

*'Memorials of great &  
good men who were my friends':  
Portraits in the Life of Oliver Wolcott, Jr.*

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OLIVER WOLCOTT, JR. (1760-1833), like many of his contemporaries, used portraits as familial icons, as gestures in political alliances, and as public tributes and memorials. Wolcott and his father Oliver Wolcott, Sr. (1726-97), were prominent in Connecticut politics during the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the first quarter of the nineteenth. Both men served as governors of the state. Wolcott, Jr., also served in the federal administrations of George Washington and John Adams. Withdrawing from national politics in 1800, he moved to New York City and was a successful merchant and banker until 1815. He spent the last twelve years of his public life in Con-

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necticut, serving as governor from 1817 to 1827. The portraits that Oliver Wolcott, Jr., commissioned or owned of political allies and family members are the subject of this article. Because of his political position and his family's interest in portraiture, he was both patron and subject of numerous portraits. The artists who made these portraits are among the most noted of the early republic: John Trumbull, Gilbert Stuart, Thomas Sully, John Vanderlyn, and Rembrandt Peale. Portraits by these artists of George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, John Quincy Adams, and other well-known sitters, have been studied and catalogued, providing a context for analyzing art patronage in the early national period.<sup>1</sup> The papers of Wolcott and members of his family offer glimpses of their relationships with these artists. When assembled, this material—much of it now widely dispersed—helps illuminate the role of portraits in the social and political culture of the era in which the younger Wolcott lived.

The value of a study of Wolcott's attitude toward portraits lies primarily in the biographical context within which they were made and collected.<sup>2</sup> As images the dozen or so portraits made of him, although by some of the best portrait artists of the era, have not piqued the curiosity of art historians. They are almost entirely head-and-shoulder or bust-length images, with limited iconographic content. Made at a time when portraits were the dominant graphic and sculptural mode in American art, they, like many

1. Examples of such studies include John Hill Morgan and Mantle Fielding, *The Life Portraits of Washington and Their Replicas* (Philadelphia: printed for the subscribers, 1931); Andrew Oliver, *Portraits of John and Abigail Adams* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967); Andrew Oliver, *Portraits of John Quincy Adams and His Wife* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970); and Alfred L. Bush, *The Life Portraits of Thomas Jefferson*, rev. ed. (Charlottesville, Va.: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation, 1987). For portraits of the most often portrayed American of a slightly earlier generation, see Charles Coleman Sellers, *Benjamin Franklin in Portraiture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962).

2. Portraits of Wolcott are discussed briefly in Samuel Wolcott, *Memorial of Henry Wolcott, One of the First Settlers of Windsor, Connecticut, and of Some of his Descendants* (New York, 1881), 310; and in George Gibbs, *The Gibbs Family of Rhode Island and some Related Families* (New York: privately printed, 1933), 'Family Portraits,' 145, 149–52. Many of Wolcott's portraits are recorded in the Catalog of American Portraits at the National Portrait Gallery, and in the Inventory of American Paintings and Sculpture at the National Museum of American Art.

others of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, are now surprisingly mute, their visual language so subtle as to be unreadable. The portraits have not been closely studied by historians or biographers, in part at least because there has been no recent full-length biography of Wolcott, and his manuscripts have not been collected and published. Nor have the portraits of Wolcott or those associated with him been widely exhibited. Retained by individual family members or donated after his death to private institutions, they have remained uncatalogued, even misattributed. However, when portraits of Wolcott, and those that he owned or commissioned of others, are examined in light of comments found in his manuscripts, they can offer significant insights into how contemporaries saw portraits and used them. Such a study contributes to our understanding of the geometric rise in numbers of portraits commissioned in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in the United States. Such a study also reveals several examples of political portrait commissions among the Federalists, a subject that has received little attention.

Oliver Wolcott, Jr., was a major figure in American politics of the early Republic.<sup>3</sup> Born in Litchfield, Connecticut, in 1760, Wolcott was the eldest son of Oliver and Laura (Collins) Wolcott, who strongly supported the American cause in the Revolutionary War. His father, a Yale College graduate, was sheriff, judge, and representative of Litchfield before becoming a delegate to the Continental Congress in 1775. He continued his service in Congress until 1783, serving also as a brigadier general and major general during the war. He became lieutenant governor of

3. There is no modern book-length biography of Wolcott. The most useful short biography of Wolcott is found in the *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. 'Wolcott, Oliver' (second entry; the first entry is for his father). A long essay by Samuel Wolcott, with extensive quotes from personal letters and other documents, is in Wolcott, *Memorial of Henry Wolcott*, 216-313. A shorter biographical essay by descendant George Gibbs appears in Gibbs, *Gibbs Family*, 72-74. Dissertations on his political career include James Edward Bland, 'The Oliver Wolcotts of Connecticut, The National Experience, 1775-1800' (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1969) and Neil Alexander Hamilton, 'Connecticut Order, Mercantilistic Economics: The Life of Oliver Wolcott, Jr.' (Ph.D. diss., University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1988).

Connecticut in 1787 and governor in 1796. His eldest son and namesake graduated from Yale College in 1778 and studied law with Tapping Reeve in Litchfield. In the 1780s he served as a state commissioner to settle claims of Connecticut against the United States, and in 1788 was made comptroller of the state's public accounts. When he was appointed auditor of the new federal Treasury in 1789, he moved to New York City and then to Philadelphia, the temporary locations of the federal government before the city of Washington was established as the capital. On the recommendation of Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton, Wolcott was made comptroller of the Treasury in 1791. Appointed Secretary of the Treasury after Hamilton's resignation in 1795, he held this cabinet office until he resigned in 1800 at the end of John Adams's presidency. At Hamilton's advice he moved to New York City, where he formed a new company designed to sell both stock and merchandise. Successful in the China Trade, he lived in New York City until 1815, serving from 1812 to 1814 as the president of the newly formed Bank of America. During this time, his political views shifted away from the Federalists over their opposition to the War of 1812. Returning to Litchfield in 1815, he became a coalition candidate for governor of Connecticut in opposition to the dominant Federalist party. He was elected governor in 1817 and was re-elected annually until 1827. He also presided over the convention that framed the new state constitution in 1818. Wolcott spent his last years in New York City, the home of his daughter Laura Wolcott and her husband George Gibbs.

The Philadelphia lawyer and jurist Joseph Hopkinson, a life-long friend, gave this description of Wolcott after his death:

Mr. Wolcott was a man of a cheerful and even playful disposition. His conversation was interesting and earnest, but gay, unless the occasion was unfit for gaiety. He enjoyed a good joke from himself or another, and his laugh was hearty and frequent. He delighted in the discussion of literary subjects and the works of distinguished authors, and was particularly fond of poetry. Indeed, I understand that in his younger

days he was a poet. He had a good taste in literature, with one exception about which we often disputed, and in which his New England attachments or prejudices controlled his judgment. He had an excessive admiration of Dr. Dwight's 'Conquest of Canaan.' His domestic life was most exemplary; his greatest happiness was in his family, with the friends who congregated there. His devotion to the business and duties of his office was severe and unremitting. He possessed, in a high degree, a very rare qualification, the capacity for continued hard work, and was in everything systematic and orderly. His attachments to his friends were strong and lasting, never taxing them with unreasonable exactions, nor subjecting them to unpleasant caprices. He was open and direct in all his dealings, without duplicity or intrigue in anything; his sincerity was sure, he deceived nobody. His political opinions were the honest convictions of a man of undoubted integrity, of distinguished intelligence, and high attainments, and, above all, of a true and sincere lover of his Country.<sup>4</sup>

What attitudes toward portraiture did Wolcott inherit as a child of the mid-eighteenth century? The portraits that Wolcott owned or commissioned, or those that were made of him, can be grouped under the terms familial, collegial, and public. On several occasions an image that was made for a family member or political ally became more widely known through public display of a copy, or through an engraving. As we will see, Wolcott did not own portraits of himself, as far as the available evidence indicates. Rather, his involvement with portraits and portrait artists indicates that he valued images of friends and family, and believed in portraits as expressions of public and private allegiances. He held this view in common with many others of his generation and social class in the United States. Americans who commissioned portraits in the fifty years following the Declaration of Independence were acting on traditions established in Europe and brought to the colonies by settlers and by European artists. Before the American Revolution portraits were used to celebrate family events, such as marriage or coming of age. Friendships were expressed through the exchange of portraits, like those collected by

4. Quoted in Wolcott, *Memorial of Henry Wolcott*, 307.

William Byrd at his Virginia home, Westover. And colonial governments displayed portraits of kings and royal governors in public places. When some of these public portraits were destroyed during the Revolution, they were replaced with portraits of George Washington.<sup>5</sup> Wolcott was introduced to these uses of portraiture as a young man. When he was thirteen, he learned the value of displaying portraits in public settings on a visit to New Haven, where at Yale he was impressed by portraits of its benefactors. He saw 'the inside of Yale College, the Library room, and the Pictures of Mr. Yale, Governor Salstonstall [sic] &c., which no other of my Schoolmates had done.'<sup>6</sup> In 1776 he witnessed the results of the animosity of Americans toward public images of George III. His father brought to Litchfield the remains of the equestrian statue of the English king that had stood in New York City until torn down in July 1776, after the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Under his father's direction, the statue was melted into bullets for use by American soldiers.<sup>7</sup>

Unlike some colonial American families, however, the Wolcotts did not have a tradition of collecting or commissioning family portraits. The first known portraits of Wolcott family members were the three-quarter lengths of Oliver Wolcott, Sr., his wife Laura Collins Wolcott (1732-94), and their daughter Mariann Wolcott Goodrich (1765-1805), painted in Litchfield in 1789 by Connecticut artist Ralph Earl (1751-1801).<sup>8</sup> The paint-

5. For the reasons that portraits were commissioned in the colonial period, see Richard H. Saunders and Ellen G. Miles, *American Colonial Portraits: 1700-1776* (exh. cat., Washington, D.C.: National Portrait Gallery, 1987), 16-25, 43-58.

6. Wolcott, 'Autobiography' (c. 1830), quoted in Wolcott, *Memorial of Henry Wolcott*, 226.

7. Joseph M. Sanderson, 'Oliver Wolcott,' *Biography of the Signers to the Declaration of Independence*, 9 vols. (Philadelphia, 1820-27), 3: 63-67, as quoted in Wolcott, *Memorial of Henry Wolcott*, 151-53. This essay was written by Wolcott, Jr., who sent his draft to Sanderson in 1822; see Wolcott to Sanderson, Nov. 28, 1822, Box VII, and Wolcott's letter book copy, v. 52, no. 15, Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Papers, Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford (microfilm, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress). I am very grateful to the Society for permission to quote extensively from this collection, the largest holding of papers of Oliver Wolcott, Jr., which will be cited here as OWJr Papers, CHS.

8. On Earl's portraits see Elizabeth Mankin Kornhauser, 'Ralph Earl: Artist-entrepreneur' (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1988), 125-26, 337-40; Elizabeth Mankin Kornhauser with Richard L. Bushman, Stephen H. Kornhauser, and Aileen Ribeiro, *Ralph*

ing of the elder Wolcott celebrates his role in the state's ratification of the United States Constitution in 1788; Wolcott is shown holding a copy of the document. His son was living in Hartford when the portraits were painted. The paintings were mentioned as an afterthought added by the elder Wolcott along the left margin of his letter of April 5, 1789, to Oliver, Jr.: 'Mr. Earle is here—and will begin to take Portraits tomorrow.'<sup>9</sup> In 1791 Earl painted Wolcott's sister Laura Wolcott Moseley and her son Charles in a large, full-length portrait.<sup>10</sup> Of the immediate family, only Oliver Wolcott, Jr. and his brother Frederick were not painted by Earl.

Nor did Wolcott's interest in portraits result from a broader patronage of the fine arts. He was not a collector on any significant scale. The inventory of his estate, made in 1833, lists Earl's portraits of his father and his mother, a portrait of his wife Elizabeth Stoughton Wolcott (1766–1805), and one of his daughter Elizabeth Wolcott Gracie (1795–1819), as well as one of her husband William Gracie.<sup>11</sup> Also on the inventory were '4 Pictures (heads),' which were portraits of George Washington, John Adams, John Jay, and Alexander Hamilton painted by John Trumbull in the 1790s.<sup>12</sup> In addition there were '2 Busts,' one of

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Earl; *The Face of the Young Republic* (exh. cat., Hartford: Wadsworth Athenaeum), 44–45, 146–51. The portrait of Oliver Wolcott, Sr., is owned by the Museum of Connecticut History, Connecticut State Library, Hartford; that of Mrs. Wolcott is owned by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond; and that of Mariann Wolcott Goodrich is owned by the Litchfield Historical Society, Litchfield, Conn.

9. Oliver Wolcott, Sr., Litchfield, Conn., to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., April 5, 1789, OWJr Papers, CHS, vol. 4, no. 73.

10. Kornhauser, 'Ralph Earl,' 306; Kornhauser, *Ralph Earl*, 52, 54; the portrait is owned by the Yale University Art Gallery.

11. Estate of Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Probate Inventory, 1833, Litchfield County Probate Records no. 6566, Connecticut State Library, Hartford. Wolcott's will, filed with the inventory, is also quoted in Wolcott, *Memorial of Henry Wolcott*, 312–33. Wolcott left his property in Litchfield to his son John Stoughton Wolcott, including 'all my Books, papers, manuscripts, pictures and household furniture,' with the exception of articles given to his daughter Laura Wolcott Gibbs. The artists are not identified. The portraits of his parents are by Connecticut artist Ralph Earl, and those of his wife and daughter are by John Trumbull. The portrait of Gracie remains unidentified. For more on Trumbull's portraits, see below.

12. The portraits were purchased from the estate of Wolcott's son in 1844 by Jay's son William Jay; see Theodore Sizer, Jr., *The Works of Colonel John Trumbull, Artist of the*

which was probably of Washington.<sup>13</sup> The portraits made of Wolcott belonged not to him, but to others among his family, friends, and admirers. Wolcott also owned engravings, with keys, of three of the history paintings of events of the American Revolution painted by Connecticut portrait and history painter, John Trumbull: *The Death of General Montgomery in the Attack on Quebec, December 31, 1775*, *The Death of General Warren at the Battle of Bunker's Hill, June 17, 1775*, and *The Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776*.<sup>14</sup> His estate inventory also listed two landscape paintings, 'Craig Millers Castle' and 'View in England,' and seven engravings of subjects from Greek and Roman history: 'Scene in Carthage,' 'Mark Antony' (dated 1787), 'Achilles & Ulysses,' 'Pyrrhus,' 'Continence of Scippio,' 'Hector & Parris,' and 'Regulus.' None of the artists were identified.<sup>15</sup> It seems likely that he collected these for their subject matter, especially

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*American Revolution*, rev. ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 18, 36, 45, 83; and Ellen G. Miles, with contributions by Patricia Burda, Cynthia J. Mills, and Leslie Kaye Reinhardt, *American Paintings of the Eighteenth Century; The Collections of the National Gallery of Art Systematic Catalogue* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1995), 308-12. Because the portraits were owned by Jay's descendants, historians, including Sizer, have assumed that they had belonged to Jay.

13. In 1812 Wolcott's son-in-law George Gibbs sent him a portrait of George Washington from Boston: 'I have put on board sloop Mary Capt. Bulkely . . . a barrel containing the bust of Washington for yourself.' George Gibbs to Wolcott, June 13, 1812, Oliver Wolcott Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

14. The engravings are listed in the inventory as 'death of Montgomery & Key,' 'Battle of Bunkers Hill & Key,' and 'Declaration of Indepence [sic] & Key.' On Trumbull's series of history paintings see Sizer, *Works of John Trumbull*, 95-102; Irma B. Jaffe, *John Trumbull; Patriot-Artist of the American Revolution* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1975), 316-24; and Helen A. Cooper, *John Trumbull; The Hand and Spirit of a Painter* (exh. cat., New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Art Gallery, 1982), 48-92. Two of the engravings were completed in 1798 and the third, of the *Declaration*, in 1823. In his letter to Joseph Sanderson, Nov. 28, 1822, Wolcott mentioned having seen the unfinished engraving of the *Declaration* at Trumbull's in New York; OWJr Papers, CHS, Box VII. His letter of July 28, 1823, to Josiah Quincy, introduced Major Wolcott Huntington, 'charged with some agency from Colo. Trumbull of New York, in relation to his Print of the declaration of Independence'; OWJr Papers, CHS, vol. 47, no. 100.

15. Estate of Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Probate Inventory, 1833. Engravings of some of these subjects are listed in the American Antiquarian Society's *Catalog of American Engravings*, primarily as illustrations to *Pictures of Roman History*, the 1811 edition, published in Philadelphia, of *Pictures of Roman History, in miniature designed by Alfred Mills, with explanatory anecdotes* (London, 1809). These illustrations were very small, and unlikely to be listed separately in an inventory. Also not all of the topics of the engravings that Wolcott owned were included in this publication.



since the subjects from classical history are consistent with American interests in expressions of Roman republican virtue.

Wolcott's most important artistic association was his lifelong friendship with artist John Trumbull (1756-1843), also from Connecticut. This led to a number of portraits, which are discussed below. Also, when Wolcott lived in New York and Philadelphia from the late 1780s until 1815, he enjoyed brief contact with a number of artists. In 1789, for example, Chauncey Goodrich asked him to make some contacts in New York through 'Mr. Verstillé,' undoubtedly the jeweler and miniaturist William Verstillé (1757-1803), who moved there from Connecticut in the late 1780s. The name 'Woolcott' appears twice in Verstillé's accounts for September 1790, without a more specific reference.<sup>16</sup> In 1809 in New York, he hired Louis Francis De Paul Binsse as a drawing teacher for his daughter Laura (1794-1870). She wrote of Binsse (1774-1844), an émigré French artist who had settled in New York in about 1805, in a letter to an uncle: 'Note that my drawing master is a french gentleman of the name of Binsse—I like him wonderfully.'<sup>17</sup> And although Wolcott was not a founder or board member of either of two prominent early American art academies, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia or the American Academy of the Fine Arts in New York,<sup>18</sup> he apparently tried at one point to assist his friend Joseph Hopkinson, who wished to borrow a painting for a Philadelphia

16. Goodrich to Wolcott, Hartford, Dec. 20, 1789, OWJr Papers, CHS. On Verstillé, see Dale T. Johnson, *American Portrait Miniatures in the Manney Collection* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1990), 223-25, and 'Accounts of William Verstillé,' *Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin* 25 (Jan. 1960): 22-31, where 'Woolcott' is listed on 28 and 29.

17. Laura Gibbs to her 'Uncle,' New York, Dec. 24, 1809, Gibbs Family Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin. On March 24, 1810, Wolcott paid 'L. Binsse' \$55 for 'tuition of Drawing' and 'crayons' for the period Dec. 20, 1809-March 20, 1810; see Binsse, undated invoice annotated with record of payment, OWJr Papers, CHS, Box VIII.

18. Cheryl Leibold, archivist at The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, checked archival references on founders and early members of the board, and found no reference to Wolcott. The founders, officers, and early members of the American Academy of the Fine Arts in New York are discussed in Carrie J. Reborá, 'The American Academy of the Fine Arts, New York, 1802-1842,' 2 vols. (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1990), esp. 1: 9-158, and 2: Appendices A and B, 495-531.

exhibition. On March 25, 1811, Hopkinson thanked Wolcott for his help in attempts to borrow the picture. Unfortunately the name of the owner of the painting, as given in the letter, is illegible. Hopkinson commented to Wolcott:

Your success with M [A—?] certainly entitles you to much praise as a diplomatic character, and to all our thanks for your exercise [?] of your skill on our behalf. State if it were possible to have the picture here the favour would be greatly enhanced. The copy would not cost us more than half as much taken here as if we shall be obliged to send the artist to New York. M [A—?]'s objection does not exactly meet the case. He does not send the picture here *to be copied*, but he sends it *to the exhibition*, at which many fine paintings from private collections will be shewn. And when the picture is thus sent not for the purpose of being copied but to be *exhibited*, his permission to take [a] copy is merely a secondary incident to the direct object of sending it. If you think this sort of reasoning will satisfy M A and the *Ladies of New York*, it may be well to make the attempt; but if it will seem like pressing him too far, when he has already done so much, the thing may stand as it does.<sup>19</sup>

Earlier in the month Wolcott had, perhaps, referred to this picture in a letter to his son-in-law George Gibbs: 'I was a short time in Philadelphia the last week, where I had the pleasure of seeing your Sister & Miss Clark. The Ladies made many kind inquiries and expressed a strong desire to see you & Laura. Miss Elizabeth's picture will I think be ordered on to Philadelphia, in consequence of what I said of it.'<sup>20</sup> The dates of the letters suggest that the loan might have been intended for the first annual exhibition of the Society of Artists of the United States, which opened to the public in Philadelphia on May 6. Hopkinson, who was a founder of the Pennsylvania Academy in 1805, gave the opening address.<sup>21</sup> The painting, and the potential lender, remain unidentified.

19. Joseph Hopkinson to Wolcott, March 25, 1811; OWJr Papers, CHS, vol. 48, no. 93.

20. Wolcott to George Gibbs, draft of letter of March 7, 1811, Wolcott Papers, Library of Congress. It has not been possible to identify the exhibition or picture referred to. 'Miss Elizabeth' could be Gibbs's younger sister Elizabeth (1786–1816); see Gibbs, *Gibbs Family*, 168.

21. William Dunlap, *History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States*, 2 vols. (New York, 1834), 1: 420–21.

PORTRAITS OF POLITICAL FIGURES

The earliest portraits of Wolcott were made in Philadelphia in the 1790s, when he was comptroller and secretary of the Department of the Treasury. The portraits, by John Trumbull (fig. 1) and James Sharples (two versions, unlocated), are not documented in Wolcott's papers. The apparent age of the sitter and the style of clothing in each confirm dates in the 1790s. Both are small portraits. Trumbull's image measures  $3\frac{3}{4} \times 2\frac{7}{8}$  inches, and was painted in oil on paper, in an oval format.<sup>22</sup> Only Wolcott's head and upper torso are visible. He wears a dark gray coat with warm brown highlights, an apricot-yellow waistcoat, and a white shirt. His hair is powdered and tied in a queue. He looks directly at the viewer with his large blue eyes, which are always a notable feature of his portraits, and he is smiling slightly. Although the portrait was a gift to Yale University by a descendant of Wolcott's, suggesting continuous family ownership, the partially legible inscription on the reverse suggests that the miniature was once owned by Wolcott's friend Joseph Hopkinson and his wife Emily Mifflin, who were married in 1794. The inscription reads: 'Oliver Wollcott Esqr Secy of the Treasury. Mr. [ ] will plea[se] to send this to Mrs. Hopkinson who will ple[ ] [illegible] it from [illegible]. Jo. Hopk[ ].' The inscription must date from about 1795, after Wolcott's appointment as Secretary of the Treasury.<sup>23</sup>

The portrait could have been made by May 1791, when Wolcott mentioned Trumbull in a letter to his father, in which he discussed his probable appointment as comptroller of the Treasury. He introduced Trumbull as the bearer of the letter to the elder Wolcott in Connecticut: 'This letter will be handed to you by Colonel John Trumbull a countryman of whom we ought

22. Sizer, *Works of John Trumbull*, 88. The portrait was a gift of Wolcott's descendant Nicholas Roosevelt to the Yale University Art Gallery.

23. For the date of the Hopkinsons' marriage, see Nicholas B. Wainwright, *Paintings and Miniatures at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1974), 116. The inscription is recorded by infrared photographs on file in the American Art department, Yale University Art Gallery.

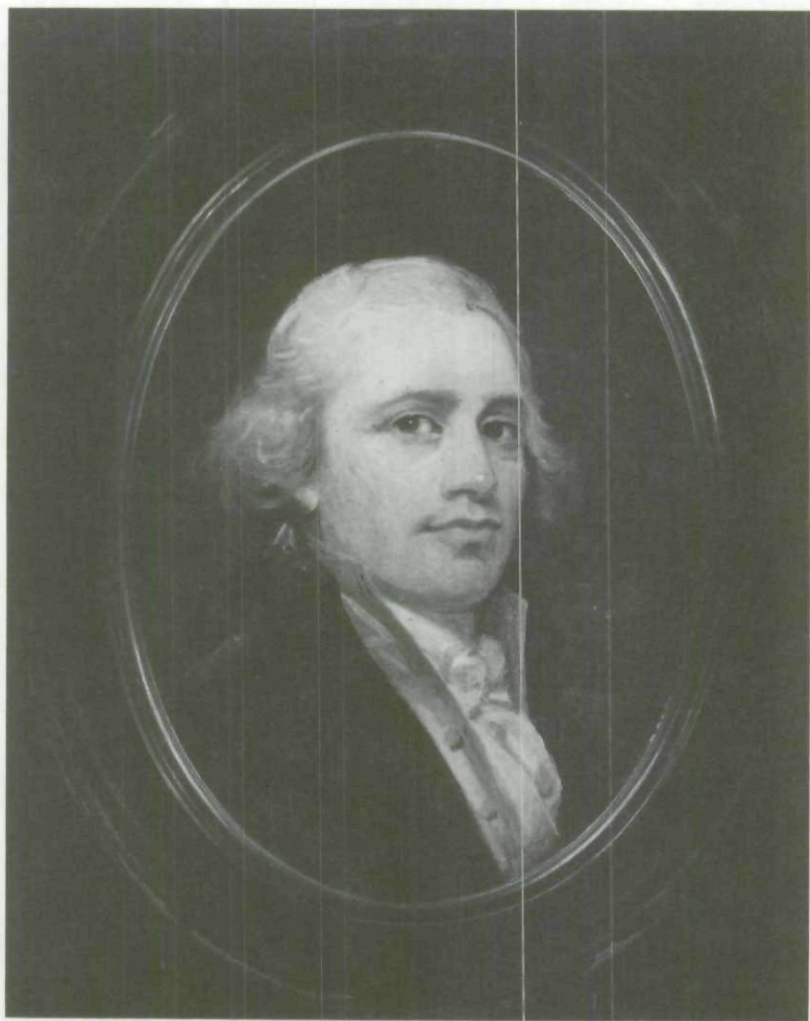


Fig. 1. John Trumbull, *Oliver Wolcott, Jr.*, oil on paper,  $3\frac{3}{4}$  by  $2\frac{7}{8}$  inches, c. 1791, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven. Gift of Nicholas Roosevelt.

to be very proud, on account of his good qualities as a man and his universal celebrity as an eminent artist.<sup>24</sup> At this time Trumbull was in Philadelphia to complete the details of his first history

24. Wolcott, Jr., to Wolcott, Sr., OWJr Papers, CHS, vol. 17, no. 27; the undated letter is inscribed 'May 1791.'

paintings of events of the American Revolution. He had conceived the series while in England, where he lived from 1784 to 1789. He returned to the United States in 1789 in order to paint the life portraits to be included in the compositions. His portrait of Wolcott, Jr., although not intended for inclusion in one of these history paintings, has the directness and freshness characteristic of the small life portraits that Trumbull was painting at the time, and is very like them, except that it is painted on paper, not wood.<sup>25</sup> When he painted Wolcott's father, he added the older man's image directly to his first version of *The Declaration of Independence*, 4 July 1776 (Yale University Art Gallery). Wolcott's letter helps to document Trumbull's portrait of the elder Wolcott.<sup>26</sup> Later in 1791 Wolcott arranged to purchase the engravings of Trumbull's history paintings, *Death of General Montgomery in the Attack on Quebec, December 31, 1775*, and *Death of General Warren at the Battle of Bunker's Hill, June 17, 1775*.<sup>27</sup>

The second portrait of Wolcott made in Philadelphia was a colored chalk drawing by James Sharples (1751/2-1811), an English artist who came to the United States with his family in the early 1790s. They settled first in New York City and moved soon to Philadelphia, where Sharples made portraits in 1796-97. Like most of Sharples's work, Wolcott's portrait (there are two exam-

25. On this series of history paintings and the small oil portraits related to them, see Jules David Prown, 'John Trumbull as History Painter,' 22-41, and catalogue entries on the individual paintings, in Cooper, *John Trumbull, Hand and Spirit*, 48-55, 63-92, and 125-47.

26. For Trumbull's portrait of Oliver Wolcott, Senior, see Sizer, *Works of John Trumbull*, 88; for the *Declaration of Independence*, see Sizer, *Works of John Trumbull*, 96 and figures 158-163. There are three versions of the painting; see also Jaffe, *John Trumbull; Patriot-Artist*, 104-17, 234-46, 318-19, 323-24 (the portrait of Oliver Wolcott, Senior, is discussed on 107); and Cooper, *John Trumbull; Hand and Spirit*, 76-81. In a discussion of portraits of his father in a letter to Joseph M. Sanderson of Philadelphia in 1822, Oliver Wolcott wrote from Litchfield that 'the *Study* [underlined] of Colo. Trumbull, from which he made his large picture, contains a good representation, but I have heard that the large Picture is not equally fortunate in this instance.' Wolcott to Sanderson, Nov. 28, 1822, OWJr Papers, CHS, Box VII.

27. Wolcott's name appears on Trumbull's 'List of Subscribers for the Battle of Bunker's Hill, and the Attack of Quebec,' John Trumbull Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library; Wolcott is number 284 on the list. His receipt for payment of five pounds, five shillings, half of the subscription price, is dated Nov. 5, 1791; John Trumbull Papers.

ples) is a pastel on paper that measures about 9 x 7 inches. Wolcott is shown in a three-quarter view, turned to the viewer's left. He has powdered hair, wears a brown coat, and is seen against a greenish-blue background.<sup>28</sup> Like the Trumbull portrait, there is no documentation for this portrait in Wolcott's papers. Also like the Trumbull portrait, the image could have been made for someone other than the sitter, perhaps Wolcott's sister Mariann. She and her husband Chauncey Goodrich, Federalist representative from Connecticut in 1795-1801, had their own portraits made by Sharples.<sup>29</sup> Wolcott also may have acquired one of Sharples's numerous pastel profile portraits of George Washington at this time.<sup>30</sup> Family tradition holds that Washington himself gave the example of this popular portrait to Wolcott. However, it is more likely that Wolcott purchased the portrait from Sharples or his wife Ellen, who advertised that she made and sold duplicates of her husband's work.<sup>31</sup>

The first extensive documentation of any portrait commission that can be found in Wolcott's papers chronicles the history of the full-length painting of George Washington by Gilbert Stuart (1755-1828) for the State of Connecticut.<sup>32</sup> Wolcott admired the

28. Katharine McCook Knox, *The Sharples, Their Portraits of George Washington and his Contemporaries; A Diary and An Account of the Life and Work of James Sharples and his Family in England and America* (1930; repr. New York: Da Capo Press, 1972), 98, listed examples owned by descendants Elizabeth P. Knowlton (Mrs. Harrison Dodge) of Washington, D.C., and Oliver Wolcott, of Hamilton, Mass. The portraits are unlocated today; photographs are on file at the Frick Art Reference Library, New York. Brandon Fortune kindly made color and costume notes from these photographs for the author.

29. The Goodrich portraits are not listed in Knox, *Sharples*. That of Mariann is illustrated in Wolcott, *Memorial of Henry Wolcott*, opp. 150, dated 1796. Copies attributed to Laura Wolcott Gibbs are owned by the Connecticut Historical Society.

30. Knox, *Sharples*, 68, 77 no. 46, 89. Oliver Wolcott's nephew Frederick Henry Wolcott owned the portrait in 1851, noting in his diary on May 6 that he 'took up picture of Washington for Mr. Meredith to see, who pronounces it a very admirable likeness. This picture was painted in Phila. by Sharpless & presented to Oliver Wolcott Secy of Treas.' Frederick Henry Wolcott. *Diary, 1849-51*. New York Public Library. (Mr. Meredith was identified as Gilmore Meredith in the diary entry for April 30, 1851.)

31. The Sharples also worked in New York City, where they lived from 1797 to 1801 and 1809 until his death in 1811, when Mrs. Sharples returned to England; see Knox, *Sharples*.

32. The portrait is now owned by the Museum of Connecticut History, Connecticut State Library, and is on long-term loan to the Old State House; see Wilson H. Faude, 'Old State House, Hartford, Connecticut,' *Antiques* 117 (March 1980): 626-33, repro.

first president immensely and had served him as Secretary of the Treasury at the end of his second term. In May 1800, a few months after Washington's death, Wolcott, who was still living in Philadelphia, investigated the cost of commissioning Stuart to paint two full-length portraits of Washington for the Senate Chambers of the state houses in Connecticut's two capital cities, Hartford and New Haven.<sup>33</sup> The correspondence that documents his role in this commission adds significantly to what is known about Stuart's portraits of Washington, especially regarding his prices, his use of wood panels instead of canvases, and his intention to copyright and publish prints of his own work. By 1800 Stuart's portraits of Washington were becoming legendary. The artist had returned to the United States from the British Isles in 1793 expressly to paint Washington's portrait. In 1795 he produced his first painting of Washington, known today as the 'Vaughan' portrait after the first owner of an important early example. Its success led to two commissions, one from Martha Washington for a pair of portraits of herself and her husband for Mount Vernon, and one from William Bingham for a life-size full-length portrait. Stuart painted the portraits for Mrs. Washington, now known as the 'Athenaeum' portraits (National Portrait Gallery and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), in 1796. Preferring that of the President to the earlier 'Vaughan' portrait, he kept it in his studio, and produced replicas and full-length portraits based on it. He sold these on commission in the tradition of European court painters who were authorized to sell studio copies of state portraits. Because Bingham sent a second full-length portrait to the Marquis of Lansdowne in England, the full-length portrait type is now called the 'Lansdowne' portrait.<sup>34</sup>

33. Connecticut had twin state capitals until the state legislature decided in 1873 to make Hartford the sole capital. The construction of the present capitol building in Hartford was a result of this decision. The last of the three capitol buildings built in New Haven (1829-30) was designed by Ithiel Town; it was torn down in 1889. See Henry Peck, *The New Haven State House, with some Account of the Green* (New Haven, 1889), 103.

34. For a brief summary of the history of Stuart's life portraits of Washington, see Miles, *American Paintings of the Eighteenth Century*, 161-62.

Wolcott's inquiry about commissioning a portrait of Washington was made on behalf of a committee of the Connecticut legislature that consisted of his brother-in-law Chauncey Goodrich, James Hillhouse, and John Trumbull (1750-1831), the poet, a cousin of Governor Jonathan Trumbull, who was the father of artist John Trumbull. The committee was appointed 'to consider in what manner' the legislature would 'pay the Tribute of Respect to the Memory of *Washington*,' and decided to 'procure two Copies of his Portrait by the celebrated Stewart, to be placed in our Senate Chambers at Hartford and Newhaven.'<sup>35</sup> Trumbull asked Wolcott to find out if Stuart would make such portraits, and at what price. Wolcott was unable to talk with Stuart, responding to the committee that the artist was 'in the country and indisposed.' He added: 'I have understood that Mr. Stewart has usually demanded One Thousand Dollars, for full length Portraits of Genl. Washington. Mr. Stewart is under many engagements and has sometimes failed in punctuality. The demand for his Portraits is increasing & he may possibly expect somewhat more than the sum I have mentioned.'<sup>36</sup> The next day he reported that he had interviewed Stuart: 'The price of One Thousand Dollars for Portraits, mentioned in my Letter of yesterday, was I find his demand for *originals*:—he will if desired engage to furnish two well finished *duplicates* of an excellent original Portrait for Twelve hundred Dollars, exclusive of frames, the expense of which is estimated at Two hundred Dollars more.' He added a comment that may explain Stuart's occasional use of wood panels for his paintings, rather than linen canvas. This unusual practice has been attributed by art historians to economic causes: 'Mr. Stewart observes, that the heat of our Climate will destroy Canvas, exposed in a public building, in about Twenty years & he recommends Mahogany Pannells, in lieu of Canvass. He says that the Pannells can be so constructed as not to warp or crack. I should suppose his

35. John Trumbull to Wolcott, May 12, 1800; OWJr Papers, CHS, vol. 11, no. 46; *Washington's* name is underlined in the original.

36. Draft, Wolcott to Trumbull, May 16, 1800, OWJr Papers, CHS, vol. 11, no. 47.



judgement founded on experience ought to be relied upon.' Wolcott ended by writing that 'the proposed Portraits will be five feet wide & eight feet long, surrounded by a plain gilded frame of nine Inches in Width. If a Contract is soon formed, the work will be ready for delivery at the end of the present year.'<sup>37</sup> When Wolcott continued to try to complete the arrangements with the help of intermediaries William Bingham and Israel Whelen, he learned that Stuart 'had come to a resolution to have inserted in every contract for any of his paintings, that he reserved to himself the entire and exclusive priviledge of copyright & publishing prints of them.' Whelen returned the contracts to Wolcott for revision, adding 'I am afraid however from the accounts I have heard that this ingenious man is unfortunately no longer his own Master, I am told he is seldom fit for business except in the morning, and that early.'<sup>38</sup> Ultimately only one portrait was painted. On February 16, 1801, Stuart wrote that 'the portrait of Genl. Washington, which was engaged by you, for the State of Connecticut, is completed, together with the frame, it will perhaps be necessary that you should designate some agent here to receive it.'<sup>39</sup> In the final painting, canvas was used, rather than a wood panel. When completed the portrait was placed in the senate chamber of the State House, in Hartford.

The comments about Stuart and his practice of portraiture at the height of his career refer to several issues on the minds of the artist and his contemporaries regarding Stuart's desire to protect his own creations from pirated painted copies and prints. After painting his life portraits of Washington, Stuart sold replicas that

37. Draft, Wolcott to Trumbull, May 17, 1800, OWJr Papers, CHS, vol. 11, no. 48. The words 'originals' and 'duplicates' are underlined in the document.

38. Israel Whelen to Oliver Wolcott, Philadelphia, Aug. 6, 1800; OWJr Papers, CHS, vol. 15, no. 108. Wolcott returned the contracts quickly; see Whelen to Wolcott, Aug. 13, 1800, OWJr Papers, CHS, vol. 15, no. 111.

39. This letter, now unlocated, is quoted in Morgan and Fielding, *Life Portraits of Washington*, 268-69, without the name of the addressee. The letter was probably written to Wolcott. On the portrait, see also Lawrence Park, *Gilbert Stuart; An Illustrated Descriptive List of His Works* (New York: W. E. Rudge, 1926), 860, and Gustavus A. Eisen, *Portraits of Washington*, 3 vols. (New York: R. Hamilton and Associates, 1932), 1: 81-84.

he had painted. By the summer of 1800 an engraving of the full-length portrait that had been sent to England had been made without Stuart's permission, and was being advertised for sale in Philadelphia. Stuart then announced his own plan to publish engravings made under his direction.<sup>40</sup> At the same time the artist prosecuted a case in court in Philadelphia involving the sale of copies of his portraits of Washington that had been painted in China. In both instances Stuart was concerned both about the quality of the copies and about his loss of revenue from their sale. Also at about this time, Stuart began using wood panels for his own work. One of the first was for his portrait of Horace Binney, a young Philadelphia lawyer who had attended the court sessions during Stuart's lawsuit over the Chinese copies.<sup>41</sup> Stuart's comments to Wolcott about the use of wood panels for large portraits shows that his use of these supports did not occur as a result of the Embargo Act of 1807, which curtailed American trade with Great Britain. Restricted trade, it is argued, cut off Stuart's supply of imported English canvas.<sup>42</sup> However, it is now clear that Stuart began using wood panels in 1800. He continued to use them for some portraits throughout his career.

The years that Wolcott lived in New York City, after he left his federal position as secretary of the treasury, provided the richest opportunity for commissioning portraits. The incoming President of the United States, John Adams, appointed Wolcott a federal judge on the new Second Circuit, making him one of the infamous 'midnight judges.'<sup>43</sup> The new Republican congress repealed the Judiciary Act that had created the judgeships. Wolcott held the position for about a year, while unsuccessfully appealing the repeal. Then, with no prospects for income, he

40. Richard McLanathan, *Gilbert Stuart* (New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc., 1986), 93-98.

41. Miles, *American Paintings of the Eighteenth Century*, 219-21; the portrait was painted in 1800.

42. Eleanor P. DeLorme, 'Attribution and Laboratory Analysis in Portraiture, the Master and the Student,' *American Art Review* 3, no. 2 (1976): 128, cites this reason for Stuart's use of panels.

43. Hamilton, 'Life of Oliver Wolcott, Jr.,' 302-5.

moved to New York City on the advice of Alexander Hamilton, and in 1803 established a merchandising firm, Oliver Wolcott and Company. His Federalist friend Josiah Quincy described him at this time: 'Our political Mars has melted down his armour and put the metal out at interest and cares nothing about the din of this great world, except what is made by telling out nine per cent at his bank and five per cent at his counting house.'<sup>44</sup> The partners in his company were James Watson, Moses Rogers, Archibald Gracie, and William W. Woolsey. In the firm he continued his association with former political allies. His correspondents included John Trumbull and William Bingham in London, George Cabot in Boston, Benjamin Goodhue in Salem, and the firm of George Gibbs and Walter Channing in Newport. Wolcott continued the business on his own after the company was dissolved in 1805.<sup>45</sup>

The portraits made in New York City fall into three groups. First are the political portraits. A number of these reflect the despair of leaders of the Federalist party after the death of Alexander Hamilton in July 1804. Such an intense focus on portraits of a political figure was not unique in American portraiture of this period. Public portraits of American statesmen had been made with some frequency since the Revolution. Philadelphia artist Charles Willson Peale (1741-1827) opened his 'Collection of celebrated Personages' in 1784 with forty-four portraits that he had painted of leaders of the Revolution whom he admired. By 1808 he had eighty-eight portraits 'of distinguished Personages' in the museum.<sup>46</sup> In the 1780s and 1790s English painter Robert Edge Pine (c. 1720/30-88) and Wolcott's friend John Trumbull painted history paintings of events of the Revolution that included life portraits of the participants and were intended to be engraved for

44. Josiah Quincy to Wolcott, Sept. 30, 1803, OWJr Papers, CHS, quoted in Robert A. McCaughey, *Josiah Quincy, 1772-1864; The Last Federalist* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), 29.

45. Oliver Wolcott, letter book, 1803-08, pp. 1, 175, Oliver Wolcott Papers, New York Public Library.

46. Lillian B. Miller, Sidney Hart, Toby A. Appel, and David C. Ward, eds., *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and his Family*, 4 vols. in print (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983-96), 1: 375, 634-35; 2: 1087.

public sale.<sup>47</sup> Full-length portraits of George Washington were commissioned for public collections beginning in 1779 with Peale's full-length portrait for the Supreme Executive Council, the governing body of Pennsylvania, and include the City of New York's commission to John Trumbull for a full-length portrait of Washington in 1790.<sup>48</sup>

The difference between these works and those depicting Hamilton after his death lies in the element of mourning for the death of a young leader.<sup>49</sup> Washington was the focus of national mourning after his death in 1799; his death, however, was that of a man at the end of a great life. The portraits of Hamilton that concerned Wolcott were made by his friend Trumbull, who was also a Federalist, and they were made on commission for other Federalists. In 1804 Trumbull returned to the United States from London, where he had been since 1794 as secretary to John Jay on the Jay Treaty Commission. Deciding to work as an artist in New York City, he contacted Wolcott to ask for help in finding a house.<sup>50</sup> Within a year he was commissioned to paint a full-length portrait of Hamilton, for New York City Hall. The commission, and one for a similar portrait of John Jay, came from the Federalists, then the party in power in New York City.<sup>51</sup> Trumbull based the posthumous portrait on the marble bust of

47. On Pine's American career see Robert Gordon Stewart, *Robert Edge Pine, A British Portrait Painter in America, 1784-1788* (exh. cat., Washington, D.C.: National Portrait Gallery, 1979).

48. Charles Coleman Sellers, *Portraits and Miniatures by Charles Willson Peale* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1952), 225-28; Sizer, *Works of John Trumbull*, 82.

49. Portraits of Hamilton have been described, first, by Charles Henry Hart, 'Life Portraits of Alexander Hamilton,' *McClure's Magazine* 8 (April 1897): 507-13, and more recently by Harry MacNeill Bland and Virginia W. Northcott, 'The Life Portraits of Alexander Hamilton,' *William and Mary Quarterly* 12 (1955): 187-98. A group of unusual profile portraits of Hamilton was sold after Hamilton's death; Paul D. Schweizer, 'William J. Weaver's Secret Art of Multiplying Pictures,' *Painting and Portrait Making in the American Northeast*, Peter Benes, ed. (Boston: Boston University, 1996), 159-64.

50. Trumbull to Wolcott, Oct. 1, 1804, OWJr Papers, CHS, vol. 8, no. 85.

51. Sizer, *Works of John Trumbull*, 37, 45; Jaffe, *John Trumbull, Patriot-Artist*, 208, 309; Oswaldo Rodriguez Roque, 'Trumbull's Portraits,' in Cooper, *John Trumbull, Hand and Spirit*, 103-4.

Hamilton that had been made in 1791 by Italian sculptor Giuseppe Ceracchi (1751-1801). The bust, owned by Hamilton's family, was exhibited in New York in September 1804 at the Tontine Coffee House. Irish sculptor John Dixey (active in the United States from 1789 to about 1819) described Ceracchi's original portrait in glowing terms: 'All who have ever seen this wonderful piece of art will recollect their emotions of pleasure and surprize at the striking resemblance it bore to the illustrious deceased; its perfect delineation of every feature; its correct exhibition of character.' He offered to sell plaster of paris casts, advertising that 'these casts may be multiplied to an extent that will enable all who set a proper value on his unequalled talents, virtues, and eminent public services, to gratify themselves with a perfect likeness of Hamilton.'<sup>52</sup> Other sculptures, as well as wax figures, paintings, and prints of Hamilton were exhibited and sold in the months following his death.<sup>53</sup>

After completing the full-length portrait of Hamilton, Trumbull received several commissions for bust-length versions (fig. 2). These smaller portraits show Hamilton in an abbreviated version of the full-length and include a partial gesture and a plain background. At least three of these posthumous images were purchased by Boston Federalists, including Wolcott's friend George Cabot. Cabot was one of the organizers of a plan through which he and others in Boston, in the months after Hamilton's death, had contributed toward the purchase of land in Pennsylvania as an investment for his widow and children.<sup>54</sup> Writing to Hamilton's executors in November 1804, Cabot and co-organizers Theophilus Lyman and Thomas Davis ended their letter by saying, 'The deep felt grief of wise & good men every where testifies their sense of irreparable loss to the public while the

52. Advertisement dated Sept. 20, 1804, in Rita Susswein Gottesman, *The Arts and Crafts in New York, 1800-1804: Advertisements and News Items from New York City Newspapers* (New York: New-York Historical Society, 1965), 87, reference courtesy of Paul Schweizer.

53. *Ibid.*, 40, 62-68, 87, 92.

54. 'Subscription List for benefit of Genl. Hamilton's heirs' [1804], Timothy Pickering Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

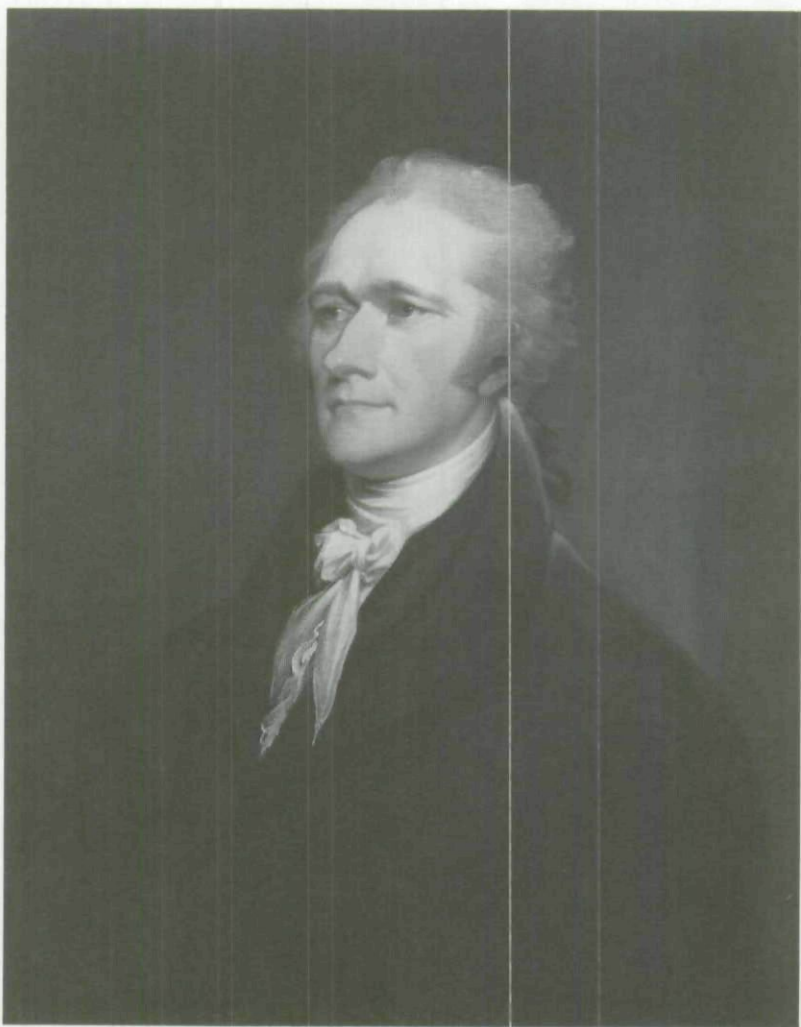


Fig. 2. John Trumbull, *Alexander Hamilton*, oil on canvas, 30 x 24 inches, 1806. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution. Gift of Henry Cabot Lodge.

strong sympathies which are awakened for those who were by nature attached to him are a just tribute to his private virtues.<sup>55</sup> In the spring of 1806, Cabot, Isaac P. Davis, S. G. Perkins, and others, purchased head-and-shoulder versions of Trumbull's posthu-

55. George Cabot, Thomas Davis, and Theophilus Lyman to John B. Church, Nicholas Fish, and Nathaniel Pendleton, Nov. 16, 1804, copy, Timothy Pickering Papers.

mous portrait of Hamilton.<sup>56</sup> David Hosack, the doctor who had attended Hamilton at his death, also acquired an example.<sup>57</sup> In a list of paintings of this period Trumbull noted four such head and shoulders replicas 'copied from large picture,' for which he charged \$100 each: 'Hamilton for Mr. I. P. Davis,' 'do [ditto] sold \$100,' 'Hamilton again Copy sold to J. G. Perkins [sic] \$100,' and 'Hamilton again \$100.'<sup>58</sup> Perkins stressed the correctness of the likeness when he wrote Trumbull on April 11, 1806: 'We have seen here a Painting of Genl Hamilton which you Executed for Mr. I. P. Davis—I understand you have another *equally Correct* as respects Resemblance to the original—*If this be true* & you will dispose of it to me for the same price which Mr. Davis gave you for his—Namely, one hundred dollars—I will thank you to send it round to me by first Conveyance Carefully Cased.'<sup>59</sup> One of these

56. The portrait owned by Perkins is now owned by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, while that owned by George Cabot is at the National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C. That owned by Isaac Davis is unlocated. See Sizer, *Works of John Trumbull*, 37–38, and *American Paintings in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, 2 vols. (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1969), 1: 272, where Trumbull's receipt of the payment from 'S. S. Perkins' on May 6, 1806, is cited. Isaac P. Davis (1771–1855) was a Boston manufacturer and businessman. Davis was a patron of Gilbert Stuart; see Miles, *American Paintings of the Eighteenth Century*, 266, 269. He was also a longtime friend and political supporter of Daniel Webster; for their early letters see *The Papers of Daniel Webster; Correspondence, Volume 1: 1798–1824*, Charles M. Wiltse, ed. (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1974), 147–48, 159–60, 165–67. In 1851 Webster dedicated the second volume of his *Works* to Davis; see *Correspondence, Volume 7, 1850–1852*, Charles M. Wiltse and Michael J. Birkner, eds. (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1986), 285–86. I would like to thank Janet Headley for this reference.

57. This is probably the painting at the National Gallery of Art; see Sizer, *Works of John Trumbull*, 37; Miles, *American Paintings of the Eighteenth Century*, 308–12.

58. John Trumbull, 'Paintings from Nov. 1805 to Mar. 22 1806,' transcribed by Charles Henry Hart with the title 'Mem. in autograph of John Trumbull.—From Silliman Mss.,' typescript, c. 1896, Charles Henry Hart Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. (Perkins's initials appear from other documents to be 'S.G.' not 'J.G.' as recorded by Hart.) Trumbull recorded the portrait commissioned by Perkins in his 'Work finished but not sent home & paid for,' undated manuscript, Hart Papers, as 'Hamilton to S. G. Perkins 100.' In an untitled document dated March 22, 1806, Trumbull noted 'IPDavis copy of Hamilton—100' and indicated an additional \$100 for another copy, the purchaser's name not listed. Trumbull then totalled the income of some of these: 'in hand 800 . . . 2 Hamilton 200 . . . Wolcott—150' and listed 'to do: Wolcott—2 Winthrop—Hosack' and others; Hart Papers. The cash payment from Davis is recorded in Trumbull's account book for 1804–06 on March 3, 1806 as 'Cash—Receivd from I P Davis of Boston for a head of Hamilton. 100'; Trumbull Papers, Yale University Library.

59. S. G. Perkins to Trumbull, April 11, 1806, Hart Papers. The phrases 'equally Correct' and 'If this be true' are underlined in the original. Trumbull noted on the letter: 'Sent the picture & ansd. the letter May 5th. 1806.'

portraits was engraved by Robert Field and published in Boston on August 31, 1806, indicating a wider, public interest there also for portraits of Hamilton.<sup>60</sup>

In May 1805, at the time that Trumbull was painting Hamilton's full-length posthumous portrait, he and Wolcott were among the founding members of the New England Society in the City and State of New York.<sup>61</sup> The society was established in New York City to celebrate the new nation, and reflected the pro-New England, pro-Hamilton stance of its leaders. Its president was Wolcott's partner James Watson, and board members included Wolcott and Rufus King. At the meeting of December 6, 1805, Wolcott proposed that Trumbull 'prepare a design and a form of a certificate' for members.<sup>62</sup> The first annual dinner, at the City Hotel on December 27, celebrated the one hundred and eighty-fifth anniversary of 'the landing of the first New-England Colony at Plymouth' and toasted 'the Birthday of a Nation.'<sup>63</sup> After Watson died in 1806, Wolcott was elected President, and Trumbull was made an 'assistant,' later becoming a vice-president.<sup>64</sup> The artist's last appearance with the group was at the annual dinner on December 22, 1807, at which he and Wolcott both offered toasts. Wolcott raised a glass to a 'National Policy—founded in just principles, demonstrated by reason, & supported by power,' while Trumbull said, 'May the day soon arrive, when mankind no longer dazzled by the false splendor of successful crimes, shall learn to reverence virtue.'<sup>65</sup> A portrait of Hamilton may have been exhibited at some of these meetings. The minutes of the December 1810 gathering at the Tontine Coffee House

60. American Antiquarian Society, *Catalog of American Engravings (CAEP)*; examples are owned by the National Portrait Gallery and Yale University Art Gallery, in the Garvan Collection.

61. New England Society in the City and State of New York, 'Minutes,' Board of Officers, vol. 1 (1805-37), New-York Historical Society, New York, 1-7; Massachusetts painter Edward Savage, who lived in New York during this decade, was also a member.

62. New England Society, 'Minutes,' 6.

63. New England Society, 'Minutes,' 7.

64. New England Society, 'Minutes,' 25, meeting of Jan. 14, 1807.

65. New England Society, 'Minutes,' 41.



record a toast by Henry Hunter: 'Hamilton—Look at his picture. Let others hail the *rising* sun. *We* bow to *Him* whose race is run.'<sup>66</sup>

By 1829 Wolcott himself owned portraits of Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, George Washington, and John Adams by Trumbull. He may have acquired these five head-and-shoulder paintings from Trumbull during the years that he lived in New York City. They are versions of paintings that Trumbull made in the early 1790s.<sup>67</sup> The date of Wolcott's acquisition of them is not known. The portrait of Hamilton is not the same as the one commissioned by Federalists in 1805, but instead is related to the full-length that Trumbull had painted for the New York Chamber of Commerce in 1792. Writing in 1829 to his friend Dr. John R. Rhineland, Wolcott noted: 'I am the last survivor of the civil companions of Washington & the elder Adams.' He commented on four portraits in his collection: 'I possess Portraits of Washington, Adams, Jay, Hamilton & Robert Morris, which I value as memorials of great & good men who were my friends.'<sup>68</sup> They are listed on the inventory of his house at Litchfield, Connecticut, made after his death in 1833. The term that Wolcott used, 'great and good,' was a reiteration of a well-known comment made about George Washington at the time of the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787. Washington's arrival was described in the *Pennsylvania Packet* for May 14, 1787: 'The joy of the people on the coming of this great and good man was shown by their acclamations and the ringing of bells.' The appellation probably was taken from Joseph Addison's poem, *The Campaign* (1704), celebrating the Duke of Marlborough's victory at Blenheim.<sup>69</sup>

66. New England Society, 'Minutes,' 68, meeting of the board of officers, Jan. 8, 1811. Wolcott was president until 1815 (93); his son-in-law George Gibbs was a member by 1811 (78). The society continued to give toasts to Hamilton's memory as late as the annual dinner of 1818; by Dec. 1820 the meeting focused on the celebration of the 200th anniversary of 'the Landing of our Ancestors at Plymouth' (148, 172).

67. Sizer, *Works of John Trumbull*, 18, 36, 45, 83; Miles, *American Paintings of the Eighteenth Century*, 308-12.

68. Wolcott to Rhineland, March 12, 1829, copy by Rhineland dated April 29, 1829, OWJr Papers, CHS, vol. 48, no. 119.

69. Quoted in John P. Kaminski and Jill Adair McCaughan, *A Great and Good Man: George Washington in the Eyes of His Contemporaries* (Madison, Wis.: Madison House, 1989), xi, 83.

Trumbull painted a second portrait of Wolcott in 1806 (fig. 3). Like the portraits of Hamilton, this was a commission from a political ally, Boston Federalist Josiah Quincy.<sup>70</sup> The portrait is listed in Trumbull's account book in an entry dated May 3, 1806: 'Cash recd. from Josiah Quincy for a portrait of Oliver Wolcott. 150.—.'<sup>71</sup> The portrait is one of only two images of Wolcott that depict more than his head and torso. The mood of the portrait is somber and still. Wolcott is seated in an armchair. He wears a black coat and waistcoat. His brown hair is slightly wavy, and falls to his coat collar. At the top, it shapes itself into a sort of tuft or topnotch, a feature that is characteristic of his portraits from this period on. He looks to the viewer's right, and not directly at the viewer—an exception in his portraits. His left arm rests on the arm of the chair, and he holds a folded piece of paper in his right hand. No inscription is visible on the paper. Behind him are a dark red curtain and a gray column. The portrait was undoubtedly sent to Quincy when it was completed. In 1846, when the first engraving was made of it, it was still owned by Quincy.<sup>72</sup> Two years after the portrait was painted, Quincy asked Wolcott's help in the production of an engraving of a portrait for the publication

70. Sizer, *Works of John Trumbull*, 88; *Birmingham Collects: American Art since 1776* (exh. cat., Birmingham, Alabama: Birmingham Museum of Art, 1976), unpaginated, no. 63, 34 3/4 x 28 inches (88.3 x 71.1 cm.), private collection. Wolcott's portrait was engraved in a reduced head and shoulders image for Wolcott, *Memorial of Henry Wolcott*, opp. 216, and is also illustrated in Gibbs, *Gibbs Family*, opp. 77. Quincy, a leading Federalist, was a member of Congress from 1805 to 1813, mayor of Boston in 1823–29, and president of Harvard University from 1829 until 1845; see David Hackett Fischer, *The Revolution of American Conservatism; The Federalist Party in the Era of Jeffersonian Democracy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 272–74.

71. Trumbull, account book for 1804–06, Trumbull Papers, Yale University Library. The portrait is also listed in Trumbull's 'Paintings from Nov. 1805 to Mar. 22 1806' as 'Ol Wolcott,' followed by the abbreviation 'do' and the price, \$150. The 'do' [ditto] indicated that the portrait was the same size as the portrait listed above, a 'Head with hands'; type-script, Hart papers.

72. The portrait was engraved by Joseph Andrews as the frontispiece for volume one of George Gibbs's *Memoirs of the Administrations of Washington and John Adams. Edited from the Papers of Oliver Wolcott, Secretary of the Treasury*, 2 vols. (New York, 1846). On this engraving, see Quincy to Gibbs, March 13, 1846, Gibbs Family Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin; and several letters to Gibbs from Quincy, in the Oliver Wolcott Papers, New York Public Library, vol. 2, part 2. On the engraving see also Wolcott, *Memorial of Henry Wolcott*, 310; by that time the painting was owned by Wolcott Gibbs, to whom Quincy bequeathed it.



Fig. 3. John Trumbull, *Oliver Wolcott, Jr.*, oil on canvas, 34 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 28 inches, 1806. Collection of Oliver Wolcott Roosevelt, Jr. (Frick Art Reference Library photo).

of the works of their Federalist friend Fisher Ames, who died on July 4, 1808. Quincy wrote to Wolcott saying that a publication of Ames's writings was being undertaken 'partly from a great sense of their merits and partly from the hope of giving some aid to his family, left by no means in affluent circumstances.' He asked

Wolcott to contribute some of the letters that he had received from Ames.<sup>73</sup> Wolcott sent a few, expressing some reservation about publishing letters that were 'strictly confidential *at the time*.' He commented about Ames: 'He was one of those friends whom I most highly esteemed and tenderly loved. He was a rare man . . . it will be difficult to name another who having derived his information principally from an actual observation of mankind was so wholly unaffected by the passions and uncontaminated by the vices of the times.'<sup>74</sup> After it was decided to include a portrait engraving made by David Edwin (1776-1841) from a portrait by Gilbert Stuart, George Cabot asked Wolcott's help in shipping the engravings to Boston.<sup>75</sup> Before the book was published, Cabot sent Wolcott two proof prints.<sup>76</sup>

#### FAMILY PORTRAITS

The second group of portraits that Wolcott commissioned or sat for in New York were family portraits. In 1804, shortly after Trumbull settled in New York, Wolcott commissioned him to paint a portrait of his wife Elizabeth (1767-1805) (fig. 4).<sup>77</sup> The portrait, painted in November, shows her wearing an empire-style ivory-colored dress with a high waist and a lace collar. She is seated in a black chair with gold accents, her arms resting on the arms of the chair, her hands clasped in her lap. She looks at the viewer, her brown hair tied with a white ribbon. Behind her are a dark blue and a burgundy curtain. The painting is a size smaller

73. Quincy to Wolcott, July 14, 1808, OWJr Papers, CHS, vol. 24, no. 15.

74. Wolcott to Quincy, draft of letter dated July 23, 1808, OWJr Papers, CHS, vol. 48, no. 78; the underlining is in the document.

75. Cabot to Wolcott, Oct. 25, 1808, OWJr Papers, CHS, vol. 18, no. 68. The engraving is listed in CAEP.

76. Cabot to Wolcott, April 10, 1809, OWJr Papers, CHS, vol. 18, no. 71. One engraving was intended for Rufus King. On Stuart's portrait of Fisher Ames, see Park, *Gilbert Stuart*, 99, no. 14; Ames's widow presented it to George Cabot, whose descendant gave it to the Smithsonian Institution in 1925. It is now owned by the National Portrait Gallery.

77. John Trumbull, untitled notes, c. 1804-05, transcribed by Charles Henry Hart as 'Mem. of Work Done at New York-1804-5 (In autograph of John Trumbull-Silliman Mss),' typescript c. 1896, Hart Papers. The price is listed as \$100. On the portrait see Sizer, *Works of John Trumbull*, 88, and *Birmingham Collects*, no. 64, 29¾ x 25 inches (75.5 x 63.5 cm.), private collection.



Fig. 4. John Trumbull, *Elizabeth Wolcott*, oil on canvas, 29 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 25 inches, 1804. Collection of Oliver Wolcott Roosevelt, Jr. (Frick Art Reference Library photo).

than the portrait of Wolcott by Trumbull, and the two paintings are not composed to balance each other. Instead each figure turns to the viewer's right, which suggests that they were not painted as pendants. Wolcott and Elizabeth Stoughton were married in 1785, and they had seven children.<sup>78</sup> Wolcott's love for his wife is

<sup>78</sup> Wolcott, *Memorial of Henry Wolcott*, 216-20; Alice Böhmer Rudd, *The Family of Henry Wolcott* (Washington, D.C.: The Guild Publishing Co., 1950), 113.

clearly reflected in their correspondence. She was in poor health for some years before her death in September 1805. Perhaps this is the reason Wolcott decided to have her portrait painted soon after Trumbull settled in New York. In her last letter, dated August 29, 1805, written from Litchfield, she commented, 'My cough has been a little tighter, a few days past, otherwise I am much as when you left me.' Wolcott added a note after her death:

This is the last letter which I ever received from my most excellent Wife, the mother of all my children—a beautiful and intelligent lady, admired by all her acquaintances and affectionately beloved by me. She discharged every duty of life in the most exemplary manner, and her calm, firm spirit enabled me to suffer the distresses to which I was exposed during the toils of my public life. She was a sincere and devout Christian. During the year 1798, her fatigues occasioned a rupture of her lungs, after which her health gradually declined. She continued, however, to attend to domestic duties until the day of her death. She rode on horseback several miles with me on the morning of Sept. 22d, 1805, was dressed and saw her friends in the afternoon; took her supper, went to bed as usual, and resigned her spirit to God who gave it, about 11 o'clock in the evening. She passed a useful and honourable life, esteemed by the most distinguished and virtuous of the age in which she lived, and closed her days with a serene confidence in God.

Mrs. Wolcott died after the birth of their son Henry, who died three days later.<sup>79</sup>

The marriages of Wolcott's two daughters, Laura and Elizabeth, provided the next occasions for family portraits, when a portrait of Wolcott was apparently made for each of them. It is uncertain who paid for these portraits; they may have been commissioned by Wolcott or by his sons-in-law. The first of these, by Gilbert Stuart, was painted in 1813, and was owned by Laura, Wolcott's elder daughter, and her husband George Gibbs, the son of his business associate, George Gibbs of Newport, Rhode

79. For Mrs. Wolcott's last letter and her death, see Wolcott, *Memorial of Henry Wolcott*, 311, 313, and Robert C. Griffen and Mitchell R. Alegre, *Wolcott Genealogy* (Interlaken, N.Y.: Heart of the Lakes Publishing Co., 1986), 216.

Island. Laura and George Gibbs were married in 1810. Stuart's portrait (fig. 5) is a small bust-length image painted on a mahogany panel measuring  $26\frac{1}{2} \times 21\frac{1}{2}$  inches.<sup>80</sup> Wolcott is seen turned to the left. His brown hair has touches of white at the temples. He wears a black coat with gold buttons. Stuart has given him an apprehensive look, and by comparison with other artists' work, a slightly more rounded face. Wolcott later described the painting: 'an excellent portrait by Stuart of Boston. This portrait was painted in the winter of 1813, when I was 53 years of age.'<sup>81</sup> By 1813 Stuart had settled in Boston, where the portrait undoubtedly was painted. The choice of Stuart may have resulted from the Gibbs family's close associations with the artist rather than from Wolcott's contacts with Stuart in 1800. George Gibbs's father had been the business partner of Stuart's uncle, Joseph Anthony, and Stuart had painted the elder George Gibbs and his wife in Philadelphia between 1798 and 1803. There is also a portrait of Laura Wolcott, painted at about the time of her marriage to Gibbs, that has been attributed to Stuart by descendants.<sup>82</sup> Wolcott's account book for this period contains an entry in 1813 that could refer to a payment to the artist. In a list of bills receivable is an entry for September 11: 'J.J. Stuarts draft on G. Stuart, Boston fav: OW 50 dollars.' The name 'J.J. Stuart' is in the column for 'Drawers and Acceptors' while the name 'G. Stuart' is in the column for 'Endorsers.'<sup>83</sup>

The second portrait of Wolcott was painted for his younger daughter Elizabeth ('Eliza') (1795-1819), and her husband William Gracie, the son of Wolcott's former business partner

80. Eleanor H. Gustafson, 'Museum accessions,' *Antiques* 126 (Nov. 1984): 1053, illustrated.

81. Oliver Wolcott to Joseph Delaplaine, Jan. 7, 1818; Society Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. Wolcott's 53d birthday occurred on Jan. 11, 1813.

82. For the portraits of the elder Gibbises and Anthony, see Park, *Gilbert Stuart*, 346-48, nos. 326-28. On the three portraits of members of the Gibbs family, see Gibbs, *Gibbs Family*, 147-48. Laura's portrait was not included in Park's study of Stuart's work.

83. Oliver Wolcott, Jr., 'Bills Receivable in September 1813,' Account Book, 1809-1821, Litchfield Historical Society, Litchfield, Connecticut. I have not been able to identify J. J. Stuart.



Fig. 5. Gilbert Stuart, *Oliver Wolcott, Jr.*, oil on mahogany panel, 26½ x 21½ inches, 1813. Collection of the Litchfield Historical Society Museum, Litchfield, Conn.

Archibald Gracie. They were married on July 2, 1813. The portrait was painted in the summer of 1814 in New York City by Thomas Sully (1783–1872), Philadelphia's leading portrait painter. Sully was in New York on commission to paint a full-length of



Stephen Decatur for City Hall. For the Wolcott family he first was commissioned to retouch a copy of John Trumbull's 1804 portrait of Mrs. Wolcott, begun by the artist William Dunlap (1766-1839), presumably because Trumbull had gone back to England in 1808 and was not available to make the copy.<sup>84</sup> The painting repeats the composition of Trumbull's original, but has unmistakable signs of Sully's touch in the broader brush strokes and in the curved outlines and elongated shapes of the figure's hands and arms. After completing the copy, Sully painted his own portrait of Wolcott (fig. 6), completing it in three days. In this very sympathetic portrait he succeeded in giving Wolcott a pleasing, friendly demeanor. Wolcott wears a brown coat and a cream-colored waistcoat and white shirt. Wolcott's brown hair has traces of gray. His blue eyes appear strong and lively. A slight trace of red to the right of, and behind, the figure, suggests an upholstered chair. The background is light brown.<sup>85</sup> In the portrait Wolcott is turned to the viewer's left, perhaps posed to balance the image of Mrs. Wolcott. However, the compositions are not mirror images; Wolcott's hands are not included. Wolcott later described this portrait as 'painted by Mr. Sully in the summer of 1815. It is a

84. Sully began touching up the copy on Aug. 21 and finished on Sept. 10. The entry in the manuscript 'Account of Pictures painted by Thomas Sully,' New York Public Library, New York (microfilm, Archives of American Art), 27, reads: 'Retouching a copy by Dunlap'; see also Edward Biddle and Mantle Fielding, *The Life and Works of Thomas Sully (1783-1872)* (1921; repr. New York: Da Capo Press, 1970), 324, no. 2011. Dunlap and Sully's copy is so similar to the original that it has been attributed to Trumbull; see Sizer, *Works of John Trumbull*, 88, where it is listed as 'probably a posthumous replica, before 1808.' An engraving in the box of photographs of Sully's work at the Frick Art Reference Library, New York, bears the correct attribution, 'from a painting by Sully in the possession of Emily Tuckerman.' The portrait is owned by a descendant.

85. The portrait, measuring 30 x 24<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches, is owned by the Connecticut Historical Society. It was the gift in 1849 of Wolcott's daughter Laura Wolcott Gibbs and her son George Gibbs; see George Gibbs's 'Memoranda,' which is annotated '1849?': 'The papers of Oliver Wolcott Senr & Sully's portrait of Oliv. W. Junior are deposited with the Conn Histl Society subject to Mrs. Gibbs' reclamation.' Gibbs Family Papers. For the artist's record of the portrait, begun on Sept. 10 and finished on Sept. 12, 1814, see 'Account of Pictures painted by Thomas Sully,' 27, and Biddle and Fielding, *Thomas Sully*, 322, no. 1997. The price was \$100. When the portrait was exhibited at the Wadsworth Athenaeum in 1863, the attribution in the catalogue to G. Stuart was altered by hand to T. Sully; see James L. Yarnall and William H. Gerds, *The National Museum of American Art's Index to American Art Exhibition Catalogues from the Beginning through the 1876 Centennial Year*, 6 vols. (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1986), 1: 738, no. 87125.



Fig. 6. Thomas Sully, *Oliver Wolcott, Jr.*, oil on canvas, 30 x 24 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches, 1814. The Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, Conn.

good performance and afforded me entire satisfaction; but I was not in good health when the resemblance was taken, and my spirits were then considerably depressed by care and anxiety.<sup>86</sup> In fact the portrait was painted at a time when Wolcott again was experiencing strong political opposition, this time because of his posi-

86. Wolcott to Delaplaine, Jan. 7, 1818, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

tion as president of the Bank of America, a Federalist institution. His support of the War of 1812 alienated many of his Federalist allies in New England.<sup>87</sup>

Two additional family portraits painted in New York were a miniature of Wolcott attributed to Joseph Wood (1778–1830), who worked in New York from 1793 until 1813, and a portrait of Eliza Gracie that Trumbull painted after he returned in 1815 from his second stay in England. An estimated date for the miniature of Wolcott, based on the style of his clothing, would be around 1810; also its style agrees with descriptions of Wood's technique at that time. It is a very precisely painted image, representing a jowly, somewhat stern sitter.<sup>88</sup> The portrait of Mrs. Gracie, who died in 1819, is listed in an 1833 inventory of Wolcott's estate.<sup>89</sup> While in New York, Wolcott also acquired two portraits of George Washington. One was a wax profile that his brother Frederick asked him to purchase in 1805. Wolcott wrote on November 28: 'I shall procure a Wax Profile, of Genl. Washington, these are I think your directions.'<sup>90</sup> This could be the wax profile, now unlocated, that has belonged to descendants of Oliver Wolcott, and has been inaccurately attributed to Patience Wright (1725–86) or her son Joseph Wright (1756–93).<sup>91</sup> The second was a sculpture, probably the one sent to him in 1812 by his son-in-law George Gibbs: 'I have put on board sloop Mary Capt. Bulkely . . . a barrel containing the bust of Washington for yourself.'<sup>92</sup>

After Wolcott moved from New York back to his family home

87. Hamilton, 'Life of Oliver Wolcott, Jr.,' 352–75.

88. For Wood's miniature portrait, owned by a descendant in 1972, see Gibbs, *Gibbs Family*, 150, and the files of the Frick Art Reference Library, New York, and the Catalog of American Portraits, National Portrait Gallery. For a discussion of Wood's career and a characterization of his New York portraits, see Johnson, *American Portrait Miniatures*, 233–34.

89. Sizer, *Works of John Trumbull*, 35; *Catalogue of American Portraits in The New-York Historical Society*, 2 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 1: 299–300.

90. Wolcott to Frederick Wolcott, Nov. 28, 1805; Alice Wolcott Family Collection, Litchfield Historical Society, Litchfield, Connecticut.

91. For the wax profile described as having been owned by Oliver Wolcott, Jr., see Fiske Kimball, 'Joseph Wright and His Portraits of Washington, Sculpture,' *Antiques* 17 (Jan. 1930): 38; and Eisen, *Portraits of Washington*, vol. 3: 750, repro. 909, plate cccxvii.

92. See note 13, above.

in Litchfield, Connecticut, in 1815, he had fewer opportunities to commission portraits. To Joseph M. Sanderson of Philadelphia, who wanted a copy of the portrait by Ralph Earl of Wolcott's father, which Wolcott owned, he explained in 1822: 'There is no artist here, who can take a Copy . . . if You know an artist traveling through this State, he might take a copy here.'<sup>93</sup> Conversely, the demand for portraits of Wolcott grew, undoubtedly as a result of his election as governor of Connecticut in 1817, as well as the increasing interest in portraits of public figures from the early days of the American republic. In June 1817, shortly after his election as governor, Wolcott expressed to his son-in-law George Gibbs his nervousness about being included in one of these projects by Joseph Delaplaine, a successful book publisher in Philadelphia. Delaplaine had first requested a portrait of Wolcott in 1813 that he could engrave for publication, writing that he had arranged to publish 'a Series of engraved portraits of the eminent men of our country.' He asked Wolcott at that time 'whether you will permit me to have engraved the portrait of yourself, & if so, when I can obtain the painting, who it has been executed by, & whether it is approved of by yourself & friends as a good likeness.'<sup>94</sup> Wolcott later remembered that he encouraged Delaplaine, but no engraving resulted. Delaplaine next developed a plan for a series of volumes with biographies as well as portraits. In his prospectus, issued in the summer of 1814, he proposed that Dr. Charles Caldwell, editor of the *Port Folio* magazine, would be the author of the biographies. Gordon Marshall recently noted in his analysis of Delaplaine's venture: 'As one of the growing circle interested in the new "science" of phrenology, Caldwell brought with him an attitude to biography oriented toward the manner in

93. Wolcott, Litchfield, to Sanderson, Nov. 28, 1822, OWJr Papers, CHS, Box vii.

94. Delaplaine to Wolcott, May 21, 1813, OWJr Papers, CHS, Box vii. He added that the letter would be 'carried by W. Dunlap Esqr.' This was probably the artist William Dunlap, who later began the copy of Trumbull's portrait of Mrs. Wolcott that was completed by Sully. On Delaplaine see Gordon M. Marshall, 'The Golden Age of Illustrated Biographies: Three Case Studies,' *American Portrait Prints: Proceedings of the Tenth Annual American Print Conference*, Wendy Wick Reaves, ed. (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1984), 32-45, 72.

which facial characteristics display inner character.<sup>95</sup> Volume 1, part one, of *Delaplaine's Repository of the Lives and Portraits of Distinguished Americans* was published in 1816.<sup>96</sup>

Delaplaine continued his hope of publishing an engraving of Wolcott as part of this multivolume project. Wolcott wrote to his son-in-law George Gibbs in 1817 about Delaplaine's renewed requests: 'Joseph Delaplaine has written to me, proposing that I should sit for my Portrait, to be presented to him, & to furnish a sketch of my Life, to be introduced into his Repository. It is out of the question for me to write anything about myself to be published at this time. All I can do, is to furnish a copy of Stuart's Portrait, to be made by Vanderlyn or Jarvis in New York. I do not know whether the work is of such a character, as to render it proper, to incur this Expense. In the year 1813 I made some promise in general terms to Delaplaine, that I would encourage him.'<sup>97</sup> In this letter Wolcott also discussed the new political allegiances that were undoubtedly at the root of his concern about having his biography published. Having split with the Federalists over the question of support for the War of 1812, Wolcott was nominated as candidate for governor of Connecticut in 1816 by the American Toleration and Reform Party, a new coalition party founded in opposition to the Federalists. Wolcott lost the election that fall, but was elected the following spring, 1817, and was re-elected for the next nine years, serving until 1827.<sup>98</sup> Soon after his election he met with James Monroe, recently elected president of the United States and on a tour of New England in June 1817. Wolcott wrote Gibbs: 'The President was well recd at N. Haven and I presume will leave this State, with very favourable impres-

95. Marshall, 'Illustrated Biographies,' 39. On Caldwell see John D. Davies, *Pbrenology: Fad and Science; A 19th Century American Crusade* (1955; repr. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1971), 13-14.

96. Marshall, 'Illustrated Biographies,' 40, 72.

97. Wolcott to Gibbs, postscript of letter of June 30, 1817, Gibbs Family Papers. The postscript has become separated from the letter, which is on a separate piece of paper in the Oliver Wolcott [Jr.] Papers, Library of Congress. The artists that he mentioned were John Wesley Jarvis (1780-1840) and John Vanderlyn (1775-1852), two successful New York portrait painters.

98. Hamilton, 'Life of Oliver Wolcott, Jr.,' 389-408.

sions: He is much altered since I saw him twenty-two years ago, & wholly for the better. I am satisfied entirely with the interview I had with him at N. Haven.<sup>99</sup> These changes in Wolcott's political allegiances led him to ask Delaplaine in January 1818 about the wisdom of including portraits of living sitters in his book.

Your request to be furnished with a sketch of my life affects me as being one of a very delicate nature. To this period my life has been a scene of care, exertion, and activity—whether it has been owing to pressing avocations, to modesty, or to pride, I leave others to conjecture. Yet it is certain I have hitherto said and written but little respecting myself. I am anxious to maintain the character of an honest man, and a friend to my Country, and if these points are conceded [sic] in my favour, the politicians and critics may entertain themselves as they please with my opinions and conduct. I have no objection to furnish an account of my parentage, age, and the different employments in which I have been engaged. This is perhaps all that You wish or expect—to do more than this is a task which I cannot perform.

I regret exceedingly that the lives and transactions of many illustrious men to whose virtues and exertions this Country is indebted for its independence, liberty and honour, are so imperfectly known to the present generation. Though I am sensible that it will not be in Your power to gratify all the wishes I have formed on this subject, yet I take the liberty to mention that the greater the proportion of those distinguished men, whose lives have terminated, which shall be recorded, the more acceptable will your Repository be to [me].<sup>100</sup>

Delaplaine responded: 'I am happy to learn that I am to be hono'rd with your portrait . . . I can only say as to living characters, that I shall endeavor to be exceedingly careful whose lives appear. A few only will be given, but permit me to say, sir, that without this spice, the book would be but little relished. Once confine the Repository to the lives of *dead* men, and the book will soon become *dead*. This, experience has taught me.'<sup>101</sup>

When Delaplaine wrote in April, he asked how the copy was

99. Wolcott to Gibbs, June 30, 1817, Wolcott Papers, Library of Congress. Gibbs, who was also an admirer of Monroe, acquired a replica (National Gallery of Art) of the portrait of the president painted by Stuart in Boston early in July; see Miles, *American Paintings of the Eighteenth Century*, 265-79.

100. Wolcott to Delaplaine, Jan. 7, 1818; Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

101. Delaplaine to Wolcott, Jan. 26, 1818, OWJF Papers, CHS, vol. 45, no. 21.

coming: 'I am happy to learn that the copy is to be from a portrait by Stuart.'<sup>102</sup> Wolcott wrote Gibbs about plans to make the copy, which was to be by John Vanderlyn, one of the two painters Wolcott had mentioned earlier as a possible copyist: 'When you have arranged with Mr. Vanderlyn, please to drop a Line to Phila informing Delaplaine when the copy will probably be ready for him.'<sup>103</sup> Vanderlyn (1775-1852) had studied in Paris and Rome from 1796 to 1801 and 1803 to 1815. Gibbs may have suggested him as the copyist, since Vanderlyn had painted Gibbs's portrait many years earlier in Paris.<sup>104</sup> The question about the biography was apparently resolved, with George Gibbs agreeing to write it.<sup>105</sup> At one point in this long process, Delaplaine complained to Gibbs: 'The copy of the portrait of Govr. Wolcott, which he was kind enough to promise, I have never yet received. If Mr. Vanderlyn is engaged, I would recommend Mr. Waldo or Mr. Metcalf, to execute it, either of whom would do ample justice to the subject.'<sup>106</sup> The wished-for copy (fig. 7) was finally completed. Vanderlyn referred to it in a letter to his nephew John Vanderlyn: 'Do not forget to have the packing case cleaned which was in Diane [?] room under the chimney full of soot & dirt from the chimney, it belongs to Govr Woolcots portrait, & Col. Gibbs

102. Delaplaine to Wolcott, April 8, 1818, OWJr Papers, CHS, vol. 45, no. 30.

103. Wolcott to Gibbs, April 11, 1818, Wolcott Papers, Library of Congress. Wolcott wrote Gibbs again on June 28: 'N.B. Mr. Delaplaine continues to write to me about the Portrait.' Wolcott Papers, Library of Congress.

104. Gibbs, *Gibbs Family*, 150, illus. opp. 32. In 1811 Vanderlyn referred to plans to ship the portrait to Gibbs from Paris; see Vanderlyn to Gibbs, July 5, 1811, OWJr Papers, CHS, vol. 48, no. 94.

105. Delaplaine wrote Gibbs on Dec. 24, 1818, thanking him in advance for writing the biography of his father-in-law; Gibbs Family Papers. Delaplaine was also trying to obtain a copy of the portrait of Wolcott's father by Ralph Earl, to be engraved. Wolcott, who owned the portrait, wrote Delaplaine on Jan. 18, 1819, that he couldn't send the original, and instead was sending a 'reduced copy taken by my daughter Mrs. Gibbs from which a good engraving can be made . . . I request you to cause the drawing by my daughter, to be put under glass in a good frame.' He commented again on the question of his own portrait: 'Coll Gibbs has undertaken to send you a copy of my portrait by Mr. Stuart, of which I understand he has apprised you.' Wolcott to Joseph Delaplaine, Jan. 18, 1819, Oliver Wolcott Papers, Connecticut Historical Society, vol. IV, no. 114.

106. Delaplaine to Gibbs, undated letter, Gibbs Family Papers; Delaplaine is recommending two New York portrait painters, Samuel Lovett Waldo (1783-1861) and Eliab Metcalf (1785-1834), who were competent painters but not as talented or successful as Vanderlyn or Jarvis.



Fig. 7. John Vanderlyn after Stuart, *Oliver Wolcott, Jr.*, 27<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 23<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches, c. 1820. Yale University Art Gallery. Gift of George Gibbs.

may possibly send for it one of these days. If he calls himself to see the Copy, tell him I should like to keep it until Spring when I shall varnish it, it was not dry enough to do it now—see that no injury happens to the Original & its frame I mean Woolcots picture & frame.<sup>107</sup> The portrait probably never reached Delaplaine.

107. John Vanderlyn to John Vanderlyn, Jr., Jan. 28, 1820, John Vanderlyn Papers, Senate House State Historic Site, Kingston, N.Y. (microfilm, Archives of American Art).



Wolcott wrote Laura Gibbs on April 9 that 'Mr. Delaplaine never has even acknowledged my letter with the Biography of my Father and your drawing of his Portrait. I presume his work is discontinued. I would not send the Portrait to him at present & till more is known how he is proceeding.'<sup>108</sup> Instead the painting was given to Yale University in 1830 by Gibbs. Vanderlyn captured Stuart's manner so successfully that the copy has been mistaken for Stuart's original since 1835, when it was first exhibited at Yale.<sup>109</sup> With the identification of the original as the painting on wood panel at the Litchfield Historical Society, the painting at Yale can now be identified as Vanderlyn's copy, painted on canvas. Like the original the portrait depicts Wolcott in a white shirt and waistcoat and a black coat with metal buttons. His brown hair has touches of gray at the sides.

#### GUBERNATORIAL IMAGES

After Wolcott was elected governor of Connecticut in 1817, new portraits were made of him, and Sully's portrait was engraved. These new portraits appear in part to be the results of self-promotion on the part of the artists, a frequent cause of the making of portraits of political leaders. The first was an engraving by a little-known Hartford engraver named Isaac Sanford (active c. 1783-c. 1822) that was used as the frontispiece of Pease and Niles, *A Gazetteer of the States of Connecticut and Rhode-Island* in 1819 (fig. 8).<sup>110</sup> In the gazetteer a discussion of Connecticut's new

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I would like to thank William Oedel for this reference and his helpful comments about Vanderlyn's associations with George Gibbs, Jr., and Oliver Wolcott, Jr.

108. Wolcott to Laura Gibbs, April 9, 1820; Oliver Wolcott Papers, Library of Congress.

109. The painting owned by Yale University is listed as Stuart's work in Park, *Gilbert Stuart*, 833, no. 938, while the painting owned by the Litchfield Historical Society is not included in Park's catalogue. On the portrait at Yale, which measures 27<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 23<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches, see also the *Yale University Portrait Index, 1701-1951* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951), 137, and Yarnall and Gerds, *Index to American Art Exhibition Catalogues*, vol. 5: 3416, nos. 87038-39.

110. A copy of the gazetteer is in the collections of the Connecticut Historical Society. The engraving is listed in David McNeely Stauffer, *American Engravers upon Copper and*

state government is preceded by a county-by-county description of the state. Wolcott had been president of the convention that framed the constitution in 1818. Sanford's bust-length image shows Wolcott turned slightly to the right, and facing in that direction. The likeness emphasizes the dark eyes seen in Wood's earlier miniature and gives him an uncharacteristically dimpled chin and short haircut. A year later, perhaps also because of Wolcott's election as governor, Sully's portrait of Wolcott was engraved by Asher Brown Durand (1796-1886), a young artist in New York. The engraving is inscribed 'His Excellency Oliver Wolcott, Governor of the State of Connecticut. From an original picture painted by Sully, in the possession of William Gracie, Esq.'<sup>111</sup> A new portrait was painted a few years later by George Catlin (1796-1872), better known today for his paintings of Native Americans. This oil portrait (fig. 9) shows Wolcott with graying hair in a bust-length pose looking at the viewer. Wolcott wears a dark coat; his hair is now graying. In the background to the right is a column.<sup>112</sup> Catlin probably painted the portrait in 1825 in Litchfield. He had studied at Tapping Reeve's law school there in 1817-18, before becoming a painter.<sup>113</sup> He returned in 1825 to enlist subscribers for a print of his portrait of Reeve.

*Steel*, 2 vols. (1907; repr., New York: Burt Franklin, 1964), 2: 454, and in CAEP; the Antiquarian Society owns an example.

111. *Catalogue of the Engraved Work of Asher B. Durand* (New York: Grolier Club, 1895), 64, #120, 'engraved in 1820'; Stauffer, *American Engravers*, 2: 114, no. 669. CAEP lists the example of this engraving at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which was the gift of Mrs. Frederick F. Durand, 1930, and is inscribed with the date 1820. An example is also owned by the Connecticut Historical Society.

112. The oil on canvas painting (26½ x 21½ inches) is inscribed on the reverse: 'Geo. Catlin Portrait Painter Hotel Ithaca' and 'L. F. Hammond [?] October 24 '87.' It was purchased from Kennedy Galleries in 1960 by Mrs. Elizabeth H. Wolcott Hamilton-Jaeger, who bequeathed it in 1963 to the Litchfield Historical Society. This may be the portrait attributed to 'Caltan' that was recorded in 1957 for the portrait survey made by the National Society of the Colonial Dames in the State of Connecticut, as owned by Miss Julia Wolcott and Mrs. Frederick Hamilton, Litchfield, Conn. See Pearl B. Carnow, 'A Compilation of Portraits of Connecticut Residents Painted Prior to 1850 by Artists who either Lived or Worked in Connecticut, and a Historical Evaluation of These Paintings' (M.A. thesis, Central Connecticut State College, New Britain, Ct., 1967), 96.

113. William H. Truettner, *The Natural Man Observed: A Study of Catlin's Indian Gallery* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1979), 11.



*Delineated & Engraved by I. Sanford, Hartford Connecticut.*

**OLIVER WOLCOTT,**  
*Governor of the State of Connecticut.*

*Hartford, Published by Wm. S. Marsh, for a Gazetteer of Connecticut 1819.*

Fig. 8. Isaac Sanford, *Oliver Wolcott, Jr.*, engraving (4 x 3 in.), in John C. Pease and John M. Niles, *A Gazetteer of the States of Connecticut and Rhode-Island* (Hartford: William S. Marsh, 1819). American Antiquarian Society.



Fig. 9. George Catlin, *Oliver Wolcott, Jr.*, oil on canvas, 26½ x 21½ inches, c. 1825. Litchfield Historical Society Museum, Litchfield, Conn.

Catlin's description of Reeve's now unlocated portrait is found in his subscription book, which is dated 'Litchfield 28 March 1825.' He recorded that it was 'the only resemblance left of that venerable man.' Wolcott, who was also a graduate of Reeve's law school, was the first subscriber for the print.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>114</sup> Subscription book, 1825-41, George Catlin Papers, National Anthropological

A third gubernatorial image of Wolcott was a crayon drawing made by Rembrandt Peale (1778–1860). The artist later explained that it 'was drawn in New Haven, May 1826, when he was Governor of Connecticut.'<sup>115</sup> Peale, it was later said, made the portrait 'while the Governor was delivering his Inaugural Address to the Legislature.'<sup>116</sup> The now unlocated portrait was reproduced in Gideon Hiram Hollister's *History of Connecticut* (1855) in an engraving made by D. C. Hinman 'from a crayon sketch by Rembrandt Peale in the possession of Geo. Gibbs Esq.'<sup>117</sup> The engraving (fig. 10) depicts a head-and-shoulders image, turned slightly to the viewer's right. Peale had timed his visit to New Haven to coincide with the session of the state legislature, with the intention of exhibiting his 'National Portrait' of George Washington. Having made his first portrait of Washington in 1795, he transformed the image into a larger, more heroic painting of Washington entitled 'Father of his Country.'<sup>118</sup> Early in 1826 Peale wrote the governors of several states recommending that they purchase a copy of this portrait. He hoped that Wolcott would endorse the portrait's claim as an accurate likeness of Washington. 'I shall be much gratified if Gov. Wolcott should approve it equally with Col. Talmadge, who has written me a letter, which it will be well to publish as soon as my Picture is fixed to be

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Archives, MS 4759, Smithsonian Institution (microfilm, Archives of American Art). Wolcott bought two prints and his brother Frederick, the second subscriber, bought one. The price of each print was one dollar. An engraving of Reeve, illustrated in *To Ornament Their Minds: Sarah Pierce's Litchfield Female Academy, 1792–1833* (exh. cat., Litchfield: Litchfield Historical Society, 1993), 22, fig. 2, probably represents Catlin's now unlocated portrait.

115. Rembrandt Peale to an unidentified correspondent, May 9, 1860, in Lillian B. Miller, ed., *The Collected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family* (Millwood, N.Y.: Kraus Microfilm, 1980), fiche VIA/14B1. The unlocated original was formerly known from a typescript at the American Antiquarian Society. The correspondent may have been F. J. Dreer, to whom Peale had sent a 'Study of Oliver Wolcott' in 1860; see Peale to Dreer, April 17, 1860, in Miller, *Collected Papers of Charles Willson Peale*, fiche VIA/14A12 (Dreer Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania).

116. Wolcott, *Memorial of Henry Wolcott*, 310, repro. opp. 310.

117. Gideon Hiram Hollister, *History of Connecticut*, 2 vols. (New Haven, Conn., 1855), 1: 382. An example of the engraving is owned by the Connecticut Historical Society.

118. Lillian B. Miller, *In Pursuit of Fame: Rembrandt Peale, 1778–1860* (exh. cat., Washington, D.C.: National Portrait Gallery, 1992), 142–45.



Fig. 10. D. C. Hinman after Rembrandt Peale, *Oliver Wolcott, Jr.*, engraving, 10 x 6 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches (paper), c. 1855. The Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, Conn.

seen.<sup>119</sup> Wolcott's letter, unlocated today, was included in a book of letters 'commendatory of his [Peale's] original portrait of Washington' that was sold from Peale's estate on November 18, 1862.<sup>120</sup>

Finally, in 1832 a year before his death, Wolcott was painted by Samuel Stillman Osgood (1808-85), a Boston artist, who gave the portrait (fig. 11) to the Massachusetts Historical Society in 1834.<sup>121</sup> This portrait, like Trumbull's of 1806, is larger than other portraits of Wolcott and has a more elaborate composition. It shows him seated in a high-backed gilded chair upholstered in red, which has the seal of Connecticut as its crest.<sup>122</sup> He wears a black suit and holds a walking stick in his left hand. With his right hand he props up a large book titled *THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT*. This book celebrates his role in the authorship of the state's constitution in 1818, when he drafted the moderate constitution that reduced the Federalists' political power. In the left background of the portrait is a column. The artist's reason for the gift to the society after Wolcott's death is not known. Wolcott had been a member of the society since 1796. Another member was Isaac P. Davis, who in 1806 had purchased one of Trumbull's bust-length portraits of Alexander Hamilton.<sup>123</sup> Wolcott's continued contacts with Bostonians interested

119. Peale, possibly to William M. Boardman, May 10, 1826; Miller, *Collected Papers of Charles Willson Peale*, fiche VIA/15B12-15C1 (Beinecke Rare Book Library, Yale University). For Rembrandt Peale's attempts to exhibit and to sell replicas of his portrait of George Washington, see Miller, *Rembrandt Peale, 1778-1860*, 148-49.

120. Thomas and Sons, *Catalogue of Valuable Original Paintings by the late Rembrandt Peale, with Engravings, Pencil Sketches and other Works of Art, comprising the contents of the Studio of this Eminent Artist* (Philadelphia, 1862), 6-7, lot 85.

121. 'Monthly Meeting [Dec. 26, 1834],' *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 1: 498; and Andrew Oliver, Ann Millspaugh Huff, and Edward W. Hanson, *Portraits in the Massachusetts Historical Society* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1988), 132-33. The portrait is an oil on canvas, 36 by 28 inches.

122. The seal was identified with the assistance of Anne E. Bentley, senior conservator of the Massachusetts Historical Society, by comparison with a crest on the knob of a cane in the collections that once belonged to Jabez Huntington of Connecticut. Huntington (1719-86) was a major general in the Connecticut militia. The crest of the chair was changed to include this seal.

123. Also in 1834 the Connecticut Senate passed a resolution, on May 29, to place Wolcott's portrait and one of his father, 'both by eminent artists,' in the State Senate Chamber in New Haven; copy, *Oliver Wolcott Papers*, CHS, vol. 4, no. 112. The portraits were the gifts of his son John Stoughton Wolcott. That of Oliver Wolcott, Sr. was by Ralph Earl; which portrait of Oliver Wolcott, Jr. was given is unclear.

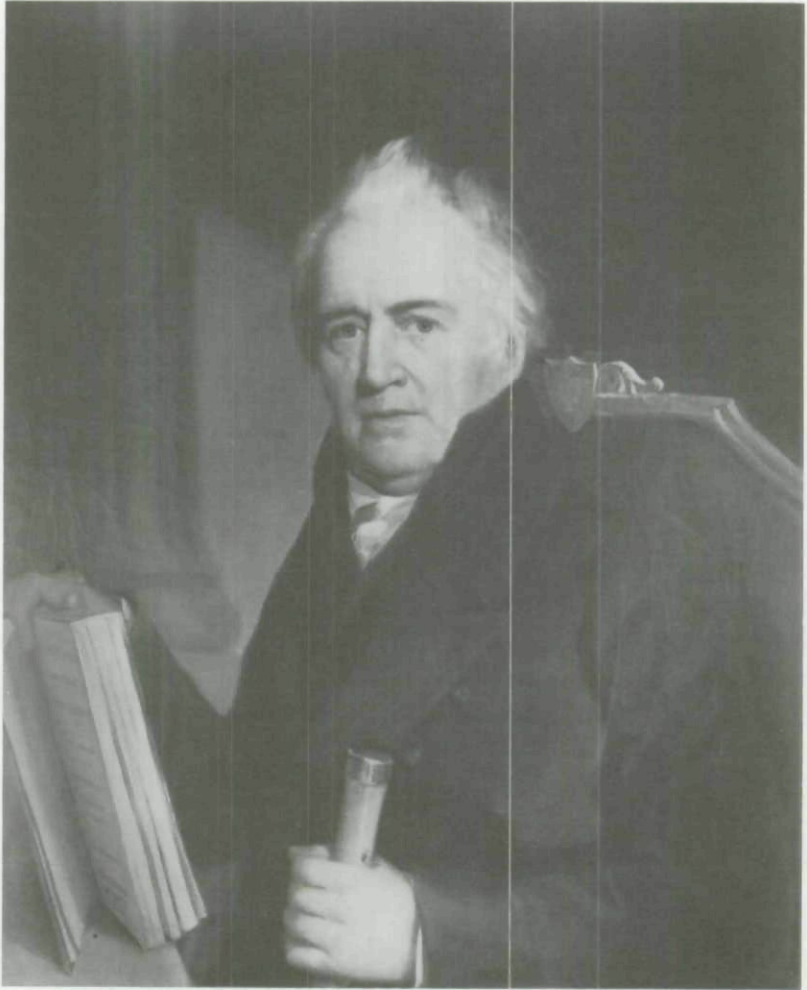


Fig. 11. Samuel Stillman Osgood, *Oliver Wolcott, Jr.*, oil on canvas, 36 by 28 inches, 1832. Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Mass.

in memorializing leaders of the early Republic is indicated by his election in 1825 to the board of directors of the Bunker Hill Monument.<sup>124</sup>

The last portrait of Wolcott was made posthumously in 1840,

<sup>124</sup> Edward Everett to Wolcott, April 10, 1825, OWJr Papers, CHS, Box VII.



seven years after his death (fig. 12). Its creation reflects the strong interest in phrenology that had developed during the 1830s. Wolcott's family commissioned the portrait from American sculptor Shobal Vail Clevenger (1812-43), a talented Cincinnati carver who worked in Washington, Philadelphia, Boston, and New York before going to Italy.<sup>125</sup> Clevenger was known for his ability to make an accurate likeness; his portrait of Daniel Webster was greatly admired by contemporaries for this reason. The portrait of Wolcott was based on a cast of his skull that was made after his death in 1833, as well as on the three portraits of Wolcott by Stuart, Sully, and Peale. The resulting sculpture was considered by Wolcott's family to be an exact likeness. In deciding to make a cast of Wolcott's skull at the time of his death, his family was probably influenced by the popular phrenological theories of German physician Franz Joseph Gall and Scottish phrenologist George Combe. Gall's theories were publicized in America by his student Johann Gaspar Spurzheim, who toured New England in the fall of 1832.<sup>126</sup> Combe's ideas were known through his highly popular book on phrenology, *The Constitution of Man* (1828).<sup>127</sup> On his tour Spurzheim planned to meet Unitarian clergyman William Ellery Channing, who was a friend of Combe's. Gibbs, who perhaps was responsible for having the cast made of Wolcott's skull, could have learned about phrenology through Channing, who was his brother-in-law.<sup>128</sup> His son George Gibbs, Jr., Channing's nephew, was visiting his aunt and uncle at the time, and humorously alluded to his own aptitude as a phrenologist when writing to his parents: 'I want to see Mr. Spurzheim much and I expect to do so soon—one thing is sure I have not the bump of individuality or locality for I have not found

125. Thomas B. Brumbaugh, 'Shobal Clevenger: An Ohio Stonecutter in Search of Fame,' *The Art Quarterly* 29 (1966): 29-45. On Clevenger, see also Richard P. Wunder, *Hiram Powers; Vermont Sculptor, 1805-1873*, 2 vols. (Newark, London, and Toronto, 1991), 1: 59, 123-35. Clevenger died at sea in 1843 as he was returning to the United States.

126. Davies, *Phrenology, Fad and Science*, 7-17; Spurzheim died in Boston in Nov. 1832.

127. Davies, *Phrenology*, 16-21.

128. Channing's wife Ruth was George Gibbs's sister; see Gibbs, *Gibbs Family*, 16.



Fig. 12. Shobal Vail Clevenger, *Oliver Wolcott, Jr.*, plaster, 27 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches, 1840. Collection of The New-York Historical Society, New York, N.Y.

my way at all and can hardly tell the City Hall from the State House.<sup>129</sup> Although the cast of Wolcott's head would have been made at the time of his death, the bust that was modelled from it by Clevenger was not made until 1840.<sup>130</sup> That November Gibbs, Jr. wrote John Trumbull, the octogenarian artist who had been Wolcott's friend: 'Will you do us the favor to take tea with us this eveg if you have no better engagement. I want you to see the Governor's bust.'<sup>131</sup> He wrote at greater length about the portrait to Benjamin Silliman on January 26, 1841:

I have caused to be packed & sent to your care for the Cabinet of Yale College a cast of the late Gov. Wolcott, which I beg you to present in the name of his family.

The bust was reworked during the past summer by Shubal V. Clevenger of Cincinnati from the cast made after death & the portraits of Sully & Stewart & a sketch by R. Peale. The family consider it a strong likeness & the *head* is undoubtedly correct, the cranium being cast in the original mould.<sup>132</sup>

Gibbs's interest in the accurate representation of Wolcott's head in the portrait indicates that Wolcott's family believed that the shape of his skull revealed certain personal characteristics. Unfortunately no one elaborated on this.

In 1826 Wolcott had written his daughter Laura Wolcott Gibbs that he was arranging his letters and other manuscripts in portfolios.

129. George Gibbs, Jr., to his parents, Sept. 19, 1832, Gibbs Family Papers. Gibbs first wrote 'individuality for locality' and then crossed out the *f* in for.

130. Brumbaugh 1966, 40, who says that Clevenger took a plaster bust of Wolcott with him, to be carved in marble after he arrived in Italy. At least twenty of Clevenger's plaster busts were carved in marble and shipped back to the United States. However, all of the recorded examples of Wolcott's portrait are in plaster, including the example that George Gibbs, Jr., gave to the New-York Historical Society (*Catalogue of American Portraits in The New-York Historical Society*, 2 vols. [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974], 2: 903), as well as the examples owned by the Connecticut Historical Society and the Yale University Art Gallery. George Gibbs, Jr., in his 'Memoranda,' c. 1849, noted: 'Mould of Gov. Wolcotts bust at F. H. Wolcotts store'; Gibbs Family Papers.

131. Gibbs, Jr., to Trumbull, Nov. 10, 1840, Gibbs Family Papers; both Gibbs and Trumbull were in New York City at this time.

132. Gibbs, Jr., to Silliman, Jan. 26, 1841, Gibbs Family Papers. This portrait is in the Yale University Art Gallery; see Paula B. Freedman with the assistance of Robin Jaffee Frank, *American Sculpture at Yale University* (New Haven, Connecticut, 1992), 199, no. 442, illus., provenance unknown. Record of a payment to Clevenger on Dec. 22, 1842 is in the accounts of 'The Estate of George Gibbs, decd': 'S. V. Clevenger 250,' Gibbs Family Papers.

I think it best at present, to *preserve the whole*. In the aggregate, they form a strange medley of opinions, in which wisdom & folly, Papism, Prejudice, Knowledge, & ignorance are strangely blended:—such however are the concerns of human life, and especially of the life of a person, engaged as I have almost constantly been, in important public concerns. You will be pleased when I assure you, that I am not more dissatisfied with the part I have performed, than I was when this labour was commenced, & that nothing can be disclosed by any one, which will occasion you to be ashamed of your connexion with me.<sup>133</sup>

By 1841 George Gibbs, Jr. was at work writing his grandfather's biography. When he began this project, he contacted his mentor, historian George Bancroft, for advice. Bancroft responded:

I am charmed to hear of your intended stroll into our Arcadia. To write a good biography, it is necessary to let a constant reference to general principles shine through your narrative so that each incident, unimportant in itself, may awaken universal sympathy by its appeal to a universal truth. . . . Your subject is noble. It includes an important portion of N.E. history and of our national history. It blends the incidents in your family with the Character of our forefathers & the destiny of our country. . . . It is a hard thing to write a good book: spare neither time nor labor. The reward is worth the while.<sup>134</sup>

After the publication of Gibbs's *Memoirs of the Administrations of Washington and John Adams* in 1846, he and his mother Laura Wolcott Gibbs distributed some of the portraits in their collections.

In his correspondence and other papers, Wolcott's references to portraits show that he and his contemporaries valued portraits for the accuracy of the likeness. The descriptive phrases that were used included 'perfect likeness,' 'exact representation,' 'strong likeness,' 'good likeness,' and 'correct as respects resemblance to the original.' The artists, while mentioned, are rarely discussed at length. As pointed out recently by Nadia Tscherny, 'the notions of what constitutes a satisfying likeness are constantly redefined by the prevailing understanding of the nature of the object of

133. Wolcott to Laura Gibbs, draft of letter, Jan. 22, 1826, Gibbs Family Papers; the emphasized words are underlined in the manuscript.

134. Bancroft to Gibbs, Jr., Oct. 27, 1837, Gibbs Family Papers.

portraiture—the sitter—and the means for its portrayal.<sup>135</sup> The stress on likeness and representation was, by the end of the eighteenth century, more than a preference for naturalistic accuracy. As explained by the pseudoscience of physiognomy, an exact likeness could convey information about the sitter's character. According to physiognomists, a person's natural endowment of mental capacities could be read by the shape of his or her skull. The study of physiognomy as published by Swiss theologian Johann Caspar Lavater held that traits could best be determined by the study of carefully traced profiles. After Charles Willson Peale placed a physiognotrace for making silhouettes in his Philadelphia museum, he articulated a view that reflected Lavater's theories: 'Collections of profiles are highly interesting, when taken with such accuracy, nay it appears to be a very certain means of studying Characters, to determine the measure of Intulects as well as disposition.'<sup>136</sup> During Wolcott's lifetime the study of physiognomy undoubtedly played an important role in the way people looked at portraiture, although not all viewers of portraits agreed with Lavater's theories. Also, during years between the making of the first portraits of Wolcott in the 1790s and the posthumous sculpture commissioned by his family in 1840, the focus of physiognomical theory shifted from Lavater's reading of personality traits in the proportions of the face, to a three-dimensional reading of the entire skull as proposed by the theories of German physician Franz Joseph Gall and his student Johann Gaspar Spurzheim. The portrait busts by Clevenger's friend, American sculptor Hiram Powers, also attracted comments that

135. 'Likeness in Early Romantic Portraiture,' *Art Journal* 46 (1967): 193.

136. Charles Willson Peale to Rembrandt and Rubens Peale, June 23, 1803, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and his Family*, 2: 537. Gibbs, *Gibbs Family*, 151, records unattributed silhouettes of Oliver Wolcott, Jr. and his wife owned by descendants, while a silhouette of Oliver Wolcott, Sr., attributed to Charles Willson Peale, was recorded in 1957 by the survey done for the Colonial Dames in the State of Connecticut; see Carnow, 'Compilation of Portraits of Connecticut Residents,' 96. Since silhouettes were first made at Peale's Museum in 1802, this could not represent the elder Wolcott, who died in 1797.

reflect the strong interest in phrenology. His portrait of Andrew Jackson, for example, was reviewed in phrenological publications as showing firmness and self-esteem.<sup>137</sup> In all cases, the viewer was asked to study closely the head of the person for information about his or her character.<sup>138</sup> If Wolcott himself agreed with these theories, his comments about portraiture do not reveal this.

Today, Wolcott's opinions on portraits, and a reconstruction of the different commissions they reflect, offer a rare survey of the reasons why citizens of the early republic valued portraiture and made it the dominant art form of the era. His use of portraits is well within the traditions that developed in the eighteenth century in Europe and, subsequently, in America. What makes his examples interesting is that they help to explain the large numbers of portraits that were commissioned in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in America, before the dominance of interest in landscape and history painting. Wolcott's commissions are similar to others in the new republic. Among the outstanding personal collections of portraits of friends and political allies is the collection of sculpted busts by French artist Jean-Antoine Houdon purchased in Paris in 1789 by Thomas Jefferson and displayed at Monticello. They represent John Paul Jones, Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, the Marquis de Lafayette, the French economist Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot, and the philosopher Voltaire.<sup>139</sup> Portraits made for John Adams and members of the Adams family, for George and Martha Washington, and for

137. Charles Colbert, "Each Little Hillock hath a Tongue": Phrenology and the Art of Hiram Powers, *Art Bulletin* 68 (1986): 295.

138. For discussions of physiognomy and American portraiture in this period, see Brandon Brame Fortune, 'Charles Willson Peale's Portrait Gallery: persuasion and the plain style,' *Word & Image*, vol. 6, no. 4 (1990), 308-24; Miles, *Saint-Mémin and the Neoclassical Profile Portrait in America* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994); and David Steinberg, 'Facing Paintings and Painting Faces before Lavater,' *Painting and Portrait Making in the American Northeast*, 201-16.

139. By the time of his presidency Jefferson had added extensively to his portrait collection. His display of patriots and other worthies at Monticello included four busts in the Entrance Hall, thirty-five portraits in the Parlour, and a number of sculptures, medals, and prints in the Tea Room; see Susan R. Stein, *The Worlds of Thomas Jefferson at Monticello* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1993), 68-75, 88-91.

the Bowdoin family of Maine or the Livingston family of New York, are similar in their variety of images of family, personal friends, and political alliances.<sup>140</sup> Some collections also were formed of historical portraits, including the collection of William Bentley of Salem, which had as its focus the collecting of images of early New Englanders.<sup>141</sup> Of particular importance for the Federal era is the way in which portraiture was so closely allied with biography, especially in public collections and in publications. Again this tradition is one that developed in eighteenth-century Europe, and was reflected in Federal America, both in the collections of portraits made by artists like Robert Edge Pine, Charles Willson Peale, and James Sharples, and by the combining of portraits and biographies in contemporary journals and gazetteers.<sup>142</sup> Thus although the portraits themselves often contain little in the way of easily read iconography, their meaning can be revealed, as in this of Wolcott's lifelong involvement with portraits, by a study of the purposes for which they were made. Wolcott's comments about portraiture emphasize likeness, and his use of them is a sampling on a small scale of the way in which portraits expressed the cultural values of his era.

140. See Marvin S. Sadik, *Colonial and Federal Portraits at Bowdoin College* (Brunswick, Maine: Bowdoin College Museum of Art, 1966); Linda J. Docherty, 'Preserving Our Ancestors: The Bowdoin Portrait Collection,' in *The Legacy of James Bowdoin III* (Brunswick, Maine: Bowdoin College Museum of Art, 1994), 54-83; Ruth Piwonka, *A Portrait of Livingston Manor; 1686-1850* (Germantown, N.Y.: Friends of Clermont, 1986).

141. Stefanie Munsing Winkelbauer, 'William Bentley: Connoisseur and Print Collector,' *Prints of New England*, ed. Georgia Brady Barnhill (Worcester, Mass: American Antiquarian Society, 1991), 21-38.

142. A survey of these collections is found in Brandon Brame Fortune, 'Portraits of Virtue and Genius: Pantheons of Worthies and Public Portraiture in the Early American Republic, 1780-1820' (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1986), 34-86.

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