American Portraiture/American Identity: Transformations in American Art 1730-1860

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

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Between the Colonial period and the Early Republic, American portraiture changed in style and in subject matter. By the early parts of the nineteenth century, a unique, and quintessentially American style emerged, a phenomenon which scholars have not yet adequately explained. The development of a unique American identity and the emergence of a middle class in Nineteenth Century society explains why artists broke from British traditions. Middle class Americans demanded to be part of a material culture previously restricted to the upper-classes by reinterpreting art to fit into their expanding but still limited budgets. This project argues that as identities of art patrons changed, artists amended their styles in the hopes of realizing the greatest profits as customer demand was the greatest force in setting American artistic styles.

American primitive or folk portraits can be viewed as the sister of Colonial and Revolutionary portraiture. Colonial and Revolutionary art adhered to British cultural norms because colonials desired to purchase portraiture that mirrored the styles that their contemporaries in England were purchasing; portraiture was a signifier of one's high social position. These consumption patterns defined American elite art well into the beginning of the New Republic. A British cultural identity was so ingrained in the upper

class that despite different political views, loyalists and patriots both expected fine art to maintain British qualities even after the Revolution.

What is unique to Colonial but more directly Revolutionary and Early Republic portraiture is that despite being executed with classical British styles, tensions of divided loyalties were indirectly evident. These tensions hinted at the changes that would shape American art as the bonds that connected Americans to British culture were challenged during the first generation of the New Republic in both academic and primitive painting. This period ushered in a new artistic genre with the emergence of a middle class, folk portraiture as an American identity influenced patrons, clients, and artists alike. A study of the professional lives of Benjamin West (1738-1820), John Singleton Copley (1738-1815), Charles Wilson Peale (1741-1827), Joseph Wright (1756-1793), Rembrandt Peale (1778-1860), and Samuel F.B Morse (1791-1872) explicates the complexity of Colonial, Revolutionary and Early Republic portraiture. Each artist, despite personal feelings, worked during a period when classical British styles reflected the inheritance of British culture, comprising a tradition in art much more British than American.

In the Nineteenth Century, American portrait artists began to sever cultural ties with England. These artists worked during a period when ideas of nationalism and American identity were hotly contested. A clearly American spirit manifested itself in portraiture with inventive styles and an appeal to all classes to purchase portraits. Artists amended their styles to be more financially affordable to more levels of classes by painting faster with less detail. Obviously, something in the American white, middle-class changed in the Nineteenth Century resulting in the first independent American artistic genre. This project examines and explains this process. An expanding middle

class, the capitalist economy, and the construction of American identity changed American portraiture. Three artists of the period demonstrate the emergence of this distinct American genre including Ammi Phillips (1788-1863), William Matthew Prior (1806-1873), and Joseph Whiting Stock (1815-1855).

INTRODUCTION

Between 1730 and 1860, American portraiture changed in style and in subject matter. In the colonial period, portraiture followed a British template as Americans viewed themselves both politically and culturally British. As time passed, the shifting identities of clients, both politically and culturally, forced artists to respond to these changes in related shifts in artistic style. By the first two decades of the nineteenth century, a unique and quintessentially American style emerged. The development of a distinctive American identity and the emergence of a middle class in nineteenth-century society explains why artists broke from British traditions. Americans demanded to participate in a material culture previously restricted to a select few who could afford to pay extremely high commissions demanded by artists. Historian Charles Sellers notes that this material culture , "appealed especially to a growing new class of "white collar" clerks, salesmen, and bookkeepers aspiring to bourgeois enterprise." [1] This material culture also appealed to those who were "farmers entering the market, to master mechanics becoming capitalist bosses, and to manual workers mustering effort against

[1] Charles Sellers. *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 237. Middle class can also be considered as professional class when considering their role in the Folk period. Artists moved away from an elite clientele. Joseph Whiting Stock's journal and account book is indicative of this new client base comprised of the professional class. Alice Winchester explains that,"the painters and the people who bought their pictures were the same ones who were replacing their candles with lamps, their old pine settles with Hitchcock chairs, and their pewter plates with Staffordshire china and pressed glass," in *Primitive Painters in America: 1750 to 1950*. (New York: Dodd Mead and Company), 6. In short, this new middle class was a group of Americans previously denied a place in material culture who utilized their American identity and the rise of capitalism to assert their own cultural role.

the disgrace of fading respectability."[2] In short, this material culture appealed to what was increasingly referred to as the "middling sort" or middle class. For the purposes of this project, the term middle class relies on Charles Seller's definition, who defines it ideologically rather than economically: "The so-called middle class was constituted not by mode and relations of production but by ideology…A middle class of consciousness encompassed people of whatever class who sustained precarious honor and sometimes prospered by embracing the bourgeoisie's self-repressive norms, competitive consumption, and middle-class mythology."[3] The term middle class, then, refers not only to one's employment, but by what one wanted or desired to consume. Similarly, this project argues for a definition of culture that emphasizes the ways in which it is a process. Robert E. Shalope offers a useful definition in *The Roots of Democracy*. Shalhope argues that "the study of culture explores primarily systems of meaning. That is, the analysis of culture is the examination of widely shared modes of assessing and responding to the world-integral worldviews-that give meaning to the lives of those who share such perceptions. It further assumes that cultural assumptions cannot be analyzed as if they exist in a vacuum."[4] Also aiding my definition of culture is T. Jackson Lears in *No Place of Grace: Anitmodernism and the Transformation of American Culture 1880-1920*. Lears explains that he has " tried to root cultural phenomena firmly in a social matrix while avoiding a problem which has plagued many social analyses of culture: a tendency to reduce the values and beliefs of a particular class to mere 'reflections' of that class's material interests. For me, culture is not 'determined' by class structure. The two

[2] Sellers, 237.
[3] Sellers, 237.
[4] Robert E. Shalhope, The Roots of Democracy: American Thought and Culture, 1760-1800 (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990), xiii.

coexist in a dialectical process each continually reshapes the other."[5] These two definitions fuel my own use of the word cultural identity. This thesis argues that the shift from mercantilism to capitalism worked in tandem with the development of American identity. Consequently, the rise of capitalism, and the development of an American identity worked together as forces. Artists responded to both and the result was the development of folk portraiture. Therefore, cultural inheritance signifies these types of customs and identities which one type of group, be it either national groups or generations, passes to the next.

This project examines the changes in American portraiture based upon the work of artists who represented these stylistic shifts. Because common historical periodization does not account for the slower changes in art patron's cultural identity it is inaccurate to describe this project in terms like Colonial, Revolutionary or Early/New Republic except in reference to changes in national politics. Instead, this project defines periods generationally, by referring to the artists who defined the style of portraiture. For example, Benjamin West's lifetime offers a useful timetable for discussing the British influence on artistic style. Like most patrons of the time, West witnessed changes in the political identity of those around him, but not cultural identity. Individuals could shift nationality easier than culture. In this way, a British style remained evident within some types of American portraits well into the Nineteenth Century.

The West period adhered to British cultural norms because colonials desired to purchase portraiture that mirrored the styles that their contemporaries in England were

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[5] T. Jackson Lears, *No place of Grace: Anitmodernism and the Transformation of American Culture 1880-192* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), xvi.

purchasing; portraiture was a signifier of one's high social position.[6] These consumption patterns defined American elite art well into the beginning of the New Republic. A British cultural identity was so ingrained in the upper class that despite different political views, loyalists and patriots both expected fine art to maintain British qualities even after the Revolution.

What is unique to portraiture executed after the West period is that despite being executed with classical British styles, tensions of divided loyalties were indirectly evident. These tensions hinted at the changes that would shape American art as the bonds that connected Americans to British culture were challenged. The result was what is best described culturally as the Morse period as artist Samuel F.B. Morse's life (1791-1872) and career was shaped by the confusion of the overlapping cultural identities of the older and younger generation. For artists like Morse, a hope to express republican ideals through art was often made difficult by the remaining West period patrons still hoping for an art executed within a British style. Republican and democratic ideology is best understood as "the sacrifice of individual interests to a greater common good…" as described by Robert E. Shalhope.[7] Shalhope also explains that "the character and spirit of the people, not the size of its armies or the wealth of its treasuries, determined whether a republic lived or died. The simple, sturdy qualities of the yeoman- courage, integrity, frugality, temperance, industry- comprised the true strengths of a republican society."[8]

Existing simultaneously with the Morse period, another artistic period in the early republic ushered in a new artistic genre with the emergence of a middle class, folk

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[6] Brown University Department of Art, *The Classical Spirit in American Portraiture* (Providence : Department of Art, Brown University, 1976), 8.
[7] Shalhope, 45.
[8] Shalhope, 44-45.

portraiture as an American identity influenced patrons, clients, and artists alike. Operating within a wholly new context of middle class clients, these artists worked during a period when ideas of nationalism and American identity were hotly contested. A clearly American spirit manifested itself in portraiture with inventive styles and an appeal to all classes to purchase portraits. Artists amended their styles to be more financially affordable to more levels of classes by painting faster with less detail. Obviously, something in the American white, middle-class changed in the first few decades of the Nineteenth Century resulting in the first independent American artistic genre. This cultural period is best described as the Folk period and follows a timetable based after artist Ammi Phillips' life (1788-1863). Phillip's life and career demonstrate how within a world still seeing the effects of the West period on upper class portrait styles, an expanding middle class, the capitalist economy, and the construction of American identity changed American portraiture. Phillips serves as the best example for setting the timetable for the period not due to level of influence, like West and Morse, but rather due to the time in which he practiced. This difference in classification of the period is important as it helps illuminate the differences between elite painting and folk painting. Unlike elite and academic painting no one artist, unlike West as president of the Royal Academy or Morse as president of the National Academy, held sway over the movement making it inaccurate to name the period after an individual.

The early eighteenth century witnessed British art's first real departure from the surrounding European style as its culture demanded a new form of representation uniquely its own. Stylistically, British and West period portraiture was inspired by the Enlightenment. Therefore, compositions, themes, and executions were greatly influenced

by the classic artistic elements of Greece and Rome, the same elements inspiring art for centuries, as these embodied many of the characteristics upper class elites hoped to express. For British upper class society, these old artistic principles were reinterpreted to express ideas of birth, wealth, and erudition through the presentation of modern individuals in a classically inspired way.

For example, multiple design books for artists and academies were utilized in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which set extremely strict standards of appropriateness within portraits. One such manual was Gerard De Lairesse's *A treatise on the Art of Painting: In all its Branches*. Lairesse's rigidity of style, representing the overarching British stylistic conventions, was so great that he included multiple plates, like Fig. 1 and 2, which left little interpretation for artists in how to develop their works.[9] In this way, British portraiture is often a stylized interpretation of its subject as an exact portrayal of the sitter's likeness took a backseat to expression of status. This witnessed most portraits representing subjects either in classic dress and setting or in contemporary clothing and wigs, a demonstrator of wealth and class, but set within a classical composition. Therefore, artists relied on the prescribed elements of paintings to structure the bulk of their work simply inserting enough of a sitter's likeness to indicate who they were. The most important function of British style was to display status and colonial patrons gravitated to these portraits to help solidify a precarious position within the larger British social hierarchy.

Conversely, folk portraiture retained no formal stylistic elements excepting a few

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[9] Gerard De Lairesse's *A treatise on the Art of Painting, In all its Branches*; *Accompanied by Seventy Engraved Plates, and Exemplified by the Remarks on the Paintings of the Best Masters, Illustrating the Subject by Reference to their Beauties and Imperfections* (London: Edward Orme, 1817), 14, 18.

cases when primitive painters traveled or studied together. Because artists were not working within a unified artistic school, being more driven by economics than style, each artist formulated whatever technique created the best portrait in the fastest amount of time and for the least money. The result was that portraits appeared to be poorly executed versions of their academic counterparts. This style explains the origins of their classification as primitive, crude, or folk portraits.

Because time and cost determined much of their style, some characteristics of folk portraits did occur more often making them the closest examples of shared stylistics principles. However, artists and patrons did not formulate these commonalities like in artistic movements such as the British school. Rather, these demonstrate emerging styles more related to the marketplace. For example, because a full length portrait took more time and money to create, few folk portraits were executed this way. Instead, the majority appear as bust length which demanded more attention to the individual's personal features as it is more difficult to stylize these portraits. This also explains a lessoning of classical themes, compositions, and clothing in folk portraits. Although classical themes could express republican ideals and were often still utilized in elite portraits following the revolution, they would go unnoticed within the bust length compositions of the middle class making them an unnecessary element. Also, folk portraits eliminated any elements which would be difficult for a painter to include as it would increase speed of execution and cost. This witnessed a decreased detail within backgrounds often simply displaying subjects against a solid background or a simplistic interior. It also explains the often strange placement of subjects to hide hands or other complicated elements for a painter.

While artists and clients interpreted their new cultural identities as Americans in both the Morse and Phillips periods of portraiture in Antebellum America, other cultural forms reflected a similar transformation as the first generation of Americans expressed just what republicanism and democracy meant. For example, the Hudson River School, much like portrait artists and their clients, reinterpreted the landscape genre in an American context. *The Hudson River School: American Landscape Paintings From 1821 to 1907* explains that the Hudson River School, "drew its main inspiration directly from America- from the beauty of the land itself- rather than from foreign influences, although some foreign influences were inevitably present."[10] In this way the Hudson River School hoped to fashion new democratic ideals of the early republic into a tangible expression of America's beauty, possibility, and exceptionalism.

Similarly, this same period witnessed the beginnings of an American literature uniquely its own. Inspired by Romanticism and Transcendentalism many new American writers like James Fenimore Cooper, Edgar Allen Poe, and Henry David Thoreau experimented with themes and characters that were American. The very same influences affecting the type of portrait a Morse or Phillips period client demanded also influenced these writers as they hoped to express what it meant to be an American devoid of British cultural influences in this first generation. Edward Halsey Foster explains that "American identity in the Romantic period depended heavily on the American setting- the wilderness, which was popularly associated with virtue and good."[11] In this manner

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[10] R.W. Norton Art Gallery, *The Hudson River School: American Landscape Paintings From 1821 to 1907* (Shreveport, Louisiana: R.W. Norton Art Foundation, 1973), 5.
[11] Edward Halsey Foster, *The Civilized Wilderness: Backgrounds to American Romantic Literature, 1817-1860* (New York: The Free Press, 1975), xii.

the very uniqueness of the American environment functioned as the greatest symbol of a new American identity. This project focuses on changes in American portraiture, an equally important form of material culture that has thus far been ignored.

HISTORIOGRAPHY

Scholars have documented well the development of American identity between the Colonial, Revolutionary, and Early Republic periods. This project draws on that literature as a point of departure from which to study the transformation in styles of portraiture as artists were forced to look to their customer base as the means of developing an artistic style. Scholars have long studied the social development of the British colonies, most often arguing that a distinct American culture and identity formed from the declining influence of New England Puritanism.[12] The 1960s saw a shift away from the declension argument, however. Scholars such as Edmund Morgan and Sacvan Bercovitch argued against the primacy of New England in social development arguing for a more complex and less geographically narrow explanation of societal emergence.

Other historians analyzing social developments in colonial America examined how migration affected culture and broke with the declension model by examining regional developments. Leading this analysis were historians Bernard Bailyn, Jack P.

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[12] Possibly the most influential promoter of the declension model was historian Perry Miller, of Harvard University, who published multiple works on the subject between the 1930s and 1950s. Some of Miller's works include, *Orthodoxy in Massachusetts* (1933), *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (1939), *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province* (1953), and *Errand into the Wilderness* (1956). The common thread of these works was Miller's contention that American society was essentially based on tenants of Puritan religion and ultimately its decline resulted in a unique American society.

Greene, and David Hacket Fischer.[13] For example, Green's *Pursuits of Happiness: Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture* (1988), argues that social transformation was dependent on a more complex intermingling of the Puritanism of New England and the slave society of the South. Historians have located the development of an American identity in debates about citizenship and social relationships.[14] Early histories about the revolution portrayed a more moderate event, one that never degenerated into more violent class struggle including counter revolutions.[15] However, the moderate approach to the American Revolution as explained by the consensus historians was both short lived and never collective.

For example, in *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, Gordon S. Wood argues against a reductive view of the Revolution, explaining that "If we measure the radicalism by the amount of social change that actually took place-by transformations in

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[13] Many prominent works in this genre of migration include Bernard Bailyn's 1986 work *The Peopling of British North America: An Introduction*, David Cressy's 1987 work *Coming Over*, David Hacket Fischer's 1989 work *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America*, and Virginia DeJohn Anderson's 1991 work *New England's Generation*.

[14] Other relevant works about the Revolutionary period that consider the debates about the new American identity include T.H. Breen's work *The Marketplace of Revolution*, David Hackett Fischer's work *Liberty and Freedom: A Visual History of America's Founding* as well as *Paul Revere's Ride*, and Barnard Bailyn's work *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*.

[15] Richard Hofstadter's introduction to his 1948 work *The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It* represents and early work utilizing this model. This ideal was adopted and refined by other consensus historians like Daniel Boorstin, Louis Hartz, Benjamin Wright, and Robert Brown who were reacting against the oversimplification of the "progressive historians," such as Arthur Schlesinger, Carl Becker, Frederick Jackson Turner, Charles Haskins, James Harvey Robinson, and Charles Beard's, interpretation of the American Revolution.[15] Similarly, historians often termed Neo-whigs or counterprogressives, such as Bernard Bailyn, Edmund Morgan and Jack P. Greene often reacted against the progressive historian's examinations of the revolution as a framework for their analysis.

the relationships that bound people to each other-then the American Revolution was not conservative at all; on the contrary: it was as radical and as revolutionary as any in history."[16] For Wood, the change in economic dependence effected American identity due to new fiscal pressures. Most important to this shift was that of upper, middle, and lower-classes, became stakeholders in America's economic way of life. Therefore, "Americans virtually ceased talking about the people's "interest" in the singular: the people's "interests"-agricultural, commercial, manufacturing-were all plural now."[17] Wood's work is essential to any study of the Revolution's effect on American society and how Americans identified themselves because his argument incorporates the relationship between Americans and the British exposed in Greene. Wood's analysis exposes the Revolution as an event of social development because colonial relationships were invariably shaped by it. The 1960s and 1970s saw another shift in the approach to studying the revolution as historians began to expand on levels of participation to include perspectives of the lower classes. This method, in conjunction with continued interest in class conflicts defined much of the literature of the 1960s and 1970s new social historians. We see this in the works of historians such as Michael Wallace, Edwin Burrows, and Jay Fliegelman who all examine the relationships of patriarchy and its role in the end of George III as representing an American father figure.[18] David Hackett Fischer and James Banner also examined the role of social makeup as a vital element of

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[16] Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 5.
[17] Wood, 247.
[18] Edwin G. Burrows and Micheal Wallace, "The American Revolution: The Ideology and Psychology of National Liberation." *Perspectives in American History* 6 (1972): 167-308; Jay Fliegelman. *Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution against Patriarchcal Authority, 1750-1880* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

this history and viewed deference as a major component in understanding creations of American identity both during and after the revolution.[19]

After the American Revolution, the influence that British culture had on the American people began to deteriorate as former British colonists strove to reinvent their society free of British cultural inheritance. Though a complete end of British influence was impossible, historians have considered the ways in which a new image of what it meant to be American began to shape culture. Historians such as Bernard Bailyn, Gordon Wood, and J.G.A. Pocock argued that republicanism functioned as a primary component in America's political and social development.[20]

More recent historians, however, have broadened understandings of republicanism beyond a political ideology and expressed how these ideals created a unique American identity. Therefore, social, political and economic realities of the new country all worked as shapers of American identity.[21] Key to this work is Joyce

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[19] David Hackett Fischer, *The Revolution of American Conservatism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965); James M. Banne, *To the Hartford Convention: The Federalists and the Origins of Party Politics in Massachusetts, 1789-1815* (New York: New York University Press, 1984). Other relevant works about the Revolutionary period include T.H. Breen's work *The Marketplace of Revolution*, David Hackett Fischer's work *Liberty and Freedom: A Visual History of America's Founding* as well as *Paul Revere's Ride*.

[20] Other historians working within this framework included Pauline Maier, *From Resistance to Revolution: Colonial Radicals and the Development of American Opposition to Britain, 1765-1776* (New York, 1972); Richard Buel, Jr., *Securing the Revolution: Ideology in American Politics, 1789*-1815 (Ithaca, N.Y., 1972); Lance Banning, *The Jefferson Persuasion: Evolution of a Party Ideology* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1978).

[21] Many prominent works in this genre include Eric Foner, "Tom Paine's Republic: Radical Ideology and Social Change," in *The American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism,* ed. Alfred F. Young (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976); Dirk Hoerder, "Boston Leaders and Boston Crowds, 1765-1776," in Alfred F. Young, ed., *The American Revolution. Explorations in the History of American Radicalism* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois Univ. Press, 1976); and Gary B. Nash, "Social Change and the Growth of Prerevolutionary Urban radicalism" in Alfred F.

Appleby's *Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans*, which explored exactly what, who and how this new generation shaped American society. Appleby used numerous personal stories of first generation Americans to explain the change in American identity that their lives personified. These individuals "are those who did something in public-started a business, invented a useful object, settled a town, organized a movement, ran for office, formed an association, or wrote for publication, if only an autobiography."[22] It is through these accounts that Appleby exposed how white, middle-class Americans developed an identity based on individualism and egalitarianism.

Appleby examined how the first generation of Americans shaped culture and ultimately broke with the British cultural inheritance that defined their parents. Appleby's work is a model for this thesis because it demonstrated the importance of understanding of generational views toward England, the American Revolution, and American identity. In this way, Appleby bridged three periods of social development and explores how each envisioned what it meant to be an American.

Appleby explained that at the heart of American cultural transformation were economic developments bringing "thousands of small opportunities to a cohort of young people eager to break out of the colonial cocoon of their parents."[23] As the end of mercantilism created a new economic system within America, the new generation used this change to transform American ideals of success and identity. What emerged was a middle-class, both vocal in their role within American society and clear in the belief that

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Young, ed., *The American Revolution. Explorations in the History of American Radicalism* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois Univ. Press, 1976).

[22] Joyce Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 7-8.

[23] Appleby, 8.

they and not colonial elites of the previous generation expressed the true identity of an American.

Scholars have also considered the conditions that shaped American identity after 1815 focusing on how economy, politics, and culture played a role.[24] This thesis draws heavily on the approach outlined in Charles Sellers's *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846*, which examined the conditions that shaped America's social and political developments after 1815. Sellers argued that tensions arose between capitalism and democracy as Americans debated the benefits of the emerging urban, elite, and centralized government. It is in this shift that the emergence of a common vision of American identity actualized.

Sellers concluded that in "establishing capitalist hegemony over the economy, politics, and culture, the market revolution created ourselves and most of the world we know."[25] Most significantly, the market revolution changed the conception of American social hierarchies with the emergence of a clear middle-class. Sellers argued that "a middle class consciousness encompassed people of whatever class who sustained precarious honor and sometimes prospered by embracing the bourgeoisie's self-repressive norms, competitive consumption, and middle-class mythology."[26] However, this new middle-class could not really experience the way of life capitalists promoted because, "while middle-class effort propelled some into bourgeois success, and a few to

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[24] This genre of historical analysis began in the 1950s with historian George Rodger Taylor and his terminology America's "transportation revolution" in *The Transportation Revolution, 1815-1860* (New York: Rinehart, 1951). Future histories examining this subject did not strongly deviate from Taylor's original interpretations but refined them to make larger and often more pointed historical interpretations.
[25] Sellers, 5.
[26] Sellers, 237.

opulence, most managed only a precarious respectability while giving their all to capitalist production."[27]

Sellers deviated from the examination of changes in American mentality and identity that Appleby explores by emphasizing the role of the economy as the primary means of social change. This project builds on Seller's assertion that changes in the economy participated in creating a distinct American identity by looking at American portraiture, until now unstudied from this perspective.[28]

Americans also artistically and creatively confronted their new identities, and debated and negotiated what this new identity meant in a variety of forums through monument construction, historic house museums, and public art.[29] For example, Kirk Savage's "The Self-Made Monument: George Washington and the Fight to Erect a National Memorial," argued that debates about democracy and American identity were evident in the construction of the Washington Monument. Savage's work functioned as a useful template. This work also explored the politics of American identity through cultural developments.[30]

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[27] Sellers, 239.

[28] Other relevant works about the early republic include Paul E. Johnson's work *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revival in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837*, Sean Wilentz's work *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850*, and John F. Kasson's work *Civilizing the Machine: Technology and Republican Values in America, 1776-1900*. Each of these documents the important role that the expansion of a market economy played in changing social relationships and American identity.

[29] Patricia West, *Domesticating History*. West argues that white women's voluntarist groups expressed visions of American identity rooted in politics of race and ethnicity through historic house museums. John Kasson, *Amusing the Millions*. In this work Kasson shows how ideas about American identity and citizenship were communicated through the construction of public parks like Central Park and amusement parks like Coney Island.

[30] Other relevant works exploring culture in America include John F. Kasson's work

METHOD

This project considers how artists responded to the changes in client identity by reinterpreting portrait style to reap the greatest economic reward. For example, John Singleton Copley offered a useful examination of how important patron's desires influenced his work in his correspondence to his stepbrother Henry Pelham. These letters are maintained in the work, *Letters and Papers of John Singleton Copley and Henry Pelham: 1739-1776*. In these letters, Copley chronicled the course of his career, including his self-training by copying available British portraits, his desire to train in London, the economic dependence he had one producing portraits in classical British styles and his eventual permanent relocation to Britain at the start of the American Revolution. This work highlighted both the tensions of identity in America during the Colonial and Revolutionary period and provides a biographical sketch of Copley that directly connects these two components of my analysis.

Naturally, the art itself serves as an important primary source. Portraits reflected not only the style of art predominant at the time, but also the attitudes of the subject or painter. For example, Copley's 1782 portrait of *Elkanah Watson* displayed some elements of his patriotism because he incorporated the stars and stripes painted over a ship in its background. Copley's patriotism was not evident while he was in America. Copley was unable to develop an American style of art because patrons desired British artistic forms. This work, therefore, provided a clear example of British style but also

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Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century and Lawrence Levine's work *Highbrow/lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America*.

exposes the tensions in the artists. Copely expressed British cultural values, but was also an American patriot. Copely's work embodied of the struggle Americans faced in the Colonial and Revolutionary periods.

Changing American identity during the first decades of the Nineteenth Century affected who purchased portraits. Artists responded to new customers by altering their styles to accommodate the needs of the middle class. There are fewer primary sources available about these clients and artists, but an analysis of newspaper advertisements, their portraits, and individuals of the time illuminates how economic shifts shaped portraiture.

Advertisements in local and state newspapers comprised a substantial portion of my primary source material. Unfortunately, most of these sources were not available to me directly as the limitations of working in Cullowhee, North Carolina and through Western Carolina University's databases restricted my access to these documents. However, many were available through the use of secondary sources which often included them in their entirety. Ads were used as a tool for promoting competitive pricing to an expanding consumer base. For example, William Matthew Prior's multiple advertisements running in the *Maine Inquirer* emphasized how he can adapt the style of his painting to reduce the cost. Prior posted an ad on April 5, 1831 and stated, "Fancy pieces painted, either designed or copied to suit the customer, enabling on glass tablets for looking glasses and time pieces…" the end of the add offers the most insight into Prior's stylistic shifts, "persons wishing for a flat picture can have a likeness without shade or shadow at one quarter price."[31] People purchased paintings for various reasons,

[31] Little, Nina Fletcher, *William M. Prior, Traveling Artist: And his In-Laws, the*

including remembering loved ones, decorating a home, or to mark their place in society.[32]

The portraiture of the Early Republic is even more useful in exposing how national identity shaped artistic styles. Most artists of the New Republic changed styles to market their work to a larger consumer base. Portrait artists of the early Nineteenth Century displayed multiple styles in their careers. For example, Ammi Phillips used three distinct styles during his career: the Border style, the Kent style, and the classic style. Phillip's inconsistency shows how nineteenth century folk portraiture painters were influenced by the demands of a new class of patron. No longer working to meet the standards of British art, artists developed styles based on economy. They appealed to a mass audience, creating affordable portraits whose prices varied according to execution. Like Phillips, most artists worked in a variety of styles to appeal to all economic classes. Through studying paintings this project will display the changes in style artists were willing to make for economic reasons.

OUTLINE

This thesis focuses on a one hundred and thirty year survey of American portraiture:

Painting Hamblems in *Portrait Painting in America: The Nineteenth Century,* Ellen Miles, ed. (New York: Main Street Press, 1977), 120.

[32] When discussing Ammi Phillip's Kent period, art historians Barbara and Larry Holdridge commented: All the women of the Kent period, whether farmer's wives or town sophisticates, wear the same mantle of aristocracy and delicate breeding. All the men are cultivated and stalwart personages. They are individuals still, but Phillips has idealized them as a proud and truly impressive breed of Americans. These are ancestor portraits in the best sense of the term, for they transcend likenesses and maintain an air of timelessness. Barbara and Larry Holdridge, *Ammi Phillips, Limner Extraordinary* in *Portrait Painting in America: The Nineteenth Century*, Ellen Miles, ed. (New York: Main Street Press, 1977), 116.

1730-1860. The artists studied are politically from the Colonial (1730-1763), Revolutionary (1763-1789) and New Republic (1789-1860) periods but culturally fall under the West (1738-1820), Morse (1791-1872), or Phillips (1788-1863) periods. Artists born in the West period maintained an identity which still had ties to England and therefore a cultural inheritance connected to classical styles, these artists include Benjamin West (1738-1820), John Singleton Copley (1738-1815), Charles Wilson Peale (1741-1827), and Joseph Wright (1756-1793). Elite artists born after the American Revolution operating in a time when some West period patrons remained but a younger generation of clients emerged in the Morse period include Rembrandt Peale (1778-1860) and Samuel F.B. Morse (1791-1872). Therefore, this period was marked by confusion for both clients and artists as individuals struggled with how to perceive themselves as politically American but often culturally British. During the Phillips period artists and clients did not have the same cultural ties to England as the elite and therefore expressed a truly American identity in their work; these artists include Ammi Phillips (1788-1863), William Matthew Prior (1806-1873), Deborah Goldsmith (1808-1835), Ruth Bascom (1772-1848), Mary Ann Willson (?), and Joseph Whiting Stock (1815-1855).

This thesis includes four chapters. Each chapter begins with an overview of the era and focuses on the artists of that period. Chapter One, *Copiers or Colonists*, examines the role of patronage on the development of West period portraiture as the demands of customers fueled the style of art. For this group portraiture represented a way to display appropriate Enlightenment ideals, such as birth, education, wealth, and material acquisition, as justification of their elite status. Portraiture became a calling card for the colonial upper classes as they hoped to affect a British hierarchy through artistic

representation. Due to these conditions British artists like John Smibert migrated to the colonies and were instrumental in developing the British standard in American art. Later artists like Benjamin West experienced art through the terms of British and classically trained artists, making their style and training standard for future portrait artists in the colonies. West's later role as a President of the Royal Academy and his informal position as mentor for contemporary and future West period artists perpetuated the strict standard of British cultural art that predominating American portraiture. This chapter exposes the relationship of Copley, Peale and Wright to Benjamin West and displays the strength of his influence on the style of colonial portraiture. Chapter Two, *Who's Who: Art in an Age of Changing Nationality*, demonstrates the complicated ways in which the American Revolution shaped attitudes of nationality and culture for patrons and artists alike. As most Americans' perception of nationality shifted from British to American their cultural identity remained primarily British. The result was a difficult decision for artists as they measured the positives and negatives of their loyalty and made personal and professional decisions that affected American art. Unsure of how their clients would see themselves during and after the Revolution, artists made difficult choices about the future of American art not knowing patrons would take longer to sever their cultural identity than their political one. Chapter Three, *Breaking with the Brits?* explains how the first generation of Americans no longer displayed the cultural loyalty to England that created a situation necessary for maintaining strict standards of classical portraiture. Academic artists like Rembrandt Peale and Samuel F.B. Morse were frustrated. They hoped to create a democratic style of art devoid of British influences. However, enough patrons of the older generation still survived making it difficult to challenge British standards

completely as these individuals still adhered to the West period principles. Elite portraiture of the Early Republic saw mild expressions of American identity and measured changes within artistic style but remained mired in British standards and is best described as the Morse period. This demonstrates the strength of client control in artistic standards as artists listened to the marketplace to develop styles, even if it conflicted with personal beliefs. The last chapter, *America Finds Its Style: Primitive*, explores how as cultural identity changed so did economics adding to the rise of a new middle-class, one desiring to purchase a place in the culture of the new nation. Due to their limited resources, however, artists, like Ammi Phillips, William Matthew Prior, and Joseph Whiting Stock, amended the style of their paintings by increasing their speed of completion and reducing detail so prices could be lowered to a point that their new, middle-class clients could afford. Therefore, it was this type of art in the Phillips period that represented the first truly American genre: affordable, easily available, quickly executed, and crudely styled.

CHAPTER ONE: COPIERS OR COLONISTS

In 1771 colonist Benjamin West was living in London when he finished his painting *The Death of General Wolfe*. The piece was created to commemorate the Seven Years' War and depicted one of the most heroic figures of the war, General James Wolfe. The painting included a mix of British, French, colonial and Native American figures forming a triangular composition with Wolfe's dying figure as the center. This composition was utilized to add gravity to the event and glorify Wolfe's actions. Despite differing national identities, West depicted each individual within the piece in the same manner and style all centered on a dying Wolfe. Even the lone Native American stood in contemplation representing both a classical pose as well as a rendition of the noble savage. Interestingly, many of West's contemporary patrons, including George III, derided the painting for deviating too much from the classical allusions customers desired. The main point of contention was depicting the subjects in their actual clothing rather than the classical togas and armor they felt would add respect to the scene. George III commented that West was "very ridiculous to exhibit heroes in coats, breeches and cock'd hats."[1]

Eventually, West's piece overcame the controversy, and even George III purchased one of five versions. West was justified his work due by making two arguments; his composition and style was grounded in classical standards and most portraits displayed their subjects in their regular clothes not classical attire. Therefore, *The Death of Wolfe* illuminated the prevailing conventions within art of the colonial

[1] Alfred Frankenstein, *The World of Copley 1738-1815* (New York: Time Life Books, 1970), 126.

period. Regardless of national origin or subject, colonial artists began portraying all subjects in a classical manner with clearly British artistic principles knowing that this was the style patrons expected and desired.

During what this project will refer to as the West period, patrons and artists working to recreate as much of British society in the colonies as possible dominated the style of American portraits. Between approximately 1730 and 1763 Benjamin West established an adherence to British cultural norms that other artists followed. This period lasted long past the politically colonial or even revolutionary periods. It influenced the types of portraits the upper-class were willing to purchase and shaped how portrait artists depicted clients. Patrons demanded portraits that reflected their place in British high society through the visual display of Enlightenment ideals.[2] According to art historian Wayne Craven, "colonial images of merchants or merchants' wives" did "indeed extol the doctrine of prosperity, so dear to the upwardly mobile middle-class aristocracy of America, through the imagery of fine clothing and handsome household furnishings subtly introduced."[3] In this way, portraiture was used by colonial elites to demonstrate their place within British society; the more "British" one's portrait was, the higher one's status.

Historian Jack P. Greene described inheritance in relation to colonial development:

> Inheritance signifies those traditions, cultural imperatives, and conceptions of the proper social order that settlers derived from the metropolis. Initially brought by them or their ancestors from the Old World, these traditions, imperatives, and

[2] Brown University Department of Art, *The Classical Spirit in American Portraiture* (Providence : Department of Art, Brown University, 1976), 8.
[3] Wayne Craven, "Colonial American Portraiture: Iconography and Methodology" in *The Portrait in Eighteenth-Century America*, Ellen G. Miles, ed. (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1993), 109.

> conceptions were subsequently reinforced through a process of continuous interaction with that world. This process pulled colonial societies in the direction of metropolitanization or anglicization.[4]

Portraiture was clearly part of this inheritance. Willard Huntington Wright, an American art historian, commented on the adoption of British artistic ideals during the West period stating: "in our slavish imitation of England-the only country in Europe of which we have any intimate knowledge-we have de-Americanized ourselves to such an extent that there has grown up in us a typical British contempt for our native achievements."[5] In this way, West period portraiture developed into a style that adhered to British standards as artists looked to the demands of patrons to determine what type of art they would create. A cycle of cultural influence defined the training and style of America's most well-known portrait artists including Benjamin West, John Singleton Copley, and Charles Willson Peale. This temporary relationship between Britain, the colonies, and their art lasted throughout the colonial period of American history and well into the early republic. It was West's place at the forefront of this cultural influence which makes him the strongest shaper of American art during his lifetime. This cycle of influence also helps explain why even into the New Republic many patrons maintained a British cultural identity after changing their national one to American.

The creation of this British culture within the colonies can be linked to the effects of mercantilism on society during America's politically colonial period. Historian T. H. Breen explained that mercantilism not only provided England with raw materials, it also

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[4] Jack P. Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 169.

[5] Jean Lipman, *American Primitive Portraiture: A Revaluation* in *Portrait Painting in America: The Nineteenth Century*, Ellen Miles, ed. (New York: Main Street Press, 1977), 95.

created a consumer culture within the colonies where consumption was instrumental. [6] Breen explained that "the colonists of the mid eighteenth-century increasingly communicated social status through possession of imported English goods."[7] Consequently, mercantilism created an ideal market for British painters because colonial elites used portraiture to express their status.

As colonial American society stabilized in the eighteenth century and as residents began to view themselves as permanent inhabitants of the colonies, a desire to establish more fixed social customs and practices emerged. New England colonials looked to Great Britain for their social template and affected an approximation of British social hierarchies in the colonies. As Gordon Wood noted, the British "still tended to divide the society into only two parts, a tiny elite of gentlemen on the top dominating the bulk of commoners on the bottom," while colonials could not rely on the same criteria to structure class divisions.[8] Absent were many of the typical characteristics Britons used to order their social classes, including aristocracy by birth, access to levels of higher education, and immense personal wealth.

Few colonials could be called elite according to British Enlightenment ideals. This necessitated a restructuring of the guidelines in the colonies. The result was a colonial approximation of the Enlightenment qualities of an elite that still included birth, education, and wealth as the primary indicators of a gentleman or lady. However, as few of the men and women in the colonies could fully meet all three components, new

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[6] T.H. Breen, "The Meaning of 'Likeness': Portrait Painting in an Eighteenth-Century Consumer Society" in *The Portrait in Eighteenth-Century America*, Ellen G. Miles, ed.(Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1993), 40.
[7] Breen, 43.
[8] Gordon S. Wood, *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004), 35-36.

methods for displaying these attributes began to permeate colonial society . As Gordon Wood noted, "The colonists were eager to create a new kind of aristocracy, based on principles that could be learned."[9] Further, "The enlightened age emphasized a new, man-made criteria of gentility-politeness, grace, taste, learning, and character."[10] In this way colonial society was defined by a class mobility not present within England.

Colonial men and women considered middling in Britain could experience a significant social ascension in the colonies and be considered an elite through adequate display of characteristics belonging to an Enlightenment elite. What emerged was a group of colonial individuals who went to great lengths to demonstrate that they in fact contained all three components comprising an Enlightenment gentleman or lady. A sure way of representing these qualities was in the West period portraiture because the cost required to commission the paintings was restricted to only the wealthiest colonists and the stylistic elements of the work or the context in which it was created could display birth and education.

Many British artists like John Smibert immigrated to America to capitalize on colonial patrons' desires for British portraits. It was this importation of British artists that began the cycle of relationships that defined West period portraiture and developed a standard of training and style still evident in American art generations later.

JOHN SMIBERT

Smibert's career reflected mercantilism's role in colonial and revolutionary

[9] Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 195.
[10] Wood, *The Radicalism*…, 195.

cultural development. According to James Thomas Flexner, "The British influence Smibert brought to America is most clearly set forth in certain classes of paintings that were unfamiliar in New England, but extremely fashionable in the London of the 'thirties: to wit, "conversation pieces" and full-length portraits."[11] Essentially, Smibert's career became a cornerstone for future colonial artists like West, Copley and Peale who relied on the standard Smibert set for their own training model knowing that portraiture created in a similar manner would appeal to colonial tastes. Mercantilism provided the means to develop a relationship among Britain, the colonies, and art by producing the context needed to import British artists like Smibert to the colonies.

Smibert and men like him set the standards for artistic training in the colonies. Smibert's popularity was based on providing colonial society with a product that reflected British culture. Smibert began working within the crafts industry as an apprentice to Walter Melville, a house painter and plasterer.[12] He aided Melville with the decorative paintings applied to the bare walls of upper-class homes in Scotland. This was a common form of decoration at this time because, as biographer Richard H. Saunders noted, "wallpaper was still a novelty…," forcing homeowners to employ painters to "enliven the walls and ceilings with a wide variety of decorative motifs."[13] Smibert's apprenticeship provided practical training because he also learned to paint many common elements in British paintings while decorating homes. For example, these rooms could include images depicting landscapes, fruit, flowers, and humans.[14] These images

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[11] James Thomas Flexner, *First Flowers of Our idleness: American Painting, The Colonial Period* (New York: Dover Publications, 1947),56.
[12] Richard H. Saunders, *John Smibert: Colonial America's First Portrait Painter* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949), 7.
[13] Saunders, 7.
[14] Saunders, 7.

functioned as essentials in classical portraits, displaying the usefulness of an apprenticeship in the craft profession for an aspiring artist providing both practical technical training and a catalogue of possible background images. Following his apprenticeship with Melville in 1709, Smibert moved to London and continued his training in crafts, first working as a coach painter and then as a copier of Old Master paintings for art dealers.[15]

Many other colonial artists followed Smibert's career path. Smibert did not create the relationship between the craft industry and art training; however, he displayed for Americans the possibilities of craft training when no alternative existed, a situation more prevalent in America than England. Smibert's association with crafts also de-stigmatized a craft background, making it acceptable for West period patrons to employ these artists. Because patrons desired British styles, they would substitute an actual British artist for a colonial one who could produce a close approximation. Since Smibert worked in crafts and was a legitimate British portrait artist, it was socially acceptable to employ his American counterparts without forfeiting the legitimacy of the classical portrait.

Many craft artists utilized advertisements to market their skills. This mirrored the approach most portrait artists, both British and colonial, used to announce their arrival in a city. A typical advertisement of a crafts painter, James Halpin, in 1773 illustrated the standard use of newspapers in marketing as well as the connection of the crafts industry to portraiture. It reads:

> James P. Halpin,
> Portraite, Herald, and Sign Painter, Has taken a room in the Brick Market, where he carries on business, in the neatest manner; and will draw gentlemen's coats of arms, paint and ornament chaises, signs, &c.&c. at a

[15] Saunders, 14-15.

very reasonable rate.[16]

This advertisement exposed how similar Smibert's early career mirrored those working later in America, revealing how strong British artists' influence was on colonial and revolutionary training and styles.

After he left the craft profession, Smibert was fortunate to enter the Queen's Street Academy. This London institution run by Sir Godfrey Kneller offered Smibert a classical education.[17] Then, after a brief period working as a portrait painter in Edinburgh, Smibert took his "Grand Tour" between 1719 and 1721. An English artist's education was considered incomplete until he traveled throughout Europe, particularly Italy, and studied the classical art it offered. [18] Therefore, under this British template, artists needed to adhere to a strict form of training to be considered acceptable portrait painters. It was the transmission of this ideal into the colonies that accompanied artists like Smibert, directly creating the relationship between Britain, the colonies and artist's training and style.

Due to the strict style of British painting, many reference manuals and books defined what should comprise a classical portrait. For example, Thomas Page's *The Art of Painting in its Rudiments, Progress, and Perfection*, published in 1720, and Gerard de Lairesse's *The Art of Painting in All its Branches*, published in 1738, were popular reference materials for artists.[19] Though it is unclear whether Smibert studied from these works, he was most likely influenced by the multitude of similar materials that he either studied directly or that influenced other artists of his time. Another similar work was

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[16] Advertisement, James P. Halpin, *The Newport Mercury*, Newport, Rhode Island, June 21, 1773, issue 772, p. 4.
[17] Poesch, 63.
[18] Poesch, 63.
[19] Craven, 113.

"The Art of Painting" by Pictor, the work's anonymous author, published in the November 1748 issue of *the Universal Magazine*. This work provided detailed instruction on appropriate technique in painting and style with comments such as, "over, under and about the eyes you will perceive a delicate and faint redness."[20] What is clear from these works is that a defined set of principles and rules existed that influenced how an artist in England worked. In fact, these rules were so strict that almost every aspect of what would be considered appropriate for a painting, such as background choice, theme, placement of figures, and coloring, was already catalogued within these works. When artists like Smibert traveled to the colonies these same principles became an element of influence for West period artists whether they directly studied them or were simply secondarily influenced by them through their relationship to British trained artists. The lasting effect of training manuals, however, was great as many future West period artists like Charles Willson Peale documented their use.

Overall, Smibert's training contrasted sharply with the training American artists could reasonably expect to achieve as no established academies existed and few could afford to travel to Europe for instruction or undergo a "Grand Tour." Therefore, a crafts background, utilization of manuals, and copying famous works developed as pillars of West period training. West period Artists reinvented a classical training basing what they considered adequate off of artists like Smibert's own training and reinterpreting it to fit a colonial context.

Unable to attend Academies of art, like the Queen Street Academy, they studied the style and works of British artists who had the opportunity to learn at these institutions. This allowed portrait artists in the colonies to learn a style of art that was prevalent in

[20] Pictor, "The Art of Painting" in *the Universal Magazine* (London, November 1748).

England at the time without undergoing the specific training that their British contemporaries received. West period artists could still learn or at least imitate the styles of British classical artists and most importantly do so to the extent that they satisfied the demands of their British culture hungry colonial patrons. For many American artists, their departure from this type of training coincided with their ability to support themselves on commissions.

Smibert's popularity after his move to America in 1728 was telling because it demonstrated that wealthy colonial patrons were willing to pay for British art, and it displayed the economic opportunities available to artists during mercantilism.[21] Due to the lack of competition among artists in the colonies, they did not need the same level of classical training as their British contemporaries as long as they could provide the correct style. However, patrons still gravitated first towards works of English artists, especially those who had undergone the appropriate training, such as Smibert as the closer the connection of British conventions the better displayer of class.[22] Therefore, the wealthier a colonial was, the closer his portraits would be to the British standard. The recreation of British society in the colonies prompted one English visitor to Boston in 1718 to comment that "in the Concerns of Civil Life, as in their Dress, Tables and Conversation they affect to be as English as possible."[23] Therefore, a legitimately classic British portrait was more reflective of a high social standing than one by a West period artist. As the colonies imported artists, like any other commodity, they unknowingly supported the cycle of influence and relationships between British and West period artist's training and style.

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[21] Poesch, 63.
[22] Breen, 43.
[23] Saunders, 61.

Colonial elites hoped to recreate British high society, and portraits became one of the tools used to accomplish this goal. Historian T.H. Breen explained the relationship colonial patrons had to England as "the painter and sitter participated in a process of self fashioning," and therefore, "colonial artists freely borrowed ideas for composition and costume from English prints. They were being paid to fashion Anglo-Americans."[24] In this way, artists like Smibert operated as another component of mercantilism. It is not surprising, then, that Smibert was extremely successful as a portrait artist in the colonies. As mercantilism created a demand for British goods, the cornerstone of American social hierarchies, patrons demanded British portraits and provided artists like Smibert a marketplace and a context to influence later artists.

Smibert's career influenced American artists in many ways. First, Smibert brought many of the Old Master copies he had created with him to America.[25] Because many West period artists used prints such as these as a major component for their training, Smibert directly added to artistic knowledge when he immigrated to America by expanding their educational materials. Similarly, Smibert added to later West period artist's training as "other artists gained some familiarity with famous European paintings about which they had only read because his studio room and his painting collection were kept intact long after his death," essentially creating a museum of European art in the colonies.[26] The degree to which Smibert's studio exposed West period artists to European art was vast as his studio contained copies of Van Dyck's *Cardinal Bentivoglio*, Raphael's *Madonna della Sedia*, as well as copies of Rubens, Titian,

[24] Breen, 49.
[25] Poesch, 63.
[26] Poesch, 64.

Tintoretto, and plaster casts of *Allan Ramsey*, *Homer*, and the *Venus de' Medici*.[27] Both John Singleton Copley and Charles Willson Peale visited the space after Smibert died and incorporated his work into their training indicating an early link in the cyclical relationship among Britain and colonial artists.[28] Copley's sketch book contained his own drawings of Smibert's *Venus* and Peale recorded visiting the site in 1768 commenting that Smibert's work was "in a style vastly superior" to his own.[29] Probably most reflective of the influence that Smibert and his studio had on colonial society was the poem "To Mr. Smibert on the sight of his Pictures," by Mather Byles. Byle's poem reads:

> Ages our Land a barb'rous Desert stood,
> And Savage Nations howl'd in every wood;
> No laurel'd Art o'er the rude Region smil'd,
> Nor blest Religion dawned amidst the Wild;
> Dullness and Tyranny, confederate, reign'd
> And Ignorance her gloomy State maintain'd.
>
> Yet Smibert, on the kindred muse attend,
> And let the Painter prove the Poet's Friend
> In the same Studies nature we pursue,
> I the Description touch, the Picture you;
>
> In gen'rous Passion let our Breasts conspire,
> As is the Fancy's be the Friendships' Fire:
> Alike our Labour, and alike our Flame,
> Tis thine to raise the Shape, and mine the Name.[30]

Clearly, Smibert's arrival to the colonies was a cause of celebration for colonial elites because his reputation and the possibilities for training that he could provide would change the very nature of colonial art and, more importantly, their social status. Smibert

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[27] Saunders, 67.
[28] Brown, 12.
[29] Brown, 12; Poesch, 66.
[30] Mather Byles, "To Mr. Smibert on the sight of his Pictures." In Fred Moramarco, "Kindred Music: American Poetry and Painting," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* Vol. 11, No. 4 (Oct. 1977): 67-68.

created a direct connection to the British culture colonial patrons desired and provided his colonial contemporaries a standard to which aspire.

Once in Boston Smibert had to prove himself as a capable artist. Being British was not enough to satisfy colonial elites. He also had to produce portraits that met their expectations. In 1729 his first commissions, a portrait of *Francis Brinley* (Fig. 3) and *Mrs. Francis Brinley and Her Son Francis* (Fig. 4), became testing ground to prove his level of talent to colonial patrons.[31] Smibert's work was accepted by the larger colonial community because he soon was employed by many of Boston's most elite families, including the Sewalls (*Judge Samuel Sewall*, 1729), the Dudleys (*Mrs. William Dudley*), and the Winslows, Olivers, Cookes, Halls, and Belchers.[32] Smibert's success in Boston was marked by an intense amount of work. He painted over a hundred portraits within a five year period.[33] Instrumental in Smibert's success was the publication of a continuous series of advertisements in various New England papers describing his services in 1734. Smibert maintained the same wording for his advertisement in *The Boston News-Letter*, *The Weekly Rehearsal*, and *The New England Weekly Journal*:

> John Smibert, Painter,
> Sells all sorts of Colours, dry or ground, with oils and Brushes, Fanns of several Sorts, the best Mezzotinto, Italian, French, Dutch, and English, in Frames and Glasses, or without, by Wholesale or Retail, at Reasonable Rates; at his House in Queen-Street, between the Town-House and the Orange Tree, Boston.[34]

What marked Smibert's art as successful within the colonies was the style he employed. Smibert did not modify his work. He used a pre-existing British style,

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[31] Saunders, 70.
[32] Saunders, 70.
[33] Saunders, 70.
[34] Advertisement, John Smibert, Boston, Massachusetts, *Boston News-Letter*, Thursday October 17 to Thursday October 24, 1734, issue 1603, p. 2.

"conditioned by middle-class mores rather than American motives."[35] It was this style that future West period artists imitated, which created a relationship of British artistic styles in the colonies.[36] And, it was this style that patrons demanded. Smibert increased his patronage because he understood that upper-class colonials wanted to appear British, not American, that they wanted to be part of a larger British hierarchy. Therefore, patrons gravitated to Smibert because his portraits conformed to British ideals of acceptable art and capitalized on their worries over being accepted as part of a British upper-class. This satiated his patron's desires to have their wealth, a result of mercantilism, reflected in their portraits. Therefore, "as an artist with London cachet, Smibert provided a valuable service to those in pursuit of such status."[37]

Smibert's obituary in the 1751 *Boston News-Letter* exposed his importance in the colonies as a legitimate British artist, one who had recognition in Europe. It reads:

> On Tuesday last dies here, much lamented, Mr. John Smibert, well known for many fine Pictures he has done here, and celebrated in *Italy*, as well as *Britain*, for a good Painter, by the best Judges.[38]
> Clearly, much of Smibert's reputation was built on his acceptance in Europe.

And consequently, a portrait by Smibert signified one's legitimate place in British culture.

Smibert's portrait of *William Browne* reflected the influence British culture had on the colonies. Browne expected a portrait that would conform to British ideals and "that would announce that he was a member of the aristocracy, a gentlemen elegantly attired and posed according to the rules and etiquette as codified and diagrammed in

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[35] Saunders, 72.
[36] Saunders, 72.
[37] Saunders, 73-74.
[38] *Boston News-Letter*, Boston, Massachusetts, April 4, 1751, issue 2550, p. 2.

contemporary guides."[39] When you compare the painting by L.P. Boitard in F. Nievelon's work on British manners, *Rudiments of Genteel Behavior* (1737), to Browne's portrait, the restricted style of classical portraiture it exposed in the similarity of Browne's posture to that recommended in the book. Patrons did not desire portraits offering a level of creative depiction but simply an object that could announce their social standing. Therefore, portraits were modeled so that on first glance they could easily be recognized as classical in nature.[40] Clearly, the level of influence of British art on West period art was immense as patrons expected a visual representation that at first glance indicated a portrait's cultural connection to Britain.

Moreover, Smibert's art is revealing when compared to later West period artists as their reliance on his style was utilized to meet the British cultural demands of their own colonial patrons.[41] Therefore, British artists like Smibert imported into the colonies during mercantilism became the standard for all future West period artists to aspire to and functioned as the cornerstone in the cyclical relationship of British cultural influence in the Americas.

BENJAMIN WEST

Benjamin West was an early American artist whose career was shaped by the standards that British artists like Smibert set. Similar to many later West period, portrait painters, West came from a humble background. He was born in 1738 in Springfield,

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[39] L.P. Boitard in Francois Nivelon, *Rudiments of Genteel Behavior* (1737), plate 1.
[40] L.P Boitard.
[41] Brown, 8.

Pennsylvania to an innkeeper.[42] Though West was from a poor family he was able to complete a high level of education and at eighteen received a degree from Pennsylvania College.[43] However, West initially relied on self education to learn his skills as an artist. This self education mirrored the typical training of many colonial artists. What is significant is not his self education but that it approximated British formal education.

West first trained by studying available examples of European art in America. This was the best way for an artist to become acquainted with the techniques needed to reproduce classical portraits upper-class patrons demanded. According to art historian John C. Milley, "the assimilation of painterly conventions transmitted through the medium of prints and the perpetuation of artistic traditions placed the work of American artists within a unified community of British art."[44] West period portraits had a British identity despite being produced in America. Artists like Smibert were significant in the evolution of colonial art because they not only provided classical examples for others to emulate through his studio, but also reinforced the concept of approximate training. Smibert's employment in crafts legitimated artists who followed similar training.

Reinforcing the importance of British artist's influence on colonial art was West's relationship to a British artist, William Williams. Williams provided West with many of the books and prints he utilized in his training.[45] An advertisement Williams ran in *the New-York Gazette* in 1769 highlighted William's career in the colonies and the different types of training that West would learn through their relationship:

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[42] Dorinda Evans, *Benjamin West and His American Students* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1980), 14.
[43] Oskar Hagan, *The Birth of the American Tradition in Art* (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, INC., 1940), 109.
[44] Fanelli, 5.
[45] Evans, 14.

> William Williams, Painter,
> At Rembrandt's Head, in Batteaux Street,
> Undertakes painting in general,
> viz. History, portraiture, landscape, sign painting,
> lettering, gilding, and slrewing and smalt. N. B. he cleans,
> repairs and varnishes, any old pictures of value, and
> teaches the art of drawing. Those ladies or gentlemen
> who may pleased to employ him, may depend on care
> and dispatch.[46]

This relationship formulated lasting attitudes about painting persisting throughout West's life as the themes and styles permeating the works he studied, such as those by Jonathan Richardson and Charles Alphonse Du Fresnoy as well as ancient themes from the Bible and Plutarch, become recurrent throughout his career.[47] Therefore, West's relationship to Williams created an initial link between British art and colonial art. However, due to West's later role as a mentor to many of his contemporary colonial artists this British influence developed into a larger cultural influence and most colonial artists displayed themes and styles in their work which referenced the same materials West studied through Williams.[48] It was this level of influence that legitimizes this artistic period being recognized as the West period. No other American artist had a greater or longer lasting effect on the style of American art in this period and on these patrons than Benjamin West.

West began his career as a portrait artist in Pennsylvania. West's strict

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[46] Advertisement, William Williams, *The New-York Gazette*, New York, May 8, 1769, issue 915, p. 2.
[47] Evans, 14.
[48] Evans, 11-23. West's influence was so great he was a mentor to many of the most successful artists of the time, including Matthew Pratt, Abraham Delanoy, Charles Willson Peale, Joseph Wright, Gilbert Stuart, Ralph Earl, John Trumball, Mather Brown, Raphael Lamar West, Thomas Spence Duche, William Dunlap, George William West, Henry Sargent, Robert Fulton, Washington Allston, Rembrandt Peale, Abraham G.D. Tuthill, Edward G. Malbone, Charles Bird King, Thomas Sully, Samuel Lovett Waldo, Samuel F. B. Morse, Charles Robert Leslie, and Gilbert Stuart Newton, and many others.

observance of British styles is represented in his 1756 painting the *Death of Socrates*. Ultimately, West's ability to create works in this way garnered him the attention of many prominent Pennsylvanians.[49] The *Death of Socrates* had clear British stylistic antecedents as it was modeled after Charles Rollin's, a British artist, frontispiece in Volume Four of *Ancient History*.[50] Both of these paintings depicted a gathering within a room displaying the same architectural details. In addition, although the compositions have been altered slightly, West mimics the same point of interest within his work and centers his piece on a sitting man extending his arm to a standing younger man. When comparing the two images, West's loyalty to British style was clear. West utilized the composition and style of a work he viewed as superior to his own knowing it would also appeal to patrons in it obvious British cultural origins despite major differences in what was actually happening in the two scenes. In this way, the *Death of Socrates* exposed many of the relationships of West period art to Britain as it is more British than American and lacks any real infusion of West's point of view as an artist. This displayed the strong cultural connections Americans maintained with Britain and the reluctance of many to question ideas of British cultural superiority. It also reinforced the strength of mercantilism on West period culture as art becomes another British commodity.[51] As colonial elites demanded a product, Britain provided them first through their own artists like Smibert and Williams, then allowed the West period artists to produce their own American version whose training could not give them the same authenticity as their British predecessors but who approximated enough of the training and style to be an accepted substitute.

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[49] Evans, 14.
[50] Evans, 14.
[51] Breen, 45-47.

It is not strange, then, that gunsmith William Henry requested that West model the work after a more famous artist's work in 1756.[52] This work demonstrated not only his ability to adequately create portraits that the elite desired but also expanded West's patronage as many other colonial patrons were introduced to West's work when visiting Henry. For example, Dr. William Smith, a classical scholar and provost of the College of Philadelphia began a relationship with West after viewing the painting at Henry's home. Though their relationship only provided West with marginal training, it added greatly to his circle of clients.[53] An article in the *Philadelphia Gazette* linked West to Smith commenting, "at an early period, Rev. Dr. William Smith, discovered the drawings of those talents which have since raised him to the Presidency of the Royal Academy."[54]

Also, important among these new connections was John Wollaston a British painter. West's relationship with Wollaston displayed the continued influence of England art and artists on West period painters like West. Clearly, a large portion of West's training related directly to his connection to men already familiar with British classical standards. In "Verses inscribed to Mr. Wollaston" believed to be written by Francis Hopkinson and first published in *The American Magazine* on September 18, 1758, references are made about West and his relationship to Wollaston. Most reflective of West's training under Wollaston are three stanzas reading: "The pleasing paths your *Wollaston* has lead, Let his just precepts all your works refine, Copy each grace, and

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[52] Evans, 14.
[53] Evans, 14.
[54] *Philadelphia Gazette*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, December 27, 1800, issue 3789, p. 3.

learn like him to shine."[55] Similarly, West's reputation was bolstered by other colonial elites viewing their associates portraits as witnessed by a February 1758 poem by the anonymous author Lovelace entitled "Upon seeing the portrait of Miss xx___xx." It reads:

> The easy attitude, the graceful dress,
> The soft expression of the perfect whole
> Both Guido's[56] judgment and his skill confess
> Informing canvas with a living soul[57]

This poem as well as the article referencing West's association to Smith demonstrates how important and lasting patronage and personal relationships were within the colonial world as they solidified an artist's career by granting him authenticity.

West's Philadelphia clients enabled him to travel to Italy in 1760. This trip served as his "Grand Tour," a common cultural rite of passage for British artists.[58] Though West was the first American artist to travel to Europe to study, he was not the last. The completion of a "Grand Tour" became a signifier of an American artist reaching the height of their career. This event established one of the strongest relationships between West period portraiture and British art. An artist's study in Europe also displayed the cyclical relationship of British cultural inheritance as Mercantilism created an environment perfect for the importation of British artists. Their training and style then created the next generation of West period artists who would later be expected to travel to Europe to finish their training and in many cases be imported back into the colonies after

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[55] Francis Hopkinson, "Verses inscribed to Mr. Wollaston." In *The American Magazine*, September 18, 1758 In Ellen G. Miles, ed., *The Portrait in Eighteenth-Century America* (Newark: The University of Delaware Press, 1993), 78.
[56] The use of Guido is a reference to West.
[57] Lovelace, "Upon seeing the portrait of Miss xx___xx," in *The American Magazine* (February, 1758).
[58] Evans, 14.

having finished the appropriate course of artistic training.

Interestingly, for most British artists a "Grand Tour" took place at the start of their careers when they were relatively unknowns in the art world and shaped their style and reputation. It was in this manner that British style became so heavily infused with classical allusions and compositions. For American artists, a "Grand Tour" usually occurred after their reputation and careers were already established, simply guarantying them the final seal of British approval indicating to patrons they had as close to a British experience as possible. .

After his tour, West became a founder and president of the Royal Academy and "with fresh students coming steadily to his 'American Academy' from 1764 to 1811, the range of his influence was enormous, particularly in its duration."[59] Therefore, West's role in London functioned as one of the strongest and most lasting connections of England to West period art as he perpetuated the training and style he learned under English artists and transmitted this inheritance to his contemporaries and colonial antecedents, making his role within the cyclical relationship of English and American art perhaps the most vital. West's role as an instructor of American students is clear within his 1765 piece *The American School* (Fig. 5). West's two most important students and purveyors of the cyclical relationship between British cultural inheritance and colonial art in their own right were John Singleton Copley and Charles Willson Peale.

JOHN SINGLETON COPLEY

John Singleton Copley (1738-1815) was an American portrait painter working in the

[59] Flexner, *First Flowers*…, 123.

classical style in both the Colonial and Revolutionary periods and a student of West's. Copley's devotion to classical styles and his persistent belief that American art was inferior to British art displayed the unusual circumstances of the time and the overarching influence of British art and artists on their West period contemporaries. Like West, Copley imitated British styles and training as closely as possible. In his artistic style, Copley saw no other alternative than to imitate British standards as his patrons desired their portraits to be similar to popular British culture.[60] Copley trained by studying the available examples of European art in America. [61] This was the best way for the artist to become acquainted with the techniques needed to reproduce classical portraits upper-class patrons demanded. This makes it clear that West period portraits had a British identity despite being produced in America.

Copley successfully developed a style of art appealing to many prominent individuals displaying his ability to approximate British classical styles sufficiently enough for elites to appreciate his work in the states and the status they could achieve through them. One such individual was Thomas Ainsile, the port collector of Quebec. Ainsile commented that his portrait painted by Copley, "gives me great satisfaction," and advised the artist to try painting in Canada, "where there are several people who would be glad to employ you."[62] Ainsile's suggestion hinted at the belief that America was artistically backward and anyone operating at Copley's level would benefit from relocating. Philadelphia patrons believed that remaining restricted to the colonies would undermine their careers. Copley's response to Ainsile indicated purely economic reasons

[60] Brown, 13
[61] Doris Devine Fanelli, *History of the Portrait Collection Independence National Historic Park* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2001), 5.
[62] John Singleton Copley and Henry Pelham, *Letters and Papers of John Singleton Copley and Henry Pelham: 1739-1776* (New York: Kennedy Graphics, Inc., 1970), 23.

for practicing in America and highlighted his success, "I should receive a singular pleasure in excepting, if my business was anyways slack, but it is so far otherwise that I have a large room full of pictures unfinished, which would ingage me these twelve months if I did not begin any others."[63] Economics kept Copley in America as he gained many important commissions, such as, *James Warren* (1763), *Mrs. Jerathmael Bowers* (1763) (Fig. 6), *Paul Revere* (1768), *The Gore Children* (1753), *Girl with Dog*, *Epes Sargent* (1760), *Mr. Thomas Gage* (1771), *Mrs. Thomas Gage* (1771), *Mrs. Roger Morris* (1771) (Mary Philipse), *Eleazer Tyng* (1772), and *Mrs. John Winthrop* (1773) (Fig. 7). Clearly, Copley was accepted by colonial elites as an artist capable of capturing their status and position within a typical British hierarchy. Much of this success was linked to his ability to train and imitate British styles in his early life.

Copley felt the need to further his artistic training even after *The Boy with the Squirrel* experienced great success in a British exhibition. The only solution for Copley, therefore, was to complete the cycle of British cultural inheritance by actual study in Britain. In 1766, Copley wrote to Benjamin West about his dissatisfaction with American art, "in this country as you rightly observe there is no example of art, except what is to be met in a few prints indifferently executed, from which it is not possible to learn much."[64] Copley, despite commercial and academic success, believed he could not excel as an artist if not fully trained in a classical manner.[65] This insecurity about American art's reputation, as well as his own technical ability, highlighted the degree to which British culture dominated American art. Copley's correspondence with Benjamin West also displayed a growing desire to study in Europe on his "Grande Tour." Copley

[63] Copley and Pelham, 33.
[64] Copley and Pelham, 51.
[65] Brown, 12.

explained in a letter to West, "I should be glad to go to Europe, but cannot think of it without a very good prosect of doing as well there as I can here…and what ever my ambition may be to excel in our noble art, I cannot think of doing it at the expence of not only my own happyness, but that of a tender mother and a young brother whose dependence is entirely upon me."[66]

Copley's insecurities became clear in this correspondence as he continued to question his abilities. Copley did not feel it would be economically viable to move to England as his American background made his art inferior to his British contemporaries and would greatly reduce his commissions. This insecurity was based in the predominant West period ideal of British imitation as without strong connections to British society, art and patrons could not fit into a larger British hierarchy, the goal of the mercantilist, West period society. In 1774 Copley began his "Grand Tour" and eventually his wife and children moved with him to London when the onset of the Revolution made their situation in America tenuous.[67] Copley's wife, Susanna Clarke, was from a prominent New England family who maintained loyalist sympathies. Susanna's father, Richard Clarke, was an agent for the East India Company and the tea destroyed during the Boston Tea party had been in his possession.[68] He and Susanna lived the rest of their lives in London where Copley established a profitable career in painting. In this manner, "both Copley and West were too big for their limited setting. They went abroad to learn more of their art, and, in the end, remained there."[69] It was artists like Charles Willson Peale who added another link to the relationship of Britain, the colonies and art as he differed

[66] Copley and Pelham, 68-69.
[67] Brown, 13.
[68] Edgar P. Richardson, *American Paintings and Related Pictures in the Henry Francis du Pont Winterhur* Museum (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1986), 50.
[69] Richardson, 77.

in West and Copley in a decision to return to America after his European training.

CHARLES WILLSON PEALE

Charles Willson Peale was born in Maryland in 1741. Peale's father Charles, a Cambridge graduate, was forced to move to Maryland after he was convicted of embezzlement at his workplace at an English post office. His punishment was reduced from execution due to his family's connections and status as English aristocrats. Charles's education afforded him many opportunities for work as a schoolmaster in the colonies because his connection to British elites and his background at Cambridge appealed to the mercantilist, colonial elites for the same reasons that his son's portraits would.[70] The senior Peale was popular because his role as a British trained teacher added authenticity to their children's education, creating connections to a larger British hierarchy and a place for themselves within it. Ironically, Charles Willson Peale would be popular due to the same status his portraits could afford his patrons. His training, style, and background connected his patrons to British culture.

To advertise his services, Charles purchased space in local papers. One that ran in the *Maryland Gazette* read: "Young Gentlemen are boarded and taught the Greek and Latin tongues, writing, arithmetic, merchant's accounts, surveying, navigation, the use of globes from the largest and most accurate pair in America, also many other parts of mathematics, by Charles Peale."[71] This ad appealed to the demands of colonial elites because it emphasized the classics that would be taught in Britain.

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[70] James Thomas Flexner, *America's Old Masters* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc.,1939), 172.
[71] Flexner, 172.

Charles Peale met widow Margaret Triggs Matthews in Annapolis, and they were married shortly afterward. Charles Willson Peale was born six months after the wedding on April 15, 1741.[72] Despite being married with four children, Peale senior squandered his teaching wages on luxuries like his elaborate wardrobe leaving the family destitute when he died in 1749. Peale attended a charity school receiving only a fraction of the education that he would have received under his father's instruction. It was during this time that Peale first indicated a talent for art as he began copying prints in oil. Peale's artistic endeavors were short lived, however, leaving school at thirteen and beginning an apprenticeship with Nathan Waters, a saddler. [73]

Peale's career as an artist began in an attempt to repay Waters a debt he developed when opening his own saddle shop. Being uninterested and poorly suited to saddling, Peale began to try a myriad of different craft professions including working as an upholsterer, a chaise maker, a brass founder, a silversmith, and a watch and clock maker.[74] Remembering his interest and talent in painting and viewing work by other artists who Peale believed were his inferiors he began to work on portraits. After viewing a work by an artist named Frazier, Peale commented, "they were miserably done; had they been better, perhaps they would not have led me to the idea of attempting anything in that way."[75] Peale approached art simply as supplying a commodity like any other he produced for a patron. Peale learned that you must supply your customer with what they want and in the West period this meant portraits with British styles that could add the level of status to his patrons. Peale understood that "like almost everyone in this Anglo-

[72] Flexner, 173.
[73] Flexner, 174.
[74] Flexner, *First Flowers…*, 254.
[75] Flexner, *First Flowers*…, 254.

American empire of goods, colonial painters were caught up in a swirling consumer economy."[76] Subsequently, Peale "crafted objects that eighteenth-century Americans wanted to buy."[77] Wisely, Peale underwent the typical manner of training that developed in the West period, turning first to copying classical prints, next to training under an American artist, and last, traveling to Europe on his "Grand Tour," eventually becoming a student of Benjamin West.

While retaining his other occupations, Peale tentatively added portraiture to his list of business ventures and began training. First, Peale completed portraits for him and his family. Peale then received a commission from Captain Maybury to paint his family and offered Peale ten pounds. Peale commented that "this gave the first idea to me that I possibly might do better by painting than with my other trades and I accordingly began the sign painting business."[78] Next, he experimented with water colors and pigments more complicated than those applied to coach and sign painting. He purchased Robert Dossie's book *The Handmaid of the Arts* realizing more theory and skill was required for painting than he previously expected. Dossie explained in the introduction of his book that "this work being intended, along with other purposes, to answer that of a glossary to the technical words and expressions, relating to the subjects treated of, peculiar to painters and their arts."[79] Therefore, it became clear that the purchase of this work by Peale was a direct action in the furthering of his talent as this work was intended to aid preexisting artists in their training. Peale was taking art more seriously at this point and

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[76] Breen, 46.
[77] Breen, 46.
[78] Flexner, 178.
[79] Robert Dossie, *The Handmaid to the Arts* (London: J. Nourse, 1758), 3, accessed from Google Books, http://books.google.com/books?id=oSkDAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=the+handmaid+of+the+arts#v=onepage&q=&f=false.

recognized it required more than a causal training regime to affect the style necessary for success in the West period.

Also revealing is Dossie's dedication of the work to the members of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce as it exposed some of the prevailing attitudes of British art's superiority as well as its connection to mercantilism. Dossie began "to a country that owes its riches, power, and even domestic security to commerce…" and continued, "to you, therefore, I dedicate this book: as it is not only in your power, but intirely in the sphere of your professed intentions, to inforce, in a more extensive and publicly beneficial way, the practice of many particulars taught within it…"[80] The fact that an instructional manual of the arts was dedicated to a business organization displayed the strength of mercantilism in promoting a British and colonial relationship in West period portraiture as all commodities, portraits included, were part of the larger British commercial atmosphere.[81] It was within this context, therefore, that artists learned to view their art not as a strictly creative or colonial product but rather as an extension of a much larger marketplace that in its most basic manifestation was British. Therefore, maintaining a strict British training and style was simply smart business.

Despite providing Peale with an initial training in painting, Dossie's book was limited in its ability as it provided "no how-to info on human proportions, modeling, or perspective drawing."[82] This prompted Peale to receive lessons from a neighbor, artist

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[80] Robert Dossie, *The Handmaid to the Arts* (London: J. Nourse, 1758), iv, accessed from Google Books, http://books.google.com/books?id=oSkDAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=the+handmaid+of+the+arts#v=onepage&q=&f=false.
[81] Breen, 47.
[82] Poesch, 66.

John Hesselius.[83] Peale also copied available paintings in Annapolis, including a portrait of Cecilius Calvert attributed to Van Dyck in the courthouse.[84] Peale followed a similar path in his training as many West period artists, beginning first in crafts and then utilizing local painters and paintings to add to his knowledge of British styles and customs.

The turning point to Peale's career came after his decent into bankruptcy. After fleeing Annapolis for Boston to avoid debtor's prison, Peale met John Singleton Copley. Peale commented about his first introduction to Copley: "I went and introduced myself to him as a person just beginning to paint portraits. He received me very politely. I found in his room a considerable number of portraits, many of them highly finished. He lent me a head done by and representing candlelight, which I copied… The sight of Mr. Copley's picture room was a great feast to me."[85] What emerged from this description is another aspect of West period art, the training of younger artists by older, more accomplished ones. This represented the cyclical relationship of artistic training in the colonies and Britain as "there was apparently a loose network among painters in each community and they learned…with each other."[86] Copley's ease in accepting the unknown Peale as a student is a testament to the quality of Peale's early work as Copley willingly aided Peale in his training without a prior relationship. It also highlighted the commonality of West period training and the system of patriarchy within the art community as more established painters often trained their younger protégées.[87]

In a dramatic turn of events, Peale's Maryland patrons, some the very men to

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[83] Poesch, 71.
[84] Flexner, 179.
[85] Flexner, 183.
[86] Poesch, 66.
[87] Poesch, 66.

whom he was heavily indebted, covered the expenses for his "Grand Tour" in 1766.[88] These individuals recognized Peale's burgeoning talent and most likely hoped to benefit from the quality portraits he would produce on his return, adding to their reputation as associations and portraits by a classically trained artist would conform to the elite, British, hierarchical nature of colonial American society. This became apparent when examining an April 1771 poem as Peale's new association to classical art was referenced in his comparison to Ruebens. It read: "when Peale his lovely Arria drew, Like Ruebens erst, by love impel'd."[89] Important to Peale's trip was a letter of introduction written by Benjamin West's own "Grand Tour" benefactor, Chief Justice Allen of Pennsylvania.[90] The relationship that developed between Peale and West solidified his introduction into the West period art society as almost all of the most accomplished artists of the period studied under West and recognized him as their mentor.

In a manner reminiscent to Copley and representative of the strength of artist communities and influences at the time, West welcomed Peale as a student without a former relationship. Art historian Edgar Richardson explained Peale's training with West in London: "There West received him kindly and he spent two years in the metropolis, 1767-1769, learning to paint in life-size and in miniature, and to make etchings and mezzotints, and to cast in plaster. It was characteristic of him that he tried every craft skill within his reach."[91] Peale's relationship with West is indicative of the cyclical relationship between British cultural inheritance, British artists and West period artists as

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[88] Flexner, 184.
[89] *Maryland Gazette*, April 18, 1771. In Jessie Poesch, "'In just Lines to trace'-The Colonial Artist, 1700-1776." In *The Portrait in Eighteenth-Century America*, Ellen G. Miles, ed.(Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1993), 75.
[90] Flexner, 184.
[91] Richardson, 99.

his training displayed how "three generations brought the manner of Benjamin West to America."[92] Therefore, Peale's training under West signified a major component of this relationship as he becomes another link in a chain of art influencers beginning with John Smibert, Benjamin West, and John Singleton Copley. Importantly, Peale's relationship with these other artists was not unusual as many similar patterns of training existed both in the colonies and in Europe.[93]

West did not require any payment from Peale for the instruction he provided believing it was a duty of a more accomplished artist to help in the training of a novice.[94] This recurrent relationship between artists marked the history of West period and British art and functioned as one of the most lasting and important elements in transmitting distinctive British training and styles into West period portraiture.[95] Though Peale gained much from his relationship to West, this relationship was not one sided as West utilized Peale for his own work as well. From the moment that West met Peale in February 1767 he used him as a model for some of his most important works up to that point, including the hands of his portrait of *Governor James Hamilton*. West executed a portrait of Peale that is unique as its style displayed "the same pale flesh color, almost ashen, and the chiaroscuro that became elements of Peale's style."[96] Clearly, Peale learned much from his training with West and began to develop his own style under the influence of West's tutelage. Perhaps, Peale's most significant role as a model for West was his posing as Regulus in *The Departure of Regulus* in 1769. This was the first painting of West's commissioned by George III and marked the beginning of West's career as a court artist

[92] Flexner, *The Flowering*…, 123.
[93] Poesch, 70.
[94] Evans, 37.
[95] Breen, 61-72.
[96] Evans, 42.

for the King.[97]

Peale's relationship to West extended further than working as his model, however, and soon West initiated Peale into a strict regime of study. This included copying West's own painting *Elisha Raising the Shunammite's Son*, then working on many miniatures such as *Matthias and Thomas Bordley* (1767) and executing a small scale portrait, *Girl with a Toy Horse*.[98] Peale's most significant work during this period was a portrait of *William Pitt* most likely painted in 1768.[99] This work is germane as it exposed both the importance of West's training as a legitimizer of Peale's reputation as well as the importance of maintaining a strict standard of style within the work. In this manner, the portrait of Pitt exposed the results of the cyclical relationship between Britain, the colonies and portraiture as it created both the training and style necessary for the portrait and Peale to be successful. The portrait of Pitt is significant because without the training Peale received under West it is unlikely that he would receive a commission by such a prominent individual. In many ways, this commission marked Peale's accession into the ranks of the best portrait artists, the goal that West aspired to with all his students, hoping they would be the one to replace him as America's most renowned artist.[100]

The style Peale employed to execute the portrait is extremely revealing of the pervasiveness of an explicit style for paintings necessary to entice patrons to purchase a

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[97] Evans, 19.
[98] Evans, 37-40.
[99] Brown, 28.
[100] Dorinda Evans, "Survival and Transformation: The Colonial Portrait in the Federal Era," in *The Portrait in Eighteenth-Century America*, Ellen G. Miles, ed.(Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1993), 130.

work as he utilized a preexisting bust of Pitt as his model.[101] By following this preexisting code of art, due in part to a schedule too busy to allow Pitt to pose, Peale executed the portrait as a Roman orator.[102] Due to the inability to create a realistic portrait, Peale responded by utilizing the classic influences he learned in his training and prevalent in all quality art of the day. Portraying Pitt as Roman also displayed his political inclinations as his reputation at this time was centered on his support of American opposition to the Stamp Act.[103] A newspaper account at the time of the painting's exhibition explained Pitt's connection to politics commenting that "states which enjoy the highest Degree of Liberty are apt to be oppressive of those who are subordinate, and in Subjection to them."[104] In this way, "Peale gave Pitt an ideal character, in his role as a defender of liberty, by adding readable symbols such as the Roman military dress and the orator's pose."[105] The portrait of Pitt exposed many common themes in West period portraiture as "American dependence upon English aristocratic tradition remained constant throughout the eighteenth century…"[106]

More revealing than Pitt's portrait are Peale's comments about art after returning to the colonies. Possibly responding to his recently finished portrait of Pitt Peale stated that "a good painter of either portrait or History must be well acquainted with the Greesian and Roman Statues, to be able to draw them at pleasure by memory, and account for every beauty, must know the original cause of beauty in all he sees. These

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[101] Evans, "Survival…, 130.
[102] Brown, 28.
[103] Evans, 43.
[104] "A Description of the Picture and Mezzotinto of Mr. Pitt Done by Charles Willson Peale, of Maryland." In Brown University Department of Art, *The Classical Spirit in American Portraiture* (Providence : Department of Art, Brown University, 1976), 29.
[105] Evans, "Survival…, 130.
[106] Brown, 45.

are some of the requisites of a good painter. These are more than I shall ever have time or opportunity to know."[107] Peale understood the relationship between Britain, the colonies and the arts perhaps more clearly than other artists commenting about his own work, "what little I do is by mear imitation of what is before me. Perhaps I have a good eye, that is all, and not half the application that I now think is necessary."[108] Peale understood that art was a commodity and one that mandated specific levels of quality to meet the demands of West period patrons. Due to the strict demands of these patrons, artists needed only talents in imitation, a direct result of the influence of Britain on West period training and style, to create a successful career.

Peale's career differed from West's and Copley's when he decided to return to the colonies after studying in Europe. Peale was a success when he returned to the colonies for the remainder of his life and viewed himself no longer as a craftsman but a painter as indicated by his listed career as limner in the 1790 census.[109] In correspondence with Thomas Jefferson, the impact of the relationship between Britain, America and the arts wa exposed as Peale and Jefferson commented on the work of Peale's family, most of who sustained careers as successful artists after training under Peale. In one letter,

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[107] Charles Coleman Sellers, *Charles Willson Peale* (New York: 1969), 57.
[108] Sellers, 57.
[109] 1790 Pennsylvania Census, Charles Wilson Peale, accessed at http://0-persi.heritagequestonline.com.wncln.wncln.org/hqoweb/library/do/census/results/image?surname=peale&givenname=charles&series=1&hitcount=1&p=1&urn=urn%3Aproquest%3AUS%3Bcensus%3B283862%3B1232425%3B1%3B2&searchtype=1&offset=0. Peale painted the portraits of some of society's most distinguished individuals including George (1772) and Martha Washington, John Hancock, Robert Morris, Nathanael Greene (1783), Horatio Gates, Benjamin Lincoln, Baron Steuben, Count Rochambeau, Baron DeKalb, Benjamin Franklin (1787), Peyton Randolph, Thomas Jefferson (1791), Charles Carroll, Lord Stifling, Bishop White, Albert Oallatin, Dr. Benjamin Rush, Count Volney, Timothy Pickering, John Witherspoon, Alexander Hamilton, James Monroe, Andrew Jackson, John Quincy Adams, John C. Calhoun, Meriwether Lewis (1807), William Clark (1810) and Henry Clay.

Jefferson discussed Peale's son Rembrandt and a commission he was working on of George Washington, commenting on Rembrandt's "native genius, his experience, and his philosophical ideas…"[110]

In this way, Peale's own place in the cyclical influence of British art on America was displayed. He imparted to his family the training and style that he learned under Copley and West. Therefore, Peale directly perpetuated some of the first standards of art brought into the colonies by Smibert, truly representing the cycle of influence and relationships beginning in the time of mercantilism. This constant movement of artists between Britain and America resulted in a standard training and style lasting throughout the colonial period and ensured that American art remained stylistically British. Most importantly it witnessed the creation of an enduring standard of American art which lasted well past the colonial period. Best understood as the West period, designating a cultural period adhering to British stylistic conventions, American elites and the artists they employed would soon be confronted with the difficulty of changing political identities during the American Revolution. It was unclear whether the West period of art would also end.

[110] Letter, Thomas Jefferson to Charles Willson Peale, February 15, 1824.

CHAPTER TWO:
WHO'S WHO: ART IN AN AGE OF CHANGING NATIONALITY

Following the American Revolution both Benjamin Franklin and George Washington, men who were both heavily invested in the cultural relationship to Britain during the colonial era, were depicted as symbols of American independence and therefore exemplars of democracy. For example, David Edwin's, modeled after Rembrandt Peale's, painting *Apotheosis of Washington* (1800) and John James Barralet's painting *Sacred to the Memory of Washington* (1816) as well as Jean-Charles Le Vasseur's, modeled off Antoine Borel's, painting of Franklin, *L'Amerique Independante* (1778) take both patriot leaders and clearly portray them with classical references. These paintings depict the patriots in Roman dress and surrounded by classical objects like statuary, laurels and cupids. This imagery created a clear link to an American inheritance of classical republican ideals. These pieces mirrored the same usage of classical compositions and styles often utilized by British nobility and aristocracy within their own portraits like William Pitt's portrait as a Roman Senator by Charles Willson Peale in 1768. Clearly, the context and national and political ideologies of the subjects differed greatly; however, artists utilized the same artistic tools. The result was a style in Revolutionary and Early Republic portraiture more British than American as little changed in art during this time.

This chapter considers why Revolutionary and Early Republic portraiture used classical British styles. In this way a clear differences appears between a transition in political identity and cultural identity. Patrons of the arts continued to maintain an adherence to West period styles long after the colonial period indicating the lasting

impact of British cultural inheritance on American art and the need to consider identity as politically and artistically separate. Gordon Wood's work on the American Revolution offers some insight. He explained: "The revolutionary leaders never intended to make a national revolution in the modern sense. They were patriots, to be sure, but they were not obsessed, as were later generations, with the unique character of America or with separating America from the course of Western civilization."[1]

Colonists' continued loyalty to British cultural conventions, in this sense restricted to a discussion of the fine arts and West period portraiture in particular, reflected the difficult transition into independence felt by many colonists as few, including leading patriots, chose independence lightly. The patron remained the most powerful actor in shaping American portraiture. As Wood explained, "Artisans in America, like their counterparts in Britain, still had patrons more than customers."[2] This chapter expands on Wood's work to examine why conflict between artists and patrons developed following the Revolution. New ideologies of republicanism shaped the mindset of younger artists who hoped to eliminate what they viewed as a British system of patronage and therefore an un-American practice. This demonstrated how economically dependent artists felt towards a relatively small group of individuals. A relationship that created tension at this time for artists as the conflicts, political, economic, and social, experienced by elite colonists directly impacted on their livelihood. Since the political and national loyalties of patrons remained ambiguous throughout much of the conflict with Britain, and since artists could not know that the arts would remain almost untouched by revolution, many chose to leave America in the hopes of

[1] Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 221.
[2] Wood, *The Radicalism*, 63.

finding security in Britain.[3]

The peaks and valleys of political loyalty demonstrated by patrons who vacillated between supporting and denouncing the revolution effected artists and the style of their art. Unsure of what the future held for American art, they made difficult decisions. Live in Britain, the choice of Benjamin West and John Singleton Copley, with relative security that your artistic style would be accepted, or remain in America, the choice of Joseph Wright and Charles Willson Peale, where nothing seemed certain, where who would be a patron and the style of art they would desire remained a mystery. Both choices were risky. The artist who moved to England faced the possibility of being considered too rustic or untrained to garner any significant clients. In the colonies, artists succeeded because there were no British artists who could perform the same task. Moving to a place where this was no longer the case would naturally awaken the fears of artists like Copley who believed his work was indeed inferior to his British contemporaries. Artists were also unsure of who their patrons would be after the Revolution. Many weighed their possibilities in correspondence between each other and their families as tension escalated. In most cases both fears proved unfounded. The West period style remained popular. Most importantly artists found ways of including political loyalties without changing styles, a clear demonstrator of how political identity transformed much faster than cultural identity in America. Colonial painters who moved to England were viewed as anomalies. Their unique background as colonials coupled with their ability to paint in

[3] Letter, John Adams to Thomas Jefferson 1815. In Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967, 1. Much of this fear was linked to the relative speed in which the conflict occurred. Since the political and cultural hierarchy that defined colonial art and society was established in a relationship to Britain over the course of 150 years, a political break in just fifteen years constituted a radical change in the status quo. Naturally, this transition caused individuals economically dependent on the existing social hierarchy anxiety

a British style made them great successes.

BENJAMIN WEST

Benjamin West's move to Britain in 1763 preceded much of the colonial tension. He was already solidly established as an artist in Great Britain during the revolution.[4] West's move exhibited the strength of the cultural relationship between the colonies and Britain prevalent during the colonial era. West hoped to hone his skill to create a stronger artistic reputation. Also contributing to West's permanent settlement in Britain was the great success he found there, an unusual feat in a time when even colonial artists worried about their success in the colonies let alone England. Alfred Frankenstein noted his accomplishments, as "for nearly three decades he served as president of the Royal Academy. He became a warm personal friend of King George III, received some 75 royal commissions, many of them huge, wall-covering canvases, and earned more than 34,000 in fees from the Crown alone."[5] West's relationship with George III was so close in fact that he provided the king not only with paintings, such as his 1779 portrait a work created in the midst of revolution, but also a candid opinion on the American conflict, an allowance only made due to their friendship. This intimacy between the King and West was apparent when John Adams was in London between 1783 and 1784 commenting about the sway artists like West seemed to have at court, "I did not ask favours or receive anything but cold formalities from ministers of state or ambassadors. I found that our American painters had more influence at court to procure all the favors I wanted, than all

[4] Alfred Frankenstein, *The World of Copley 1738-1815* (New York: Time Life Books, 1970), 120.
[5] Frankenstein, 120.

of them."[6] Adams remembered in 1813 that, "Mr. West asked of their majesties permission to show me and Mr. Jay the originals of the great productions of his pencil, such as Wolfe, Bayard, Epaminondas, Regulas, etc., etc., etc., which were all displayed in the Queen's Palace, called Buckingham House. The gracious answer of the king and queen was, that he might show us "the whole house."[7] Clearly, West and the king had to be more than causal associates for him to allow West not only access to much of the Royal art collection but the palace itself. The closeness of their friendship was displayed when George III died prompting West to comment "I have lost the best friend I ever had in my life."[8]

Therefore, as other artists made difficult choices during the Revolution as personal loyalty could greatly affect their economic stability as well as drastically change where they lived, West was already a personal favorite of the King living in Britain. Naturally, he was hesitant to abandon his comfort and friendship in order to directly support a patriot cause during the Revolution instead demonstrating a loyalty to Britain but one plagued by a conflict of conscience as West continued to display understanding of the American cause. This tension of loyalty became clear when West wrote to Charles Willson Peale on the eve of the revolution:

> As opposition and differing in opinion in regard to the right of taxing America, seems to be hastening to a crisis, I hope my countrymen will act with that wisdom and spirit which seems to have directed them as yet, and be the means of bringing about a more permanent union than has been for these some years past between that country and this.
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> Measures taken here relative to America show but little knowledge of that country…and should measures with you be as wrongly advised as with us, both

[6] Robert C. Alberts, *Benjamin West: A Biography* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1978), 144.
[7] Alberts, 151.
[8] James Thomas Flexner, *America's Old Masters* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1939), 96.

> countries for some time are undone, and which if pursued must finally break those extensive outlines of British Empire which those colonies alone must have procured her.[9]

West's increasing popularity in London despite his personal crisis of loyalty allowed him to move beyond portraiture as a genre, Frankenstein explained, "he considered this mere potboiling and yearned for the opportunity to devote his skills to more important subjects, especially historical scenes that embodied the theme of courage."[10] West told many of his students why he disliked portraiture commenting, "I seldom paint portraits and when I do I neither please myself nor my former employers," and that "Although I am friendly to portraying eminent men, I am not friendly to the indiscriminate waste of genius in portrait painting."[11] West's ability to decrease the number of portraits he executed in favor of history painting was a testament to his skill as well as his growing autonomy. If West was unwilling to abandon his career and life in London to support the patriots during the Revolution, indicating a British political and national identification, his later history pieces demonstrated American sentiments. West's divided loyalty marked the ambiguous nature of colonial loyalty, both nationally and culturally, during the Revolution and Early Republic as a generation born under the crown could not easily cast off a lifetime of relationships with Britain.

This tension over loyalty was expressed in two of West's paintings executed well after his move to Britain. The first piece, *The Death of Wolfe*, was created in 1770 and promoted British bravery during the Seven Year's War.[12] This piece was a clear celebration of both the British Empire and its loyal citizens as well as a promotion of its

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[9] Alberts, 122.
[10] Frankenstein, 122.
[11] Alberts, included in illustrations grouped after page 270.
[12] Frankenstein, 126.

protection and support of the colonies. Executed around the time the various tax acts as well as the Boston Massacre had created tensions so deep that few could fail to choose sides in the deepening rift in the relationship between Britain and the Americas. West's subject displayed a clear loyalty to the British. It is not surprising considering the subject and timing of the work that this piece was lauded within British society. Frankenstein explained, "the picture won such applause that West painted five versions of it. One of them was claimed by the King."[13] If West's loyalties fell with the British in the early periods of the conflict, his later works not only display his growing tension of loyalty but contributed to his loss of reputation. This threat to reputation and therefore commissions was the very thing that most artists feared during this period. Success remained dependent on patrons, and any level of alienation from them could result in ruin.

The work that damaged West's British reputation as well as challenged his loyalty to the British during the Revolution was his 1778 *The Battle of La Hogue*. Depicting a battle following the Glorious Revolution of 1689 in which the deposed Catholic monarch James II was attempting to reclaim his thrown, West was criticized as many saw the work as a veiled condemnation of the Crown and a support for the American Revolution.[14] This response to West's work was revealing of the level of suspicion during the period concerning personal loyalties as little in the work would imply an American sympathy as in fact, "West's painting was widely cheered at its exhibition in 1780."[15] Clearly, this time was so heated that simply being from the colonies, although having lived in Britain for many years, indicated West as a possible patriot in hiding. Much of this negative response was related to the fact that colonial loyalists, as demonstrated by Hutchinson's

[13] Frankenstein, 126.
[14] Frankenstein, 128.
[15] Frankenstein, 128.

own situation in London, were not accepted into British society. Samuel Curwen expressed this tension while living as a loyalist exile in London:

> It is my earnest wish the despised Americans may conceive these conceited islanders, that without regular standing armies our continent can furnish brave soldiers and judicious and expert commanders, by some knock-down irrefragable argument. For then, and not till then, may we expect generous or fair treatment. It piques my pride, I confess, to hear us called "our colonies, our plantations," in such terms and with airs as if our property and persons were absolutely theirs, like the "villains" and their cottages in the old feudal system, so long since abolished, though the spirit leaven is not gone, it seems.[16]

The complicated reality of personal loyalty that men like Hutchinson, West, and Curwen experienced while remaining tied to the British Empire politically demonstrated why little in American culture changed. Though these individuals both saw themselves as British politically and nationally the nature of their colonial position made them something different than Britons living in Britain. Even though political and national ideology was shifting, former colonists, both loyalist and patriot, were still emotionally tied to their birth place and therefore protected the culture of the place while differing on the best way to govern. The result was that art remained untouched as the relationship between Britain and the colonies that witnessed its creation was deemed by all as satisfactory.

West was not the first or last artist living in London who utilized historical themes as a way of promoting patriot sentiments as Joseph Wright's work would elicit the same level of controversy as West's. Ultimately, West remained in Britain even becoming the President of the Royal Academy in 1792, however, as Frankenstein explained, "as George III became increasingly unstable, West lost his prestige at court" and "his last

[16] Alberts, 124.

years were spent in decline."[17]

West's life and career in Britain demonstrated the level of confusion for artists during this time as they confronted the changing ideology of patrons. A painting that displayed this level of confusion is an unfinished work of West, the signing of the treaty ending the Revolution, *The American Peace Commissioners*. This piece served as the first of many works West intended to create depicting the revolution. West wrote to Charles Willson Peale asking for help in the project:

> I have now a favor to ask for myself, which is that you would procure for me the drawings or small paintings of the dressed of the American army, from the officers down to the common solider, rifleman, etc. etc- and any other characteristic of their armies or camps which I may form an exact idea, to enable me to form a few pictures of the great events of the American contest.[18]

West was exuberant over the peace; a natural reaction considering he never lost his feeling for the Americas despite remaining within the British Empire. West again wrote to Charles Willson Peale saying he was creating, "a set of pictures containing the great events which have affected the revolution of America. For the better enabling me to do this, I desire you to send whatever you thought would give me the most exact knowledge of the costume of the American armies, and [also] portraits in small, either in painting or drawing, for the conspicuous characters necessary to be introduced into such a work."[19]

The piece depicted all the major American politicians involved in the action including John Jay, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Henry Laurens, and William

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[17] Frankenstein, 128.
[18] Alberts, 150.
[19] Letter, Benjamin West to Charles Willson Peale. In James Thomas Flexner, *America's Old Masters* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1939), 70.

Temple Franklin.[20] Missing are the British commissioners who refused to sit for the painting as though George III's personal relationship allowed West to speak rather openly with him about the conflict. The painting was too strong a testament to American loyalties for him to allow West to complete the work. Instead, West turned the project over to John Trumbull.[21] In a letter from October 8, 1780, to Benjamin Franklin, West explained why Trumbull would not only be a natural choice to finish the work but that he was a great American artists. "He visits his native climate to perpetuate the faces of some of his distinguished countrymen and I hope he will meet with their approbation both as a gentleman and an artist of equal [?] and citizen," wrote West.[22] Clearly, if West could not create a work promoting the new independent America and its patriotic elite, he could choose a replacement mirroring his own sentimental attachment to his homeland as well as a student demonstrating an adherence to his style. This painting served as evidence of West's precarious situation and compromised artistic career. The conflict continued to test the loyalties and identity of both British and Americans separating individuals who less than two decades earlier viewed themselves as elements within a single British social hierarchy. West's answer to George III about the effect of American independence is perhaps the best example of West's true loyalties as he responded that "the ill-will would soon subside and America would prefer England to all other European nations."[23] West hoped for a return to the relationship enjoyed by both the American people and the British that dominated society and created his own position before the war. Though remaining loyal to Britain in the war, West clearly experienced a level of

[20] Bullock, 100.
[21] Bullock, 100; Flexner, 70.
[22] Letter, Benjamin West to Benjamin Franklin, October 8, 1789. Printed in the *Columbian Magazine*, February 1790. Seen on *American Periodicals Series*, 126.
[23] Flexner, 69.

loyalty to his homeland and hoped that though political identification had already shifted little in the social makeup of his world would change. West's hopes in many ways were realized as though closely associated with George III and remaining in the British Empire during the war, many leading patriots still turned to West for portraits. Because patrons retained the cultural relationship to Britain that set the standard of West period art in America, West was still considered a desirable artist by Americans and Britons alike. Therefore, during and after the war West executed works for many American patrons like Benjamin Franklin. Both a 1793 portrait based on Martin's piece as well as the dramatic *Benjamin Franklin and the Lightening* in 1805, Robert Fulton (1806), and Arthur Middleton.

Adding to West's popularity by American patrons was a continued recognition of West as not British but American despite his life in London. The American obituaries following his death in 1820 make this clear. Most made a point of both drawing attention to his birthplace as well as diminishing his relationship to Britain during the revolution. For example, the May 6, 1820 obituary in the *Ladies Port Folio* West stated, "Died, In England Benjamin West, the celebrated painter, a native of Pennsylvania, aged 82."[24] *The National Recorder* felt it necessary to comment on West's political affiliation after his death writing, "He was a native of America, but left that country in early life, and of course before he could be imbued with those political principles which produced the revolution that separated the two countries."[25] The American populace justified the continued popularity of both West and his style of art after the Revolution by equating

[24] Obituary, Benjamin West, *Ladies Port Folio,* Boston: May 6, 1820 volume 1 issue 19. Accessed at *American Periodicals Series Online*, 151.
[25] Obituary, Benjamin West, *The National Recorder*, May 6, 1820. Accessed at *American Periodicals Series Online*, 293.

them not to a British but a native history. This desire to create legitimate links to pre-war standards of art demonstrated the hope patrons had that the cultural relationship with Britain, and therefore the main social structure of their society, would remain unchanged despite political transformations.

If West experienced complicated personal loyalties as the war progressed the subject but not style of his painting saw a shift making American patrons still invested in the British cultural relationship very desirous of his work. Art historian Alfred Frankenstein described how West's style during this period "departed from the Neoclassical style to some extent when he painted subjects from contemporary history…these pictures appeal not to the viewer's reason but primarily to his emotions; their aim is to evoke awe and fear."[26] What this demonstrated was the lasting impact of classical British standards in the creation of art even as personal motivations and new ideals about national identity changed. Similarly, American patrons commissioning portraits remained satisfied with the cultural relationship with Britain. Therefore, patron's artistic expectations remained the same and the West period continued. While some artists exhibited expressive changes their overall style continued to meet British standards. Therefore, because West acted as a teacher to so many artists "he exerted significant influence on the art of the emerging Republic."[27]

JOHN SINGLETON COPLEY

If Benjamin West was plagued by the tensions of revolution and the subsequent

[26] Frankenstein, 124.
[27] Brown University Department of Art, *The Classical Spirit in American Portraiture* (Providence: Department of Art, Brown University, 1976), 15.

question of his personal loyalty to Britain, so too was John Singleton Copley, West's brightest student. Much like West, Copley's role in the conflict was minimal as he left the colonies for Europe during the major points of battle to undergo his "Grand Tour." He soon found his family had fled to Britain to avoid the mounting clash between the colonies and Britain.[28] The fact that Copley and his family left during the revolution and never returned to the colonies suggested a clear loyalty to Britain, however, many of Copley's statements suggested if not loyalty at least understanding of the patriot cause. Frankenstein explained that, "It is possible that in his departure his native land lost a potential freedom fighter, for his basic approval of the cause of American independence- and his opportunistic eye for the winning side- may ultimately have led him to throw in his lot with the rebels."[29] For example, in multiple letters to his wife while abroad Copley described the colonial unrest as justified explaining, "As the sword is drawn all must be finally settled by the sword. I cannot think that the power of Great Britain will subdue the country, if the people are united, as they appear to be at present…it is very evident to me that America will have the power of resistance until grown strong to conquer, and that victory and independence will go hand in hand."[30]

Copley's decision to remain in Britain and stay loyal to the crown was plagued by uncertainty concerning his artistic and economic future. Staying in America could be damaging to his profession as his reputation and career was based on a British style of portraiture and the mimicking of a British social hierarchy, a relationship he most likely felt would be greatly altered due to the revolution. The uncertainty of what would remain in the colonies for artists is explained by Frankenstein, who noted, "How Copley would

[28] Frankenstein, 89.
[29] Frankenstein, 91.
[30] Frankenstein, 137.

have fared had he stayed in Boston can only be surmised….To be sure during the war there was little market for an artist's services, except for the execution of such patriotic and satirical engravings as Paul Revere turned out to rally public sentiment."[31] These works, such as Reeve's 1770 engraving in the *Boston Gazette* as well as his depiction of the Boston Massacre, all deviated greatly from the style of art and motivations behind their commissions Copley was use to. More than just a belief that his artistic services would not be utilized informed Copley's decision to leave as he had created an early cartoon in 1765 supporting the colonies in the Stamp Act crisis and was clearly able to adapt his ability to the needs of new patriotic patrons.

Copley's fear in choosing a clear side related to economic anxiety. The most profitable solution would be a return to the colonial status quo which guaranteed Copley's success in the colonies. However, as it became increasingly clear that this was not a possibility Copley considered the safety of his family and his economic stability. A few key events which occurred before the revolution explain why Copley chose to move to London permanently even though he expressed at least equal loyalty to America. For Copley this decision interrupted a period where he was busy creating many portraits depicting patriots such as Paul Revere, John Hancock, Samuel Adams and Nicholas Boylston. The initial conflict witnessed men who would commonly comprise Copley's colonial clientele eager to have works executed to express their achievements as patriots. Frankenstein explained, "Apparently neither [Copley] nor his patrons saw any conflict in memorializing the features of ardent Whigs while pursuing his normal contacts with

[31] Letter, John Singleton Copley to Susanna Clarke Copley. In Alfred Frankenstein, *The World of Copley 1738-1815* (New York: Time Life Books, 1970) , 91.

loyalist Tories."[32] In the early stages of the conflict, Copley would have been secure that despite the divided political loyalty of his clients he would not be affected by the turmoil as both sides wanted similar West period styled portraits still relying on the standard set by a British cultural inheritance. According to art historian James Flexner, at this time Copley's "sitters were divided about equally between the two sides," indicating that politics and culture were still separated and all men still desired British standards of art.[33]

However, Copley's artistic, economic, and social security would be tested as the conflict grew more immoderate. The Boston Tea party would in fact involve Copley personally and challenge the idea that he could remain an artist for both sides as his father-in-law, Richard Clarke, was a prominent Boston loyalist and a merchant targeted during the attack on tea due to his role as an agent for the East India Company.[34] Clarke and his sons were warned to end their relationship with the East India Company as described in a letter to London from Clarke's company explaining how at, "about one o'clock we were roused out of our sleep by a violent knocking at the door of our house, and on looking out the window we saw (for the moon shone very bright) two men in the courtyard" asking them "to make a public resignation of your commission."[35] The *Pennsylvania Gazette* noted the danger Clarke and his family were in at this time in an article describing an attack on his home, "Last evening a number of persons assembled in School-Street; they broke the windows, and did other considerable damage, by throwing large stones into the house occupied by Richard Clarke, Esq; who is one of the agents for

[32] Frankenstein, 72.
[33] Flexner, 137.
[34] Frankentein, 73; Flexner, 135.
[35] Flexner, 135.

the East-India Company."[36] Clarke and his family responded to the danger of their position in a letter to the East India Company which was run in the Boston Post-Boy, "That some of your petitioners have in consequences of this been eternally insulted in their persons and property- that they have had insulting and incendiary letters left and thrown into their houses in the night, that they have been repeatedly attacked by a large body of men."[37] Eventually, Clarke and his family moved into Castle William, a fort garrisoned by British troops, in order to protect themselves from the hostility of patriots and local people dissatisfied by the British laws.[38]

Henry Pelham, Copley's half brother, described the general atmosphere of Boston at this time and noted the unsettled nature of the populace saying:

> The various discordant noises with which my ears are continually assailed in the day, passing of carts and a constant throng of people, the shouting of an undisciplined rabble, the ringing of bells, the sounding of horns in the night when it might be expected that a universal silence should reign, and all nature, weary with the toils of day, should be composed to rest, but instead of that nothing but a confused medley of the rattling of carriages, the noises of pope-drums, and the infernal yell of those who are fighting for the possessions of the devil.[39]

Bostonians confronted the very tensions of loyalty that many of the upper classes, both loyalist and patriot faced resulting in a tangible and audible change in society. Hoping to restore the status quo of the earlier relationship between Britain and America as well as being viewed by both sides as an impartial judge, despite both his father-in-law's direct role in the conflict and a professional relationship with many prominent patriots like Hancock and Adams, Copley acted as a mediator between the two factions. Copley believed he could both stop what he felt would be a bloody civil war and retain his

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[36] *The Pennsylvania Gazette* (Philadelphia: December 1, 1773), 2.
[37] *Boston Post-Boy* (Boston Massachusetts: December 20, 1773), 2.
[38] Frankenstein, 74.
[39] Flexner, 136.

economic and social stability.[40] However, Copley's mediation failed to end the hostility despite his best efforts and the Sons of Liberty, described by Steven Bullock as, "a series of loosely linked local groups that directed opposition to British measures," threw 340 chests of tea into Boston Harbor on December 16, 1773.[41]

Following the Boston Tea Party, Copley became inaccurately linked with the loyalists despite a lingering ambiguity in his actual allegiance as demonstrated by his statements after his move to Britain. It was this connection to the loyalists that inspired an attack on his home the April following the Boston Tea Party when a mob went to Copley's home at Beacon Hill in search of Colonel George Watson, "a well-known loyalist who was shortly to be sworn in as a member of the governing Royal Council of Massachusetts."[42] Copley described the event saying:

> A number of persons came to the house, knocked at the front door, and woke Sukey and myself. I immediately opened the window and asked them what they wanted. They asked if Mr. Watson was in the house. I told them he was not. They made some scruples of believing me, and asked if I would give them my word and honour that he was not in the house. I replied: 'Yes.' They said he had been here, and desired to know where he was. I told them…he was gone, and I supposed out of town…They then desired to know how I came to entertain such a rogue and villain…What if Mr. Watson had stayed, as I had pressed him to, to spend the night! I must have given up a friend to the insult of the mob, or had my house pulled down or perhaps my family murdered.[43]

Surely remembering the destruction of Thomas Hutchinson's home not long before, the arrival of the mob had a clear effect on Copley's attitude toward the increasing violence of the conflict and according to Alfred Frankenstein, "spelled the end of his life in Boston. He never turned his eyes from Europe and the Watson incident apparently decided him. With the political situation so inflammatory and the economic outlook so

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[40] Flexner, 137.
[41] Bullock, 34.
[42] Frankenstein, 75.
[43] Flexner, 141-142.

shaky, he saw no future for himself, at least for a good while, in Boston."[44]

This tension over where to place his loyalties became clear in a letter to his wife, Susanna Clarke Copley, from October 1774:

> if in three or four years I can make as much as will render the rest of our life easy, and leave something to our family I should be called away, I believe that you would think it best to spend that time there; should this be done, be assured, I am ready to promise you that I will go back and enjoy that domestic happiness which our little 'farm' is capable of affording. I am sure you would like England very much; it is a very paradise; but so I think is Boston Common, if the town is what it once was.[45]

What was clear from this letter was that Copley's loyalties remained divided and complicated. Unable to sever the relationship between the colonies and Britain that both created his clientele as well as developed the style of his work, Copley remained equally divided about his future and where it should be.

Copley's loyalties were decided for him despite a clear sympathy for the Americans during and following the conflict as his position in America became increasingly precarious. Due to his association with loyalists, as much a part of a working relationship as a social one, colonial society irrevocably linked Copley with this faction and led him to believe this designation would end at least half of his possible commissions in America if the uncertainty of the conflict did not stop them completely.[46] Copley's decision to move was made simple as witnessing an action that showed public support shifting out of his favor, a necessity to prolong an artist's reputation in colonial America, as James Flexner argued, "it did not seem treason to Copley to flee a civil war he thought unnecessary by going to the capital of the nation of which he had always been

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[44] Frankenstein, 75.
[45] Letter, John Singleton Copley to Susanna Clarke Copley, October 1774. In Alfred Frankenstein, *The World of Copley 1738-1815* (New York: Time Life Books, 1970), 135.
[46] Flexner, 137.

a subject."[47] Interestingly, Copley's fears that his art would not be accepted in America at this time proved unfounded as he remained busy with work until his departure. This included works for Mrs. John Amory (1764), Mrs. Ezekiel Goldthwait (1770-1771), and Mrs. Adam Babcock (1774).

Copley continued to be successful as a portrait painter as well as a historical painter in England creating many important works like Mrs. Seymour Fort (1778), Watson and the Shark (1778), The Death of the Earl of Chatham (1779-1781), The Death of Major Peirson (1783), and George IV (1804-1809). However, Copley's fears that Americans would no longer desire the style of portraits that he created proved equally unfounded as following the conflict as before, during, and after the war a rush to create an American patriotism in art began, one that employed the very style and artists who had worked in the British standard and looked directly to West and Copley as examples to emulate as the cultural inheritance still dominated despite changes in politics. This adherence to pre-war cultural standards is explained by Gordon Wood who noted that, "It was particularly important that artists and scientists be considered members of the 'fellowship of intellect' or what was commonly called the 'republic of letters.' The American Revolution may have divided the British Empire, said Benjamin Rush, but it 'made no breach in the republic of letters.'"[48] This became obvious in a December 1795 letter in the *Massachusetts Magazine* which clearly indicated West and Copley as part of American culture despite both moving to Britain, "But the English now confidently deny assertion, and refer at once to the pre-eminent productions of a Copley, a West, and a

[47] Flexner, 142.
[48] Wood, *The Radicalism…*, 221.

Trumbull, in its refutation, with the unblushing oblivience that these were American."[49]

JOSEPH WRIGHT

Another artist operating in the Colonial and Revolutionary periods was Joseph Wright. Unlike West and Copley, Wright embraced the revolutionary cause and utilized it as the means to create his reputation. Wright's success perhaps best displayed how American patrons of the revolutionary and early republic desired works grounded in West period styles as Wright's artistic training took place during the American Revolution and he executed the majority of his professional work after the war. Wright developed a classical style after training in Britain making his art even more tied to the cultural relationship with England then men like West or Copley as his early career had little connection to anything American. Wright moved to London early in his life following his mother, Patience Wright, the first American sculptress, after the death of his father.[50] Wright then wasted no time in enrolling in the Royal Academy of Arts in Somerset House in 1775.[51] Much like West, Wright missed facing the difficult decision of where to live during the conflict as he was already a successful student in London during most of the war. Obviously, Wright, West, and Copley held similar beliefs about training in Britain since they chose to train there despite growing tensions between Britain and the colonies.[52] Luckily, Wright's financial situation allowed him to get a classical British

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[49] "Some Account of Benjamin West," *The Massachusetts Magazine* (Massachusetts: December 1795). In American Periodicals Series, 515.
[50]Monroe H. Fabian, *Joseph Wright: American Artist 1756-1793* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1979),19.
[51] Fabian, 22.
[52] Brown, 11.

artistic education before beginning his career. The Wrights felt that no artistic tradition or academic establishment existed in America to either promote an already established practice like Patience Wright's or to develop the skills needed to begin a career like Joseph Wright's. Like Copley, Wright embedded his style in economics as most patrons of the arts still wanted to replicate British material culture in an adherence to West period portraiture. This created two possible options for successful careers. The first, Copley's option, was to train yourself in America by copying British styles. The second, Wright's choice, was to train in Europe with a traditional artistic education. Wright's decision to move to London at this time highlighted how complicated both loyalty and the future of American culture was. Wright moved with the expectation that his training in Britain would still enhance his financial opportunities in a changing America believing the demand for West period art would continue. Despite an obvious shift in politics, Wright never felt that either his patriot patrons or his own ideals were challenged by portraiture executed in the British standard.

While Copley struggled between loyalty to Britain and America, Wright identified himself as a patriot. This was clear in his 1780 self portrait, *Yankee- Doodle or the American Satan*, indicating that he felt loyalists and the British viewed his American political ideology as demonic. Because Wright lived in Europe during the American Revolution and never fought in the war, he displayed similar tensions of loyalty. In this way, Wright's work acted like a mirror of American identity of the time. Politically, Wright's work presented an American patriotism executed in the classic British style. These two seeming discrepancies between style and subject represented how many Americans now identified as American politically but maintained the cultural relationship

to Britain. Wright expressed his political identity early in his art with the painting *Patience Wright Modeling the head of Charles I* (1780). The work depicts George III and Queen Charlotte watching Patience Wright mold the head of Charles I, who many, American and British, considered a martyr. As Wright's first and last submission to the Royal Academy, the work received much controversial attention even appearing in a letter from Horace Walpole to the Reverend William Mason in 1780, "By what lethargy of loyalty it happened I do not know, but there is also a picture of Mrs. Wright modeling the head of Charles the First, and their majesties contemplating it."[53] Wright's work became a political attack of King George expressing his patriotism. Following the exhibition, a number of responses circulated in London newspapers concerning the painting. Much like West's controversial pieces, Wright's painting's reception was mixed with positive and negative responses. One review of the work commented:

> This is a very striking likeness: the head, about which the famous modeller of wax is represented to be employed, has exactly the features of that incorrigible tyrant, Charles the First; two figures are appointed as looking on, which seem designed as portraits, or rather caricatures, of the two first personages in this kingdom. Should the instructive lesson which this piece appears calculated to convey, be properly attended to by those whom it more immediately concerns, and to whom perhaps it was dictated, Mrs. Wright will merit the most magnificent rewards which royalty can bestow; and will gain the grateful and cordial applauses not only of her injured compatriots in America, but likewise of every honest well-wisher to the liberties of this kingdom, and to the glorious privileges of the pure and genuine constitution of England.[54]

The May 16th issue of the *Gazette* weighed in on the painting commenting in verse, "Wright on her lap sustains a trunkless head, And looks a wish- the King's was in its

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[53] Letter, Horace Walpole to the Reverend William Mason, 1780. In Monroe Fabian, *Joseph Wright: American Artist 1756-1793* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1979), 28.

[54] *London Courant and Westminster Chronicle*, May 3, 1780. In Monroe H. Fabian, *Joseph Wright: American Artist 1756-1793* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1979), 28.

stead.[55] The *Public Advertiser* maintained a different commenting, "Such a piece in any public Exhibition would be an Insult to Decency; in a Royal one, so protected and encouraged by the munificence of its Founder, it adds Ingratitude to Insult and Indecency. If the frantic fanatic, for whom it is executed, was Rebel enough to design it, and pay for it, such a Piece certainly ought never to have obtained a Place in the Exhibition of the Royal Academy at Somerset Palace."[56] Obviously, Wright's work created a buzz in London. His reputation as a patriot and an artist grew out of this early controversy prompting Wright to move to France where he felt he could capitalize off the new American demands for patriotic portraiture. Portraiture still adhering to the West period style.

Due to his mother's acquaintance with Benjamin Franklin and a friendship with Franklin's grandson, Temple Franklin, Wright painted Franklin's portrait in 1782. In a letter to Franklin, Patience Wright commented on her son's painting, "I am very hapy to here by Mr whit ford and others that my son is Painting your Portraite. We Expect a order from the Comon Councill very soon and so by these orders of the City or Part of them for your Picture to be Painted by Jos Wright and presented to those or to whome or where it may domost Honour. The perticulers are now in Contemplation."[57]

This was the first of a number of portraits and sculptures Wright created of Revolutionary heroes and marked the real beginning of his professional career. This series of portraits was perhaps most reflective of the unique state of American society and

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[55] Fabian, 29.
[56] *Public Advisor*, June 7, 1780, p.2. In Monroe H. Fabian, *Joseph Wright: American Artist 1756-1793* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1979), 29.
[57] Letter, Patience Wright to Benjamin Franklin, London, July 30, 1782. In Monroe H. Fabian, *Joseph Wright: American Artist 1756-1793* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1979), 35.

American identity following the Revolutionary War. Gordon S. Wood explained the new political situation in America after the Revolution as "clear to many Americans by 1790, was a truly original formulation of political assumptions and the creation of a distinctly American system of politics."[58] Americans were no longer politically tied to Britain, and they rushed to develop a material culture reflecting their new independence and memorializing their revolutionary heroes, however, they still adhered to their British cultural inheritance by executing portraits in West period styles. This became clear when Benjamin Franklin, satisfied with his own portrait, sent a letter of recommendation to George Washington with Wright when he travelled to America. With this level of praise marking his move to America, Wright painted a number of important political portraits in America including, *George Washington* (1783) (Image 14), *George Clinton* (1786), *John Jay* (1787) (Image 15), and *Benjamin Goodhue* (1790) (Image 16). And according to William Dunlap's journal he witnessed both James Madison and Martha Washington sitting for portraits though both paintings are now lost.[59]

Economics still played a significant role in the type of art created after the revolution. Two advertisements from 1790 displayed not only Wright's reputation following his portraits of Washington but how lucrative classical British portraiture still was in America. The first ad was from May 13, 1790, and appeared in New York, "The artist who had the honour of taking his Excellency the President's Likeness, and executing it as a Medel, takes the most correct and expressive Likens in four minutes- finishes them as Miniatures in Hair- Painting or Crayons, from one dollar to three

[58] Wood, xvii.
[59] Dunlap, *History*, vol. 1. In Monroe H. Fabian, *Joseph Wright: American Artist 1756-1793* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1979), 98.

guineas, either as profile, three-quarter or full face."[60] A second ad was published in Boston on September 3, 1790. This ad contained similar language to its predecessor displaying how Wright's reputation for painting political heroes figured predominantly in his career as he referenced his portraits of Franklin and Washington. Wright also explained his pricing commenting he could, "take the most correct likenesses in two minutes sitting; finish them from one dollar, to three, or a Miniature from seven to fourteen dollars."[61] It is clear that economics was a major component of Wright's career as he appealed to the demands of his clientele. This meant promoting past successes as a portrait painter of Revolutionary War heroes as well as maintaining the classical standards developed during the West period patrons had come to expect.

CHARLES WILLSON PEALE

One artist who sided fully with the patriot cause was Charles Willson Peale. Unlike Wright, Peale developed as an artist in the colonies before the conflict and followed the same training as West and Copley. Peale faced the same fiscal uncertainties. But Peale also chose to train and to use the West period style. Peale's patrons, often leaders in the Revolution also demanded a West period style.

Peale studied under West when the conflict between the colonies and Britain began to escalate. He could have remained in London where he was guaranteed a degree

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[60] Advertisement, Joseph Wright, No. 33, Smith Street, New York, 1790. In Monroe H. Fabian, *Joseph Wright: American Artist 1756-1793* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1979).

[61] Advertisement, Joseph Wright, Printed by N. Coverly, at the sign of the Grand Turk, Boston, 1790. In Monroe H. Fabian, *Joseph Wright: American Artist 1756-1793* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1979).

of success. Peale received praise for many of his works while studying under West. For example, James Flexner described *Pitt as a Roman Senator* as, "a large neo-classical allegory showing William Pitt dressed in a toga standing before the alter of liberty with the Magna Charta in one hand, pointing with the other to a statue of British freedom stamping on the rights of the State of New York."[62] Like West and Wright, Peale utilized his art to express his personal feelings about the relationship between the colonies and Britain and "resolved, after Parliament had annulled the charter of the State of New York, never again to pull off his hat when his master's patron, the King, went by; he swore to bend all his energies to making America independent."[63] Peale deviated greatly from other artists like West, Copley and Wright by choosing to return America in 1769 and taking a direct role in the war.[64] Peale aided the patriots when he helped recruit troops and served in the Continental Army becoming a captain of the Pennsylvania militia.[65] As chairman of the Whig Society of Philadelphia, Peale highlighted his political aims and the strength of his American loyalty in a statement to the public in March of 1777, "an enemy is at our gates, an enemy within our doors; without government, laws, and civil magistrates we can neither draw forth our military strength to oppose the one, nor exert our civil power to suppress the other."[66] Peale continued to aid the Revolution when he served in the Pennsylvania state assembly between 1779 and 1780 before he returned to

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[62] Flexner, 187.
[63] Flexner, 188.
[64] Edgar P. Richardson, Brooke Hindle, and Lillian B. Miller, *Charles Willson Peale and His World* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, INC., 1982), 34.
[65] Charles Willson Peale, Diary August 9, 1776. In Thomas James Flexner, *America's Old Masters*. (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1939), 19
[66] Charles Willson Peale, "To the Public" *Pennsylvania Evening Post* vol. III, issue 329 (Philadelphia: March 3, 1777), 156.

painting full time.[67]

Peale's choice revealed that not all colonial artists were hesitant to leave America. At some level they felt they could still enjoy some artistic patronage even after a break with Britain politically. For Peale this meant producing a large amount of work for patrons before the actual Declaration of Independence, including John Deale Bordly (1770), Mordecai Gist (1774), William Paca (1772), William Stone (1774-1775), Mrs. Thomas Harwood (1771), John Dickinson (1770), and John Phillip De Haas (1772). Included within this group of patrons were many who exhibited strong patriotic sentiments like John Dickinson whose 1767 work "Letters from a Pennsylvania Farmer" functioned as an early defense of American rights.[68] Peale's patriotic patrons continued to demand works grounded in West period styles despite changing political ideology. This hinted that the tensions of nationality felt more strongly by men like West and Copley was not endemic to the art world. In fact, their loyalty most likely mirrored the same pattern of loyalty as colonial society in general as most remained indifferent to the conflict, at least in the initial stages, as a more radical faction dominated on both sides.

Peale's success during the conflict demonstrated the remaining strength of British cultural standards during and after the revolution. For example, Peale went to Mount Vernon to execute a portrait of Washington in 1772.[69] Washington is wearing his Virginia Militia uniform.[70] It became increasingly obvious to most colonials that a war was inevitable and Washington was aware that he would stand likely to be the leader of

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[67] Flexner, 205.
[68] Richardson, 46.
[69] Flexner, 192.
[70] Flexner, 193.

the American forces.[71] When others spoke of Washington's leadership abilities, they discussed his personal appearance as Benjamin Rush commented, "If you do not know his person, perhaps you will be pleased to hear that he has so much martial dignity in his deportment that you would distinguish him to be a general and a soldier from among ten thousand people. There is not a king in Europe that would look like a valet do chamber by his side."[72] Washington displayed the painting prominently in his home and used it as a political tool. Washington's nephew, William Washington, commented that, "This splendid and most interesting picture formed the principal ornament of the parlour of Mount Vernon for twenty-seven years."[73] Its placement reminded his visitors, the very men who organized much of the revolution, about his past in the military and made a strong case for Washington's control of the continental forces. However, even when promoting his place within a new colonial society Washington utilized portraits that adhered to British themes and styles and was clearly part of West period art. Even after the conflict, patriots never commissioned portraits that deviated from the British standard.

Washington was not the only patriot commissioning portraits. Peale stayed busy creating works for wealthy patrons like Dr. Benjamin Rush (1783), Mrs. Benjamin Rush (1776), Margaret and John Bayard (1780), the Marquis de Lafayette (1780-1781), Conrad Alexandre Gerard (1779), Colonel Walter Stewart (1781), Mrs. Walter Stewart (1782), and Thomas Robinson (1784). If pre-war portraits demonstrated status in a British social hierarchy, their wartime counterparts demonstrated patriotic sentiment. This saw the

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[71] Joseph Ellis, *His Excellency George Washington* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 72.
[72] Letter, Benjamin Rush October 1775. In Steven C. Bullock, *The American Revolution: A History in Documents* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Ellis, 69.
[73] Flexner, 193.

inclusion of Revolutionary uniforms instead of luxurious suits and battle scenes in lieu of well appointed interiors. However, these were superficial changes; for the most part, the same artists and styles were employed in their execution.

In addition to full sized portraits, intended for display in homes as symbols of patriotic loyalty, Peale remained extremely busy creating miniatures during the war as well. This other genre of portrait, often marking the wealthiest of colonial gentleman, remained in demand during the revolutionary war as many of the generals commissioned Peale to hastily create these keepsakes for loved ones in case they did not survive. Also influencing this influx of miniatures was Peale's ability to more easily create these pieces at the camps and battle scenes where it became increasingly difficult to carry the supplies necessary for full sized portraits. Peale explained this to Benjamin West in an April 1783 letter, "You will naturally conclude that the arts must languish in a Country in trouble with Wars, yet when I could disengage myself from military life, I have not wanted employment. But I have done more in miniature than any other manner, because these are more portable and therefore could be kept out of the way of a plundering enemy."[74] What this demonstrates is not only why so many of Peale's works where in miniature at this time, a genre he generally did not like, but also the continued demand for works adhering to the British standard that characterized the colonial period despite patrons changing political beliefs. Peale's letter also seems to indicate to men like West and Copley, fearful that their commissions would end if remaining in America, that little had

[74] Letter, Charles Willson Peale to Benjamin West, April 1783. In Edgar P. Richardson, Brooke Hindle, and Lillian B. Miller, *Charles Willson Peale and His World* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, INC., 1982), 51.

changed other than the context in which his painting was executed.[75] Clearly, Peale was essentially continuing much of his regular services during the war as evidenced by an advertisement at the onset of the conflict. It stated:

> Mr. Cha: Peale presents his Compliments to the Ladies & Gentleman of Philadelphia and begs leave to offer his services to paint their Portraits in Miniature or large, if most agreeable at their own houses. Mr. Peale is to be spoke with at Mrs. Yard's, Second Street.[76]

While men like West and Copley feared the war would end their commissions, Peale understood that although politics and nationality had shifted little would change in terms of the portraiture market as the West period remained intact. A British cultural inheritance was too entrenched to make his clientele demand a new type of portrait.

This adherence to West period styles, predicated on a cultural relationship to England, became even more revealing when considering portraits commissioned at the end of the war and the beginning of the New Republic. In their desire to create an American history and promote the roles and lives of patriot leaders, patrons still relied on British cultural standards. Peale's 1779 portrait of Washington (Fig. 8) revealed this desire. Washington was depicted as an impressive American general, but in the style of a British gentleman. Washington was depicted within the thick of the battle. However, his pose was reminiscent of older West period portraits by simply replacing a hand resting on a mantle or architectural detail with Washington's on a cannon. He was also displayed in

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[75] Richardson, 52. Peale executed over forty miniatures of revolutionary officers including George Baylor (1778), General St. Clair (1780), General Williams (1786), General Brodhead (1777), General Febiger (1781), George Walton (1781), Silas Deane (1776), Henry Knox (1778), Thomas Wharton (1774), and Peyton Randolph (1776). In addition to these works, Peale also created a miniature of Martha Washington in 1776 that George Washington was rumored to have worn the rest of his life and alternately created a miniature of George Washington in 1777, at the bequest of Martha, a work created without Washington present for a sitting.

[76] Sellers, 117.

his uniform but it was as equally impressive as any colonial gentleman's garment clearly displaying wealth and position. Both Washington's appearance in full military uniform and its commission by the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania displayed the extent to which Americans were hoping to create a material culture representing the war and the new American politics through the utilization of classical British standards.

Though Americans began to separate themselves from Britain at this time, they could not sever generations of British cultural inheritance. Even American patriots like Franklin in his 1787 portrait by Charles Willson Peale (Fig. 9) and Washington desired portraits executed in West period styles displaying the continuing devotion to British material culture.[77] If political identities had shifted, the West period of art remained.

Peale's next portrait of Washington was his 1880 piece, *Washington, Commander and Chief of the Federal Army*, a work that generated such demand in American society it was turned into a mezzotint and announced for sale to the public in the August 26, 1780 issue of the *Pennsylvania Packet*.[78] Peale next commissioned painted Washington in 1783 for Princeton College. By then, Washington was not only a man, but a symbol of American liberty. Washington stands under the American flag, and according to Charles Coleman Sellers, "holds his sword with something of the air of a lecturer discoursing on the battle."[79] Ironically, this portrait was put in a frame that had held George II's portrait. It represented both the end of the political relationship to Britain but the continuance of the cultural one.[80]

The portraits of Washington were just some of the works Peale created to promote

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[77] Bullock, 60.
[78] Richardson, 57.
[79] Sellers, 201.
[80] Sellers, 220.

American patriotism. This continued in what has been described as Peale's Gallery of Great Men which included portraits of individuals like Baron Von Steuban (1780), General Otho Holland Williams (1782), Baron Johann De Kalb (1781-1782) General William Smallwood (1781-1782), Colonel John Eager Howard (1782), Colonel William (Augustine) Washington (1782), James Wilkinson (1797), and William Moultrice (1782). This gallery was a change in a typical practice of artists displaying works in their anteroom in order to promote their abilities.[81] Peale used his space as a pseudo museum proudly showcasing not only American heroes but his ability to paint them in the West period style still adhering to British standards and appealing to American patrons. In this way, Peale's gallery demonstrated how strongly the cultural relationship to Britain continued after the revolution as he maintained an artistic career despite political changes and even capitalized off his ability to paint patriotic works in the West period standard, much like Wright.

Peale painted portraits well into the early republic, including works like Mrs. Jacob Rush (1786), Charles Pettit (1792), Mr. and Mrs. James Latimer (1788), Captain James Josiah (1787), John Quincy Adams, Henry Clay (1818), Sophonisba and Coleman Sellers (1805), Coleman Sellers (1811), David Mittenshoue (1791), Major Stephen H. Long (1819), Benjamin Franklin (1785), George Washington (1795), Thomas Jefferson (1791), William Bartram (1808), and John Adams (1791-1794).

Gouverneur Morris commented, "national spirit is the natural result of national existence; and although some of the present generation may feel colonial oppositions of

[81] Richardson, 64.

opinion, that generation will die away, and give place to a race of Americans."[82] This comment explained why artists and patrons did not initially reject British styles and customs despite changes in political identity. As Americans were confronted with the realities of the Revolution, artists faced a different set of problems. Understanding that their livelihood was based on the taste of patrons none knew whether the West period's style of art, having been grounded in a cycle relationship to Britain, would outlast the Revolution. Ultimately, the relationship to British culture demonstrated within the West period proved too strong to sever despite changes in political loyalty. The cultural identity of patrons first established in the colonial era and represented stylistically in the West period extended well beyond revolution. In this way the ability for individuals to transform their political identities considerably faster than their cultural ones demonstrates the need to understand American portraiture outside of political periodization. Just one generation later, however, art reflected the shifts in American politics. For these men and women, being American meant internalizing all the ideals of the revolution and casting off the very cultural associations that had defined the status and society of their parents and grandparents.

[82] Joyce Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000) , 3.

CHAPTER THREE: BREAKING WITH THE BRITS?

In 1834 Samuel F.B. Morse wrote a letter to Daniel Webster, John C. Calhoun, Henry Clay, and John Quincy Adams in the hopes of receiving a commission for painting one of the four remaining panels of the Capitol Rotunda. In Morse's mind this project would symbolize the culmination of his life's work; he would create a truly American form of art. Eventually, the committee overlooked Morse in this project as his revolutionary view about the use of art as an expression of democratic ideals was still too radical to appease the demands of an elite patronage tied to British culture and adhering to the West period of art. This rejection led Morse to quit painting altogether. As the upper classes continued look towards a heritage of social status based on British cultural standards, strict adherences to preexisting styles of art remained.

However, for the new generation of academic artists, like Rembrandt Peale and Samuel F.B. Morse, the revolution signified not only a new political America but a state of mind as well. Therefore, young artists of the Early Republic attempted to utilize the shifting identity of Americans to revolutionize culture. This included new ideas about how to democratize art. Although the financial dependence on patrons meant that most of these attempts ended in failure, these efforts marked the beginning of an American cultural identity. What emerged was the Morse period of art (approximately 1791-1872). This new era was marked by a confusion of identity as although the revolution changed the political identity of Americans, a lingering cultural tie to the customs and art practices begun before the war persisted. However, the first generation of Americans who comprised the Morse period began to challenge the cultural conventions of the West

period as they held no ties either of a British cultural inheritance of the styles of the West period. In this way the Morse period was marked by two competing artistic styles as the overlap of West period patrons in the Morse period influenced the clients and artists of the Morse period. West period patrons continued to exert control over elite portraiture despite new efforts in the Morse period to change American culture.

Upper class portraits remained a staple of American art just as they did in the colonial period. Charles Sellers explained that the reality of American society following the revolution differed from the popular "middle-class myth" as "the generation of 1820 and its children experienced American history's sharpest rise in the 'permanent inequality of conditions and aristocracy' feared by Alexis de Tocqueville."[1] An examination of upper class portraits demonstrated that client demands still set the standard. The difficulty Rembrandt Peale experienced in breaking free of his famous families' reputation, founded on British cultural standards, and Samuel Morse's growing discontent with patronage and older West period artists' adherence to what he felt were antiquated artistic ideologies, particularly John Trumbull's, demonstrate an initial crack in the cycle of cultural influence experienced between Britain and America. Therefore, elite art of the Morse period was often a battle of two ideals. The first included the older generation's continuance of a British cultural inheritance passed down from father to son for multiple generations. The second was the new generation's, the American generation, desire to break this cycle on influence by embracing more republican forms of art. Ultimately, a British cultural heritage persisted as the economic reality of elite portraiture demanded that artists adhered to patron's desires and those who could afford elite

[1] Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 238.

portraits still wanted a British-styled art.

Although the Morse period praised the new middle class and their ideals, the reality of America's social hierarchy was quite different. A strong upper class rivaling Britain's own aristocratic hierarchy persisted in American society. After the revolution "the share of national wealth held by the richest 10 percent jumped, mainly after 1820, from the 49.6 percent of 1774 to reach 73 percent by 1860. The richest 1 percent more than doubled their share from 12.6 percent to 29 percent."[2] While one did not have to be of noble birth to be elite, one did have to have wealth.

The result is perhaps best represented by Noah Webster's definition of a gentleman in 1828, "men of education and good breeding, of every occupation."[3] What is apparent from this simple definition change is the looseness of characterization for an American gentleman compared to that of his colonial counterpart. "Every occupation" meant money and not demonstration of Enlightenment qualities, and it seemed to be the strongest determinant of status. While men of humble backgrounds could ascend the class barriers of the previous generations, moving from artisan to gentleman, the process required a tricky and affected expression of Enlightenment ideals. Because the definition of gentleman as well as the cultural inheritance from Britain broadened for the first generation of Americans, the demand for portraiture expanded, but not necessarily the style. Artists also began to view patronage as an antiquated and British convention, not in line with republican ideals, and hoped to replace this economic dependence with a

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[2] Sellers, 238.
[3] Gordon Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 345.

more capitalistic model.[4] By definition an artist in the West period would never be considered a true gentleman despite their level of financial success due to their occupation. The changing nature of American society allowed them to enter into a class they would previously be denied. Naturally, this appealed to younger Morse period artists who viewed the Revolution as not only a way to break political ties to Britain but also advance socially. The result was a change in viewing clients as customers, not patrons. Both the attempt to redefine art in America so that it met republican ideals, and the subsequent failure to do so in academic painting demonstrated the degree to which British cultural inheritance influenced America's cultural development. For Rembrandt Peale this meant a personal clash with his father's advice on how to paint and structure his career.

REMBRANDT PEALE

Rembrandt Peale was born in 1778. An American citizen, he might have heralded a new American art.[5] Charles Willson Peale provided Peale with much of his early training. Charles Willson Peale taught Rembrandt Peale to use a British style adhering to West period conventions. Early in Rembrandt's career, Charles Willson expressed both his hopes that his son would be a great success. This also indicated how related

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[4] Much of this attack on patronage by artists was endemic of a larger shift in American working class sentiments as people became less willing to accept the social customs of the colonial age. In *A Shopkeepers Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837,* Paul E. Johnson examines how the fabric that held economic relationships together in the previous generations saw dramatic shifts in the next as "even as merchants and masters talked of patriarchy, the intimacy fell apart.," 45.

[5] James Thomas Flexner, *Nineteenth Century American Painting* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1970), 139.

Rembrandt's early career was to Charles Willson's generation's style of art:

> His merits will be extolled from one end of the continent to the other as soon as his Pictures are seen- we shall have constant visitors of all the Ladies and Gentlemen of this city as well as travelers- His outer room where his Pictures will be seen free of expense to Visitors, will form a charming lounge for the beau-mond. He must be content for a little while with a small price for his Portraits, and when the demands become greater than he can possibly execute…he will of course increase his price, and finally I verily believe, he will make an independent fortune, for Rembrandt now knows the Value of Money, and is an economist, and also free from vices, which are too prevalent among Artists.[6]

An artistic style that adhered to the older artistic conventions of the West period appealed to Peale's patrons like George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. Peale still demonstrated the cultural ties to England the patriot elite had come to expect in their works.[7] In fact while working on his portrait of Washington in 1797, Charles Willson Peale joined his seventeen year old son at the sittings producing his own version of the portrait. The result was that both Charles Willson Peale's painting and Rembrandt's use similar styles and compositions. Rembrandt Peale was still in the process of learning his trade and relying heavily on his famous father's style in order to execute his pieces. It was this education that explained why Rembrandt Peale remained tied to the period, despite personal efforts to use a new style later in his life. Even the public identified Rembrandt Peale with an earlier portrait style. In the October 16, 1860 issue of the *New York Tribune* an article noted that, "He was the last of our painters whose name is connected with our Revolutionary period."[8] However, as Peale progressed so did his style. This is clear in one of his later portraits of Washington in 1846 (Fig.10). This

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[6] Letter, Charles Willson Peale to Angelica Peale, May 24, 1805. In *Peale Papers vol. 2*, 841-842.

[7] Rembrandt Peale, *George Washington*, 1797. In Edgar P. Richardson, Brooke Hindle, and Lillian B. Miller, *Charles Willson Peale and His World* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, INC., 1982), 201.

[8] *The New York Tribune*, October 16, 1860. In *The Peale Family: Creation of a Legacy* 1770-1870, Lillian B. Miller, ed. (New York: Abbeville Press, 1996), 151.

portrait subtly departed from his earlier portrait by displaying a less stylized and more realistic Washington. In this way Rembrandt Peale and his younger Morse period patrons pursued an American identity through the development of an American art.

Rembrandt Peale vehemently rejected his classification as a West period artist. He wrote, "whereas few persons discriminate between the peculiar names of my father, uncle, brother or myself, which creates confusion disadvantageous to the distinct merits of each as an artist; I am induced to obviate this inconvenience on my part, in being known only by my first name Rembrandt; the adjunct Peale serving only to show from whom descended."[9] This contrasted sharply with the previous generation as a connection to an older, established artist only helped to secure a good reputation and career. Peale's dissatisfaction, therefore, is a clear indication that his and his younger client's identity was changing.

Rembrandt Peale looked to art as a means of emotional expression more than simply a career and as a result experimented with his work. According to William T. Oedell, Rembrandt Peale exhibited "a daring inconstancy in both style and theme, a bookish fascination with the chemical properties of picture-making and the techniques of the masters…a commitment to reformist French theory…and an obsession with what was called "finish," implying the meticulous recording of selected visual facts and the suppression of the painter's physical interest."[10] What Peale was experiencing was a freedom to reinvent art in American society as the new country and its inhabitants were

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[9] William T. Oedel, "The Rewards of Virtue: Rembrandt Peale and Social Reform." In *The Peale Family: Creation of a Legacy* 1770-1870, Lillian B. Miller, ed. (New York: Abbeville Press, 1996), 152.

[10] William T. Oedel, "The Rewards of Virtue: Rembrandt Peale and Social Reform." In *The Peale Family: Creation of a Legacy* 1770-1870, Lillian B. Miller, ed. (New York: Abbeville Press, 1996), 152.

undergoing similar experiences in the creation of a uniquely American cultural identity. Although trained by his father in the West period style appealing to the patriot elite, Peale and his new clients desired something different, something that expressed what it meant to be American.[11]

Rembrandt Peale's decision to open a gallery, the Appollodorian, was his first foray into promoting a more American, elite art. In this way Rembrandt did not appeal to the same clientele his father hoped he would attract. By incorporating paintings demonstrating more originality and daring subject matter like nudity. The older generation did not consider these styles of art desirable as they did not extol the characteristics of the Enlightenment or display any British associations. Therefore, when Charles Willson Peale realized the gallery deviated greatly from his own he was upset with his son's career. Peale's intended his Gallery to do the opposite of his father's by diversifying his paintings to appeal to more individuals as it became more and more obvious that the identity of Americans was changing and the same styles and themes popular with Charles Willson Peale's West period patrons were becoming less popular with first generation Americans Morse period style.[12]

This desire to promote multiple styles and themes within his Gallery is obvious in the advertisement Peale placed when first opening the Gallery:

Rembrandt's Picture Gallery,

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[11] Part of this transformation of American society, According to Joyce Appleby in *Inheriting the Revolution*, saw a "sprawling, inclusive American middle class composed of families known for their respectability, their material competence, and their identification with a progressive model of human endeavor came into power, drawing individuals from all the ranks of colonial society.," 21.

[12] This demonstrates what Joyce Appleby explains, "Cultural institutions rest on a particular economic base, and when the base shifts or disappears, venerable institutions can collapse without warning, throwing into high relief the inseparable union of the ideal and the material.," 19.

> In Walnut Street, Opposite Potter's Field
> Containing his Great Equestrian Picture of Napoleon;
> His Large View of Harper's Ferry,
> At the junction of the Shenandoah with the Potomac; And other Paintings, &C.
> Admittance 25 Cents.[13]

This advertisement revealed Peale's desire to distinguish himself from his father's style and influence and embrace a career less dependent on patronage as he indeed eliminated his connection to his artistic family he was beginning to hate by only identifying himself as Rembrandt. Peale's gallery also functioned as an early mass exhibition space as anyone could view his works for a small price, a clearly democratic ideal as art of the previous generation was restricted to the elite. Both of these changes in art, however subtle they may seem, demonstrated a growing rift between the older generation and the first American generation as the availability of art to classes of people other than the elite witnessed tentative steps into a truly democratic and therefore American genre of art which characterized the Morse period.

Naturally, since Rembrandt Peale and Charles Willson Peale were working at this same time, at the end of one career and the start of another, and both came from different generations, one with cultural ties to Britain and one without, conflict emerged over Rembrandt's Morse period style and its deviation from what Charles Willson had taught him. This became clear in two letters concerning the subject and execution of works like Rembrandt Peale's painting *The Roman Daughter,* one of the works in the Apollodorian featuring female nudity.[14] After viewing this and a few other of Rembrandt's later pieces, Charles Willson was greatly upset with the work of his son prompting him to write, "Truth is better than finish…the portrait painter must dispatch his work as quick as

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[13] Advertisement, Rembrandt Peale, *Aurora* (Philadelphia), December 24, 1811.
[14] Lillian B. Miller, ed., *The Peale Family: Creation of a Legacy* 1770-1870 (New York: Abbeville Press, 1996), 111.

possible, by aiming at good character, truth in drawing & colouring-effect at a proper distance if not so highly finished may be acceptable with the multitude."[15]

Not only Charles Willson Peale rejected the painting but multiple newspapers and journals. For example, The *Monthly Anthology and Boston Review* wrote, "The figure of an old man, placed in the situation of an unconscious infant, is perfectly disgusting."[16] A less overtly negative review of the piece but one that still seemed hesitant to accept it fully was by G.M in *The Port Folio* who wrote, "the design and execution acceptable" but overall "conveys but a faint idea of that extreme delicacy and beauty so perceivable in the female figure of the ancients."[17] This allusion to classical art and Peale's inability to fully express it within his work is a direct display of continued British artistic conventions in America. Because British art was so strongly based in classical themes, compositions, and allusions, G.M's assessment of Peale's work explained Peale's departure from typical and expected styles and a lasting West period influence.

Clearly, Charles Willson Peale, and other individuals of his generation and cultural sentiments, responded to what they viewed as superficial work. Morse period art did not demonstrate British or West period styles and themes and therefore could not possibly meet the demands of a specific patron and garner Rembrandt any profit. For Charles Willson art was the result of a patron's demands resulting in either portraits or historical pieces that expressed characteristics the patron hoped embodied his own personality. Therefore, a piece such as *The Roman Daughter* would seem odd to him as producing art for art's sake was not in the ideology of West period painters. Rembrandt

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[15] Letter, Charles Willson Peale to Rembrandt Peale, August 23, 1823. In *The Peale Family: Creation of a Legacy* 1770-1870, Lillian B. Miller, ed. (New York: Abbeville Press, 1996), 152.
[16]Miller, 111.
[17] Miller, 111.

wrote to Thomas Jefferson, one of his earliest patrons, about his general dissatisfaction with Charles Willson's approach to art commenting, "I love the Art of Painting but the greatest merit of execution on subjects that have not a virtuous tendency, lose all their value."[18] This is a direct condemnation by Peale of the previous generation's use of portraiture to affect Enlightenment ideals, often when none of these qualities existed. Whereas Charles Willson Peale looked at art as a profession, one he came to after failure in many other professions, Rembrandt began to view it as something more, a noble calling which could promote the country and the individual. It was this change in artistic ideology that defined the shift in American elite portraiture from the West period to the Morse period as artists no longer looked to Britain to set the standard.

JOHN TRUMBULL AND SAMUEL F.B MORSE

This new focus on experimentation in lieu of simply following a British model became particularly revealing when considering the emergence of art academies at this time and their instructors like John Trumbull. The American Academy of Fine Arts, founded in 1802, and the National Academy of Design founded in 1825, aided not only the training of artists but transformed the future of American art as a debate between the academies confronted new ideas of American identity.[19] While the West period witnessed artists undergoing a very loose course of study, usually beginning by copying British prints, apprenticing under an established artist, and if very lucky undergoing a

[18] Letter, Rembrandt Peale to Thomas Jefferson, July 3, 1820. In *The Peale Family: Creation of a Legacy* 1770-1870, Lillian B. Miller, ed. (New York: Abbeville Press, 1996), 152.
[19] Irma B. Jaffe, *John Trumbull: Patriot-Artist of the American Revolution* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1975), 207;

"Grand Tour," the establishment of academies in America allowed artists to receive classical training at home. Naturally, this shaped the style of art because for many academic training still emphasized classical themes and styles. However, the establishment of the National Academy and The American Academy mirrored much of the conflict witnessed between Peale and his father as the organizations and their members differed about the necessity of patronage and therefore style of art. Essentially, the academies represented a direct confrontation of the West period and the Morse period. The National Academy and its younger Morse period artists hoped to revolutionize art whereas the American Academy hoped to maintain a West period status quo.

The American Academy was really more an organization of patrons like its wealthy founders, Edward and Robert R. Livingston, as "membership in the academy included artists, but the organization was owned and controlled by wealthy landowners, merchants, lawyers, and doctors."[20] Due to the level of influence that patrons had on the artists in the American Academy it initially fostered an American art much like its colonial predecessors. Adding to this continuation of pre-war artistic precedents was the Academy's early teachers, such as John Trumball, who began their training while the cultural relationship to Britain was still strong. Artist Samuel F. B. Morse, from the American generation, explained the cycle of influence that resulted in Trumbull's role as the leading American artist while studying in London in 1813, "The American character stands high in this country as to the production of artists…Mr. West now stands at the

[20] Jaffe, 207;Kenneth John Myers, "Art and Commerce in Jacksonian America: The Steamboat Albany Collection" *Art Bulletin LXXXII*, no 3. (September 2000), 506.

head…Mr. Copley next, then Colonel Trumbull."[21] The result witnessed what art historian Irma B. Jaffe described as "The one criticism which should have been leveled against [Trumbull]...he did not establish a tradition of discourses and discussion in which American art theory could develop."[22] Because Trumbull was operating at a time when American identity was transforming but not fully changed, he relied on the conventions of his youth to define the academy and adhered to West period ideals. Older West period patrons who still looked to their British cultural past to define their artistic standards celebrated Trumbull, but he was viewed negatively by the first generation of artists and patrons who no longer wanted American culture to be derivative of a British inheritance. In a January 1833 speech, Trumbull expressed his view of American art, saying "it has been proved by all experience, and, indeed, it is a truism, that the arts cannot flourish without patronage in some form."[23] Although the definition of gentleman was changing and new ideas about what it meant to be American saw the adoption of republican ideology, Trumbull refused to abandon the relationship to individual clients, or the style they desired, that both created his reputation and generated his success. Jaffe noted Trumbull's role in both the academy and the perpetuation of patronage commenting, "For the first nine years of Trumbull's presidency…the Academy with its strong leader was the cohesive force that held together artists and patrons and cultivated an art community as part of the cultural tradition…The prestige of art and artists grew in consequence of the prestige of the president and his ability to win the patronage of highly placed

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[21] Samuel F.B. Morse, *Samuel F.B. Morse: His Letters and Papers vol. 1,* Edward Lind Morse, ed., (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1914), 102-103.
[22] Jaffe, 267.
[23]John Trumbull, *Address read before the directors of the American Academy of the Fine Arts*, January 28, 1833. In Myers, 507.

persons."[24] This reflected a conflict between younger Morse period artists working in the academy and their older, West period trained teachers as both their personal identity as well as the larger cultural identity of America was in flux. The result was tension between the two groups about the true direction American art should undergo with the issue of patronage as a primary point of contention.

By the end of 1825, many of the younger Morse period artists in the Academy, such as A.B. Durand, William Dunlap, and Samuel F.B. Morse, broke away to form the National Academy structuring it more in line with the new republican ideals American art was generating.[25] According to Kenneth Myers, the National Academy was less tied to ideas of patronage because "many early nineteenth-century American artists were democrats who resented the dependency engendered by personal forms of patronage."[26] The artists running the National Academy felt that circumscribing artistic styles and techniques was an antiquated and colonial phenomenon. Rather, patrons should look to artists and the public to set the standards. On March 20, 1826, Samuel F.B. Morse gave a lecture on clarifying this new approach:

> There is a habit, very prevalent among many who pretend to taste, of extravagant censure and extravagant praise, the sure indication of false taste, and which arises not so much from deficiency in native sensibility to beauty and defect, as from real ignorance of how much to blame, and how much to applaud… With these he places another class the members of which will be more ready to dispute their proscription than the first but whose exclusions from a vote on Taste is undoubtedly as just as theirs. These are 'the voluptuous, those who inflamed by riches vent their appetite for superiority and respect upon the possession of costly furniture, numerous attendants, a princely dwelling, sumptuous feasts, and every thing superb and gorgeous to amaze and astonish all beholders.' To these may be added another and smaller class, composed of those who want that native sensibility of which we have spoken. These being excluded there is left a class composed of the intelligent and well educated in all countries and ages whose

[24] Jaffe, 267.
[25] Jaffe, 273.
[26] Myers, 506.

> province it would seem to decide on the objects of Taste. But why is their opinion to be undisputed?[27]

In many ways it was Trumbull's hope to maintain the West period status quo which prompted Morse period artists to break away as "Trumbull saw his institution as a kind of guild that controlled art and artists…and he intended to make his role clear."[28] However, Trumbull's role also aided younger artists in the creation of their own artistic reputations despite them finding flaws in his method of governing the academy. This displayed a problem between the reality and idealism of art for the first American generation of academic artists that would ultimately cause much of their democratic experiments in art to fail. Trumbull's role in many younger Morse period artists' success is apparent from the professional relationship he had with many of the individuals comprising the National Academy such as A.B. Durand who executed the engravings of Trumbull's piece *The Declaration of Independence*. Not only did Trumbull trust Durand with this task he made a point of extolling his virtue in a 1821 announcement of the project:

> John Trumbull take this opportunity of informing the public, and particularly the Subscribers of the Print of the Declaration of Independence, that in consequence of the desires which have been very generally expressed, that the engraving might, if possible, be executed in this Country, he has engaged Mr. A.B. Durand, of this city, a native artist, to engrave the plate; and judging from the progress already made, he feels no doubt but the work will be executed in a style that will do honour to the country, and will be completed in a much shorter time, than it would have by eminent artists in Europe.[29]

Trumbull demonstrated the same level of influence when he allowed Morse to exhibit his portrait of James Monroe in the Academy's gallery. In addition to this

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[27] Samuel F.B. Morse, *Lectures on the Affinity of Painting with the Other Fine Arts*, Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr., ed. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1983), 55-56.
[28] Jaffe, 273.
[29] *New York Daily Advertiser*, New York, January 6. 1821. Accessed at America's Historical Newspapers.

allowance, he also publicized the work in multiple advertisements reading:

> AMERICAN ACADEMY OF THE FINE ARTS
>
> The Full length portrait of the President of the United States, painted for the corporation of the city of Charleston, S.C. by Mr. Morse, of New Haven, is this day placed in the Gallery of the Academy, and will, by permission of the artist, be exhibited for a short time only, prior to its being forwarded to Charlestown.
>
> The Gallery is open everyday as usual, from 9 in the morning till dusk.[30]

Trumbull's role as a promoter of young talent was clear as he utilized the academy as a place of training, promotion and display. Morse had already garnered the commission for himself, documented in a March 1, 1819 resolution by the Common Council of Charleston which read:

> Resolved Unanimously that His Honor the Intendant be requested to solicit James Monroe, President of the United States, to permit a full-length likeness to be taken for the City of Charleston, and that Mr. Morse be requested to take all necessary measures for executing the said likeness on the visit of the President to this city.
>
> Resolved unanimously that the sum of seven hundred and fifty dollars be appropriated for this purpose.[31]

However, Trumbull's acceptance of the piece was instrumental in demonstrating to the public that Morse was a talented artist capable of meeting the standards the Academy promoted, standards more in line with West period art than the emerging American genre with the Morse period. The first portrait of the president by Morse, commissioned by the city of Charleston, was the portrait the academy displayed and seemed congruent with the previous generation's ideals of art in both composition and subject. It was intended to hang opposite of Trumbull's portrait of Washington, executed after Washington's own visit to Charleston and a matched set required Morse to paint in a style similar to

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[30] Advertisement, *The Academy of Fine Art*, National Advocate vol. VIII, issue 2428, 3, New York, November 16, 1820. Accessed at America's Historical Newspapers.

[31] William Roach, Jr., Common Council of Charleston, March 1, 1819. In *Samuel F.B. Morse: His Letters and Papers vol. 1*, Edward Lind Morse, ed., (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1914), 222.

Trumbull's.[32]

Morse deviated slightly from the British styled work of Trumbull by including more realism in his piece. He depicted the president's age to indicate his role in the revolution and inspire respect in viewers. As William Kloss explained, "Morse created an effective contrast between the two [Monroe and Washington]: interior versus exterior, intellect versus action, Federalist versus revolutionary."[33] The full length work of Monroe by Morse is reminiscent of the other patriot portraits of the West period style as well as demonstrating the emergence of the Morse period style. In this way Monroe straddled two periods and artistic styles and was less grounded in the cultural associations to Britain that influenced other patriots choice of artist and style.

Monroe's family was so satisfied with Morse's portrait that they commissioned a private piece based on the Charleston painting. First generation Americans embraced a new identity and a new art. Their request for a bust length piece is demonstrative of this change. Portraits no longer served to display Enlightenment qualities, so less attention was given to backgrounds and finery and the individual took on greater importance. As who a man was and why he should be admired transformed American society a similar change in how he was depicted in portraiture emerged. This witnessed the start of the popularity for artists like Morse and established the Morse period as they understood the new American identity better than their predecessors affecting a related shift in their portraits. Morse recorded the pleasure the family felt with his work in his journal on December 17, 1819:

> I have succeeded to my satisfaction, and, what is better, to the satisfaction of himself and family; so much so that one of his daughters wishes me to copy the

[32] William Kloss, *Samuel F.B. Morse* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1988), 62.
[33] Kloss, 62.

> head for her. They all say that mine is the best that has been taken of him. The daughter told me (she said it was a secret) that her father was delighted with it, and said it was the only one that in his opinion looked like him; and this, too, with Stuart's in the room.[34]

This entry reveals how strongly the first generation of Americans was moving away from the art of the West period at this time. It does not seem strange that it was Morse's daughter who requested the bust length portrait of her father as she would not desire the full length style popular with her father's and more so grandfather's generation as it no longer accomplished the goal of the portrait, displaying an individual's best qualities. The popularity of Morse's piece over Gilbert Stuart's, an artist fully invested in a British model like Trumbull, as well as Monroe's observation that his other portraits did not resemble him demonstrated how customers began desiring not the sentimental and idealized pieces men like Stuart painted but the newer, more realistic Morse period style the new generation began to experiment with as it more fully represented them as American through attention to detail as a sign of age, experience, and accomplishment. Also evident in Morse's work and his growing popularity was the beginning of a conflict between the younger Morse period and older West period generation of artists as Morse demonstrated tentative movements away from their style, changes coveted by younger customers.

Part of this conflict originated from Trumbull's personal belief about what part he should play in the next generation's art education, style, and the nature of their careers. His beliefs compared closely to the role West played in Trumbull's own career as well as most of the successful portrait artists of his time life. Trumbull demonstrated a reluctance to abandon the cultural standard of his generation which encouraged close

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[34] Morse, 226.

imitation of the work of an older more established painter. Though apprenticing under an older West period artist never ended as a major component of learning, the nature of the relationship changed as artists were more willing to deviate and experiment with styles and themes since the American generation no longer based work on styles popular with British aristocracy and a less strict template of fine art appeared in the first generation. Therefore, Trumbull clearly represented the maintenance of a British cultural inheritance into the Early Republic, one that began to be challenged by the next generation of artists and patrons alike in the Morse period.[35] However, Trumbull was not unaware of the changing nature of American art as he made clear in the advertisement promoting Durand as he indicated he was not only an American artist but one superior to a European counterpart. This type of praise appealed to the new, American identity marking the first generation as the ties and influences of Britain are not informing fine arts and society completely.

The National Academy interpreted the republicanism of revolution into a related shift in American art and as Myers noted, "unlike their brethren who defended the American Academy, the leaders of the National Academy embraced the egalitarian values encouraged by the more competitive and anonymous capitalist marketplace."[36] This ideology witnessed moving away from West period conventions and dependence on a specific set of patrons as a way to put more control into their own hands by structuring the academy like a craft guild and focusing on education and experimentation instead of

[35] Joyce Appleby explains this rift between the generations in her book *Inheriting the Revolution*, "The collapse of venerable hierarchies and the scattering of family members caught Americans unawares. Mobility-both geographic and social- cut off young people from the community of their childhood.," (21).
[36] Myers, 507.

copying.[37] For this new group of artists, the relationship between art and society which had proven satisfactory to the previous generation and the American Academy, based off strong ties to Britain, was not only unacceptable but un-American. Therefore, changes in the style of early American portraits reflected the same changes in American identity as artists internalized what republicanism meant. This became clear in both the attack on patronage, a clearly British convention, and the artists who hoped to continue this practice. This sentiment was shared by much of the first new generation of Americans as witnessed in *The Working Man's Advocate*, a magazine representing middle and working class individuals, which on February 18, 1834 wrote, "The time has arrived when the people of the United States must decide whether they will be a Republic in fact, or only a Republic in name…"[38] Many of these connections to what new Morse period artists viewed as antiquated West period principles are displayed in letters and memorials following Trumbull's death on November 10, 1843 that simultaneously revere his position in art as well as relate it to the previous generation.

For example, on November 13, 1843 Thomas Seir Cummings wrote, and later included in his book, *Historic Annals of the National Academy*, about the difference between Trumbull and the younger generation:

> Departed this life, the venerable Colonel Trumbull, aged eighty-seven years- and artist and a gentleman. Whatever differences of opinion may have existed as to his policy as President of the old American Academy – however he may have proved deficient in his estimate of the rising generation of artists in his day- there is no doubt he acted in the full belief in the wisdom of his views. He was of the old school; his courtesy and urbanity of manner were worthy of imitation; his want of heartfelt-ness for the professional was severely felt by the youngest

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[37] Myers, 506.

[38] *The Working Man's Advocate,* February 18, 1834. In *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 237.

> artist.[39]

Cummings also included Samuel F.B. Morse's letter informing the council of the National Academy of Design about Trumbull's death from November 14th:

> …it is my melancholy duty once more to convene you, to announce to you the death of Colonel John Trumbull …whose name and works are amongst the earliest associations of our childhood, and whose fame is interwoven, not merely with the history of arts and design, but also with the political history of the country. Although not enrolled as a member of this Academy, yet I believe I express your sentiments, gentlemen, when I assert that we render a sincere, willing homage to the character of Trumbull, as one of the brightest ornaments of his country in the arts of design.[40]

Trumbull was not considered a good example of how the new generation should approach their art. He was remembered as an overall symbol of both the transformation of America politically, as a revolutionary hero, as well as a direct link in their artistic history as he continued the cycle of British associations through his own study under West. However, neither Cummings nor Morse viewed Trumbull as a relevant artist in their day and deviated greatly from his style and approach. Just as Rembrandt Peale wrote to Jefferson about his desire to change the nature of art so too did Samuel F.B. Morse and Dunlap. In 1833, reacting directly to Trumbull's support of patronage and the West period model of art, Dunlap declared:

> If there are any who desire to have such a patronizing institution as this-if there are artists who desire to be thus protected and thus dependent, it is a free country, and there is room for all; every man to his taste;-but the artists of the National Academy have some character to be deadened, some pride of profession to be humbled, some of aspiring after excellence in art to be brought down, some of the independent spirit of their country to lose, before they can be bent to the purposes of such anti-republican institution.[41]

A similar attack against the American Academy and its artists was published in an April

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[39] Thomas Seir Cummings, *Historic Annals of the National Academy of Design* (Philadelphia: George W. Childs, 1865), 175.
[40] Cummings, 175.
[41] William Dunlap, 1833 speech. In Myers, 507.

1831 *Address to the Students of the National Academy of Design* by Morse:

> In enlightened Greece they revered, they almost adored their artists,-they did not talk of patronizing them. They looked to them for instruction and divine pleasure, and not as objects wanting protection. Patronage! Degrading word! Only used by presumptuous ignorance,-only submitted to by the basest sycophancy. Every artist who has the feeling of a man, or more especially of a republican man, will spurn from him the offer of patronage as debasing to himself, to his art, and to his country.[42]

Both Morse's and Dunlap's condemnation of the American Academy is distinctly linked to their conception of American politics and identity. As the first generation of Americans confronted the task of shaping a society based off of republican ideals they began to sever the cultural inheritances the previous generation had preserved. Just as the patriot generation ended the political relationship to Britain feeling it had failed them, their children and grandchildren ended the cultural one believing that to fully reinvent society a complete severance from British principles needed to take place.

Just as the artists in the National Academy began to view patronage as a negative aspect of the profession so too did many of the other non-Academy affiliated painters of the time. If patronage supported the West period portrait artists, the Morse period relied on what would be more aptly called customer and client demand. The difference between a patron and a client, therefore, is a vague one but important to the change in American identity and related to the change in definitions of American elites compared to their colonial and Revolutionary counterparts.

This shift in how artists viewed their clients was apparent in two portraits of Benjamin Silliman in 1825, one executed by John Trumbull, his uncle in law, and the

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[42] Samuel F. B. Morse, *Address to the Students of the National Academy of Design*, April 1831. In Myers, 507.

other by Samuel Morse, a fellow classmate at Yale.[43] Working at roughly the same time and corresponding to the start of the tensions between the American and National Academies, the difference in both the style of their works as well as manner in which they were created illuminated the divergence of cultural standards away from the British, and therefore, West period model. What was clear from the portraits was the more stylized approach Trumbull took in his piece. Silliman's portrait by Trumbull would fit perfectly with those of the previous generation portraying him in a reserved and classical way. Little in his portrait distinguishes him as an individual as the composition and execution of the work was similar to those of the great patriot elite, like Charles Willson Peale's portrait of Jefferson. Just commissioning a West period portrait itself was enough to tell what type of man its subject was. Therefore, since Trumbull's background was linked to the British standards his pieces of the first generation of Americans attempted to accomplish the same goals as those of his earlier patrons, the display of status. This meant more emphasis on idealism than realism as it was less important at this time to have an extremely accurate likeness than a representative piece.[44]

Morse's portrait appeared almost the opposite of Trumbull's as he clearly represented Silliman in a very personal manner. For example, Silliman was displayed examining rocks, an apt inclusion for one who worked many years as a prominent geologist. More telling than this inclusion since many gentleman of the previous generation were displayed in action, such as Benjamin Franklin in scientific pursuits, was how Morse chose to handle Silliman's connection to geology. Silliman was not

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[43] Samuel F.B. Morse, *Benjamin Silliman*, 1825. In Kloss, 97.
[44] Dorinda Evans, "Survival and Transformation: The Colonial Portrait in the federal Era," In *The Portrait in Eighteenth-Century America*, Ellen G. Miles, ed. (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1993), 130.

displayed in an idealized pursuit of learning, but in a manner wholly unique to himself. Joyce Appleby explained that this was a common component of being a first generation American as, "First generation men usually lauded careers that blended the personal with the public."[45] The result is not a work meant to show that Silliman was a gentleman adhering to common ideals shared by his entire social group but rather an individual whose personal qualities made him a gentleman. This difference highlighted both the transformation of American art and American identity. Because the definition of gentleman changed, clients no longer desired portraits that followed strict parameters but rather pieces that told an audience specifically who they were. Alexis de Tocqueville noted the role of individualism in the identity of Americans writing, "Individualism is democratic in origin, and it threatens to develop as conditions equalize."[46] De Tocqueville goes on to explain how this concept was what separated not only English society from American but the older West period and younger Morse period generations: "Individualism is a recent expression arising out of a new idea. Our fathers knew only the word egoism."[47] Much of this shift in portraits can be explained when Silliman noted the differences in how the two artists worked writing, "Col. Trumbull painted very rapidly-Mr. Morse was less rapid and both were very agreeable companions."[48] Because Trumbull was following the West period template he executed his portrait much quicker than Morse, just like Charles Peale cautioned his son to work in a timely fashion, as an idealized portrait needed little study as it followed specific guidelines. However, Morse could not simply rely on prescribed styles and compositions to develop his piece as he

[45] Appleby, 123.
[46] Tocqueville, 585.
[47] Tocqueville, 585.
[48] Kloss, 96.

needed to fully understand who Silliman was in order to create a true, realistic portrait.

Just like Peale and Morse, Silliman was a first generation American who struggled to define his personal identity while respecting the older West period generation. Silliman's difference in attitude explained why elite and academic art began to witness changes in the Morse period. Men in the upper classes no longer thought of themselves as patrons, an element associated with Enlightenment ideals and therefore Britain, but rather one type of American customer. It was this same identity that marked the new breed of American artists in the Morse period as they too desired to cast off patronage.

The psychological dependency that West period artists experienced as their livelihood was dependent on satisfying a very small number of individuals was contrary to the republicanism of the first generation of Americans.[49] Economics still influenced the style and themes of artist's works, especially in portraits; however, Morse period artists realized a larger pool of clients could increase their autonomy allowing for more personal experimentation, a relationship more in line with a democratic society.

Expanding one's customer base to decrease reliance on patronage followed the same basic principle of American capitalism. Joyce Appleby explained how capitalistic ideals were a major component of the first generation's identity: "If commerce laid the material footings for a new kind of society in the United States, personal autonomy and

[49] Joyce Appleby explains that "The limited scope of the colonial economy had greatly aided those who wished to maintain a social order of place and prescription. When parents and patricians controlled land and credit, their values had the backing of power. Expanding opportunity in America had just the opposite effect, dealing as mighty a blow to traditional assumptions about social order as had the War of Independence," 127.

freedom of association- all products of hard-fought political campaigns- provided its moral underpinnings."[50] Artists like Rembrandt Peale made money through an art with mass appeal and by increasing the audience of art viewers. Miller noted, "A few painters...were developing innovative exhibition techniques and professedly democratic modes of address."[51] Put simply, Peale democratized his work because many people had a chance to view it. Peale used this policy in his own exhibition of his 1819-1820 work, *Court of Death*, as a way to raise money after the 1819 economic panic.[52] Peale's gamble paid off and he saw a profit of four thousand dollars the first year of his exhibition when over thirty-two thousand individuals viewed the work for twenty-five cents each.[53] The piece went on a traveling exhibition and Peale created an explanatory pamphlet explaining both its artistic style and biblical theme as a way to educate all of American society about art, a truly democratic appeal to a previously restricted cultural form.

Peale was not the only artist employing mass viewing in lieu of selling to an individual patron. For example, Samuel F.B. Morse in *The House of Representatives*, Henry Sargent in *Christ's Entry into Jerusalem*, Francois Marius Granet in *The Choir of the Capuchin Church in Rome*, Francis Danby's *An Attempt to Illustrate the Sixth Seal*, and William Dunlap's *Christ Rejected* followed the same basic template. Despite varying levels of success, the desire to move away from patronage as the primary relationship in an artist's career functioned as the strongest indicator that art was undergoing a shift, as artists hoped to fully reach the democratic ideals they felt embodied the revolution. Charles Ingersoll, a gentleman of the first generation of

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[50] Appleby, 128.
[51] Miller, 155.
[52] Miller, 154.
[53] Miller, 156.

Americans, noted this change in the identity and level of respect for middle and working class Americans during the Morse period in a work written to extol America, *A Discourse Concerning the Influence of America on the Mind* (1823). Ingersoll noted two main concepts he felt embodied being American; ingenuity and invention: "American ingenuity has been put to trial it has never failed…In all the useful arts and in the philosophy of comfort,- that word, which cannot be translated into any other language, and which, though of English origins, was reserved for maturity in America, we have no superiors."[54]

Even John Trumbull began to admit his error in believing the patronage of the West period generation was superior to the approach of the next generation that embraced an American spirit. Speaking specifically about the differences between the American and National Academies in 1831 he commented:

> There was a time that I felt a wish that we had not two hundred Stockholders, who, with their families are free to visit our exhibitions: I did consider this as an unfortunate deduction from our probable receipts; but now my fears…have vanished; for what are two hundred to the multitude of opulent families who may, and will, and do, visit the various exhibitions. It does appear to me there is a fair prospect in future of ample patronage for both Academies.[55]

Despite these steps to eliminate patronage, even slowly accepted by the previous generation, ideology differed from reality and artists still needed customers to succeed. Therefore, the reinterpretation of patronage related directly to shifting definitions of "elite," witnessed by Webster's changing definition of gentleman. Customers better fit into the rhetoric of republicanism. Alexis De Tocqueville, although critical of this class system, noted how blurred the lines of class in America were becoming: "Some people

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[54] C.J. Ingersoll, *A Discourse Concerning the Influence of America on the Mind* (Philadelphia, 1823), 24, 27.
[55] Jaffe, 274.

still enjoy quite considerable privileges, but the possibility of acquiring such privileges is open to all…"[56] For Americans, social status in the Morse period was more malleable than the strict observance of Enlightenment ideals marking the West period, therefore, allowing both them and the artists they commissioned more likely to desire and create unique, republican pieces of art.

Unlike Peale, Samuel F.B. Morse was less tied to West period art. He was born in 1791, a first generation American, and so was his earliest teacher, Washington Allston. He experienced the transformations in American identity and artistic style first hand as much of his career was influenced by these changes.[57] However, because Morse was born when many of the leading patriots as well as many West period gentlemen were still alive he faced similar difficulties as Peale in how to execute his works as one portion of his customers hoped to maintain a style and relationship to British culture that marked their generation. A second group of clients, those comprised of first generation Americans, no longer desired this relationship and created the Morse period. Morse's artistic beginnings corresponded to the start of the War of 1812 when the new American elite fully severed British associations as an indicator of renewed revolutionary ardor.[58] This impacted Morse directly as the war interrupted his studies in London prompting him to completely renounce his associations with Britain altogether. According to art historian William Kloss, the result of the war was Morse becoming, "...an ardent republican whose jaundiced view of European institutions and peoples only narrowed with age," an occurrence related to the same process most Americans underwent in their

[56] Tocqueville, 660.
[57] Kloss, 16.
[58] Kloss, 25.

transformation into fully fledged Americans, both politically and culturally.[59]

Due to Morse's background as an American, his family was concerned with his safety while studying in Britain during the war. After the declaration of war, Morse received warnings from both his mother, who wrote, "steer clear of any of the difficulties of the contest that is about to take place," and his father, who warned "your mother has given you sound advice as respects the course you should pursue. Be the artist wholly and let politics alone."[60] Morse's parents encouraged him to take a neutral course. They believed that political ties to Britain were different than cultural ones; that art and politics were distinct. A major characteristic of most West period patrons.

Morse responded with a declaration of political loyalty to the revolution: "…that war with this country is just, and that the present Administration of our country has acted with perfect justice…"[61] His allegorical pieces, *Marius in Prison* and *The Dying Hercules*, both executed while in London during the war, served the same purpose as the revolutionary works of West and Wright. Morse portrayed these heroes as a symbol of America betrayed in its relationship to Britain, a country no longer upholding the ties of a shared history which for many still held them together culturally if not politically. Interestingly, Morse did not return to America but chose to continue his studies in Britain, an unusual choice as both he and the American people in general, as a significant number of the West period generation was beginning to die out, no longer desired works of this style. As Kloss explained, "he was indoctrinated with the tenets of the academic

[59] Kloss, 32.
[60] Letter, Elizabeth and Jedidiah Morse to Samuel Morse, June 28, 1812. In Kloss, 25.
[61] Letter, Samuel Morse to Jedidiah Morse, August 6, 1812. In Kloss, 25.

"great style" even as it was in decline…"[62]

Morse's desire to undergo this type of study indicated the precariousness of his situation, as well as how unsure the course of America's cultural identity continued to be. American society was still in flux and artists and clients both struggled with how to portray themselves in art. This resulted in an initial condemnation of portraiture when he returned to America even though he grounded his training and style in the standards applauded by the West period generation. Before his return, Morse's mother prompted him to focus on portraits, writing to him at the end of 1814, "You must not expect to paint anything in the country, for which you will receive any money to support you, but portraits; therefore do everything in your power to qualify you for painting and taking them in the best style. That is all your hope here."[63] This advice seemed reasonable since Morse's mother was a member of the West period generation and to her any career in art would be marked by the successful accumulation of patrons through the continuation of British cultural standards.

However, just like many other Morse period artists, Peale included, Morse felt this was not only a waste of his talent but a non-republican act as it continued the practice of patronage and the cultural relationship with England. Morse's belief about what constituted the correct path of American culture was demonstrated in an 1814 statement promoting not only an acculturation of the public at large but through a uniquely American context:

> All we wish is a taste in the country and a little more wealth…In order to create taste, however, pictures, first-rate pictures, must be introduced into the country,

[62] Kloss, 32.
[63] Kloss, 32.

> for taste is only acquired by a close study of the old masters. In Philadelphia I am happy to find they have successfully begun [with the founding in 1806 of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts]. I wish Americans would unite in the thing, through aside local prejudices, and give their support to one institution. Let it be in Philadelphia, since it is so happily begun there, and let every American feel a pride in supporting that institution; let it be a national and not a city institution.[64]

Therefore, at this time, Morse was struggling both to define art in an American environment torn between two generations, and to execute his own work in a way that would appeal to the public without compromising his patriotism. Disagreeing with the advice he received from home, Morse responded to his mother in a typically childish way:

> The moment I get home I wish to begin work, so that I should have some portraits bespoken in season. I shall charge forty dollars less than Stuart for my portraits, so that, if any of my good friends are ready, I will begin the moment I have said 'how do ye do' to them…Had I no higher thoughts than being a first-rate portrait-painter, I would have chosen a far different profession.[65]

Despite Morse's belief to the contrary, his mother proved right in her assessment of the art world. Although the Morse period generation hoped to refashion art in a democratic mold, clients still paid the bills. Just as his portrait of Benjamin Silliman indicated, Morse was overwhelmingly tied to individuals to make a living especially since his own mass exhibition, *The House of Representatives*, a work he considered to be the ultimate experiment in both American themes and democratic art, was a failure.[66] This is clear in a letter by James Gates Percival, a client of Morse's who wrote, "…that picture has cost him one hundred and ten dollars to exhibit it in New York…He labored at it eighteen months, and spent many hundred dollars in its execution; and now he has to pay the

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[64] Samuel F.B. Morse, *Lectures on the Affinity of Painting with the Other Fine Arts,* Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr., ed. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1983), 17.
[65] Letter, Samuel F.B. Morse to Elizabeth Morse, May, 3, 1814. In Kloss, 32.
[66] Oedell, 162.

public for looking at it, 'largess, largess'…"[67] Fellow artist Francis M. Edmonds wrote to Morse about the piece in December 1847, surprised by the poor state in which he found the work:

> We found it at a store of Coats & Co., No. 54 Exchange place, nailed against a board partition in the third story, almost invisible from the dirt and dust upon it…Having no strainer, its surface is as uneven as the waves of the sea…Excuse me for troubling you in this matter, but, believing it to be one of the best works ever painted by you…I could not patiently be silent while [it is] in its present condition.[68]

The fact that the piece was essentially abandoned indicated the degree to which Morse's project in democratic art was a failure. By producing works that could appeal to the tangible shift in American identity that opened art to the masses, Morse and his generation felt they revolutionized art. Morse's early dedication to this type of art was clear in his promotion of other artist's exhibitions. In particular, Morse allowed many other painters to utilize his work space when they held an 1817 public exhibition. Interestingly, Morse was not included in the project and most likely received no profit from the venture. This demonstrated the degree to which he hoped to challenge West period artistic customs in the US by reducing the role of the individual. The group placed an advertisement on January 1, 1817 in the *Boston Gazette* demonstrating artists' shift away from patronage and Morse's support of their endeavor:

> Grand Picture of BONAPARTE
>
> Is now ready for Exhibition, at the room lately occupied by Mr. Morse, (Joy's Building) Cornhill-square, a fine, full length PAINTING of the late Emperor BONAPARTE-in his imperial dress; executed by his own order, for the imperial palace of Compienge—by the celebrated Lefevre…
>
> In addition to the above , will be Exhibited, 14 original PAINTINGS, by Vandyke, Slingeland, Woovermans, Mursillos, Bergham, and others.

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[67] Kloss, 75, 79.
[68] Letter, Francis W. Edmonds to Samuel F.B. Morse, December, 1847. In Kloss, 76.

> Hours of Exhibition, From 9, A.M. until 5 P.M.- Price of admittance, 25 cents.
>
> Tickets for 1 dollar each, will admit one person at any time during the Exhibition.
>
> Entrance form No. 3, Cornhill-square, on the front of the building.
> Jan. 13[69]

However, the populace had a different idea about what democratization of art meant and the exhibitions that artists like Morse created failed to meet their demands. It was not enough for the public to view art, they wanted to own it. The result of these differences in how to democratize art witnessed a continued dependence on individual customers, such as Silliman, despite Morse period artists' new American ideology of moving away from patronage in all manifestations. Artists' desires were not congruent with making a living. To be profitable an artist still had to listen to the demands of customers. Therefore, Morse's response to Edmonds revealed the changes he underwent since the idealism he felt toward public art as the ultimate symbol of democracy, both in his letters to his parents and his feud with Trumbull, was unable to manifest in any real way. Edmonds noted that Morse wrote him about his works saying, "they must take their chances in the world-he cared no further for them."[70] This displays the overall confusion of being an artist at a time when two distinct cultural periods overlapped.

Morse's personal artistic failures explained how a discussion of the artist and his sitter helps explicated why portraiture styles changed. Most Morse period artists quickly realized that although patronage was a holdover of the West period model they hoped to avoid as it was inherently non republican; capitalism, an American staple, allowed them to both create works for individuals, providing them with an economic foundation, and

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[69] *The Boston Gazette*, January 13, 1817, vol 47, issue 8, 3, Boston Massachusetts.
[70] Kloss, 76.

do so in an American context. The result was the real change in elite portraiture as it was not only artist's opinions that shaped American art but their clients as well. Just as artists no longer utilized the terminology of the British hierarchy popular in the West period to affect social status, clients did so as well as redefining the relationship to artists in a manner more congruent with democratic ideals. As the definition of "elite" changed in America, Morse period clients demanded portraits that signified this change.

For many years, roughly 1790 to 1820, an overlapping of both artists and patrons, or clients depending on the individuals involved in the relationship, defined American portraiture. Two generations both with contrasting personal identities lived and operated in the art world at the same time.[71] For men like Morse and Peale, personal beliefs about both American cultural identity and portrait style were often put aside to appease their subjects. If artists failed to do so the result could be not only one dissatisfied customer but a tarnished reputation.

The tenuous nature of this period became clear as Morse vacillated between patrons, men and women of the older West period generation, and customers, first generation Americans, resulting in striking differences in pay for his works. As a patron considered themselves an artist's primary financial backer paying exorbitant prices to display their own status and wealth; clients, on the other hand, paid much less as they

[71] This complicated understanding of personal identity in the nineteenth century and the difficulty of both artists and clients in understanding how to depict themselves is witnessed in Morse's 1826 portrait of DeWitt Clinton (Fig. 11). Like Rembrandt Peale, Clinton's family shared the British cultural identity of much of the older colonial elite. However, Clinton's age, he was born in 1817, put him solidly within the first generation of Americans. This tension of personal versus family identity is clear within his portrait. Clinton's portrait demonstrates the tentative steps away from British artistic conventions as he is depicted much more realistically than colonial portraits and absent are the typical symbols popular within colonial portraits displaying Enlightenment characteristics.

were just one of many people hiring an artist. Therefore, their relationship to the artist was just like any other capitalist relationship. For example, in a letter to his parents on August 16, 1816, Morse explained his success appealing to a more middling clientele:

> I have painted five portraits at fifteen dollars each and have two more engaged and many more talked of. I think I shall get along well. I believe I could make and independent fortune in a few years if I devoted myself exclusively to portraits, so great is the desire for good portraits in the different country towns.[72]

Morse discovered early in his return to America that he would indeed have to rely on portraits for his living, mistaken in believing that this would be a short term compromise in his democratic art, when his father helped him secure the commission of John Adams in 1816 as both were staunch Federalists.[73] The former president was a man familiar with portraits as his position as a patriot elite resulted in the desire to have him memorialized in art, one still steeped in British cultural traditions, during the Early Republic. Adams was not an easy client and rarely appreciated his portraits. He wrote to Morse's father Jedidiah explaining that he was allowing Morse to execute the portrait because of their personal relationship: "If your son had proposed it, I would have written him a letter too ludicrous for you to read, describing the Portraits and Busts which have already transmitted me to Posterity."[74] Morse's early success was still tied to the previous generation's idea of West period art and patronage. Morse's career was due in large part to a respected family.

Adam's friendship with Morse's father was not enough to make him happy with his portrait, however, and if Adams was often disappointed by his earlier portraits, all executed in the style set while the cyclical relationship with Britain was still active,

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[72] Morse, 201.
[73] Kloss, 16.
[74] Kloss, 36.

Morse's piece, replete with his republican idealism and realistic depiction was almost too much for Adam's to take. The style of the piece was unusual because it was not related to either a British inspired art or Morse's later style, clear when compared to his portrait of Benjamin Silliman. Art Historian William Kloss noted that the piece did not follow any standard stylistic parameters:

> The image is such a distance from the idealizing portraits of Morse's London experience that we are hard put to explain the abrupt transition…But it may also be that his return to New England, where colonial portraiture was once again before his eyes, played a role. Perhaps he sensed an old rebel should be painted like an old rebel, in the style of his youth and first celebrity. Perhaps, on more specifically stylistic grounds, Morse was also trying to come to terms with that basic American portrait manner of descriptive realism…[75]

Morse's personal beliefs about his American identity and his struggle to incorporate art into a wholly American context explained the mix of styles in the portrait. Because Morse was not familiar with portraiture as a business in America, and he viewed it beneath his talents, he tried to accomplish many different goals. He was fueled by his own artistic beliefs and what he felt patrons desired. The result was a strange amalgamation of styles appealing to neither the older or younger generation.

Naturally, Adams was not pleased by the piece and his wife Abigail called it "stern, unpleasing."[76] Particularly galling was the realism, which depicted Adam's wrinkles and abnormal eyes. The stylized, often exaggerated depiction of patriots, like that of Franklin and Washington, often used classical Greek and Roman imagery. A work like Morse's was almost insulting by denying Adams the deference he would feel his position as a patriot leader and elite deserved. Especially troubling was the display of weaknesses and physical imperfections. For Morse and his generation a promotion of

[75] Kloss, 37.
[76] Kloss, 36.

Enlightenment ideals and British social standards were not only outdated but un-American. Therefore, depicting gentleman as they actually looked was not an insult to their character but an announcement of their role as American and their accomplishments in the revolution. The result was that age was something that should be lauded not ignored. Your individual actions made you a gentleman, not the ability to affect a standard set of characteristics.

Morse's generation looked at both identity and the cultural relationship with Britain differently than the previous one as the political break experienced by their parents and grandparents without a related shift in everyday life was re-imagined by the first generation of Americans into a wholly republican way of life. The result was a difficult period of American portraiture as what a customer wanted depended even more on the individual's age and personal sentiments and the artist could easily make a mistake. The case in Adam's portrait. Morse experienced a career dependent on portraiture, what he had hoped to avoid, marked by two different types of customers, patrons and clients each demanding different styles and themes within their pieces neither realizing the goals Morse had of creating a democratic art.

Morse relied on commissions for individual portraits and soon advertized himself in many popular newspapers like the *New-Hampshire Gazette* where on December 24, 1816, he used the same notice in many other papers like the *Portsmouth Oracle* on January 4, 1817, he placed an ad that read:

> Mr. MORSE,
> From Boston,
> Will reside in town for a few weeks, and will paint the PORTRAITS of those ladies and gentleman who may favor him with their commissions. He has taken a

room at Mrs. Ringer's.[77]

Absent from Morse's ad, however, are some of the most important signifiers from the West periods that artists used to demonstrate that they fit into the cycle of British cultural influences. In particular, Morse does not mention his connection to Washington Allston, his main teacher, Benjamin West, or his training in London. These omissions are striking especially since Morse was a virtual unknown at this point in American art and any of these references could greatly aid his reputation. Morse also failed to mention his portrait of Adams, a potential demonstration to the public that he was not only an accomplished artist but included in a select group who received access to the patriot elite for sittings. All of these missing components were the driving force behind artists' advertisements, like Joseph Wright, of the West period.

Although some of these oversights might be easily explained, for example Adam's general dislike of his portrait may have caused Morse hesitation in mentioning it, the fact that Morse failed to include any of the usual indicators of professional ability demonstrated some transformation was taking place in portraits. All of the normal references that Morse ignored where active during West period portraiture. At the time patrons dominated the style of portraits and artists hoped to create a reputation by linking themselves to important patrons in print. Therefore, since Morse is both a member of and a witness to the first generation of Americans moving away for this cultural identity he chose to represent this through his advertisement. The language also appeared more democratic than earlier painter's ads as both the definition and parameter of a gentleman and lady was changing opening up his clientele to many more people. In the previous

[77] Advertisement, Samuel F.B. Morse, *New-Hampshire Gazette*, December 24, 1816.

generation, this would restrict his subjects to a very small group of individuals. For the Morse period generation of Americans, however, almost anyone could be considered a lady or gentleman if their actions and characteristics fit into the new American definition.

An even more democratic advertisement appeared in the 1820s after Morse had some recognition as an artist in America. Again, missing are all the old signifiers of an artist's ties to England; however, Morse's language appeared even more democratized as his appeal seemed to reach a larger crowd as now absent is any recognition of the type of individual who might employ him.

> Mr.Morse
>
> Has returned to Charleston, and has his PAINTING ROOM in the rear of the Jones' Hoarding House, in the room recently occupied by Mr. Jay, the architect.—
> Entrance from St. Michael's Alley,
> December 29.[78]

Although Morse's career was marked by an inability to fully realize his goal of a democratized form of art he never deviated from his idealism. This is apparent not only from his advertising but all his artistic endeavors. Throughout his American career, Morse made a point of displaying his role as a first generation American and an artist dedicated to expressing this identity. This influenced his portraits of Adams, Monroe, and Silliman, his relationship to the American Academy, and his private exhibitions. In each instance, even when his patrons were from a generation dedicated to the British cultural standard, Morse tried to direct his art into an American context often with disastrous results.

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[78] Advertisement, *City Gazette*, January 3, 1821, vol, XLI, issue 13230, 1, Charleston, South Carolina.

Morse expressed this idealism in multiple journal entries and letters. Underlying Morse's artistic style was a commitment to the first generation's republicanism which blurred the lines of the social hierarchy prevalent in the West period. In addition, Morse expressed dissatisfaction with the leaders of the country as many he felt were still too tied to the social conventions of the previous age and were unwilling to help the lower classes become familiar with the culture and refinement of fine art. In an entry in his journal, 1833, Morse provided a clear definition of what he hoped to achieve in his art, "I believe in the possibility, by the diffusion of the highest moral and intellectual cultivation through every class, of raising the lower classes in refinement."[79]

Ironically, it was Morse's inability to realize his goal of a truly republican form of art that resulted in his retirement in favor of scientific endeavors such as the invention of the telegraph, what he was most remembered for in American history. Because Morse remained unable to garner any real profit from his public exhibitions, he had to sell his pieces to patrons. He became increasingly jaded by American art. This was clear in his failed exhibition of *The Gallery of the Louvre*. Because American sentiments began to shift from Britain to France due to shared revolutionary ideology, both Morse and his generation lauded French painting. Therefore, Morse felt that the piece would appeal to society at large. In fact, the work received many positive reviews such as one from the *New York Mirror* during its exhibition, "…We have never seen anything of this kind before in this country…This representation of the Louvre…grows in interest at every fresh view, and we have found ourselves unconsciously lingering for hours, and yet have

[79] Samuel Morse, *Samuel F.B. Morse: His Letters and Papers vol. II,* Edward Lind Morse, ed., (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1914), 26-27.

been unable to exhaust its beauties."[80]

However, Morse received almost no personal profit from the work and realized the piece must be sold in order for him to survive financially as it took over fourteen months to paint the piece. Morse bemoaned his failed experiment in art writing:

> I have had for three weeks more hopeless despondence in regard to the future, than I have ever before suffered…[I must] try to live if I can; to last through life, to stifle all aspiring thoughts after any excellence in art, about which I can only dream, an excellence which I see and felt I might attain, but which for 20 years has been within sight but never within grasp. My life of poetry and romance is gone.[81]

The continued failure of Morse's artistic vision began to see him growing more and more tied to his scientific pursuits and willing to give up his art to do so. This influenced his decision to sell *The Gallery of the Louvre* for below what he believed it was worth. The piece sold for thirteen hundred dollars, including the frame, instead of his initial price of twenty-five hundred to George Hyde Clark in 1834.[82] Morse expressed his desire to lower the price of the painting as a means to finance other pursuits, in particular the telegraph, in a letter to Clark a few months before the final sale:

> I have lately changed my plans in relation to this picture and to my art generally, and consequently I am able to dispose of it at a much less price. I have need of funds to prosecute my new plans, and, if this picture could now realize the sum of twelve hundred dollars it would at this moment be to me equivalent in value to the sum first set upon it.[83]

Morse's desire to end the system of patronage in American art proved futile, but he hoped to gain one more commission that would express his patriotism and democratic ideals. The four blank panels in the rotunda of the Capital in Washington needed

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[80] Kloss, 132.
[81] Kloss, 135.
[82] Kloss, 135.
[83] Letter, Samuel F.B. Morse to George Hyde Clark, June 30, 1834. In Morse, 27-28.

someone to fill them with historical paintings. For Morse this offered the perfect opportunity to practice a republican art, opened for all to see and displaying uniquely American themes. Therefore, Morse sent a circular letter to the committee responsible for choosing the artists involved in the project, including Daniel Webster, John C. Calhoun, Henry Clay, and John Quincy Adams, on March 7, 1834. In part of the letter, Morse explained both his training and connection to the project which made him a perfect candidate, "I have devoted twenty years of my life…studying with special reference to the execution of works of the kind proposed, and I must refer to my professional life and character in proof of my ability to do honor to the commission and to the country."[84]

As president of the National Academy of Design most American artists felt Morse would receive and deserved the commission. However, John Quincy Adams opened the competition to foreign artists believing no American born painter demonstrated sufficient talent to work on the rotunda. Naturally, in an atmosphere where challenges were being made to the West period ideals of elite status and British cultural inheritances, many first generation Americans were outraged over this clear promotion of the cultural ties to England they were fighting to destroy. Adams was unique in his position as a remaining gentleman in America still demonstrating these West period associations as more and more Americans began to create a uniquely American culture in the Morse period. Born in 1767, Adams did not participate in the revolution directly, but most likely was influenced by his father and that generation in his cultural ideology finding himself in a similar situation as Rembrandt Peale being linked to the revolutionary generation more because of his father's reputation than his own. Also, because Adam's attack directly

[84] Letter, Samuel F.B. Morse to the Library Committee, March 7. 1834. In Morse, 29.

targeted Morse, it seems reasonable to assume that much of his response could be related to his parent's dissatisfaction with the portrait Morse painted twenty years earlier, perhaps they believed that Morse was simply a bad painter.

Despite personal motivations, Adam's support of foreign artists demonstrated the continuance of West period standards well into the nineteenth century and helps explain Morse's continued frustrations after working for twenty years to end this practice. However, Adam's opinion was a dying one and fueled a vitriolic response from the public. This included a piece in the *New York Evening Post* which so insulted Adams that Morse was dropped from consideration completely since he was commonly believed to be its author. In reality, it was his friend James Fenimore Cooper who wrote the piece, fitting since Cooper was himself a proponent of a uniquely American culture created by and for the first generation.[85] Despite the mistaken identity, this blow effectively ended Morse's artistic career as he retired from the National Academy a few years later in 1842.

Morse communicated his failure to meet his goals of transforming American art in a 1849 letter to Cooper:

> Alas! My dear sir, the very nature of pictures produces a sadness of heart I cannot describe. Painting has been a smiling mistress to many, but she has been a cruel jilt to me. I did not abandon her, she abandoned me. I have taken scarcely any interest in painting for years. Will you believe it?[86]

If Morse failed to realize his personal goal in the creation of a truly American genre of art it was perhaps due to a narrow perception of clients. Though Morse hoped to democratize art he did not look widely enough hoping to eliminate portraiture completely

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[85] Morse, 30.
[86] Letter, Samuel F.B. Morse to James Fenimore Cooper, November 20, 1849. In Morse, 31.

as a democratic genre and therefore ignoring the middle and lower classes after his brief execution of their portraits very early in his career. For Morse these groups represented exhibition viewers but not customers. Therefore, if elite and academic portraiture remained conflicted by the demands of a dying but still present West period generation and a new Morse period generation, both hoping to shape the style and themes of the works, a new type of art, wholly American, emerged in its wake, middle and lower class, primitive portraits.

CHAPTER FOUR: AMERICA FINDS ITS STYLE: PRIMITIVE

In 1838 Joseph Whiting Stock, a crippled, middle class, itinerant folk artist painted the portraits of siblings Mary Jane Smith and William Howard Smith. These portraits, both crudely executed and costing only $12 apiece- elite portraits could cost well in the hundreds if not thousands of dollars- represented the emergence of the first genre of American art. Artists like Rembrandt Peale and Samuel F.B. Morse hoped that the first forms of American art would be displayed in mass exhibitions or at government institutions, but their timing was too early. Much of the upper class maintained a cultural identity tied to Britain and the West period and continued to hold most positions of power. Therefore, it was neither the academic artists nor their elite patrons whose portraits witnessed the beginnings of an American artistic style but rather the less trained and less refined middle class painter and customer. It was this type of art which is best characterized as the Folk period. Lasting roughly the same time as the Morse period, and for the sake of this project corresponding to the life of Ammi Phillips (1788-1865), it witnessed both a different type of client and style within its brand of portraiture.[1]

The lack of any real presence in art by the middle and lower classes in the West and Morse periods saw the surfacing of an art form, folk portraiture, which truly embodied an American identity. This group internalized the ideology of the revolution and demanded their own place within a new American culture completely devoid of

[1] The use of Ammi Phillips life as the timeframe of the Folk period is simply related to its close correspondence with the Morse period as it is important to display how both operated simultaneously. Phillips was no more or no less representative of this type of art as folk artists, unlike West and Morse period artists, where not consciously working within a unified artistic movement. Therefore, unlike the West and Morse period, this cultural period cannot be named after a single individual as this would undermine what characterized the period, the artists who operated within it, and its customer base.

existing influences. Artists like Ammi Phillips, William Matthew Prior, Deborah Goldsmith, Ruth Bascom, Mary Ann Willson, and Joseph Whiting Stock became the first truly American artists working within an American genre.

In 1831 Alexis De Tocqueville commented that Americans were, "A people absolutely without precedents, without traditions, without habits, without dominating ideas even, opening for itself without hesitation a new path."[2] Though De Tocqueville's statement clearly exaggerated the degree to which American culture was without influences given that many Anglo Americans who were born and grew up in England were still living, it certainly highlighted how cultural associations within Britain that structured America in the past were less prevalent. According to historian Joyce Appleby, this first generation of Americans, "demonstrated a heightened awareness of 'firstness'-of being the first to have rugs on their floors, to have steamboats and canals, national elections, public land sales, cheap newspapers, pianos wholly produced in the United States, and a president who wore shoe laces instead of buckles-the list goes on…"[3] Art also changed for these Americans as they created new genres of truly American art, with portraiture as a staple.

If the art of the West period was executed to express the status of the elite, predicated on British ideals, the art of the nineteenth century demonstrated status of both the upper and middle classes in both the West and Morse periods as new ideas about what

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[2] Letter, Alexis de Tocqueville to Jules de Tocqueville, December 4, 1831. In *Tocqueville on American Character: Why Tocqueville's Brilliant Exploration of the American Spirit is as Vital and Important Today as it was Nearly Two Hundred Years Ago,* Michael Arthur Ledeen (Macmillan, 2000), 18.

[3] [3]Joyce Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 22.

republicanism meant permeated American society.[4] Just as it was patron's desire that fueled the portraits of the previous periods so too did client's demands mark the style of the new American art. In lieu of the portraits expressing a patron's British-ness, middle class works of the Folk period declared that its subject was an American.

Ultimately, two styles of American portraits developed in the nineteenth century: academic (Morse period) and primitive (Folk period). The difference in these pieces is instrumental in demonstrating how strongly Americans began to internalize and express the ideals of the revolution. While the former West period generation allowed for class mobility through the affectation of Enlightenment ideals, this generation of Americans, especially among the middle classes, no longer looked to the aristocracy as a template for proper behavior. A promotion of the middle class as in many ways superior to elites resulted in their desire to create a material culture that lauded their place in society.

Art historian Jean Lipman explained the emergence of these works at this time saying, "the fact that primitive portraiture reached its height in the nineteenth rather than in the more "primitive" seventeenth and eighteenth centuries indicates that the native trend was at first submerged by traditional European styles and then eventually achieved independent expression."[5] Obviously, something in the American identity changed in the antebellum nineteenth century resulting in the first independent American artistic genre. According to Charles Sellers, "this formula for taming American nature to a sentimental

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[4] In *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), Sean Wilentz describes this new approach to American society arguing that "In the early nineteenth century to be an American citizen was by definition to be a republican, the inheritor of a revolutionary legacy in a world ruled by aristocrats and kings.," 61.

[5] Jean Lipman, *American Primitive Portraiture: A Revaluation* in *Portrait Painting in America: The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Ellen Miles (New York: Main Street Press, 1977), 95.

bourgeois/middle-class morality met such critical needs that it soon pervaded every arena of cultural expression."[6] Economically, Americans were prospering opening up the possibility of purchasing portraits to even the common man. Naturally, this new type of financial independence, denied to middle and lower classes in the West period, affected how individuals viewed themselves. Joyce Appleby noted how American society was undergoing a major change as, "society divided among rich, poor and middling gave way to one in which representatives of occupations-farmers, lawyers, school teachers, manufacturers, and merchants-interacted to create general prosperity."[7] Patrons utilized their newfound prosperity to employ artists. They demanded to be part of American material culture previously denied them by reinterpreting art to fit into their expanding but still limited budgets. This was an expression of customers American, not British or West period, identity. The degree to which these types of paintings were popular with the middle class was apparent in a comment by John Neal, himself a miniaturist as well as journalist in Maine. In 1829 he wrote:

> We have certainly, either by nature…or by accident, something that appears like a decided preposition in this country…painters, if not too numerous to mention, are much too numerous to particularize. They are…more than we know what to do with. If you cannot believe this, you have but to look at the multitude of portraits, wretched as they generally are, that may be found in every village of our country. You can hardly open the door of a best-room any where, without surprising or being surprised by, the picture of somebody, plastered to the wall and staring at you with both eyes and a bunch of flowers.[8]

This meant artists of the Folk period created affordable works. The result was a new style as this brand of client no longer desired the expensive classical portraits inherited from British cultural norms of the West period but favored the cheaper, less

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[6] Sellers, 373.
[7] Appleby, 256.
[8] John Neal, *The Yankee; and Boston Literary Gazette, N.S.* (1829), 48. In Rumford, 19.

academic works of limners as the promotion of Enlightenment qualities was not their aim.

Limning was a practice in the United States associated with untrained, itinerant portrait painters.[9] Limners were career painters who often traveled with other limners or in rare occasions trained under academic painters but the majority remained self taught.[10] Paintings were executed in a number of mediums including oil, pastel, and watercolor on many different surfaces such as canvas, bed ticking, or glass.[11] Jean Lipman explained typically in the paintings of the limner, "portraits are stylistically characterized by firm outline, simplified mass, solid tone and color."[12]

Limners often supplemented incomes by performing craftsmen's jobs like painting coaches, houses, and signs when commissions for portraits were scarce or as a platform to train themselves in basic painterly techniques.[13] It is important to make the distinction between craftsmen and limners, however, as limners evolved from earlier artistic traditions and their art highlighted the changes in artistic motivations of the Folk period. Jean Lipman expressed the importance of viewing limners in the family of academic artists and not as outsider artists. She explained, "it cannot be sufficiently stressed that the style of the American primitive is essentially intellectual and abstract-not "quaint"- and that it represents the opposite of illusionist realism, the essence of abstract design."[14] Like craftsman, however, economics influenced their practice as styles were

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[9] Jane Kallir, *The Folk Art Tradition: Naïve Painting in Europe and the United States* (New York: The Viking Press, 1981), 24.
[10] Kallir, 25.
[11] Lipman, 96.
[12] Lipman, 95.
[13] Kallir, 24.
[14] Lipman , 95.

influenced by how quickly and cheaply a painting could be produced. This connection to economics reflected a growing capitalism in America. Capitalism became a direct influence in the identity of middle class Americans. It allowed the middle class a participation in areas of life not previously experienced. Charles Sellers explained how transformative capitalism was to all aspects of American society. Sellers commented, "as traditional cultures gave way to a spreading market culture, new beliefs, behaviors, emotions, and interpersonal relations spurred work and consumption."[15]

This opened up the possibility of marketing art to regular people indicating a new American identity as a desire to become consumers and creators of a material culture permeated the middle classes and marked the Folk period. Alexis de Tocqueville negatively explained this new desire of the middle class believing it tainted art. De Tocqueville commented, "to satisfy these new cravings of human vanity the arts have recourse to every kind of imposture, and these devices sometimes go so far that they defeat their own purpose."[16] But, the influence of economics on art was not markedly different than in the West and Morse periods. Copley's career displayed how influential economics was on where and what he produced. Even Peale and Morse, desperately fighting against an economic dependence, were tied to customer's demands in their own careers. The Folk period, therefore, reflected how a change in economics influenced art as this new type of economy influenced American identity just as Mercantilism influenced West period identity. This highlighted how American identity was influencing the type of painting patrons wanted and the amount of classical training artists got as well as the style in which they worked. Six limners of the period who

[15] Sellers, 4.
[16] De Tocqueville, Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1969), 467.

demonstrate the emergence of this distinct American genre include Ammi Phillips, William Matthew Prior Deborah Goldsmith, Ruth Bascom, Mary Ann Phillips and Joseph Whiting Stock.

AMMI PHILLIPS

Phillip's career reflected the profitability of limning during the new republic and how economics in tandem with client's attitudes influenced their art.[17] John Vanderlyn, an academic artist of the time, commented on the success of itinerant painters as they attracted many commissions and developed very profitable practices. In a letter to his nephew in 1825 he wrote, "Were I to begin life again, I should not hesitate to follow this plan, that is, to paint portraits cheap and slight, for the mass of folks can't judge of the merits of a well finished picture, I am more and more persuaded of this. Indeed, moving about through the country as Phillips did and probably still does, must be an agreeable way of passing ones time."[18] According to this letter, Phillips clearly developed a successful practice as his adaptability in changing styles and his attentions to patron's demands created the profitability and endurance of his career.

Works by Phillips were generally considered to be of three separate artists, the Border Limner, the Kent Limner and himself. Because the Border and Kent pieces were unsigned and executed in very different styles, they were not attributed to Phillip's works. Evidence amassed by Lawrence and Barbara Holdridge as well as Mary Black

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[17] Jean Lipman and Alice Winchester. *The Flowering of American Folk Art: 1776-1876*. (New York: Viking Press, 1974), 5-6.

[18] Letter, John Vanderlyn to his nephew, John Vanderlyn, September 9, 1825. In *Ammi Phillips: Portrait Painter 1788-1865,* Mary Black (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1969), 14.

showed that the paintings of the Kent and Border Limner's were actually works by Ammi Phillips at different periods.[19] Phillip's inconsistency showed that nineteenth century folk painters were not operating with a specified artistic criteria but working through the demands of a new class of client. Artists began developing styles that appealed to a mass audience, and creating economically affordable portraits whose prices varied according to execution. This meant that like Phillips, most folk artists worked in a variety of styles in order to appeal to all economic classes.

Phillip's Border period was between 1812-1819. This period was called the Border period because Phillips was working at the borders of New York, Massachusetts, and Vermont. This period was characterized, according to Mary Black, by "ethereal visions in delicate pastels,"[20] and, "fine, big, subtly colored portraits."[21] Lawrence and Barbara Holdridge explained Phillip's style was an attempt at copying artistic paintings that Phillips may have been familiar with.[22] Phillips was probably not relying on specific paintings to influence his early work but was simply trying to adhere to classical ideals. This was similar to the approaches that earlier portrait artists, like West, Copley and Peale, utilized in their training and displays how often American primitive artists experimented with classical styles in the nineteenth century but abandoned these techniques after they proved to be in little demand with a new price conscious consumer base. It was not to the folk portraitist's advantage to maintain classical styles as patrons were willing to forgo technical ability for cheaper paintings as "gone were the days when

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[19] Kallir, 25.
[20] Kallir, 25
[21] Mary Black, *Ammi Phillips: Portrait Painter 1788-1865* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1969), 13.
[22] Barbara and Larry Holdridge, *Ammi Phillips, Limner Extraordinary* in *Portrait Painting in America: The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Ellen Miles (New York: Main Street Press, 1977), 113.

art was only for the aristocracy."[23]

It is likely that Phillips was modeling his work off of J. Brown (active 1806-1808) who may have been Phillip's teacher as both were working in the same area.[24] Qualities of Brown's work, "intense realism" and "the poses of sitters, his bright warm palette, and his fanatical attention to detail" are reflected in Phillip's work at the time.[25] In Phillip's work, "what emerges is a true primitive, in which everything is naively simplified. Outline holds the brightly colored forms, and subtleties are all but absent…still it-in its assurance, innocence, and simplification-completely fresh and disarming."[26] Some of Phillip's border period portraits include *Joseph Slade* (1816) and *Also Slade* (1816).

Phillips continued to change his artistic style throughout his life. Phillips entered into a period between 1820 and 1828 characterized by realistic portraits similar to more classical portraits. Mary Black explained Phillip's style in this period, "the costumes are as dark or darker than the backgrounds, and most of the women wear black dresses. The backgrounds and the dark-clad figures seem to be part of a convention intended to set forth finely painted features, laces and muslins are displayed on dark velvet."[27] The best example of Phillip's work from this period is *Lady in White* (1820). Again, Phillip's style may have changed due to influences of another artist, Ezra Ames (1768-1836). Ames was academically trained and his influence would explain Phillip's new attention to classical style and detailing as Ames own work reflected intricate detailing of women's

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[23] Lipman and Wincester, 6.
[24] Deborah Chotner, *American Naïve Paintings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 271.
[25] Black, 12.
[26] Holdridge, 113.
[27] Black, 13.

lace and shawls.[28]

Phillip's style changed again in his Kent period (1829-1838) when he was painting portraits of many of the families of Kent, Connecticut such as *Mrs. Mayer and Daughter* (1835-1840) (Fig. 12).[29] Mary Black described this period as being more stylized than Phillip's earlier work with, "a new gracefulness in the poses of the women. The men are often set in painted stenciled chairs with one arm resting on the top rail."[30] Phillip's works of this period were almost abstract in style as his intense stylization lends itself to compositions consisting of angular shapes.[31] Some of Phillip's most accomplished Kent period portraits include *Catherine A. May* (1830), *The Strawberry Girl* (1830), *Mr. Day* (1835), *Mrs. Day* (1835), *Henry Teller* (1835), and *Jane Storm Teller* (1835). What was most unique in Phillip's style during the Kent period was his ability to create portraits appealing to his patron's desires to become part of American material culture:

> All the women of the Kent period, whether farmer's wives or town sophisticates, wear the same mantle of aristocracy and delicate breeding. All the men are cultivated and stalwart personages. They are individuals still, but Phillips has idealized them as a proud and truly impressive breed of Americans. These are ancestor portraits in the best sense of the term, for they transcend likenesses and maintain an air of timelessness. [32]

Phillip's understood the American desire to have a representation of their American way of life incorporated into their portraits. Inherently in these representations are the new parameters of being considered a gentleman or lady. As Americans internalized the republican ideals of the revolution, they demanded an equal place with the new cultural

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[28] Chotner, 271.
[29] Holdridge, 116.
[30] Black, 15.
[31] Holdridge, 116.
[32] Holdridge, 116.

forms. Art, portraiture in general, was now American not British, at least for the middle classes, and artists like Phillips needed to understand that this meant a specific handling of his subjects, both financially and thematically, in order to garner success. In this way, Phillip's art and career reflected the larger changes in American identity that influenced the styles and types of portraits client's demanded in the Folk period.

WILLIAM MATTHEW PRIOR

Another folk artist of the Folk period whose art reflected an emerging American identity was William Matthew Prior. Prior's work displayed a style of painting independent not only of classical British standards but was independent of the styles of other folk portraitists as well. For example, Prior's and Phillip's work have no real artistic commonalities. This demonstrated how American folk portraitists were not attempting to work in a particular style or school. Some artists trained together and influenced each other's work, like Brown and Ames in Phillip's career, but this was more evident of economic concerns than artistic ones and was the difference between their training and academic painters studying under other artists. Folk artists of were more concerned with developing a commercial style than in developing a school of training.[33] It was this discontinuity of style and lack of artistic rules that created the first American artistic genre in the Folk period instead of the academic art of the Morse period. This was clear by Peale's and Morse's failures in creating a truly democratic art as the continuance of an older generation's control of academic art retarded the growth of their own American genre.

[33] Lipman and Winchester, 6.

Like other folk artists of the Folk period, Prior developed a practice both artistically rewarding as well as profitable. In this manner, early Folk period portraitists were not different from West period artists because both relied on economics to fuel their careers and Prior's move into art mirrored Charles Willson Peale's own decision to pursue art after many failed careers. The difference in Folk period portraiture was in attitudes of the middle class clientele representing a new American identity. Whereas, West period patrons wanted classical portraits, replete with British association, middle class clients of the Folk period demanded affordable prices. This led to an abandonment of rigid classical standards, costly due to the time they took to execute, and ushered in a new quick and cheap portraiture available in multiple price points.[34]

Prior's style was telling as his ability to work in many different levels of detail was intentional creating cheaper portraits the common man could easily afford. Prior was a capable artist in many different styles and mediums including classical oil portraits, paintings on glass, landscapes, and "flat" portraits painted on artist's boards in tempera.[35] If Prior was able to paint classical portraiture why would he as well as his clients prefer his most primitive or "flat" style?[36] The answer appears to be entirely economic reflecting the common motivations of Folk period portraitists. According to Nina Fletcher Little, Prior, "could paint well when he wished to, or when it was financially profitable, but for his less affluent patrons he early adopted a style which provided a passable likeness with the least possible expenditure of his own time and effort."[37] Some examples of Prior's "flat" paintings include *Baby in Blue* (1845), *Boy with Toy Horse and*

[34] Lipman and Winchester, 6.
[35] Little, 120.
[36] Sears, 42.
[37] Little, 120.

Wagon (1845), *Little Miss Fairfield* (1850), *Master Cleeves* (1850), *The Burnish Sisters* (1854), and *Child with Straw Hat* (1873).

The most revealing sign that Prior was capable of executing academic portraits, and therefore choosing a primitive alternative simply for economic reasons, was his exhibitions with many of the most famous elite artists of the day. Prior's work was so accomplished that he was one of many participants in the 1831 Boston Athenaeum also showcasing work by Gilbert Stuart, A.B. Durand, Thomas Cole, Washington Allston, and Thomas Sully.[38] Importantly, Prior's work in the exhibition was a portrait of Abraham Hammatt indicating that he not only could paint in a more classical and academic style but that he could also receive commissions for pieces from wealthier clients. This explained both the growing middle class demand for their own genre of portrait as well as the changing mentality of painters as the democratic ideals the first generation of Americans promoted permeated almost all aspects of life, even artistic patronage. Prior consciously chose to appeal to the middle class not only from economic necessity as he could have been a successful academic and elite Morse period painter but most likely was dissatisfied with the nature of that occupations relationship to patronage, like Peale and Morse, believing in to be an antiquated and elitist convention no longer in line with the first American generation's view of society.

This new identity of the democratic, American middle class was evident from the profitability of Prior's historic portraits painted on glass. Beginning as an ode to his artistic idol, Gilbert Stuart with whom Prior had an exhibit in 1831 and later named his son for, Prior convinced the Boston Athenaeum, who bought the piece in 1828 from

[38] Rumford, 27.

Stuart's wife, that he should be allowed to copy Stuart's portrait of George Washington.[39] Although Prior had already made copies of the work he had never made them from the actual piece most likely viewing a mezzotint or another artist's copy. Therefore, the ability to work from the original would not only meet a personal goal of Priors, working with his hero's painting, but greatly improve the quality of his reproductions. Finishing the project in 1850, Prior took little time in converting it into a series of portraits on glass, a technique he learned in the crafts industry while working with the enameling of mirrors and clocks.[40] Theses portraits were intended to appeal to a lower class cliental as the American elite had purchased expensive and classically executed portraits of their patriot leaders since the revolution, as evident from Charles Willson Peale's Gallery of Great Men, but few cheaper alternatives existed. Therefore, Prior utilized the clear demand of a material representation of American culture originating from the changing American psyche when deciding to develop this line of portraits. Prior purposely kept the price low and execution crude resulting in both an affordable price and a wholly American theme. Prior even directly targeted a lower class clientele by selling the pieces at docks, wharves, and other working class areas where individuals hoping to promote their patriotism had previously been denied the opportunity due to poverty. This displayed not only Prior's understanding of the demand for cheap republican themed art but also a keen business mind by seeking out a very specific demographic.

Prior's entrepreneurial pursuits were reflected in a series of advertisements he posted in small newspapers, mainly the *Maine Inquirer*. These demonstrated how the versatility of Prior's style developed to market his art to more consumers. The first

[39] Little, 122.
[40] Rumford, 178; Little, 122.

known advertisement Prior posted was in the *Maine Inquirer* on June 5, 1827 and stated, "Ornamental painting, old tea trays, waiters re-japanned and ornamented in a very tasty style. Bronzing, oil guilding and varnishing by Wm. M. Prior, Bath. No 1 Middle Street."[41] The summer after this initial advertisement Prior ran another in the same paper, it read, "Wm. Prior, fancy, sign, and ornamental painting. Also drawing of machineries of every description executed in good order and on shortest possible notice."[42] These postings demonstrated the variety of work limners were willing to take in order to be profitable and how their artistic pursuits often went beyond portraiture. It appeared as if these early artistic endeavors helped develop his career as a limner. Possibly, Prior worked honing his abilities at these more craft related projects before he began his career as a limner. This seems like a likely training ground for Prior as it was not clear if he trained under any other portrait artists directly.

February 28, 1828 marked the first mention of Prior's portraits in another advertisement posted in the *Maine Inquirer*. Not only did this ad categorize Prior as a portrait artist, it reflected competitive pricing. It stated, "Portrait painter, Wm. M. Prior, offers his services to the public. Those who wish for a likeness at a reasonable price are invited to call soon. Side views and profiles of children at reduced prices."[43] Obviously, folk portraits were offered at reasonable prices and marketed to a mass audience. The most telling advertisement Prior posted was on April 5, 1831 and stated, "Fancy pieces

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[41] *Maine Inquirer,* June 5, 1827. In Nina Fletcher Little, *William M. Prior, Traveling Artist: And his In-Laws, the Painting Hamblems* in *Portrait Painting in America: The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Ellen Miles. (New York: Main Street Press, 1977), 120.
[42] Little, 120.
[43] *Maine Inquirer,* February 28, 1828. In Nina Fletcher Little, *William M. Prior, Traveling Artist: And his In-Laws, the Painting Hamblems* in *Portrait Painting in America: The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Ellen Miles. (New York: Main Street Press, 1977), 120.

painted, either designed or copied to suit the customer, enabling on glass tablets for looking glasses and time pieces…" the end of the advertisement offers the most insight into Prior's stylistic shifts, "persons wishing for a flat picture can have a likeness without shade or shadow at one quarter price."[44] In a few of Prior's advertisements, price lists are incorporated indicating his portraits ranged from $10 to $25 and their frames went from $3 to $10 a huge departure from the prices of elite portraits considering Morse was paid $750 for his portrait of President Monroe.[45]

Prior was promoting competitive pricing as the cornerstone of his practices a clear departure from the relationship between patrons and artists in academic works. In addition to his price lists in advertisements, a label found on the reverse of one of Prior's paintings also lists pricing options. In the portrait of Mr. and Mrs. Nat Todd, typical examples of "flat" portraits, Prior included a label reading, "PORTRAITS/ PAINTED IN THIS STYLE!/ Done in about an hour's sitting./ Price $2,92, including Frame, Glass, &c./ Please call at Trenton Street/ East Boston/ WM. M. PRIOR."[46] This label reflected how Prior's art was strongly tied to economics. Prior emphasized the low cost of his portraits as well as the speed he could produce them in order to promote his work to a class of client more concerned with price than artistic technical ability as the portraits aim had changed from the previous West period generation. Portraiture still expressed status and identity, however, as the middle class began to embody what it meant to be American the old Enlightenment and British styled works of the previous generation died out giving way to an art form unique in itself as it was created by and for a customer base not even

[44] Little, 120.
[45] *Maine Inquirer*, April 5, 1831. In Nina Fletcher Little, *William M. Prior, Traveling Artist: And his In-Laws, the Painting Hamblems* in *Portrait Painting in America: The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Ellen Miles. (New York: Main Street Press, 1977), 120.
[46] Little, 120.

in existence until the first generation of Americans.

DEBORAH GOLDSMITH, RUTH BASCOM, MARY ANN WILLSON

Just like their male counterparts, female painters began to witness new opportunities in the Folk period as social customs began to shift along with identity. These new prospects were capitalized by Deborah Goldsmith. Goldsmith began her career as a way to supplement her parent's dwindling income. According to Goldsmith's granddaughter, Olive Cole Smith, "To Deborah, with her sensitive nature and her enjoyment of the refinements of life, poverty was a dread spectre."[47] Smith recorded her grandmother's motivation in both becoming an artist and her career in *The Old Traveling Bag*, a compilation of Goldsmith's letters, journals, two friendship albums and many of her water colors and drawings.[48] Goldsmith's motivation was similar to most itinerant artists who often turned to their profession after being unable to find another career. As a woman Goldsmith's financial options were few. Painting, a skill required for a young lady's education and a socially accepted hobby was a natural choice.[49] Goldsmith's training conformed to the appropriate roles of woman at the time making her job as an itinerant artist seem less professional than her male counterparts.[50] In fact, Goldsmith

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[47] Jean Lipman, "Deborah Goldsmith: Itinerant Portrait Painter," in *Portrait Painting in America: The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Ellen Miles. (New York: Main Street Press, 1977), 125.

[48] Jean Lipman, "Deborah Goldsmith: Itinerant Portrait Painter," in *Portrait Painting in America: The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Ellen Miles. (New York: Main Street Press, 1977), 125.

[49] Joyce Appleby examines the new roles of women as well as the burgeoning education available to females of all classes in her book *Inheriting the Revolution* on pages 105-106.

[50] Appleby explains that "Careers were mostly masculine affairs; women had domestic

abandoned her career after marrying a client, George Addison Throop, in 1832.[51] Therefore, Goldsmith and her family made sure to indicate that she was not exactly a professional. In many ways Goldsmith's position indicated the changing identity of middle class clients as having a career in the West period would eventually disqualify a woman from being considered elite. For the first generation of Americans, however, one's job, if still grounded in expectable gender roles, was not sufficient reason to view someone with less respect.

It was this unique aspect of Goldsmith's career that her granddaughter related in the published edition of her journal commenting, "She had managed some way to improve her natural gift for painting. As a portrait painter she supported herself and helped her parents. It was the custom, then, to go to the homes of patrons and remain until the family portraits were painted."[52] In this way Goldsmith's career was promoted less as a profession than a usual way of life as it followed many of the typical activities a lady would experience as it was not uncommon for them to visit in relative's or friend's homes for extended periods of time. This made up much of a lady's social life as it would be inappropriate for them to be fully engaged in society and needed this private space as a way to maintain the appropriate level of privacy within a domestic sphere.

Because art was a typical component of many antebellum nineteenth-century ladies' live, many examples of primitive works by them exist. However, most were not itinerant or semi-professional artists like Goldsmith but rather executing portraits out of a sense of duty and as a hobby expected of a lady. This was the case of Ruth Henshaw

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responsibilities.," 21.

[51] Lipman and Winchester, 108.

[52] Jean Lipman, "Deborah Goldsmith: Itinerant Portrait Painter," in *Portrait Painting in America: The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Ellen Miles. (New York: Main Street Press, 1977), 125.

Bascom whose art was an extension of her other roles as a middle class woman and wife of respected community leaders such as her first husband Dr. Asa Miles, a Dartmouth professor, and her second husband, the Rev. Ezekiel L. Bascom.[53] Bascom's career was remembered in multiple diaries, similar to Goldsmith's, that she began at seventeen and continued for fifty-seven years. This indicated the related nature of portraiture and common expectation's of women's lives as the correspondence, journals, and letters which chronicled their art career were another typical component of their lives. Just like Goldsmith, Bascom made note of her paintings almost daily in her journal with entries such as:

> Boston, 1830: …bought some crayons at Burdit's and crayon paper; began to paint the two sisters, Rebecca and Lydia Lovejoy of Nelson, N.H. Painted til twelve…
>
> July 6, 1837. Painted in little Mary Denny.
>
> July 17, 1837… finished the painting and framing of twin sisters Woodcock.
>
> July 24, 1837… began little Stephen Salisbury's sketch.
>
> Sept. 8th, I painted Herbert Richardson, ten years old, a neighbor who was sketched last P.M., and then took Miss Knight's shadow at evening.[54]

The difference between Bascom's painting and Goldsmith's, however, was need. Bascom was not reliant on her art for any income and never charged a client. Bascom did not begin to paint until forty-seven as it was only one of her many hobbies and never a necessity. For example, in one journal entry Bascom wrote about all her hobbies in the same manner as she did her art, "Quilting at Mr. Andrews'. Had a great number of gallants. 'Wool break' at Mr. Southgate's, spinning frolic at Mr. Green's. Had a

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[53] Lipman and Winchester, 32.
[54] Diary, Ruth Henshaw Bascom. In Lipman and Winchester, 38.

Cappadocian Dance. Mr. Shaw played for us."[55] A similar entry records, "Betsy and I carding and spinning. Later we went to pick blackberries out of old Mrs. Andrews' pasture and she was mad as hops."[56] Therefore, Bascom's art was inherently different than Goldsmith's as it comprised neither a career or witnessed any itinerancy but was simply normal day to day life of a lady.

While the two women's art was motivated by different factors, the fact that both participated in the burgeoning folk art genre demonstrated just how strongly American identity was changing as a place in art existed for them as middle class females at all. The previous generation would never have considered art as a useful occupation for middle class women as it was restricted to men or in some cases an elite female's education, in this way related to the British cultural inheritance and a demonstration of elite power. In extreme circumstances, such as that of Patience Wright whose husband's sudden death made it necessary for her to support a large family, art was utilized by women as a career in the West period. However, Wright was careful in the nature her career took by making it as close to accepted gender roles as possible. Also contributing to her ability to be a professional woman and still considered a lady was her position as a widow that demanded some participation in a male environment as no male existed in her life to serve as an intermediary between public and private space. However, Wright did lose some social position by her choice to work and was often considered more as a man then woman in her social circles. Because the reputation of the revolution became more entrenched in everyday life during the first generation of Americans, families rushed to share the material culture of elites making arts and crafts a perfect past time for middle

[55] Diary, Ruth Henshaw Bascom. In Lipman and Winchester, 34.
[56] Diary, Ruth Henshaw Bascom. In Lipman and Winchester, 34.

class woman. Art was a way to both define themselves as respected, although less wealthy than elites, and able to appreciate and experience typical markers of gentility.

This connection to respectable behavior for women seemed to be the association that Goldsmith's granddaughter tries to make in the book by linking her own painting to these types of ladylike pursuits. However, Goldsmith was not living with families she knew and using her art as a hobby, like Bascom, but was staying with clients. Therefore, Goldsmith's career was the same model that Prior employed as he expected to live with his clients while executing their portraits and more in line with professional portrait painters than middle class female's past times.[57] Goldsmith was forced to travel to the towns of Brookfield, Hamilton, Lebanon, Toddsville, Hartwick, Cooperstown, and Hubbardsville, all in New York, pursuing commissions.[58] This relationship mirrored that of the older West period artists who would indeed move in with a family for extended periods of time, often in the South as most gentlemen lived in the country, while completing their portraits but differed by the sheer number of places Goldsmith went and the types of families she painted. Goldsmith's experience was neither exactly like that of primitive painters like Phillips or Prior, who would rent a room in each town they visited, women who lived in the homes of associates while on extended stays, like Bascom, or elite painters of the West period generation who stayed in patron's households but rather an amalgamation of all three.

In this manner itinerancy was just as vital to Goldsmith's art as any other primitive painter's career as she was reliant on multiple customers in order to create a decent living and needed to find a way to make it acceptable without losing her place

[57] Little, 122.
[58] Lipman and Winchester, 108.

within a respectable middle to lower class family. Goldsmith's sex could have limited her ability to move from place to place respectably. Goldsmith found a way of linking her movement to a common and accepted practice of both painters and women circumventing a subsequent loss of reputation her loose associations with the people she stayed could create. This became clear in Goldsmith's letters as her decisions to move are often related to invitations or advice by individual people or families giving an impression of intimacy when in fact none existed. For example, when deciding whether to leave the town of Toddsville Goldsmith wrote:

> I do not know how long I will stay in this place. I have business enough for the present, and for some reason or other, Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd seem to be overanxious for me to remain here through the summer. A lady was here a few days since from Hartford. She thought I would do better there than here, and I may possibly go there, or to Cooperstown village, but I do not know yet, for I think shall stay here as long as I can get portrait painting.[59]

This need to ground her career in ladylike behavior demonstrated Goldsmith's desire to use art for financial gain but not risk losing her status in the middle class, a possibility as itinerancy demanded leaving the domestic sphere in favor of a public one.[60] If a female artist did not take the precautions that Goldsmith did her reputation and social status would be forfeited as was the case of Mary Ann Willson.

Willson's art was neither a form of feminine entertainment, like Bascom's, nor a

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[59] Jean Lipman, "Deborah Goldsmith: Itinerant Portrait Painter," in *Portrait Painting in America: The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Ellen Miles. (New York: Main Street Press, 1977), 125.

[60] In many ways Goldsmith's career as a folk painter and her attempts to ground her work in respected roles for middle class women followed the same template for other women's occupations at the time, including those working in the mills of Lowell, Massachusetts. Thomas Dublin in *Women at Work: The Transformation of Work and Community in Lowell Massachusetts, 1826-1860* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979) examines how after leaving their families' homes, the girls working in the mills still followed a strict adherence to gender roles and proper behavior and most, like Goldsmith ending her own art career, left the mills after marriage.

professional career made acceptable through a strict adherence to proscribed gender roles, like Goldsmith's. Willson's art was a component of a larger abandonment of societal norms. Most of Willson's life was remembered through an 1850 letter written by an anonymous author describing themselves as "An Admirer of Art."[61] This author indicated that Willson's career was a necessity after moving from the east to make a home in Greene County, New York with her friend, Miss Brundage. The impetus for this move, according to the letter's author, was a homosexual relationship between the women as they demonstrated a "…romantic attachment for each other and which continued until the death of the 'farmer maid.'"[62]

Because the taboo nature of their relationship resulted in their movement out of normal society, no longer needing to ground their careers in accepted social conventions like Goldsmith, they affected new roles and careers in order to support themselves which were more commonly male. This witnessed Miss Brundage working as a farmer as Willson, "made pictures which she sold to the farmers and others as rare and unique 'works of art.'"[63] Because Willson was untrained even according to the standards of folk painters, she relied on both primitive techniques and supplies. For example, "Their paints, or colours were of the simplest kind, berries, bricks, and occasional 'store paint' made up their wants for these elegant designs."[64] Although executed in an extremely crude style, the paintings were quite popular as Willson explained to the letter's author that her works, "were very beautiful…boasting how greatly they were in demand. 'Why!

[61] Lipman and Winchester, 50.
[62] Letter, "An Admirer of Art," (1850). In Lipman and Winchester, 54.
[63] Letter, "An Admirer of Art," (1850). In Lipman and Winchester, 54.
[64] Letter, "An Admirer of Art," (1850). In Lipman and Winchester, 54.

They go way to Canada and clear to Mobile!'"[65] Willson's comment demonstrated how similar her career was to other itinerant artists as her primitive style appealed to the lower or middle class farmers in the area, likely related to the low price more than general appreciation of style, as well as how important mobility was to anyone utilizing portraiture as a realistic means of their income. If an artist catering to these classes hoped to earn a living, they must travel as low costs necessitated multiple clients to make their portraits profitable.

JOSEPH WHITING STOCK

The life and work of Joseph Whiting Stock (1815-1855) reinforced the importance that economical pricing was for this new type of customer. The clients of the middling and lower classes were more interested in participation in the arts, a symbol of their role in the republicanism of America, than execution. Stock discovered painting after a tragic accident left him crippled at a young age. Stock explained in his journal, written sometime after 1846, how this event shaped his life. He was confined to bed and relied on many different activities to pass the time, "Sometimes reading, studying, sewing at other times by indulging my Yankee propensity for whittling and making toys for the children."[66] Stock's parents were typical of the newly emerging middle classes. His father was an employee for the U.S. Embassy and as Stock explained, "maintained a respectable standing in society by their honest and industrious habits." He still needed a career because he could not rely on family fortune in his adult life a clear departure from

[65] Letter, "An Admirer of Art," (1850). In Lipman and Winchester, 54.
[66] Joseph Whiting Stock, *The Paintings and Journal of Joseph Whiting Stock*, Juliette Tomlinson, ed. (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1976), 6.

elite artists of the previous generation as most came from families both wealthy and respected as their reputations helped secure their son's own artistic success.[67] Stock explained that as he got older, "My friends often consulted and inquired for some occupation by which I might gain a livelihood but my situation made me incapable of following pursuits by which most men gain a living."[68]

The answer to Stock's problem was proposed by his doctor, a Dr. Loring in 1832: "My attention at length, was directed by a friend…to the art of Painting which he thought I might easily attain and support myself by painting portraits."[69] The fact that a doctor influenced Stock's profession was not surprising in light of the changing nature of American society. This group of professionals, not previously considered gentlemen based on their own merits, now attained a new level of respect in the democratic society resulting in their desire to demonstrate this status in portraits and they became a likely component of many artists' success.[70] In 1823 Charles Ingersoll expressed the difference between physicians of the previous generation and those practicing in first generation of Americans:

> The pernicious and degrading system which subdivides labour infinitesimally- a system useful perhaps for pin-makers, but most injurious in all the thinking occupations- has no countenance in America. The American physician practices pharmacy, surgery, midwifery; and is cast on his own resources for success in all he does: The consequence of which is, that he is forced to think more for himself, and of course to excel…Every hamlet, every region abounds with educated physicians…[71]

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[67] Stock, 3.
[68] Stock, 6.
[69] Stock, 6.
[70] Joyce Appleby examines the new role of doctors in her book *Inheriting the Revolution* on pages 111-112. Appleby examines how a new interest in nature and science resulted in doctors being considered members of an intellectual community and discourse not previously open to them in earlier generations advancing their status in America.
[71] Ingersoll, 24.

A niche developed for artists like Phillips, Prior, and Stock. This group amended their training to suit new clients. They were self taught by copying academic works but eliminated the "Grand Tour." Execution was forfeited in favor of a speed, to reduce the cost. Dr. Loring could express his status through portraiture in a respectable and affordable way.

According to John Lee Clarke Jr. between 1832 and 1834, Stock completed fifty-one paintings. Many of these works included famous individuals like Napoleon and Josephine, John Randolph, Andrew Jackson, and Sir Walter Scott.[72] Stock's training was grounded in the ideals of primitive or folk portraits. Because Stock's background resulted in a pseudo crafts training, many of his activities as an invalid mirrored similar occupations of other primitive painters. He entered his painting career on a relatively equal playing field with many of his contemporaries such as Phillips and Prior. This included the execution of family portraits as much of his early training. For example, Stock explained in his journal that after a brief study with another young artist, Franklin White, who was lucky enough to study under a professional artist, Chester Harding, he tried a portrait of his sister Eliza.[73] It was the success of this work that began to develop Stock's reputation and career:

> It was soon noticed abroad and received many visits from citizens and some order which were executed with various degrees of success like the productions of all beginners. My terms were very low and many were induced to patronize me from benevolent motives and as I gained more experience from observation, and the patronage thus bestowed upon me I soon acquired more skill and expertness in the use of pencil and gave more perfect likeness. I painted some portraits for people from the neighboring towns and frequently received invitations to make them a

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[72] Jean Lipman and Alice Winchester, *Primitive Painters in America: 1750 to 1950* (New York: Dodd Mead and Company, 1950), 116.
[73] Stock, 6.

professional visit but my situation prevented.[74]

Folk painters approached their work like any other job in this age of capitalism. If they showed a general ability, like Prior, that simply aided their success but did not restrict others, like Stock, from taking part in a burgeoning and growing field. For Stock, and many other folk artists, his art began as a job and nothing more.

Stock chose painting as a job, the only one his physical condition would allow him to do. Conversely, academic artists of the Morse period chose the arts as a way to both explore a passion they discovered at early age as well as depict a republican ideal. In many ways, primitive portrait painter's careers and motivations more closely mirrored the West period template than the academic painters of the Morse period. They relied almost exclusively on demands of customers to determine the amount of training they needed, the time they took to execute a work, and the amount they would be paid to determine the style of their work. The real difference was who bought the works. The middle class was promoted as more democratic than any other social group. Therefore, they deserved the same level of attention previous generations showed the elites, material acquisition and display, simply one catering to their own circumstances.

It was in this environment that Stock began his career and quickly realized a huge return for his efforts. After being fitted with a movable chair by a Dr. Swan in 1836, Swan commissioned Stock to produce a series of anatomical drawings paying Stock $75 a piece. The mobility his chair provided allowed Stock to incorporate the itinerancy necessary for a successful primitive portraitist. The low cost of portraits demanded a large number of works and therefore a large number of clients not located within a single area. Stock explained his early success commenting, "My health improved and in the

[74] Stock, 6.

spring of 1836 I left my father's house for the first time at the invitation of several friends in North Wilbraham who wished their portraits painted and thought there might be many other who would be induced to patronize me after seeing theirs finished."[75] Stock's hope was realized. According to his journal, he painted one hundred and forty-three portraits in 1836 alone at an average cost of eight dollars.[76] The comparison of these pieces to academic painters like Morse as well as his own more academic works, like the drawings for Swan, demonstrated just how cheaply primitive portraits were in relation to elite art.

Stock's reliance on the creation of a reputation based on his pieces being viewed by guests in his client's homes indicated how closely this practice mirrored that of much earlier artists who used the parlors and grand rooms of their patrons as a pseudo exhibition space. This demonstrated both the strength of customer demand and how the changing identity of Americans opened a new artistic genre. While the West and Morse period portraits were purchased by elites, taking long amounts of time to paint and costing exorbitant prices, the portraits of middle class individuals were affordable to many. The result was artistic visibility becoming even more important for primitive Folk period artists than academic Morse period ones. The size of the middle class and the time artists worked with an individual client reduced the intimacy of the relationship between artist to customer and subsequently the likelihood they would serve as an intermediary between the artist and their next client. The very economic dependence men like Peale and Morse hated in the patronage of the older elite generation. Gone were the days when a good letter of introduction or meeting over dinner secured the artist's next year long project. Therefore, primitive Folk period painters relied on advertising more in line with

[75] Stock, 7.
[76] Lipman and Winchester, 116.

capitalistic principles hoping to appeal to everyone who viewed their pieces. The parlors of the middle class were less galleries than billboards.

This made itinerancy of utmost importance. When commissions began to dwindle an artist left town. Stock made this clear in a journal entry on January 28, 1843 while in New Bedford, Massachusetts, "This week business has been dull: another such week and I leave New Bedford. The only sitter I have had this week has been Mr. Farnsworth and my time has been occupied on his portrait and some landscapes which may by and by produce something."[77] Clearly, without multiple clients Folk period painters could not survive and inevitably an artist would exhaust potential sitters. For example, after first beginning to suspect his commissions had dried up in New Bedford, Stock remained working on a few more portraits until February 18th when he wrote, "Business is so dull in this town and as there is no prospect of its improving immediately. I intend to leave the first of the ensuing week."[78]

Therefore, when preparing to work in another town, artists often announced their arrival through running advertisements in local papers to reach as many clients as possible. This was similar to the advertisements found in the preceding periods of portraiture. However, the language of the ads changed with American identity. Just like the ads of academic Morse period painters, like Morse, became less elitist, indicating the transformation of American art away from a strict patronage, so too did limners by not promoting individuals portraits or subjects within ads as few would recognize the names of their clients. Instead they focused on speed and cost as major selling points. Folk period painters also failed to mention their training in most cases choosing to display

[77] Stock, 29.
[78] Stock, 30.

experience over schooling. This in part was related to their informal education but also demonstrated the diminishing importance associations to British culture, and by extension British training, played in creating an artist's reputation. This was clear in the simple and short ads artists like Phillips and Prior posted.

Also changing was the location ads were placed as the shift away from major papers in cities like Boston, Philadelphia, and New York, reserved for elite patrons since most congregated in urban centers, to similar regional papers indicated a related shift in clientele. Rural towns offered folk painters a large lower and middle class customer base making ads in the larger papers of less importance. These changes are clear in the ads Stock placed to announce his arrival in a new town like one in the May 27, 1853 issue of *The Independent Republican*, a local paper in Goshen, New York:

> PORTRAIT PAINTING. J.W. Stock would like to announce that he has taken rooms in VAIL'S BUILDING, opposite Edsall's hotel, near the depot and respectfully offers his professional services to the public. He has during the past year painted over sixty portraits in Middletown, and having devoted his time for twenty years in the study and practice of his profession in New England towns and cities, feels confident of giving entire satisfaction to his patrons. Terms moderate. Give him a call and see specimens. Gilt frames of all kinds, canvass, artist's colors, and brushes for sale and furnished to order. Goshen, May 18, 1853.[79]

Stock's ad was similar to any American service advertisement demonstrating to his potential customers both why he is a good portrait painter and how he meets their personal demands. All of the most pertinent information Stock provided declared his services to be for the middle class without overtly saying so. His indications that he works rather quickly, by referencing the sheer number of portraits he painted in his last location, as well as a direct appeal to economics differed greatly from the ads of

[79] Advertisement, Joseph Whiting Stock, *The Independent Review* (Goshen: New York, May 27, 1853). In Stock, xii.

academic or elite painters. For example, though Morse did not discriminate in who was a client, his emphasis was not on speed and cost as he would require both from his customers as an academic Morse period painter.

Because Stock understood the difference between both his role as a limner to that of an academic or elite painter as well as the identity of his middle class customers compared to elite patrons he utilized the proper means to affect the greatest financial reward. By restricting his style and cost, increasingly his speed of execution, and advertising to a niche, middle class rural residents, Stock became one of the most productive limners of the Folk period. In just fourteen years, Stock produced a massive quantity of folk portraits even earning $740 alone in a nine-month period in 1842-1843.[80] This demonstrated how folk artists could make comfortable livings as this amount was almost equal to what Morse received as payment for his portrait of President Monroe. In total Stock's journal lists 912 works but it does not cover the entirety of his career and most likely he executed more pieces. Of these the majority are 30 inches by 25 inches and $5 to $10 in price.[81] However, because Stock was aware that his success depended on his customer's demands he was amenable to exactly what they wanted being quite flexible in pricing, size, and type of portrait he executed. The result was the division of his works into different price categories.

For example, customers desiring larger, full length portraits paid much more than the more common smaller works a clear advantage for an artist selling to both the very poor and the moderately wealthy. This was the case for Miss Ann M. Haynes whose

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[80] Beatrix T. Rumford, ed., *American Folk Portraits: Paintings and Drawings from the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Center* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1981), 186.
[81] Rumford, 186.

1838 portrait, measuring sixty by forty-two inches, cost twenty-five dollars.[82] The portrait of an A. Goodale in 1836, measuring sixty-six by forty-two inches and the largest canvas Stock ever used, cost twenty dollars.[83] One of Stock's most expensive portraits was that of William Sears in 1842. Although the piece was assumed to be no larger than that of Goodale's, it cost fifty-five dollars, most likely indicating extra time spent on the piece to satisfy Sear's demands.[84] Obviously, Stock was very savvy in his business dealings understanding that although all his clients were from the class of Americans previously denied a place in American art, that did not mean their tastes and desires were synonymous. By having a variety of styles and price points, Stock's portraits are truly an example of American capitalism and middle class identity as they could indeed have it their way.

Stock was also known to barter in exchange for portraits again making his works available to many people. This was the case of J. Ward of New Bedford whose pictures of himself and his mother were painted by Stock in exchange for services rendered.[85] Stock noted his bartering differently in his journal than his payments in cash by not including these works within an accounting system he developed for himself, substituting an alphabetic code in lieu of numbers to indicate price, and that corresponds to his daily journal entries. Therefore, for J. Ward, Stock made several mentions about the economic component of their relationship writing on April 25, 1843, "Commenced a portrait for Mrs. Ward to receive pay in trade of her son J. Ward Draper & Tailor," continuing the next day, "Commenced a Portrait of Joseph Ward to take pay from his shop Mrs. Ward

[82] Stock, xiv.
[83] Stock, xiv.
[84] Stock, xiv.
[85] Stock, xiv.

also, set today."[86] The meticulous care Stock took in listing his prices, the size of his portraits, and the number executed in each town he visited revealed the strong economic component of itinerancy. All of these statistics, for Stock covering fourteen years of his career, helped to catalogue success by indicating what factors contributed to a large profit. Stock's varying sizes, prices, and time of execution demonstrated how much a client's desires determined how and where he worked. In many ways flexibility was the truest component of America's first genre of art with the Folk period as the ability to cater to demands set what an artist produced. This also explained why few commonalities of style exist between folk artists like Phillips, Prior, and Stock.

Stock continued to display flexibility in the latter years of his career when the daguerreotype began to become popular in the United States. This initial form of mass photography appealed to the same customer base that comprised Stock's clients as for around the same price, between eight and twenty-five dollars, the middle and lower classes could have an exact likeness created rather than the less accurate images of the limner. Because Stock was a man always aware that the demands of the public drove his business and therefore his art, he quickly partnered with a photographer, O.H. Cooley. Though they had a tempestuous relationship, most likely related to the natural competition between their mediums, and often broke of their partnership, they typically reconciled and the business seemed to play a significant part in Stock's career.[87] The business was advertised in 1846 in the Springfield city directory where Stock and Cooley set up shop on Main Street:

STOCK AND COOLEY

Portrait and Daguerrean Gallery, opposite Chicopee Bank, Main Street, where the

[86] Stock, 34.
[87] Lipman and Winchester, 117.

> public are respectfully invited to call and examine their specimens of painting and superb colored daguerreotype. Likenesses taken in a superior manner on large or small plates, and in groups from two to seven persons. A perfect and satisfactory likeness guaranteed. Likenesses taken of deceased persons. Instructions carefully given, and pupils furnished with everything necessary for the business at prices varying from $.75 to $1.50. Photographs put up in breastpins, lockets, cases, frames, from $8 to $25.
>
> TO DAGUERREOTYPE OPERATORS:
>
> German cameras, lockets, plates, cases, chemicals, polishing materials and all articles used in the business furnished to order.[88]

Although Stock's desire to work in tandem with Cooley indicated a hope that customers would still commission his portraits the ad demonstrated how strongly the public was turning away from this medium by the middle of the nineteenth century. It focused mainly on daguerreotypes and offered little information about painted portraits. However, many limners, such as Stock, began to use photos in lieu of personal sittings in order to execute their pieces, therefore reducing the need for travel as clients could simply go to a studio, have a photo taken, and return when their portrait was ready.[89] This arrangement would be appealing to Stock since his physical deformity had made his itinerancy particularly difficult. This also indicated how much Stock's art was based around economics as he never got into the work for a love of art and would willingly try new mediums if his client's demanded them.

Like Stock, many of the artists of the time were both intrigued as well as nervous about the new photographic medium. Unsure of its threat to their own career a proliferation of articles about daguerreotypes by painters began to circulate in the mid nineteenth century. On such article was by T.S. Arthur in 1849 in *Godey's Lady's Book*:

> If our children and children's children to the third and fourth generation are not in possession of portraits of their ancestors, it will be no fault of the

[88] Advertisement, Joseph Whiting Stock and O.H. Cooley, Springfield city directory (1846). In Lipman and Winchester, 117.
[89] Rumford, 34.

> Daguerreotypists of the present day; for, verily, they are limning faces at a rate that promises soon to make every man's house a Daguerrean Gallery. From little Bess, the baby, up to great great grandpa', all must now have their likenesses; and even the sober Friend, who heretofore rejected all the vanities of portrait-taking, is tempted to sit in the operator's chair, and quick as thought, his features are caught and fixed by a sunbeam.[90]

Arthur's article is revealing as in many ways it mirrored the same language first used to describe the start of limning or folk portraiture around a half century earlier. The availability and affordability of daguerreotypes fulfilled the American need to have a middle and lower class material culture similar to their elite counterparts. Moreover, photos were even more democratic in nature, and therefore, more able to meet the demands of an American art form. Style and quality of execution was no longer a component of the work and lessoned the difference between middle class portraits and elite portraits. However, this impacted folk artists as the primitive style they used clearly indicated that the piece was for a certain client whereas a photo blurred class lines.

Despite reservations many primitive artists tried to both support daguerreotypes as well as make a distinction in the art forms, most likely in the hopes that clients would not view them as competition but a completely different material expression. This was clear in a November 1850 article, "The Daguerreotype," in *The Bulletin of the American Art-Union*:

> Art has nothing to fear from this invention. On the contrary, she has everything to gain; for she can verify by it her imitations of lines and masses, and her nice gradations of lights and shadows. When we think, however, that the Daguerreotype can only give us the aspect of a face as it appears during a mere moment of time, and that our ideas of that face are formed from the combination of a great number of its appearances at various times, and that its characteristic expression comes and goes…we shall cease to wonder that a photograph is so often unsatisfactory, and the artist's portrait so much more life-like. It is he only who can catch this fleeting peculiarity, which distinguishes his sitter from all other people,-this looking of the soul out of the features, which, after all, is what

[90] T.S. Arthur, *Godey's Lady's Book* (1849). In Rumford, 33.

we observe and remember.[91]

American cultural identity underwent a significant change during and especially after the American Revolution as the populace hoped to internalize democratic ideals in the Folk period. T this time an American, elite portraiture which previously borrowed styles and standards from a British cultural inheritance during the West period began to see subtle movements away from the artistic conventions lauded by the older generation in the Morse period. However, significant changes in portraiture occurred within the first generation of the new republic with the introduction of a uniquely American genre of portraiture in the Folk period. Folk period artists strove to meet the demands of a new middle class clientele who more fully represented the new American identity and who previously had no voice in art. Although the Morse period hoped to reinvent art in a new democratic mold the lasting influence of the West period continued to shape the nature of all elite art. In this way the middle class clients of the Folk period were the perfect niche in which to begin an American art as they were utilizing portraiture as a new form of expression not a re-envisioned one like the Morse period. A key component of this new American identity was the role of a changing capitalist economy and its ability to influence the cultural identity of the middle classes. In this manner the Folk period truly represented a unique American cultural experience. Artists like Ammi Phillips, William Matthew Prior, Deborah Goldsmith, Ruth Bascom, Mary Ann Willson, and Joseph Whiting Stock listened to the demands of their new class of customer and created styles of portraiture economically yielding them the greatest return with the smallest effort. Perhaps, Alexis de Tocqueville expressed this change in portraiture best commenting,

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[91] "The Daguerrotype," *The Bulletin of the American Art-Union* (1850), 131. In Rumford, 34.

"Aristocracies produce a few great pictures, democracies a multitude of little ones."[92]

[92] Tocqueville, 468.

CONCLUSION

In 1792, Benjamin West painted a self portrait to announce his election as president of the Royal Academy.[1] West choose not to depict himself in the process of painting or surrounded by his life's work but at his desk surrounded by books and papers wearing a luxurious suit replete with lace cuffs and a powdered white wig. This painting's composition and style would not have looked out of place decades earlier. West's decision to adhere to the stylistic standards he learned as a young, West period artist represented the lasting impact British cultural conventions had on artists and art alike for generations to come in both locales.

West followed the rules set by British patrons. Even though he was marking a personal accomplishment, nothing about his appearance within his portrait indicated who he was as an individual. British classical standards were increasingly unable to fit into an American cultural idiom. While West strove to maintain a status quo in Britain, Americans struggled to create a new place for individuals within their portraits more in line with the ideals of the American Revolution. The result was a slow but important transformation of academic artists and styles and the emergence of a type of portrait for middle and lower class individuals previously denied any presence in art altogether. This created a genre of art wholly American in the Folk period.

Interestingly, the degree to which folk art represented the first true genre of American art can best be understood by studying the portraits, artists, and patrons of the British Royal Academy at the beginning of the nineteenth century. These relationships

[1] Marcia Pointon, "Portrait! Portrait! Portrait!!!," In *Art on the Line: The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House 1780-1836*, David H. Solkin, ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 96.

demonstrated how strongly academic and American elite art was tied to its cultural predecessor and how the ideology of the Revolution shaped the cultural identity of not only the middle classes but the first generation of Americans as a whole. In many ways the same tensions within academic art in America, witnessed by Rembrandt Peale's and Samuel F.B. Morse's discontents over patronage in the Morse period, was mirrored in a growing conflict between artists of the British Royal Academy and their dependence on patronage.

British artists felt creatively circumscribed by the continued existence of strict stylistic standards set by a very stratified British social hierarchy. The social hierarchy which continued to shape the very fabric on which Britain's artistic pattern was cut remained mired in the same social structure that men faced in the colonies generations before. Because the same cultural transformations which shaped American society after the Revolution were not experienced in Britain, related shifts in art were no longer growing out of the same motivations. Therefore, why British artists chose to challenge patronage at this time cannot be related to changes in their collective identity, like their American contemporaries, but most likely demonstrated how America's Revolution influenced the arts across the Atlantic. Now, American's democratic ideology challenged the cultural identity of Britain and not the reverse. Artists hoped to recreate an American artistic convention within Britain to gain more control over their work.

The only way to support academic art, due to the time and cost involved in its creation, was through private patronage. Mass exhibitions proved unable to cover the costs associated with production in Britain as well. The result was that portraiture continued to be limited to the very wealthy. Although artists believed that portraiture

was an inferior form, the Royal Academy continued to focus exhibitions around them. They were very popular among the British elite who came to see themselves, their family, and their friend's portraits.[2] In this way Royal Academy exhibitions served as venues for patrons to see examples of portraits they admired, and to commission works by an artist who they expected to create their portrait in the same manner. Therefore, a cycle permeated British art as exhibitions only garnered more portraits of the same style and then more exhibitions. Classic, elite portraits remained popular because the patrons of the arts in England did not see the changes in America. And, without an emerging middle class, British portraiture styles remained static as art was a way for the aristocracy, and in rare cases an extremely wealthy merchant or member of the professional class, to display the attributes which justified their elevated place in society. Sir Joshua Reynolds, the Royal Academy's first president, described the ideal method of creating work early in his career:

> The great use of studying our predecessors is, to open the mind, to shorten our labour, and to give us the result of the selection made by those great minds of what is grand or beautiful in nature: her rich stores are spread out before us; but it is an art, and no easy art, to know how or what to choose, and how to attain and secure the object of our choice.[3]

Obviously, Reynolds' approach was similar to the West period in America as the copying of already established painters and their style constituted the best course of learning. According to art historian Anne Puetz, "British high art was meant to look like- and not different from- high art elsewhere in Europe."[4] American art began to take an

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[2] Pointon, 93.
[3] Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses on Art,* Robert R. Wark, ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 101.
[4] Anne Puetz, "Foreign Exhibitors and the British School at the Royal Academy, 1768-1823," In *Art on the Line: The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House 1780-1836*, David H. Solkin, ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 229.

opposite view as artists strove, if in many cases unsuccessfully, to develop an art which expressed what it meant to be American. In this manner British portraiture of the nineteenth century maintained the same style of art as in the colonial period, in America and Britain alike, as it effectively was commissioned to accomplish the same goals as their society, unlike America, had witnessed few changes in cultural identity at this time. An April 22, 1788 letter from Reynolds to George Birch displayed the priority that artists placed on completing portraits of elite patrons for exhibition. Reynolds was behind on completing the portrait of Dr. John Ash, a man attempting to be counted among Britain's elite through commissioning a portrait. Reynolds wrote:

> …I am so hurried in preparing for the Exhibition that I have but just time to acknowledge the receipt of your obliging letter inclosing a draft for one hundred guineas being the first half-payment for Dr Ash's Picture which Picture I hope to begin in two or three days and you may be assured that no attention on my part shall be wanting in the finishing it.[5]

What was clear from Reynolds' letter was that exhibitions, and in this case those at the Royal Academy, were of primary importance to artists like Reynolds who remained dependent on wealthy Britons for their livelihood. It was this continued financial relationship, the very element which marked the transformation of both client relationships and subsequently style in American portraits, which demanded the maintenance of strict classical styles and portraits within England. These influences lasted for generations as artists had little choice other than finding patrons through the Royal Academy.

Even as artists like Reynolds, who supported historical painting as a superior artistic genre to portraiture in multiple discourses he gave to students at the Royal

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[5] Letter, Joshua Reynolds to George Birch, In *Letters of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, Frederick Whiley Hilles, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929), 182.

Academy, made his living as a portrait painter.[6] In *Discourse III* Reynolds explained portraiture's relationship to still life painting arguing, "In the same rank, and perhaps of not so great merit, is the cold painter of portraits…"[7] In *Discourse IV* Reynolds described portraiture in relation to the other genres of art as clearly inferior explaining that as a result of only working on poor quality pieces, portrait artists cannot successfully execute historical pieces, what he viewed as the greatest form of artistic expression as they do not understand the process:

> A Portrait-Painter likewise, when he attempts history, unless he is upon his guard, is likely to enter too much into the detail. He too frequently makes his historical heads look like portraits; and this was once the custom amongst those old painters, who revived the art before general ideas were practiced or understood. An History-painter paints man in general; a Portrait-Painter, a particular man, and consequently a defective model.[8]

Reynolds' complicated relationship to portraiture was expressed in an October 4, 1790 letter to the Duke of Leeds:

> I may say, without much affectation of modesty that the Picture which I have the honour of sending by the bearer, is, either as a subject, or as a Picture scarce worth hanging however it is very flattering to me that Your Grace is of another opinion, and your being so, I seriously consider as the greatest honour of my life.[9]

Reynolds' clear dislike of portraits was expressed within this letter. He does not view it as a legitimate genre of art much less something elites should covet. The motivations patrons had for commissioning works and an artist's reasons for producing them varied greatly. However, Reynolds recognized that it was not up to him to decide the nature of what the population considered good art but to meet the demands of his

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[6] Pointon, 94.
[7] Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses on Art*, Robert R. Wark, ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 52.
[8] Reynolds, 70.
[9] Letter, Joshua Reynolds to the Duke of Leeds, October 4, 1790. In *Letters of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, Frederick Whiley Hilles, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929), 207.

patrons. This contrasted with American art of roughly the same period. Although older patrons of the West period still demanded British styled works, younger artists and clients of the Morse and Folk periods hoping to end this un-republican relationship also emerged.

The importance of patronage to the continuance of British art at this time was noted in a letter Reynolds wrote to Queen Catherine II which discussed his Discourses at the Royal Academy:

> This approbation which your Imperial Majesty has been graciously pleased to express of the Academical Discources which I presumed to lay at your Majestys feet, I truly consider as the great honour of my life, That condescending acceptance of my attempts raises me in my own estimation & must of course advance my reputation in the Eyes of my Country men…that whilst I endeavour to demonstrate my gratitude for the distinction I have received I may have further motives to such gratitude by receiving accessions to my reputation, & that Posterity may know (since now I may indulge the hope that I may be known to Posterity) that your Imperial Majesty had design'd to permit me to solicit the patronage of a Soveign to whom all the Poets, Philosophers, & Artists of the time have done homage & whose approbation had been courted by all Geniuses of her Age.[10]

Reynolds praises Catherine's role as a patron while discussing his accomplishments with the Royal Academy. Clearly, a tension between idealism and reality existed for artists in Britain at this time, a similar situation to those operating in America, as they both hoped to change the relationship of artists and clients but had no real means to do so.

This sentiment was expressed in the 1817 *Annals of the Fine Arts, I* which commented, "Portrait! Portrait!! Portrait!!! Intrudes on every side; while history, poetry,

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[10] Letter, Joshua Reynolds to Catherine II, August 6 (?), 1790. In *Letters of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, Frederick Whiley Hilles, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929), 205-206.

fiction, fade before the overwhelming invader."[11] Therefore, the aristocracy and their demands, much like colonial elites in the eighteenth century, determined the type of art prevalent in Britain at this time despite artist's protestations. Due to this continued influence of just as small portion of society on its entire cultural output, the style of British portraits saw few shifts in execution. The same principles which created the stylistic standards adhered to in America in the West period persisted well into the nineteenth century in Britain.

According to Marcia Pointon, in collaboration with Anne Puetz, the ratio of portraits to overall works in the Royal Academy's exhibitions increased from 44% in 1780, to 36.2 % in 1820, and 46% in 1829.[12] This change displayed artist's desire to move away from portraiture and their inability to do so. While a new customer base allowed American artists to experiment, British artist's careers remained mired in dependence on patrons and a strict style and form.

American art of the early nineteenth century shifted in terms of execution, motivation, and style with the introduction of a customer fueled, middle class primitive art in the Folk period and a subtle transformation in the attitude of academic painters who hoped to denounce patronage as an expression of democratic ideals of the Morse period. British art changed minimally. If academic American art was still dependent on a form of patronage, having grown out of the British model, it did not persist at the same level as the patronage that existed within Britain during the same time. The beginnings of a severance of pre-war British social structures not only altered the nature of American society but their material representations as well.

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[11] Pointon, 93.
[12] David H. Solkin, ed., *Art on the Line: The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House 1780-1836* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 96.

Clearly, the difference between art in America and that in Britain during the nineteenth century reflected the effects of the American Revolution. The Revolution did not initially change American culture as Americans born before the war were hesitant to abandon their everyday habits, consumption patterns, and traditions. It was the strength of their cultural ties to Britain that explained the nature of portraiture during the West period.

West period portraits were used to demonstrate that men and women, who would not be considered upper class within Britain, could justify their status within the American colonies through related if affected British Enlightenment characteristics. It was through portraits that much of this was accomplished as a good artist could demonstrate all the important aspects of an elite gentleman or lady simply by creating a portrait which adhered to proper British standards. This meant including recognized signifiers of class like wigs, interior furnishings, and books. Each of these could in turn be used as symbols of elite birth, education, and wealth, the primary markers of the upper class in Britain. The result was a demand by patrons of the arts for a rigid and specific style of portrait as no other alternative could meet the goals they set for their works. Portraits were not art for art's sake but a component of a larger class struggle as men and women in America hoped to create some form of the British social hierarchy within their own environment.

The result was both the importation of British artists, like John Smibert, as well as a strict training of West period artists in a British style as little else would appease their client base. For West period artists like Benjamin West, John Singleton Copley, and Charles Willson Peale both their training and artistic philosophy became mired in British

conventions. This saw not only a set style of portrait in both the colonies and Britain but a clear mindset in both artists and patrons that anything displaying ties to England was inherently better than anything colonial. In this way a cultural identity more British than America permeated the colonies and set an artistic standard which would take generations to overcome.

For the patriot elite the type of portrait executed after the war remained basically unchanged from those previously commissioned. The only real difference in portraiture was the inclusion of new American symbols in lieu of overtly British ones; however, even these were still expected to express an individual's identity as elite. In this manner the art of the Revolution remained solidly British in nature as the West period persisted. The resultant ideological and cultural change within all of American society that the Revolution inspired, stronger than what was even imagined by the Revolution's inventors, proved to be the real catalyst to the end of British cultural influence in America as it developed the first genre of America art.

What is most unique about portraits of the Early Republic is the visibility of the break with previous British cultural conventions and cultural identity as two distinct forms of portraiture existed for the first time simultaneously in America. The first, upper class or academic portraiture (The Morse period), demonstrated the difficulty in eliminating a British presence in art as patrons of an older generation still adhering to the West period conventions struggled with both clients and artists born in the first generation of Americans. Their personal, cultural identities were founded on very different principles. For the first generation of Americans their everyday life centered on a new adherence to republican ideals instead of Enlightenment ones. For artists like

Rembrandt Peale and Samuel F.B. Morse, therefore, new approaches to art in the Morse period seemed a valid form of expressing democracy.

However, their denouncement of patronage an un-American proved unviable. The time and cost involved in executing elite portraits demanded a wealthy clientele who acted similarly to West period patrons. However, the very act of challenging previous conventions, even if unsuccessful, demonstrated the degree to which American identity was undergoing significant cultural transformations. Few artists or clients in the earlier periods, or those operating in Britain at this time, attempted to restructure art at all. The ideological impact of the Revolution was so great that a slow but important shift away from British standards began. A new emphasis on the individual as opposed to the idealized subject meant it was no longer necessary to display such specific symbols of Enlightenment ideals within an individual's portrait as class mobility became even more malleable within America.

The truest sign that the American Revolution transformed American identity and therefore American portraiture was the emergence of a middle class, folk art. The middle class now felt empowered to demand their own place within material culture as the Revolution promoted their class as well as individuality as the strongest markers of what it now meant to be American. In this way a change in artistic demand was reflected in a change in artistic style. Because the middle class hoped to take part in the culture of portraits, artists had to amend their personal styles to meet the economic limitations of the middle class budget in the Folk period. Artists like Ammi Phillips, William Matthew Prior, Deborah Goldsmith, Ruth Bascom, Mary Ann Willson and Joseph Whiting Stock capitalized off the new demands of what became known as primitive or folk art by

purposely increasing speed of execution, reducing their level of detail, and including itinerancy to their artistic careers. The final result was a new, wholly American style as little in these portraits related to their sister portraits as both American elite and British portraiture still adhered to classical ideals, what their clients had come to expect.

Ultimately, American art from the West period through the Morse and Folk periods is a story of identity. This represented the single most important factor in the production and style of portraiture as artists responded most strongly to the demand of their clients whether they were patrons or customers. Who a person was at the time of their commission was reflected in the type of piece they demanded. Therefore, as shifts occurred in how people viewed themselves both an adherence and later a severance of British cultural identity took place in America. Interestingly, these shifts did not occur at times of political change but significantly later than the periods most commonly characterized as colonial, revolutionary, and early republic. This demonstrates not only a need for new cultural periodization (the West period, The Morse period, and the Folk period) but the fluidity of personal identity. These three cultural periods overlapped and competed with one another demonstrating the multiple American identities at the same time. Because cultural identity was shaped by almost all elements of life (social, political and economic) no definitive American identity was established until well past the American Revolution as individuals had time to process what revolution, republicanism, and being American meant to them. In particular, the middle class portraiture of the Folk period developed as a new American genre of art first. Their lesser ties to British culture helped reduce the level of cultural confusion expressed by elite art of both the West and Morse periods. Ultimately, portraits became a logical means of expressing national

personality. As in times past, a portrait could speak a thousand words and clarify to any observer just who a painting's subject was inside and out.

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APPENDIX A

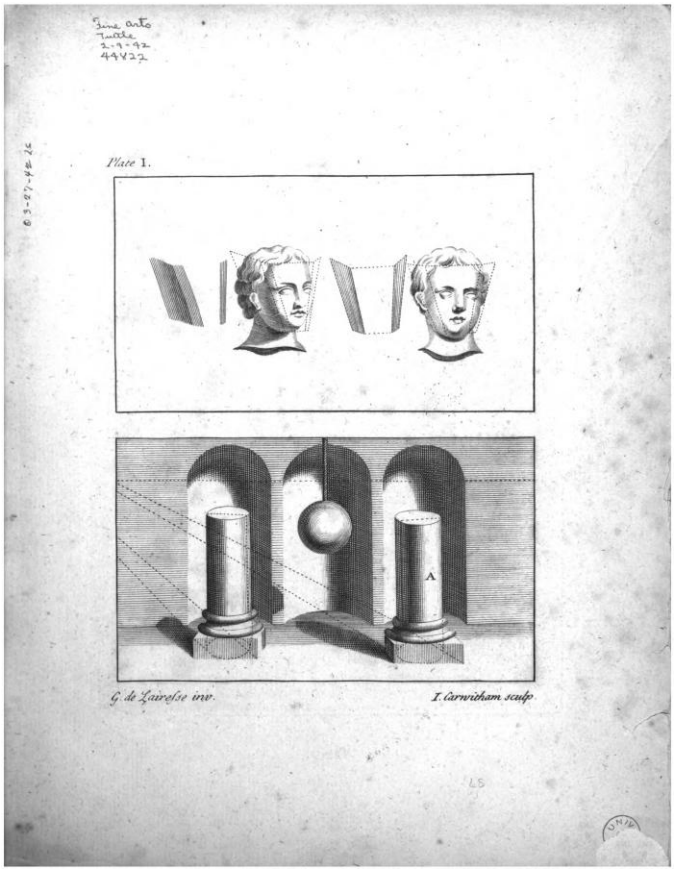

Fig. 1. Gerard De Lairesse's *A treatise on the Art of Painting, In all its Branches*; *Accompanied by Seventy Engraved Plates, and Exemplified by the Remarks on the Paintings of the Best Masters, Illustrating the Subject by Reference to their Beauties and Imperfections* (London: Edward Orme, 1817), 14.

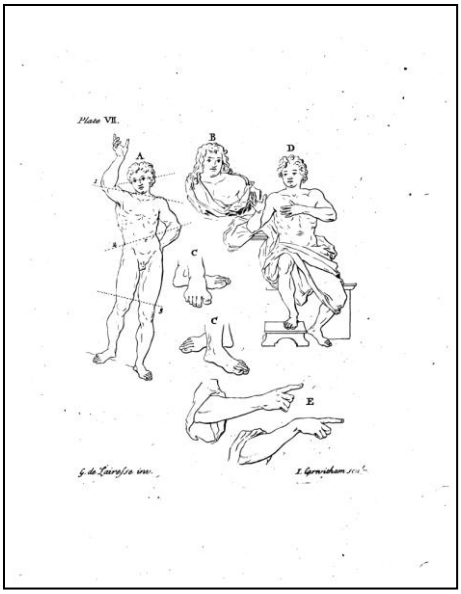

Fig. 2. Gerard De Lairesse's *A treatise on the Art of Painting, In all its Branches*; *Accompanied by Seventy Engraved Plates, and Exemplified by the Remarks on the Paintings of the Best Masters, Illustrating the Subject by Reference to their Beauties and Imperfections* (London: Edward Orme, 1817), 18.

Fig. 3. John Smibert, *Francis Brinley*, 1729, Oil on Canvas, 50 x 39 ½ in (127 x 99.7 cm), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1962 (62.79.2).

Fig. 4. John Smibert, *Mrs. Francis Brinley and Her Son*, 1729, Oil on Canvas, 50 x 39 ½ in (127 x 99.7 cm), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1962 (62.79.2).

Fig. 5. Benjamin West, *The American School*, 1765, Oil on Canvas, 36 x50 ¼ in (91.4 x 127. 6 cm), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Samuel P. Avery, 1897 (97.29.3), Photographed by Geoffrey Clements.

Fig. 6. John Singleton Copley, 1763, *Mrs. Jerathmael Bowers*, Oil on Canvas, 49 7/8 x 39 ¾ in (126.7 x 101 cm), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1915 (15.128).

Fig. 7. John Singleton Copley, 1773, *Mrs. John Winthrop*, Oil on Canvas, 35 ½ x 28 ¾ in (90.2 x 73 cm), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Morris K. Jessup Fund, 1931 (31. 109).

Fig. 8. Charles Willson Peale, 1779-1781, *George Washington*, Oil on Canvas, 95 x 61 ¾ in (241. 3 x 156. 8 cm), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Collis P. Huntington, 1897 (97.33).

Fig. 9. Charles Willson Peale, 1787, *Benjamin Franklin*, Mezzotint, 6 7/16 x 5 3/16 in (16.3 x 13.2 cm), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Charles Allen Munn, 1924 (24.90.52).

Fig. 10. Rembrandt Peale, 1846, *George Washington*, Oil on Canvas, 36 x 29 in (91.4 x 73.7 cm), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Francis Mead, 1926 (54.15.1).

Fig. 11. Samuel F.B. Morse, 1826, *De Witt Clinton*, Oil on Canvas, 30 x 25 1/8 in (76.2 x 63.8 cm), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1909 (.09.18).

Fig. 12. Ammi Phillips, 1835-1840, *Mrs. Mayer and Daughter*, Oil on Canvas, 37 ¾ x 34 ¾ in (96.2 x 87 cm), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch, 1962 (62.256.2).