

SOPHIA DWIGHT FOSTER BURNSIDE (1787-1871), c. 1830

Eliza Goodridge (1798-1882)

watercolor on ivory

3 3/4 x 2 7/8 (9.5250 x 7.3025)

Bequest of Harriet E. Clarke, 1944

Weis #18¹

Hewes Number: 16

Ex. Coll.: sitter's family, to her grandniece, the donor.

Sophia Dwight Foster was born in Brookfield, Massachusetts, and in 1816 at age twenty-nine, she married Samuel M'Gregore Burnside (1783-1850). Her husband was a lawyer from Worcester and, as a member of the Worcester School Committee and a trustee of Leicester Academy, was active in community affairs. Burnside was also one of the incorporators of the American Antiquarian Society, joining Isaiah Thomas, Sr. (cat. #123), and others to form the Society in 1812. He was a Councilor of the Society and briefly served as librarian from May 1830 to April 1832.² Burnside was primarily interested in the Society's newspaper collections and over the course of thirty years gave dozens of issues of the Columbian Centinel, the Boston Courier, and the Worcester Palladium.³ His personal papers, including speeches made in support of public education, and his diaries are preserved in the American Antiquarian Society's manuscript collection.⁴

¹ Weis incorrectly lists the sitter's first name as 'Sarah.'

² Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society (October 1830): 234. During this period the Society's librarian Christopher Columbus Baldwin (cat#) was on leave.

³ Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society (May 1847): 521. Samuel M. Burnside also authored 'Memoir of Isaiah Thomas L.L.D., First President of the American Antiquarian Society,' which appeared in the second volume of the Society's Archeaologia Americana, (1836): xvii-xxx.

⁴ Samuel M'Gregore Burnside Papers 1783-1850, American Antiquarian Society Manuscript Collection. Burnside mentions his wife infrequently in his diaries, usually in the context of social occasions, ie. 'Went to meeting with Mrs. B.'

Sophia Dwight Foster Burnside was the older sister of Albert Dwight Foster (1800-52), another active Worcester resident and member of the American Antiquarian Society. Among the extensive collection of the Foster family papers preserved in the Society's manuscript collection are weekly letters written by Sophia Dwight Foster Burnside to her mother Rebecca Faulkner Foster (cat. #51) who lived in Brookfield, Massachusetts.⁵ The letters focus primarily on health and family matters, with Sophia providing detailed reports on her children and her brother's activities and wellbeing. Visits to Brookfield to see her parents were frequent. In 1820, after a carriage accident during a journey from Brookfield to Worcester, Sophia wrote immediately to her father to detail the incident: '[T]he driver lost the command of [the horses] - they ran.... We overtook a man on horseback, our horses ran with violence against his, threw him down, threw the man off, overset our carriage, threw the driver from his seat, did not stop their progress but went on with increased speed, with the carriage on the side.' The driver stopped the horses by running them towards a rock wall, and Sophia noted, 'Mr. Burnside and I then crept, or rather, climbed out and found ourselves safe on the ground without having received any injury excepting a bruise on Mr. B.'s arm.'⁶ Burnside's parents moved to Worcester in 1821, and the correspondence between Sophia and her mother, as well as visits to Brookfield, become less frequent after that date.

This miniature of Burnside was painted around 1830 by the miniature painter Eliza Goodridge (fig# photoEG). Goodridge was ten years younger than her sister, the miniaturist Sarah Goodridge (see cat.# 3). Eliza Goodridge's earliest miniatures date from the late 1820s and are similar in style to her sister's work, although not as technically advanced.⁷ Goodridge probably began her career in Boston working with her sister, but spent most of her life in the central part of the state. She lived in Templeton, Massachusetts, and made several extended trips to Worcester in the 1830s and 1840s, during which time she lived with and painted members of the

⁵ Foster Family Papers 1740-1884, American Antiquarian Society Manuscript Collection.

⁶ Sophia Dwight Foster Burnside to Dwight Foster, March 18, 1820, Foster Family Papers.

⁷ Dale T. Johnson, *American Portrait Miniatures in the Manney Collection* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1990), 123-24. The Manney collection includes a miniature of an unknown woman that is signed 'E. Goodridge Pinxt, Sept. 26, 1829.'

Foster family.⁸ In 1849, at the age of fifty-one, Goodridge married Colonel Ephriam Stone, who owned a general store and sawmill in Templeton.⁹ The American Antiquarian Society's portrait collection contains the largest representation of Eliza Goodridge's known work and includes twelve images by her hand (cats.# 16, 49, 51, 53, 88, 89, 107-12).

⁸ Susan Strickler, American Portrait Miniatures (Worcester: Worcester Art Museum, 1989), 63.

⁹ Strickler, American Portrait Miniatures , 63. Seven miniatures of the Stone family painted by Eliza Goodridge, including her self-portrait, are preserved in the Narragansett Historical Society in Templeton, Massachusetts.