

Notes and Acknowledgements

Among the collections of books, manuscripts, and graphic arts held at the American Antiquarian Society is a group of 164 portraits—oil paintings, miniatures, and sculpted portrait busts. These portraits reflect the changing styles and tastes in portraiture from the seventeenth through the twentieth centuries. It is an eclectic collection representing many aspects of the history of the Society: the interests of benefactors who gave their collections to the Society, as well as the impulse to commemorate the Society's leadership. Because a number of portraits came into the collection with or because of related manuscript or book collections or were commissioned by the Society, we are able to include in the catalogue entries extraordinary information about the circumstances of their production. In her introductory essay, art historian Linda J. Docherty notes that 'subject matter always took precedence over artistic quality at the Society, which, eschewing aesthetic standards, formed a collection of visual range and great historical import.'

Several individuals are represented by more than one portrait for reasons that are related in each catalogue entry. Isaiah Thomas's importance as the leading publisher of the Revolutionary era, founder of the American Antiquarian Society, and patriarch of a large family offers abundant reasons why he would be the subject of multiple portraits in a variety of media. Other subjects with multiple portraits include members of the Mather family, Daniel Webster, John Winthrop, Edward Everett, George Frisbie Hoar, and Charles Sumner. The miniatures of three generations of the Stiles, Foster, and Newcomb families of Templeton and Worcester, Massachusetts, are notable because they tell another kind of story.

Almost one-fourth of the portraits in the collection are images of Worcester residents and are included in 'Portraits!,' an on-line exhibition that was developed in conjunction with a city-wide cultural initia-

tive in the fall of 2002. Working with this group of images revealed details about community life over more than two centuries. The charming interiors and domestic scenes of Lydia Stiles Foster and her family by Eliza Goodridge hint at the close personal friendship between the artist and her friend. The relationship between Isaiah Thomas and William Paine took a very different trajectory. When Isaiah Thomas, the patriot and printer, moved his press to Worcester in 1775, William Paine, a Loyalist, had already left for medical training in Scotland. He returned to the colonies as a surgeon in the British Army during the Revolution, eventually settling in Salem, Massachusetts, rather than on land in Canada that he had been offered for his service in Nova Scotia. Paine and his family moved back to Worcester in 1793, and in 1812, old political sentiments set aside, this physician joined with Isaiah Thomas as one of the founding members of the American Antiquarian Society. The portraits of Worcester residents highlight the corporate and collecting histories of the American Antiquarian Society that are dispersed through the catalogue, which is arranged alphabetically. Color images and descriptions drawn from the catalogue entries of Worcester sitters may be viewed on the AAS website.

Since Frederick Lewis Weis compiled the checklist that appeared in the *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* in 1946, several additions have been made to the collection, among them portraits of Timothy Swan, Benjamin Chapin, John Moore, Stephen Peabody, Samuel Sewall, and members of the Goddard family. (In addition to the portraits, the Weis checklist also includes other oil paintings and a few framed drawings in the Society's collection.) The portraits were described in an article by the Worcester Art Museum's former Curator Louisa Dresser, 'Portraits Owned by the American Antiquarian Society,' that appeared in *The Magazine Antiques* in November 1969, and are included in two Smithsonian Institution databases, the Catalogue of American Portraits, and the Bicentennial Inventory of American Paintings. New descriptive entries that have been prepared for each portrait are accompanied by an image and information about the subject and the artist (when known). Taken together, these pictures tell a part of the Society's story since its founding in 1812 in Worcester, Massachusetts.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks to many individuals who have had a part in this project. Linda J. Docherty, professor of art history at Bowdoin College, and Lauren B. Hewes, independent art historian, who researched the collection, have also written introductory essays that shed further light on the collection as a whole and offer an interpretation of institutional collecting. Thanks are also due to other colleagues and friends of the American Antiquarian Society who have worked with us as part of this collaboration—Charles Barlow, Megan Bocian, Ellen Dunlap, Christine Estabrook, James N. Heald 2nd, John B. Hench, John Keenum, Henry E. Peach, Katherine St. Germaine, Caroline W. Stoffel, and Therasa Tremblay.

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