

ANDREW CRAIGIE, JR. (1754-1819), c. 1800
Attr. Archibald Robertson (1765-1835)
watercolor on ivory
2 15/16 x 2 7/16 (7.46 x 6.19)
Gift of Edmund B. Hilliard, 1955
Weis 41
Hewes Number: 34

Ex. Coll.: Sitter; to his widow Elizabeth Shaw Craigie (1772-1842); to the sitter's niece and ward Elizabeth Craigie Foster Haven (1770-1851); to her son Samuel Foster Haven (cat. 65); to his grandnephew, the donor.

Exhibitions:

1957, 'New England Miniatures,' Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, no. 45.

Publications:

Frederick Haven Pratt, The Craigies: A Footnote to the Medical History of the Revolution (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge Historical Society, 1942), frontispiece.¹

Boston-born Andrew Craigie, the son of a sea captain, studied the apothecary business and in 1775, at the age of twenty-one, was serving as an apothecary for American forces during the Revolutionary War. Two years later, he became the nation's first Apothecary General, remaining in that post until 1783 when he left the army. After the war, Craigie, who was referred to as 'Doctor' by most of his business associates, sold drugs and medicines wholesale with a partner in New York City. He also became a financier and land speculator, buying and selling parcels of property in New England and Ohio and making and losing large sums of money. The decade from 1790 to 1800 was the most successful period for Craigie. He bought and renovated a large mansion in Cambridge, Massachusetts, married, and socialized with Boston's wealthiest families. His biographer described Craigie as someone who 'entertained without regard to expense, who kept dozens of servants and well stocked stables and wine cellars. [He had] weekly dinners, great garden parties, especially at Commencement season, and dances where the beauty and gallantry of the Greater Boston of the time held unprecedented sway.'² Records of Craigie's land transactions, his business correspondence, and legal documents relating to the management of his fortune were preserved by a grandnephew, Samuel Foster Haven (cat. 65), the librarian of the American Antiquarian Society, who donated the material to the Society in 1847.³

This miniature of Craigie is one of a group of images of the Craigie and Foster families attributed to the Scottish artist Archibald Robertson (cats. 34-35, 48, 50).⁴ Robertson studied art in Edinburgh and London before immigrating to the United States in October 1791. He settled in New York City, where, with his brother Alexander (1772-1841), he established the Columbian Academy of Painting. The Robertsons taught drawing and painting at the academy and advertised their skill at doing miniatures and ‘hair work.’⁵ The intricately woven chestnut-colored hair set into the verso of the case holding Craigie’s miniature is an example of the brothers’ practice of this popular art (fig. 16).⁶ Robertson probably painted Craigie’s likeness during one of the financier’s business visits to New York City.

This miniature was owned by Craigie’s widow, Elizabeth Shaw Craigie. When she showed the portrait to one of her boarders, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-82), the young poet called the image ‘dull and heavy’; he was not impressed by Craigie’s business practices or questions about his moral character.⁷ This miniature, along with those of Francis Hilliard (cat. 67) and the sitter’s nephew Bossenger Foster, Jr. (cat. 48), descended in the family and were first loaned to the American Antiquarian Society in 1933 by a descendant, who noted: ‘I cannot tell you how much I appreciate having all these ancestral relics properly taken care of so that they may not only be preserved but available for public study and inspection.’⁸ The miniatures were given to the Society in 1955.

¹ A reproduction of the miniature appears on the cover of the 1996 reprint of this publication.

² Frederick Haven Pratt, The Craigies: A Footnote to the Medical History of the Revolution (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge Historical Society, 1942), 15.

³ Andrew Craigie Papers, 1717-1834, AAS Manuscript Collection.

⁴ A fifth image of Bossenger Foster, Sr. (1742-1805), was lost by a family member about 1900 (see fig. 17).

⁵ Dale T. Johnson, American Portrait Miniatures in the Manney Collection (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1990), 185. Robinson’s ‘Treatise on Miniature Painting’ appears in Emily Robertson, ed., Letters and Papers of Andrew Robertson, A.M. (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1895). For a more detailed discussion of Robertson’s work, see John E. Stillwell, ‘Archibald Robertson, Miniaturist, 1765-1835,’ New-York Historical Society Bulletin 13 (April 1929): 1-33.

⁶ The miniatures of Bossenger Foster, Jr. (cat. 48), and his wife Mary Craigie Foster (cat. 50) also include woven hair work.

⁷ Pratt, The Craigies, 15. Pratt cites a Longfellow manuscript, ‘Craigie House,’ which is in the collection of the Longfellow National Historic Site in Cambridge, operated by the National Park Service. Gossip surrounding Craigie and his estranged wife, as well as the life of Craigie’s illegitimate daughter, is chronicled by Pratt.

⁸ Edmund B. Hilliard to Clarence S. Brigham, June 22, 1933, AAS Archives.