timothy Matlack</i>
1947.17.11	919	Thomas Sully, <i>Robert Walsh</i>
1947.17.14	922	John Vanderlyn, <i>John Sudam</i>
1947.17.16	924	Rembrandt Peale, <i>George Washington</i>
1947.17.17	925	Douglas Volk, <i>Abraham Lincoln</i>
1947.17.37	945	Unknown American artist, <i>Portrait of a Man</i>
1947.17.44	952	Unknown American artist, <i>Portrait of a Man</i>
1947.17.46	954	Unknown American artist, <i>Miss Robinson</i>
1947.17.51	959	Unknown American artist, <i>Portrait of a Man</i>
1947.17.52	960	Unknown artist, possibly American or British, <i>Portrait of a Man</i>
1947.17.53	961	Unknown artist, possibly American or British, <i>Mother and Child</i>
1947.17.55	963	Unknown American artist, <i>Junius Brutus Booth</i>
1947.17.58	966	Unknown American artist, <i>Portrait of a Lady</i>
1947.17.59	967	Unknown American artist, <i>Portrait of a Man</i>
1947.17.61	969	Unknown American artist, <i>Portrait of a Man</i>
1947.17.67	975	Unknown American artist, <i>Abraham Lincoln</i>
1947.17.70	978	Unknown American artist, <i>Portrait of a Man</i>
1947.17.72	980	Unknown American artist, <i>Eliab Metcalf (?)</i>
1947.17.75	983	Unknown American artist, <i>Portrait of a Lady</i>
1947.17.77	985	John Neagle, <i>Amy Taylor Dickson (Mrs. John Dickson)</i>
1947.17.78	986	John Neagle, <i>Thomas W. Dyott</i>
1947.17.79	987	Unknown American artist, <i>Ann Crook Dyer Rudman (Mrs. William Crook Rudman, Sr.)</i>
1947.17.80	988	Unknown American artist, <i>William Crook Rudman, Jr.</i>
1947.17.81	989	John Neagle, <i>The Reverend John Albert Ryan</i>
1947.17.82	990	Attributed to John Neagle, <i>Portrait of a Lady</i>
1947.17.85	993	Rembrandt Peale, <i>Richardson Stuart</i>
1947.17.96	1004	Frederick R. Spencer, <i>Frances Ludlum Morris (Mrs. Robert Morris) (?)</i>
1947.17.108	1016	Thomas Sully, <i>Thomas Alston</i>
1947.17.109	1017	Unknown American artist, <i>Portrait of a Man</i>

1947.17.111	1019	Thomas Sully after Gilbert Stuart, <i>John Philip Kemble</i>
1948.16.1	1029	John Singer Sargent, <i>Nonchalair (Repose)</i>
1948.16.2	1030	James McNeill Whistler, <i>Alice Butt</i>
1948.13.1	1031	Thomas Sully, <i>The David Children</i>
1951.5.3	1063	Albert Pinkham Ryder, <i>Mending the Harness</i>
1951.6.1	1064	Irving R. Wiles, <i>Miss Julia Marlowe</i>
1951.20.1	1066	John Singer Sargent, <i>Ellen Peabody Endicott (Mrs. William Crowninshield Endicott)</i>
1952.3.1	1108	John Singer Sargent, <i>Miss Mathilde Townsend</i>
1954.1.6	1190	Unknown American artist, <i>Portrait of a Man</i>
1954.4.1	1340	Julian Alden Weir, <i>Moonlight</i>
1955.2.1	1360	Rembrandt Peale, <i>Thomas Sully</i>
1957.3.1	1475	John Neagle, <i>George Dodd</i>
1957.3.2	1476	John Neagle, <i>Julia Dodd (Mrs. George Dodd)</i>
1957.4.2	1479	Gari Melchers, <i>The Sisters</i>
1957.9.1	1486	John Neagle, <i>Colonel Augustus James Pleasonton</i>
1958.2.1	1498	John Singer Sargent, <i>Mary Crowninshield Endicott Chamberlain (Mrs. Joseph Chamberlain)</i>
1959.3.2	1531	James McNeill Whistler, <i>Gold and Brown: Self-Portrait</i>
1959.3.3	1532	James McNeill Whistler, <i>George W. Vanderbilt</i>
1961.8.1	1651	Unknown American artist, <i>John Smith Warner (?)</i>
1962.4.1	1658	John Singer Sargent, <i>Street in Venice</i>
1962.6.1	1660	John Singer Sargent, <i>Miss Grace Woodhouse</i>
1963.10.64	1728	Unknown artist, possibly American or British, <i>Madame G</i>
1963.10.71	1735	Unknown artist, possibly American or British, <i>Little Girl in White</i>
1963.10.106	1770	Unknown artist, possibly American or British, <i>Chrysanthemums</i>
1963.10.188	1852	John Wesley Paradise, <i>Elizabeth Oakes Prince Smith (Mrs. Seba Smith)</i>
1963.10.202	1866	Henry Ward Ranger, <i>Spring Woods</i>
1964.13.1	1925	John Singer Sargent, <i>Eleanora O'Donnell Iselin (Mrs. Adrian Iselin)</i>
1964.22.1	1927	John Henry Twachtman, <i>Winter Harmony</i>
1965.10.1	1946	Alexander Helwig Wyant, <i>Peaceful Valley</i>
1966.11.1	2314	Thomas Sully, <i>The Vanderkemp Children</i>
1967.1.1	2327	Edmund Charles Tarbell, <i>Mother and Mary</i>
1967.9.1	2330	Thomas Moran, <i>The Much Resounding Sea</i>
1971.57.1	2562	Henry Ossawa Tanner, <i>The Seine</i>
1973.1.1	2638	Eugene Lawrence Vail, <i>The Flags, Saint Mark's, Venice—Fête Day</i>
1973.3.1	2639	Robert Street, <i>George Washington Deal</i>
1973.3.2	2640	Robert Street, <i>Elizabeth Price Thomas</i>
1973.4.1	2641	Thomas Sully, <i>The Leland Sisters</i>
1974.19.1	2657	John Frederick Peto, <i>The Old Violin</i>
1976.50.2	2699	Willard Leroy Metcalf, <i>Midsummer Twilight</i>
1981.46.1	2848	Samuel F. B. Morse, <i>Eliphalet Terry</i>
1981.46.2	2849	Samuel F. B. Morse, <i>Lydia Coit Terry (Mrs. Eliphalet Terry)</i>
1982.76.8	2874	James McNeill Whistler, <i>Wapping</i>
1985.59.1		Rembrandt Peale, <i>Rubens Peale with a Geranium</i>
1990.7.1		James Peale, <i>Fruit Still Life with Chinese Export Basket</i>
1990.70.1		Theodore Robinson, <i>Drawbridge—Long Branch R. R.</i>
1990.74.1		Julian Alden Weir, <i>U.S. Thread Company Mills, Willimantic, Connecticut</i>
1991.144.1		Unknown American artist, <i>Schooner</i>
1991.177.1		John Singer Sargent, <i>Valdemosia, Majorca: Thistles and Herbage on a Hillside</i>
1993.64.1		Unknown American artist, <i>View at West Point</i>
1997.19.1		John Vanderlyn, <i>Mary Ellis Bell (Mrs. Isaac Bell)</i>