ARCHIBALD AND ALEXANDER ROBERTSON AND THEIR SCHOOLS, THE COLUMBIAN ACADEMY OF PAINTING, AND THE ACADEMY OF PAINTNG AND DRAWING, NEW YORK, 1791-1835

by

MEGAN HOLLOWAY FORT

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Art History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Art History in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

Archibald and Alexander Robertson and Their Schools, the Columbian Academy of Painting, and the Academy of Painting and Drawing, New York, 1791–1835

by

Megan Holloway Fort

Adviser: Professor Sally Webster

This dissertation is the first extensive study of Scottish-born painters Archibald Robertson (1763–1835), and Alexander Robertson (1771–1841), and the schools they founded, the Columbian Academy of Painting and the Academy of Painting and Drawing. In operation from 1791 until 1823, the Columbian Academy was the first art school in New York City and the earliest sustained effort to provide art instruction in the United States. In 1802 Alexander left the Columbian Academy and established the Academy of Painting and Drawing, which functioned until 1835. In their careers as artists and teachers, the Robertsons played a key role in disseminating a conservative taste and mode of expression in America.

Significantly, Archibald was invited to New York by a group of influential figures—including Robert R. Livingston, Samuel Bard, and John Kemp—who endeavored to improve cultural life in their city. Chief among their

undertakings was to bring about a drawing academy at which aspiring professional artists, as well as cultivated amateurs, could receive basic training in the rudiments of the fine arts. These civic leaders sought to model New York's emerging cultural institutions on those of the Enlightenment capitals of Europe, specifically Edinburgh. Thus it was to Scotland they turned when seeking an artist who could introduce the traditional European drawing academy to America.

The five chapters of this dissertation chart the histories of the Robertsons and their schools, while also considering larger issues in the progress of the fine arts in New York. Chapters 1 and 2, respectively, examine Archibald and Alexander's lives and works. Chapter 3 considers the circumstances behind the Columbian Academy's founding. Chapter 4 is devoted to a detailed chronology of the Columbian Academy and the Academy of Painting and Drawing, and an examination of the teaching practices implemented there. Chapter 5 considers aspects of the legacy of the Robertsons and their teachings by examining the careers of three of their students—John Vanderlyn, John Henri Isaac Browere, and Anne Hall—and the Robertsons' involvement with the American Academy of the Fine Arts.

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Over the past three years I have worked with scores of individuals who have helped with this dissertation. I owe the greatest thanks to my advisers, Professors Sally Webster and Katherine Manthorne, who have guided my project and encouraged my efforts, and to the other members of my committee: Professor David Jaffee, who allowed me to audit a course on material culture that has broadened my perspective and enhanced my work; and Dr. Carrie Rebora Barratt of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, whose high level of scholarship has been a model for me.

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INTRODUCTION

On 13 October 1791 Scottish painter Archibald Robertson (1765–1835) opened the first institution devoted to fine arts training in New York City, the Columbian Academy of Painting. It was so well received that in 1792 Archibald enlisted his brother, Alexander Robertson (1772–1841), to come from Scotland to New York to help him run the school. The Columbian Academy continued to thrive until it closed in 1823, making it the earliest sustained effort to provide art instruction in the United States. In 1802, Archibald published the first drawing book in America, *Elements of the Graphic Arts*. Later in 1802 Alexander left Archibald and established his own school, the Academy of Painting and Drawing. Like the Columbian Academy, Alexander's Academy of Painting and Drawing prospered for more than thirty years, closing in 1835.

This dissertation is the first extended study of the lives and works of Archibald and Alexander Robertson. It focuses on their teaching careers in New York from 1791, when Archibald arrived in the United States from Scotland and opened the Columbian Academy, to the year Alexander's Academy of Painting and Drawing closed. Because the

Robertsons worked exclusively in New York City, this study of them and their influence is restricted to New York. This dissertation is arranged by theme. It incorporates monographic examinations of the Robertsons and their schools, while also considering larger issues in the progress of the fine arts in New York. These include the political and social roles the fine arts played in the new nation in the years immediately following American independence, and the complex and intriguing connections between the visual cultures of Scotland, specifically Edinburgh, and New York in the late- eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Parallel developments in these two cities culminated in the founding of the National Academy of Design in New York and the Royal Scottish Academy in Edinburgh, both in the year 1826. Archibald, who studied art in Edinburgh from 1782 to 1784, before introducing professional arts training to New York in 1791, was at the center of events in both places.

Significantly, Archibald Robertson was invited to New York in 1791 by a group of wealthy and influential lawyers, doctors, and professors who endeavored to improve cultural life in their city. Chief among their undertakings was to bring about a drawing academy at which aspiring professional artists, as well as cultivated amateurs, could

receive basic training in the rudiments of the fine arts. These civic leaders sought to model New York's emerging cultural institutions on those of the Enlightenment capitals of Europe, specifically Edinburgh. Thus it was to Scotland they turned when seeking an artist who could introduce the traditional European drawing academy to America. Archibald, who had trained in Edinburgh and London and had established his reputation as an art instructor in the coastal town of Aberdeen, had the experience necessary to open an art academy in New York.

In teaching careers spanning over four decades, Archibald and Alexander Robertson played a key role in disseminating a conservative taste and mode of expression in America. The Columbian Academy was modeled after traditional European drawing academies, where young men and women, both amateurs and aspiring professionals, learned to draw by copying from drawing books, prints, copies of old master paintings, and casts of classical statues. As their newspaper advertisements emphasized, the Robertsons charged their students as much for instruction in painting and drawing as for access to their collection of casts, prints, and paintings. There were no public art museums in New York during the period, and aspiring artists relied on private

collections—such as those owned by the Robertsons—as models for instruction.

The pedagogical method the Robertsons employed at the Columbian became the basis for art training in New York for more than thirty years, as small, independent drawing schools became increasingly common in New York in the early nineteenth century. The Columbian Academy was undoubtedly an important model for the drawing schools opened by John Vanderlyn in 1816 and John Rubens Smith in 1821. At these schools, as at the Columbian, instruction in drawing and painting was available for both male and female students. Typically professional aspirants proceeded from such drawing schools to apprenticeships with practicing artists or to academic training abroad. The Columbian, the Academy of Painting and Drawing, and their derivatives dominated art training in New York until the founding of the National Academy in 1826.

As prominent and influential art instructors—and popular and respected artists themselves—the Robertsons also helped shape the style of drawing and painting produced in New York at the time. Archibald was an acclaimed painter of portrait miniatures, working primarily in watercolor on ivory. Alexander achieved an enviable reputation as a painter of landscapes in watercolor.

Throughout their careers they worked within a conservative tradition of European portrait and landscape painting. The characteristics of their portraits and landscapes are derived from the style of contemporary British artists such as Scottish portraitist Allan Ramsay (1713–1784) and English landscapist William Gilpin (1724–1804). It was these fine arts traditions that the Robertsons, as art educators from the 1790s through the 1830s, introduced and popularized in New York.

Despite the decades-long influence the Robertsons exerted on the development of the fine arts in New York, they have been virtually overlooked by art historians. One reason is that, until recently, American art historians have neglected the media in which they excelled—portrait miniatures and works on paper—in favor of oil painting and sculpture, which have been considered more valuable and important. Though examples of the Robertsons' work are held in esteemed collections such as The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the artists have received little scholarly or public attention.

Art historian Mark Mitchell recently evaluated scholars' tendency to disregard miniature painting in writing about American art, remarking that miniatures have

become victims of a "bifurcated aesthetic discourse."[1] Basically, twentieth- and twenty-first-century viewers have been unable to reconcile the traditional function of miniatures as personal tokens of intimacy and affection with contemporary notions of "fine art," which has been, until recently, restricted to painting in oil on canvas and sculpture intended for public exhibition.

For eighteenth- and nineteenth-century artists and patrons, however, portrait miniatures were fine art. Miniatures were displayed in large exhibitions such as the annual exhibitions of the American Academy of the Fine Arts in New York, and later at the National Academy of Design. That Archibald and his peers believed these objects to belong to the realm of fine art is attested both by Archibald's writings and by the fact that miniatures were always included in the American Academy's annual exhibitions. It was only in the twentieth century, Mitchell points out, that the rigidity of formalist criticism began to deny miniatures their place in history.

Formalist historians such as Alan Burroughs resisted including miniature painting in the canon of American art because it had "little to do with aesthetics and art

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[1] Mark DeSaussure Mitchell, "The Artist-Makers: Professional Art Training in Mid-Nineteenth-Century New York City" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2002), 110-12.

history" and reflected a "feminization of taste" that Burroughs deemed unworthy of American art.[2] More recent specialists, particularly Dale Johnson, reevaluated the medium in context.[3] Carrie Barratt's forthcoming catalogue of the miniatures in the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art will further highlight the important function these objects played in early American life, and to assess the works critically as fine art objects.

Similarly, all but the most specialized scholars of American landscape and works on paper have forgotten Alexander Robertson's landscape drawings and watercolors, which were popular and widely disseminated as prints during his lifetime. Art historian Theodore E. Stebbins, Jr., has attributed this neglect to drawings and watercolors' lack of ostentation, their often small size, their fragility, and their abundance, which causes them to seem less rare and valuable. Early scholarly treatments of the field of American watercolor were essentially limited to Sherman E. Lee's 1941 unpublished doctoral dissertation and Albert Ten Eyck Gardner's 1966 book *A History of Water Color Painting*

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[2] Alan Burroughs, *Limners and Likenesses, Three Centuries of American Painting* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1936), 141.

[3] Dale T. Johnson, *American Portrait Miniatures in the Manney Collection* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, in association with Harry N. Abrams, 1990).

in America.[4] Early studies of drawing include Theodore Bolton's 1923 *Early American Portrait Draughtsmen in Crayons* and Charles Slatkin and Regina Schoolman's 1947 *Treasury of American Drawings*.[5] Stebbins's 1976 *American Master Drawings and Watercolors* represents the first attempt to offer a comprehensive survey of American drawings from the late- sixteenth century to the late-twentieth century.[6] Catalogues of public collections of American works on paper in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and The Metropolitan Museum of Art also represent major efforts to assert the importance of works on paper in the history of American art.[7]

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[4] Sherman E. Lee, "A Critical Survey of American Watercolor Painting," (Ph.D. diss., Western Reserve University, 1941); Albert Ten Eyck Gardner, *A History of Water Color Painting in America* (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corp., 1966).

[5] Theodore Bolton, *Early American Portrait Draughtsmen in Crayons* (New York: F. F. Sherman, 1923; reprint, New York: Kennedy Graphics, 1970); Charles E. Slatkin and Regina Schoolman, *Treasury of American Drawings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947).

[6] Theodore E. Stebbins, Jr., *American Master Drawings and Watercolors: A History of Works on Paper from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976).

[7] For collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, see *M. & M. Karolick Collection of American Water Colors and Drawings, 1800-1875*, 2 vols., intro. by Henry Rossiter (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1962). For the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, see Kevin J. Avery et al., *American Drawings and Watercolors in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, vol. 1, *A Catalogue of Works by Artists Born*

Ann Bermingham's 2000 book *Learning to Draw: Studies in the Cultural History of a Polite and Useful Art* is the most constructive text on the subject.[8] Bermingham urges a consideration of cultural productions as reflections of larger social phenomena such as social, political, and economic forces. She examines drawing as a social practice rather than a purely aesthetic one. This establishes amateur drawings, which typically go unnoticed and unremarked in the art-historical literature because of their often negligible quality and uncertain authorship, as a legitimate body of work from which to study cultural mores.

Another factor contributing to the fall into obscurity of Alexander Robertson's landscapes in watercolor is the overwhelming tendency of studies of American art to stress the seminal position of Thomas Cole and the so-called Hudson River School in the history of landscape painting in the United States. The first major study of American landscape painting before Cole is the catalogue of the

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before 1835 (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2002-).

[8] Ann Bermingham, *Learning to Draw: Studies in the Cultural History of a Polite and Useful Art* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press for the Mellon Center for Studies in British Art, 2000).

Corcoran Gallery's 1986 exhibition *Views and Visions, American Landscape before 1830*.[9] In their catalogue essays, Edward J. Nygren and Bruce Robertson suggest that Alexander Robertson and other artists of his generation played a critical role in the history of American landscape by laying the foundation for Cole's achievements.

Another reason that scholars have overlooked the Robertsons and their schools is that, as Mitchell posits, historians of American art have traditionally overlooked training as a line of inquiry because it challenges the prevailing bias toward the idea of American genius. Mitchell wrote that America's first "school" of art, the Hudson River School, was comprised largely of artists glorified for being unsullied by academic instruction. Any study of training would be contrary to the prevailing bias toward unfettered, untutored genius.

That the Robertsons and the schools they founded have been almost entirely overlooked in the history of American art to date can also be attributed to the fact that the traditional European-style drawing academy they introduced to this country has been seen as antithetical to the desire

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[9] Edward J. Nygren and Bruce Robertson, eds., *Views and Visions: American Landscape before 1830* (Washington, D.C.: The Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1986).

to locate the "American" in American art. Accounts of art training in America that do exist almost always begin with the efforts of Charles Willson Peale at the Columbianum in Philadelphia. Founded in 1794 and disbanded in 1795, the short-lived Columbianum was an association of thirty professional and amateur artists, fractious from the outset, who sponsored an exhibition that was held at Independence Hall, and who organized an academy for art instruction.[10] Despite the Columbianum's lack of success, it holds a lofty position in the history of American art as the predecessor to the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, which Peale helped to found in the same city in 1805. In the extensive body of scholarship devoted to him, Peale is extolled not only as an artist, but also an inventor, a scientist, and an historian. As a champion of American art and artists, he is also considered a consummate patriot. In contrast, despite three decades of success, the Robertsons' Columbian Academy is far less known that Peale's Columbianum, which lasted merely a year. In an article in the May 1890 issue of *Century Magazine* Edith Robertson Cleveland declared: "Probably the career of no one among

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[10] For the Columbianum, see Lillian B. Miller, ed., *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983–), 2:101-13.

the pioneers of American art is so little known to the present generation as that of Archibald Robertson."[11] The truth of that statement has not changed in more than one hundred and fifteen years.

Early accounts of the Robertsons were primarily biographical. Cleveland's 1890 essay concentrated on Archibald's genealogy and his 1791–92 encounter with George Washington.[12] Mrs. J. Warren (Geraldine Winslow) Goddard's biographical address before members of the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, published in 1920, was apparently based on most of the same sources as Cleveland's.[13] Cleveland and Goddard were both descendants of Archibald Robertson, and the tone of their studies is admiring and deferential. John E. Stillwell's 1929 article about Archibald includes all of the same biographical information, but expands on the genealogy and describes a group of portraits by Archibald, Alexander, and their younger brother, renowned miniaturist Andrew Robertson, in

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[11] Edith Robertson Cleveland, "Archibald Robertson and His Portraits of the Washingtons," *The Century Magazine* 40 (1890): 3.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Geraldine Winslow Goddard, *Archibald Robertson: The Founder of the First School of Art in America* (New York: Genealogical and Biographical Society, 1920).

an effort to clarify attributions.[14] The most recent biographical source is an essay by Maria Naylor published by Kennedy Galleries in 1967.[15] Naylor provides little new information, but the essay includes illustrations of several drawings by the Robertsons and their students at the Columbian Academy. Because of their limited scopes, these studies fail to examine the crucial influence the Robertsons and their schools exerted on art training in New York City.

The several thematic texts and art historical surveys that discuss the Robertsons and the Columbian Academy supply more stimulating literature on their endeavors. William Dunlap's early account of the Robertsons in *History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design* (1834) summarizes their biographies and introduces the role the Columbian Academy played in the history of art in New York.[16] In 1966 Lillian B. Miller considered the role of the

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[14] J. E. Stillwell, "Archibald Robertson, Miniaturist, 1765-1835," *New-York Historical Society Quarterly* 13 (1929): 1-33.

[15] Maria Naylor, "A. and A. Robertson, Limners," in *American Drawings, Pastels and Watercolors. Part One: Works of the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (New York: Kennedy Galleries, 1967): 12-27.

[16] William H. Dunlap, *History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States*, 2 vols. (New York: Printed by George P. Scott, 1834).

Columbian Academy in the development of cultural nationalism and the American enlightenment.[17] Also in 1966, Neil Harris positioned Archibald within a group of enterprising but otherwise unremarkable European artists who about 1800 organized academies and drawing schools geared toward wealthy amateurs.[18] The best source to date is Edward Nygren's essay "From View to Vision" in the catalogue of the Corcoran Gallery's 1986 exhibition *Views and Visions: American Landscape before 1830*, in which he discussed Archibald and Alexander's work in terms of their dissemination of the artistic ideals advanced in the Reverend William Gilpin's late-eighteenth-century essays on picturesque scenery.[19]

Because there is no major repository of Robertson materials, this dissertation benefits from examination of related manuscripts and other materials in widely dispersed public, private, and university collections. The largest

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[17] Lillian B. Miller, *Patrons and Patriotism: The Encouragement of the Fine Arts in the United States, 1790-1860* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1966).

[18] Neil Harris, *The Artist in American Society, the Formative Years, 1790-1860* (New York: George Braziller, 1966).

[19] Edward J. Nygren, "From View to Vision," in Nygren and Robertson, 1986, 3-82.

cache is the Archibald Robertson Papers at the Rosenbach Museum and Library, Philadelphia. The Rosenbach owns Archibald Robertson's unpublished 1823 "Biographical Memoir of the Author," his annotated family Bible, his will, his paint box, and a selection of his drawings. The "Biographical Memoir" was probably the major source for all of Archibald's early biographers.

Archibald Robertson's 1800 "Treatise on Miniature Painting," addressed to his youngest brother Andrew and published in the 1895 *Letters and Papers of Andrew Robertson, A. M.*, and his 1802 drawing book *Elements of the Graphic Arts* are critical to forming an understanding of Archibald's approach to teaching the fine arts. The volume of Andrew Robertson's letters and papers is also valuable because it contains correspondence between Archibald Robertson, Alexander Robertson, and Andrew Robertson—who spent most of his career in London—regarding art and family concerns.

The papers of the American Academy of the Fine Arts at the New-York Historical Society provide additional firsthand accounts of the Robertsons' professional activities. Other valuable resources include receipts for payment to the Robertsons in the Robert R. Livingston Papers at the New-York Historical Society, and New York

City tax assessment records available on microfilm at the New York City Municipal Archives. This study also benefits from extensive research in contemporary newspapers published in Aberdeen, Scotland, and in New York.

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapters 1 and 2 are discussions of Archibald and Alexander's lives and works. These chapters discuss the Robertsons' early training and artistic backgrounds, and a selection of the works they produced in America. The Robertsons merit considerable biographical attention because the small amount of published literature on them is incomplete, leaving extensive periods of their lives unexamined and filled with factual errors. The biographies presented in these two chapters will clarify the Robertsons' personal histories and offer perspective on their approach to art and pedagogy.

Chapter 3 considers the circumstances behind the Columbian Academy's founding, specifically the impetus behind inviting Archibald to come to New York. The chapter reveals four distinct but often intersecting motivations behind the desire on behalf of some leading New York citizens to establish an academy for drawing and painting: emulation of European, particularly Scottish, Enlightenment culture; political ambition on behalf of individuals,

groups, and the city as a whole; new concern for the trappings of refinement among the upper- and middle-classes; and the need for professional training for portraitists and architects, as well as doctors and mathematicians whose studies relied heavily on their ability to draw. These motivations reflect the prevailing republican philosophy in New York in the postrevolutionary period, which centered on attempts to educate and improve the citizenry for the greater good of the nation. The practical need to train professionals in marketable skills, whether portrait painting or mechanical drawing, coexisted with the idealistic desire to introduce gentlemen and ladies to the genteel practices of sketching and watercolor painting.

The fourth chapter is devoted to a detailed chronology of the Columbian Academy of Painting and the Academy of Painting and Drawing that will establish clearly the histories of the schools, and an examination of the teaching practices implemented there. A primary goal of the chapter is to clarify the muddled history of the two academies. Even the most recent art historical sources have confused the facts, thereby propagating incorrect information about these two institutions.

The fifth chapter considers aspects of the legacy of the Robertsons and their teachings. The first section is devoted to examining the Robertsons' legacy as manifested by their pupils. Using three students—history painter John Vanderlyn, sculptor John Henri Isaac Browere, and miniaturist Anne Hall—as case studies, I will explore the impact of their association with the Robertsons' on their works and careers. The second section of this chapter concerns the Robertsons' roles as patrons of the fine arts through their active membership in the American Academy of the Fine Arts.

Though stylistically distinctive, the work of Archibald and Alexander is often indistinguishable in terms of skill and technique. The artists almost never signed their works, but some—including examples in the collections of the New Jersey Historical Society, the Metropolitan Museum, and the New-York Historical Society—have later inscriptions that read: "drawn by Archibald Robertson my father / Andrew J. Robertson." These notes by the junior Robertson are unreliable and confusing, as they sometimes appear on works that were certainly executed by Alexander, such as original drawings and watercolors for prints. As a result, scholars have long debated the authorship of many of the Robertsons' works. One of the best-known examples,

Collect Pond, New York City (Fig.Intro.1), has over the years been attributed variously to Archibald or Alexander.[20] Because verifying authorship of works of art is not an objective of this dissertation, I will almost always discuss works by the Robertsons according to the attributions currently supported by the owners of the pictures.

When quoting directly from sources, I have not changed irregular punctuation and/or spelling except when absolutely necessary. Changes or additions are always indicated within square brackets. Because the two subjects of this dissertation share the same family name and first initial, throughout the text I will refer to them by their first names.

[20] Avery et al., *American Drawings and Watercolors*, 102.

CHAPTER ONE

ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON: LIFE AND WORK

Archibald and Alexander Robertson were born in Scotland and received early arts training there and in London before settling in New York to establish careers as artists and teachers. This chapter and chapter 2 discuss their early training and artistic backgrounds, and a selection of the works they produced in America. As Mark Mitchell asserted in his recent study on professional art training in mid-nineteenth-century New York: "Biography is essential to the study of these individuals' careers. Their intellectual and social backgrounds offer important clues about their approaches both to art and teaching." [1] The Robertsons merit considerable biographical attention because the small amount of published literature on them is incomplete and filled with factual errors, leaving extensive periods of their lives unexamined.

Archibald Robertson (Fig.1.1) was born on May 8, 1765, in the village of Monysmusk, about eighteen miles from Aberdeen, Scotland. He was the eldest son of William Robertson (1732-1817), an architect, and Jean Ross (1738-1811). The family descends from the Drumnahoy line of

[1] Mitchell, 10.

Robertsons, and can trace their ancestors back to the thirteenth century.[2] Archibald's parents had five sons—three of whom became artists—and three daughters.[3] Soon after Archibald's birth, the family moved into the city of Aberdeen, where Archibald attended school and first showed interest and proficiency in the arts.[4] He wrote in his autobiographical manuscript that at this time he attended King's College in Aberdeen, although in 1834 William Dunlap, Archibald's first biographer, wrote that it was Marischal College, not King's, where he had studied. However, there is no record of Archibald having ever been enrolled at either King's or Marischal College.[5] He definitely did not graduate from either school.[6]

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[2] An avid genealogist, Archibald recorded his family history in his unpublished autograph manuscript, "An Account of the Location of Drumnahoy for Many Ages the Homestead of a Junior Branch or Robertson of Struam," Archibald Robertson Papers, Rosenbach Museum and Library, Philadelphia. See also Emily Robertson, *Letters and Papers of Andrew Robertson, A. M. (1777-1845), Miniature Painter to His Late Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex; Also a Treatise on the Art by His Eldest Brother Archibald Robertson (1765-1835) of New York* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1895), 284-85.

[3] E. Robertson, 1.

[4] Archibald Robertson, "Biographical Memoir of the Author," AMsS, 8 May 1823, Archibald Robertson Papers, Rosenbach Museum and Library, Philadelphia.

[5] An Archibald Robertson was enrolled in 1838, three years after the death of the Archibald who is the subject of this dissertation. Peter John Anderson, ed., *Roll of Alumni in*

Dunlap recorded that Archibald was encouraged in his first attempts at drawing by Lord Archibald Grant. Grant was a friend of the Robertson family and an important local figure who "represented the lords, lairds, and other freeholders of Aberdeenshire in Parliament for a period of thirty years."[7] After completing his studies in Aberdeen, Archibald was invited by Grant to study the arts of design in Edinburgh.[8] At the time, there was no independent drawing academy in Aberdeen.

Archibald went to Edinburgh some time in 1782; the exact date is not known. In September 1783 he was admitted to the Trustees' Academy School of Art in that city.[9] Archibald's period of study at the Trustees' Academy instilled in him great veneration for classical art that

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Arts of the University and King's College of Aberdeen, 1596-1860 (Aberdeen: Printed for the University, 1900).

[6] Peter John Anderson, ed., *Officers and Graduates of University & King's College, Aberdeen MVD-MDCCCLX* (Aberdeen: Printed for the New Spalding Club, 1893).

[7] Cleveland, 5.

[8] Dunlap, *History*, 1:395.

[9] "Appendix: Students Admitted to the Trustees' Academy Between 1760 and 1796," in Patricia Brookes, "The Trustees' Academy, Edinburgh, 1760-1801: The Public Patronage of Art and Design in the Scottish Enlightenment" (Ph.D. diss., Syracuse University, 1989), 227. This is the only comprehensive examination of the Trustees' Academy, and the source for my analysis.

would have a profound impact on his career as an artist and a teacher. In conception, purpose, and character the Trustees' Academy was directly related to the aesthetic theories and intellectual climate of the Scottish Enlightenment. It was established in 1760 by the Board of Trustees for Improving Fisheries and Manufactures, at the instigation of the Select Society of Edinburgh, with the aim of improving design in the linen industry. It was the first publicly sponsored school of art in all of Britain, thereby transferring the major patronage for improvement of taste in Scottish design from private organizations, such as the Select Society, to the official sponsorship and financial support of the British Crown. Within ten years of its founding the Trustees' Academy expanded into the role of a more conventional art school, and became an important training ground for aspiring Scots artists.

From 1772 to 1785 the academy was under the leadership of neoclassical painter Alexander Runciman (1736-1785). An Edinburgh native, Runciman believed, as did many eighteenth-century painters, that learning to draw the figure was the basis for all artistic training. As a student at the Foulis Academy in Glasgow, where he had enrolled in 1766, Runciman drew from a living model three

evenings a week and from the antique also thrice weekly.[10] In 1767 Runciman went to study in Rome, where he became interested in neoclassical history paintings with life-size figures, and focused his efforts on the careful scrutiny of classical figurative sculpture. Runciman returned to Scotland in the autumn of 1771. Between July and November 1772 he completed his most important work, a commission for Penicuik House, an estate ten miles south of Edinburgh on the southwest side of the town of Penicuik. On the ceiling of the principal room he painted scenes derived from the life of Ossian, a fictitious third-century British bard invented by writer James Macpherson in the 1760s. The Hall of Ossian, is it was called, became known outside of Scotland and established Runciman's reputation as a historical painter in the classical mode.[11]

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[10] The Foulis Academy, founded by brothers Andrew and Robert Foulis in 1753, was Scotland's only fine arts academy until it closed in 1775. There is no published history for the academy. The best source is Robert Brydall, *Art in Scotland, Its Origins and Progress* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1889), 121-30. See also Peter J. M. McEwan, *Dictionary of Scottish Art and Architecture* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, England: Antique Collectors' Club Ltd., 1994), 212.

[11] The standard source for Runciman is Duncan Macmillan, "Alexander Runciman and the Influences That Shaped His Style" (Ph.D. diss., Edinburgh University, 1974). See also Susan E. Booth, "Alexander Runciman in Italy and His Work for Sir James Clark, of Penicuik" (master's thesis, University of London, 1967), partially published as "The

Runciman continued to paint neoclassical style works throughout his career. As master of the Trustees' Academy, he promoted classical art ideals to his students. It is known, for example, that his students at the academy practiced antique drawing from plaster casts of antique sculpture, including a copy of the famous late-Hellenistic Laocoön.[12]

Archibald was clearly impressed by Runciman's teachings, which is seen in his taste for classical art and in his preferred pedagogical method at the Columbian Academy of having his students copy from plaster casts of classical and renaissance sculptures. Archibald was also influenced by Runciman's efforts to unite the applied arts with the fine arts. The majority of Archibald's fifteen to twenty male and female fellow students at the Trustees' Academy were applied artists bound for professions in design for manufactures, including damask pattern drawing,

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Early Career of Alexander Runciman and His Relations with Sir James Clark of Penicuik," in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 32 (1969): 332-43.

[12] Brookes, 81-82; Duncan Thomson et al., *Raeburn: The Art of Sir Henry Raeburn 1756-1823* (Edinburgh: Scottish National Portrait Gallery, 1997), 12-13.

weaving, and metalworking.[13] Under Runciman, the school also offered instruction to fine artists, and, although the Trustees disparaged the practice, to amateurs.[14]

At the Trustees' Academy Archibald became acquainted with Scottish portrait painters Henry Raeburn and George Watson and genre painter Walter Weir. In 1783 the four young artists formed a life-drawing evening class in the Theatre-Royal with Runciman assisting as instructor.[15] Runciman, who decorated the theater in the 1770s and worked there as a scene painter, likely helped his students gain access to the space. They held their classes in the "green room" on the three nights a week the theater was not in use.[16]

Dunlap stated that Archibald and his colleagues formed their "school for mutual improvement" in Edinburgh because

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[13] The academy could support a maximum of twenty students, although actual enrollment seems to have been about fifteen when Archibald was there. Brookes, 85.

[14] Board of Trustees for Improving Fisheries and Manufactures, Edinburgh, Meeting Minutes, 23 January 1786, transcribed in Brookes, 86.

[15] Dunlap, *History*, 1:395. The Theatre-Royal, located at 95 Princes Street, was built in 1768 and was torn down in 1859 to make room for a new post office. For its history, see Robert Chambers, *Sketch of the History of the Edinburgh Theatre-Royal, Prepared for This Evening of Its Final Closing, May 25, 1859* (Edinburgh: Wood, 1859).

[16] Dunlap, *History*, 1:396.

"at that time there was no academy of fine arts in that city."[17] It is more likely that Archibald, Raeburn, Watson, and Weir intended their classes to supplement the training they received at the Trustees' Academy. They drew from live (but clothed) male models, and borrowed casts from Runciman.[18] It is not known how long the class lasted, or whether any other students attended. In later years, efforts by Raeburn, Watson, and Weir to establish life-drawing classes in Edinburgh culminated in the founding of the Incorporated Society of Artists (est. 1808) and the Royal Scottish Academy (est. 1826), the longest surviving fine arts organization in Scotland.[19]

Archibald returned to Aberdeen in August 1784 and established himself for the first time as a professional drawing instructor. He settled in a house on the east end of Marischal Street, a short street built fairly recently,

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[17] Ibid., 1:395.

[18] Thomson et al., 12, 202; Dunlap, *History*, 1:395-396.

[19] The Minute Book of the Incorporated Society of Artists, Edinburgh, is in the Royal Scottish Academy Archives, Edinburgh. For the Royal Scottish Academy, see Brydall, 334-49; Esme Gordon, *The Royal Scottish Academy of Painting Sculpture & Architecture 1826-1976* (Edinburgh: Charles Silton Ltd., 1976); and Frank Rinder, *The Royal Scottish Academy 1826-1916* (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1917).

in 1768, and of moderate gentility.[20] Drawing on his recent academic training, Archibald confidently offered instruction in a range of specialties. On 23 August 1784 he advertised in the *Aberdeen Journal* "that he has this day opened an academy for teaching the principles of drawing in all its different branches, viz. Design, Heads and Figures, landscapes, flowers, and patterns, the art of perspective, architecture, and all the other parts relative to painting."[21] His fee was one guinea per quarter.[22]

At the time, Archibald was the only artist in Aberdeen to offer a full range of drawing instruction.[23] Nevertheless, the only pupil identified from this period is Francis Peacock (1723-1807), a dancing teacher in Aberdeen

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[20] Archibald likely lived with his family, but there is no official record of the members of the household. The character of Marischal Street is derived from a letter to the author from Dr. Nicola J. Mills of the Aberdeen City Archives. Nicola J. Mills, Aberdeen, to the author, New York, email, 16 December 2005.

[21] "Painting and Drawing," *Aberdeen Journal*, 23 August 1784.

[22] Naylor, 13.

[23] This was confirmed through a comprehensive examination of issues of the *Aberdeen Journal* for the years 1784-91. The author also examined editions of *The Aberdeen Almanack* for 1783, 1786, and 1788-91—the only years preserved from this period—in the Local Studies Department, Aberdeen Central Library.

since 1744.[24] According to art historians John Hill Morgan and Mantle Fielding, Archibald studied the "art of bowing" under Peacock, and Peacock received lessons in miniature painting.[25]

At this time Archibald also set himself up as a miniature painter, taking "likenesses in miniature of all sizes, for rings, bracelets, &c. at the lowest prices . . . . Specimens of A. Robertson's work to be seen at his lodgings . . . where, or at their own lodgings, those ladies or gentlemen who incline to take this opportunity to have their likeness taken, may be waited upon."[26] By the following year, in addition to miniatures he was painting full-size portraits in oil. He also drew silhouettes, "as large as life, with candle light, so low as 6 s[hillings] each head."[27]

In 1785 Archibald devised a scheme to sell by subscription a series of six engraved landscape views of

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[24] Peacock is listed as a dancing teacher in *The Aberdeen Almanack* throughout the 1780s.

[25] John Hill Morgan and Mantle Fielding, *The Life Portraits of Washington and Their Replicas* (Philadelphia: Printed for the subscribers by Lancaster Press, 1931), 188.

[26] "Painting and Drawing," *Aberdeen Journal*, 23 August 1784.

[27] "Six Views of Aberdeen," *Aberdeen Journal*, 12 December 1785.

Aberdeen. The 12 December 1785 issue of the *Aberdeen Journal* announced their forthcoming publication:

> SIX VIEWS OF ABERDEEN, And its environs, etched upon copper by A. Robertson limner and drawing master in Aberdeen: Such as have subscribed to this work, will please call for their sets either at A. Robertson's lodgings, Marishal street, second house and third fl, or, westside, or at any of the places where subscriptions were taken in. The terms of subscription three shillings to subscribers, and to non-subscribers five shillings.[28]

In his studio Archibald exhibited colored and uncolored versions of the views, "so that any subscribers that chose may have their sets coloured with a small additional expence." They do not appear to have been reproduced and only one example from the series survives in public collections. However, this evidence of an early interest in landscape drawing, heretofore undiscovered, provides new insight into Archibald's career as an artist and teacher.

The surviving example, *King's College, Aberdeen* (Fig.1.2), unrecorded until now, is pasted into a volume of miscellaneous uncatalogued prints in the National Museums of Scotland Library, Edinburgh.[29] According to an inscription at lower center, Archibald based the image on a painting by Scots painter George Jamesone (1589/90–1644)

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[28] Ibid.

[29] "Various Engravings," National Museums of Scotland Library, Edinburgh, call number NE VAR (N), p. 55A.

that was in the college's collection. Jamesone was born in Aberdeen, son of Andrew Jamesone, a master mason and city architect, and his wife Marjorie. In Edinburgh Jamesone was apprenticed for seven years to a fellow artist from Aberdeen, John Anderson. His earliest patrons were from the trade and academic circles of Aberdeen, but within a short time he was painting the aristocracy of the north-east and eventually all of Scotland. Following the departure of his main competitor, Adam de Colone, from Scotland in 1628, Jamesone enjoyed a monopoly on commissions for the rest of his life.

Today Jamesone is considered Scotland's first major portraitist.[30] By making an engraving in 1785 after a work by Jamesone from 1630, Archibald was announcing himself as the successor to the great tradition of Aberdeen painters Jamesone had inaugurated in the 1600s. It is impossible to draw any comparison between the two works because Jamesone's original view of King's College is otherwise unrecorded.[31]

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[30] The standard biography for Jameson is Duncan Thomson, *The Life and Art of George Jamesone* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974). An important early source is John Malcolm Bulloch, *George Jamesone the Scottish Vandyck* (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1885).

[31] Though primarily a portrait painter, Jamesone is known to have made city views, including a "Perspective view of the

In 1786 Archibald went to London to refine the artistic skills he had acquired in Edinburgh.[32] His fellow Scot David Wilkie had insisted that all Scottish painters must go to London if they wished to succeed in the profession, and Archibald was among a large number of his young countrymen to flock to the city.

According to all of his previous biographers, Archibald remained in London for about two or three years and studied at the Royal Academy of Arts under Sir Joshua Reynolds and Benjamin West. He is also supposed to have studied miniature painting with Charles Shirreff (b. ca. 1750), a native of Edinburgh who had settled in London in 1768, studied at the Royal Academy, and established a career painting miniatures.[33] In fact, the precise nature of Archibald's activities in London is not known. It is almost certain, however, that Archibald did not officially enroll

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City of Edinburgh." However, Duncan Thomson's catalogue of works by Jamesone does not list a view of King's College. "Catalogue Raisonné," in Thomson, 79-128.

[32] The precise date of his departure for London in 1786 is not known. See Archibald Robertson, "Biographical Memoir of the Author."

[33] Johnson, 184. For Shirreff's biography, see E. Bénézit, ed., *Dictionnaire Critique et Documentaire des Peintres, Sculpteurs, Dessinateurs, et Graveurs de Tous les Temps et de Tous les Pays par un Groupe d'Ecrivains Spécialistes Français et Étrangers*, 14 vols. (Paris: Éditions Gründ, 1999), 12:759.

in any course at the Royal Academy. Archival research shows no record of Archibald Robertson in the Registers of the Royal Academy Schools.[34] An Archibald Robertson exhibited there from 1772 to 1796, but our Robertson was only seven years old in 1772.[35] It is also unlikely that he studied under either Reynolds or West, although according to tradition, he briefly met both painters shortly after his arrival in London. Archibald, Dunlap wrote:

> carried among other letters one to Sir Robert Strange. The engraver was not home when he called, but his wife, a Scotchwoman, received her young countryman very cordially and went with him to Newman-street to introduce him to Benjamin West . . . . West received the young man with that amenity which characterized him . . . . He asked Robertson what were his views in

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[34] In a letter to the author, Elizabeth King, Research Assistant, Royal Academy of Arts, London, wrote: "I have to tell you that I can find no reference of these artists [Archibald Robertson and Alexander Robertson] in the Registers of the Royal Academy Schools." Elizabeth King, London, to the author, TLS, New York, 20 May 2005. Andrew Robertson did enter the Royal Academy Schools, School of Painting, in 1801 at the age of 24.

[35] Algernon Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts. A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and Their Work from Its Foundation in 1769 to 1904*, 8 vols. (London: Henry Graves; George Bell and Sons, 1906), 6:327. There are entries for "Robertson, Archibald . . . Painter. (An Honorary Exhibitor)" for the years 1772, 1775, 1781, 1787, 1788, 1789, 1790, and 1796. An explanatory note in the text following these entries reads: "The above are evidently by one artist, but whether they are by Archibald Robertson, the elder brother of Andrew, is doubtful. Miss Emily Robertson in her letters, etc., of Andrew Robertson (printed in 1897), states that Archibald came to London in 1786, and went to America in 1791. He was born in 1765, so the 1775 exhibit must be by a different Arch. Robertson."

> respect to the art. Whether he intended to pursue historical or portrait painting, and being informed that the latter was his object he recommended application to Reynolds.[36]

On West's advice, Archibald next sought an introduction to Reynolds. Dunlap continued:

> To Sir Joshua Reynolds he was introduced by Sir William Chambers the architect, and was received as he could wish. Reynolds was then the president of the Royal Academy and pointed out to him the steps necessary for his introduction to that school; the first of which is to make a drawing from the plaster figure for presentation to the counsel or keeper . . . . Robertson said he had no plaster figure to draw from, and the artist directed him to choose one from those in his *studio* and make use of it. The young Scot chose the crouching Venus and triumphantly bore the goddess to his own chamber, eager to devote himself to the study of beauty and the *antique*.[37]

There is no evidence of any further association between Archibald and either West or Reynolds, making it unlikely that he received any individual instruction from either painter. Instead, it appears that Archibald claimed to have studied at the Royal Academy and with the revered Benjamin West to enhance his credentials while promoting his portrait painting and teaching ventures in Aberdeen and in America.

In London Archibald probably did spend some time at the Royal Academy making drawings from their collection of

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[36] Dunlap, *History*, 1:396.

[37] Ibid., 1:396-97.

plaster casts. But, according to letters written from New York in later years, he did not believe it was worth the time or effort for an aspiring portrait painter to gain full admission to the school. When his younger brother Andrew was preparing for his own training in London in 1801, Archibald advised against spending much time at the Academy:

> As to academical studies, there will be no harm in making as much of them as you can, not that you will have a very great occasion for them in common practice. For doing Miniatures, or heads of any kind, the Academy will be of little service, unless you were to be a thoroughly historical painter. Even Sir Joshua could not draw a figure better than myself for all his eminence. The Academy is good for history, which pays little and only to the most famous and eminent. Portraits, and to you in particular, Miniature is the thing.[38]

In another letter Archibald recommended a shortcut for studying at the Academy that may echo his own experience in London in the 1780s:

> When you are entered as a regular student, and have all the privileges of the Academy—that is, to attend the Lectures, have access to the Library, etc.—in short, full admission to everything. This, unless you were to make London a permanent abode, would be useless for you to attempt. The only thing I would recommend is, according to usual custom, to make a drawing from any plaister figure you can procure, present it to the keeper at the Academy at any time you expect he is there, which will be at the usual

[38] Archibald Robertson, New York, to Andrew Robertson, Aberdeen, 21 February 1801, transcribed in E. Robertson, 39.

> hour of attendance for the students, and tell him you wish to attend the plaister figure room to draw. [39]

Archibald urged Andrew to draw from the Academy's plaster casts as often as he could. He also advised him to watch and learn from his fellow students, a practice he would later endorse for his students at the Columbian Academy.[40]

In the same letter Archibald recommended Andrew procure an introduction to American expatriate painter Benjamin West. Contrary to accounts that Archibald himself profited from lessons received from West, he appears not to have had any relationship with the artist. He was not able to supply his brother with a letter of introduction; instead, Andrew relied on John R. Murray, an associate of Archibald from New York (and one-time student at the Columbian Academy).[41] Archibald wrote:

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[39] Archibald Robertson, New York, to Andrew Robertson, Aberdeen, 25 May 1799, transcribed in ibid., 14.

[40] Ibid.

[41] John R. Murray was an important New York merchant and patron of the arts. He believed that American art would flourish by copying and emulating European old master paintings. According to John Vanderlyn's biographer Salvatore Mondello, Vanderlyn and Murray were students together at the Columbian Academy from 1792 to 1794. Salvatore Mondello, *The Private Papers of John Vanderlyn (1775-1852) American Portrait Painter*, Studies in American History (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), 5. For more on Vanderlyn studying at the Columbian Academy, see chapter 5 of this dissertation.

> If you can procure any one to introduce you to him, so much the better—I think it is probable you will be introduced by Mr. John Murray to Mr. West, and in that case you request the favor of an introduction to the keeper by a few lines from Mr. West.

That Archibald had no professional or personal relationship with West is confirmed in a letter to Archibald from Andrew:

> I have wished long to be introduced to West. I introduced myself at middle of day. I should have gone in the morning at 10. He was painting . . . .
>
> After some more conversation he . . . . asked me why I did not call before, he would have been happy to have seen [my] works.
>
> I said I had waited for Mr. Murray to introduce me. He asked many questions.
>
> He had heard of you.[42]

* * *

In May 1788 Archibald left London and returned to Aberdeen. Immediately upon his arrival in June, he announced in the *Aberdeen Journal*

> that he is returned to Aberdeen, from the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture in London, being at same time under the particular tuition of Sir JOSHUA REYNOLDS, paints Portraits, Miniatures, &c. This day (at his lodgings, west side Marischall-street) opens his classes, for teaching ladies and gentlemen Drawing, Heads, Figures, Architecture, and Landscapes, Flowers, Patterns for sewing, &c.[43]

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[42] Andrew Robertson, London, to Archibald Robertson, New York, 1 April 1802, transcribed in E. Robertson, 66-67.

[43] "Painting and Drawing," *Aberdeen Journal*, 3 June 1788.

He emphasized the prestige afforded him by his studies in London, and encouraged potential students to take advantage of his recently acquired training, noting "that although he has been at very large expences in improving himself in all the above branches, he will, for a short time, accept the same terms as formerly."[44]

From June 1788 through 1791 Archibald was the only painter who offered drawing lessons in Aberdeen.[45] According to newspaper advertisements, young ladies could learn to draw at the local boarding schools as part of their general education. This included one operated by Mill Bell Gordon on Marischal Street, but in that period Archibald's was the only independent drawing school in the city. This likely prompted Dr. Thomas Gordon of King's College, Aberdeen, to forward to Archibald a letter he received inviting a local artist to move to New York to establish the city's first art school. Archibald recalled the events in his autobiographical manuscript, written in the third person:

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[44] Ibid.

[45] This was confirmed through a comprehensive examination of issues of the *Aberdeen Journal* for the years 1784-91. The author also examined editions of *The Aberdeen Almanack* for 1783, 1786, and 1788-91—the only years preserved from this period—in the Local Studies Department, Aberdeen Central Library. The *Almanack* for 1789-91 lists Archibald under "Teacher of Drawing."

> There [in Aberdeen], whilst in the extensive and successful exercise of his art, he was invited by the late venerable Dr Gordon of Kings College Old Aberdeen, at the request of the Late Dr Kemp of Columbia College New York, at the particular solicitation of the Late Chancellor Livingston and the late venerable Dr Samuel Bard to cross the Atlantic to New York; he felt great reluctance at the first proposition to even think of such a thing, as to go reside in such a barbarous country as the United States then appeared in his eyes, it was 'terra incognita to him, & he formed the most ludicrous Ideas of its inhabitants.
>
> However eventually in the spirit of Romantic frolic, & not with any serious intention of remaining, but a short time, he crossed the Atlantic.[46]

Archibald left Aberdeen sometime after 28 June 1791.[47] His father had fallen into poverty, making it essential for Archibald to earn as much money as possible to help support the family.[48] Though he had enjoyed success as a portraitist and teacher in Aberdeen, he must have been enticed by the

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[46] Archibald Robertson, "Biographical Memoir of the Author."

[47] The precise date of Archibald's departure is not known, but it must be after 28 June 1791, the date of a letter from David Stuart Erskine, the Earl of Buchan, to George Washington, which Archibald was entrusted to deliver to the president. The date of the artist's arrival in New York is recorded in his autobiographical manuscript. Archibald Robertson, "Biographical Memoir of the Author."

[48] Family correspondence indicates that the Robertsons struggled financially throughout the artists' lives. According to one source, their father "had fallen into absolute poverty." See the Robertsons' correspondence in E. Robertson; and *A Brief Memoir of the Life of Andrew Robertson, Miniature Painter to H. R. H. the Duke of Sussex, for Private Circulation among His Friends* (London: Spottiswoode, 1874).

wealth of opportunity available to a European painter in America. “New York was full of prominent people,” art historians Carrie Barratt and Ellen Miles explain, “and it was void of fine portraitists.”[49] Politicians such as Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, and George Washington came to town when New York was the seat of national government, from 1789 to 1790. Members of patrician families, including the Livingstons and Van Rensselaers, returned to New York after the evacuation of the British, determined to rebuild their city according to the courtly system of posh entertainments derived from England. There was a huge demand for portraits, and an ever-increasing flow of money to pay for them. The city, Barratt and Miles note, “fulfilled all the criteria for a successful portrait practice.”[50]

Hearing of Archibald’s intended departure for America, David Stuart Erskine, the eleventh earl of Buchan, as well as a distant relative and frequent correspondent of George Washington, enlisted Archibald to deliver a gift to

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[49] Carrie Rebora Barratt and Ellen G. Miles, *Gilbert Stuart* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 101.

[50] Ibid., 102. The best description of New York at this time is Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 299-408.

Washington and commissioned him to paint Washington's portrait. Buchan was an important patron of Scottish art and owned at least one of Archibald's early works. In 1780 he founded the Society of Antiquaries, an organization based in Edinburgh and influenced by the model of the Society of Antiquaries in London (est. 1707). A museum collection of objects—purchased by the society or donated by individual members—was instigated immediately. On 9 March 1790 Buchan presented to the society the print of Archibald's etching *King's College, Aberdeen*, described above, that is now in the National Museums of Scotland Library.[51]

Almost all of Archibald's early biographers recounted the story of Buchan's offering to Washington. The gift, known as the Wallace Box, was a small, hinged snuffbox made of wood from the oak tree that sheltered Sir William Wallace after the July 1298 Battle of Falkirk in the struggle for Scottish independence from England. The outside of the box was varnished, and on the inside of the lid was a silver plaque inscribed: "Presented by the

[51] The minutes for the meeting read: "The Earl of Buchan presented a View of King's College, Aberdeen, from a Painting by George Jamesone. Etched by Robertson." Society of Antiquaries, Edinburgh, Meeting Minutes, 15 November 1784-19 February 1805, AD, National Museums of Scotland Library, Edinburgh.

Goldsmiths of Edinburgh to David Stuart Erskine, Earl of Buchan, with the freedom of their Corporation by their Deacon, 1791."

Buchan asked Archibald to give the box to Washington along with a letter of introduction from Buchan on the artist's behalf. In that letter, Buchan wrote to Washington that since he felt his "own unworthiness to receive this magnificently significant present," he had secured permission of the donors "to make it over to the Man in the World to whom I thought it was most justly due."[52] Buchan instructed Washington to pass the box, after his death, "to the man in your country who shall appear, in your judgment to merit it best." Washington accepted the Wallace Box but not the terms of the gift; in his will he returned it to Buchan.[53]

In addition to delivering the Wallace Box, Buchan commissioned Archibald to paint a portrait in oil of the president to add to his collection at his home, Dryburgh

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[52] David Stuart Erskine, Earl of Buchan, Dryburgh Abbey, Scotland, to George Washington, Philadelphia, 28 June 1791, quoted in "The Will of George Washington, Transcription" [resource online], provided by the University of Virginia, available at http://gwpapers.virginia.edu/documents/will.text.html#n16; Internet; accessed 23 May 2005.

[53] Ibid.

Abbey, near Melrose in Scotland.[54] Buchan wrote to Washington: "I beg your Excellency will have the goodness to send me your portrait, that I may place it among those I most honour, and I would wish it from the pencil of Mr. Robertson."[55] By providing Archibald with an introduction to Washington, Buchan effectively bestowed on the young Scots painter a level of visibility and prominence attained by few portraitists in America at the time.

When Archibald arrived in New York on 2 October 1791 he "found the country quite contrary to his expectation, any thing but a scene of Savages . . . . He soon came to the resolution to make it the home of his choice, and the country of his hopes."[56] Archibald promptly advertised his arrival in the city's newspapers as a portraitist trained "under the particular tuition of Mr. West and Sir Joshua

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[54] According to John Hill Morgan and Mantle Fielding, Archibald painted commissioned portraits of both George and Martha Washington for Buchan. Morgan and Fielding, 189. However, research for this dissertation has not uncovered any evidence of Archibald having completed a portrait of Martha Washington in oil.

[55] "Portrait of George Washington. Lord Buchan's Gift to Sulgrave Manor," unidentified clipping, 8 August 1851, transcribed in Morgan and Fielding, 189.

[56] Archibald Robertson, "Biographical Memoir of the Author."

Reynolds for several years." He also announced the opening of the Columbian Academy of Painting at 89 William Street.[57]

Two months later, in early December 1791, Archibald delivered the Wallace Box to Washington in Philadelphia, where he commenced the portrait Buchan had commissioned. The first sitting was on 13 December 1791. Significantly, Archibald painted the president four years before his better-known contemporaries Gilbert Stuart and Charles Willson Peale, who made their earliest portraits of Washington in 1795.[58] In Robertson's account of his first

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[57] "Archibald Robertson, Limner," *Daily Advertiser*, 11 October 1791. A chronology of the Columbian Academy and an examination of Archibald's teaching practices constitute chapter 4 of this dissertation.

[58] For Stuart painting Washington in Philadelphia in 1795, see Barratt and Miles, 133-36. Charles Willson Peale, his son Rembrandt Peale, and his brother James Peale all painted portraits of Washington in 1795. In 1823 Rembrandt Peale incorrectly wrote: "There are only five Artists living who have painted original portraits of Washington. He sat to Stuart, my father & to me in the year 1795. Trumbull did not see him for several years before his death, & my Uncle James Peale is only a feeble miniature painter." Thus Rembrandt Peale—whose family's letters are a key primary source for art historians—effectively omitted Archibald from the historical record. Rembrandt Peale, Philadelphia, to Henry Brevoort, Philadelphia, 30 December 1823, transcribed in Miller, ed., *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale*, 4:351. John Trumbull painted at least four life portraits of Washington from sittings in February, March, and July 1790, which he incorporated into his history paintings. See Irma B. Jaffe, *John Trumbull: Patriot-Artist of the American Revolution* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1975), 314-15.

interview with the president, he described his agitation and sense of awe, and Washington's efforts to dispel his nervousness.[59] The president introduced him to Martha Washington and her grandchildren, George Washington Parke Custis and Eleanor Custis, and invited him to stay for dinner, at which he met three of Washington's secretaries, William Jackson, Tobias Lear, and John Trumbull, who later became a close friend and colleague. Washington's own account of his first meeting with Archibald and subsequent portrait sittings does not survive.[60]

The miniature Archibald painted from life in watercolor on ivory, which is now in the collection of Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, depicts George Washington in three-quarter profile, facing toward the viewer's right, against an undefined blue background (Fig.1.3). His face is long and thin, the corners of his eyes sag, and his lips are set in a thin line. His hair is curled and lightly powdered. He is depicted wearing a plum- colored coat, waistcoat with yellow buttons, and a white shirt with a

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[59] For Archibald's account of the meeting and dinner, see Goddard, 2-3.

[60] Washington's diaries are missing for the dates 5 July to 31 December 1791; 1792 to 1793; and 1 January to 29 September 1794. See Donald Jackson and Dorothy Twohig, eds., *The Diaries of George Washington*, 6 vols. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1976-79).

ruffle. In portraits Washington is almost always depicted in a black coat and waistcoat, which he wore for all formal and public occasions. According to Carrie Barratt and Ellen Miles, of the non-military portraits made during Washington's presidency, only two others, Gilbert Stuart's Gibbs-Channing-Avery portrait from 1795 in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and Stuart's 1795 Washington in The Frick Collection, New York, show him in a coat other than black. In these examples he wears chestnut brown.[61]

Archibald probably began the miniature of Martha Washington shortly after painting the president (Fig.1.4). She is depicted in three-quarter profile seated on an upholstered chair against an undefined dark red background. Her cheeks are full, the skin beneath her chin sags, and her nose is thin. Archibald indicates his sitter's good humor in her closed lips, which turn up at the corners in a subtle smile, and in her eyes, which are lively and expressive. President Washington's demeanor, by comparison, appears somber and dull. Her dark gray hair is covered by a white gauze mobcap with a black ribbon, and she is wearing a dark red dress with black lace overlay. The white gauze neckline beneath the red fabric modestly covers her entire

[61] Barratt and Miles, 145.

neck and chest. The red in the background complements the color of her dress.

The two miniatures were intended for display together, with Martha facing slightly to the viewer's left, so the finished compositions would show the two figures turning toward each other. The miniatures were set in silver as brooches, and were meant to remain in the artist's family as "an heirloom and memorial of his veneration for the great and successful champion of American liberty."[62] After the artist's death they descended to his granddaughters, Mrs. S. M. Mygatt and Mrs. C. W. Darling, probably through their father, the artist's eldest son, Jacob.[63] In 1888 historian and Washington biographer Benson Lossing wrote General C. W. Darling of the miniatures: "One thing is settled; you have in your family Robertson's original

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[62] Quoted in Cleveland, 10.

[63] In his will Archibald Robertson expressed his desire "to divide all my books, Pictures, Portfolios and Statues into Setts [sic] or Lotts [sic], as soon as may be after my death, according to their Subjects and Sizes, and to allow each of my children, in succession according to Seniority, in turn to choose a Lott or Sett, until the whole are divided off." Archibald Robertson, Last Will and Testament, ADS, 20 October 1831, Archibald Robertson Papers, Rosenbach Museum and Library, Philadelphia. The portrait miniatures of General and Mrs. Washington must have been considered the most important works in Archibald's estate. His eldest son, Jacob Abramse Robertson—who had first choice of the objects—claimed the miniatures and they descended in his branch of the family.

painting from life of Gen. Washington and his wife."[64] From Mygatt and Darling, the miniatures descended to Otis Angelo Mygatt, then to his son Kenneth Mygatt, of Paris. Kenneth Mygatt sold them about 1955 to New York dealer John F. Fleming, who in 1956 sold them to Colonial Williamsburg.[65] On 3 February 1956 Fleming wrote to Williamsburg's president, Kenneth Chorley: "I think they are certainly two of the most important portraits and I feel that they now have the most appropriate repository possible."[66]

In 1799 J. B. Longacre published an engraving of Archibald's portrait miniature of Martha Washington (Fig.1.5) very similar to the miniature owned by Colonial

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[64] Benson John Lossing, Dover Plains, New York, to [General C. W. Darling], ALS, 19 May 1888, Archibald Robertson Papers, Rosenbach Museum and Library, Philadelphia.

[65] An invoice dated 4 February 1956 in file W-1956 of the John F. Fleming, Inc., Records (1955-1988) in the collection of the Grolier Club of New York records the sale price and describes the miniatures as: "Washington, George and Martha. Original miniature portraits by Archibald Robertson of General and Martha Washington done from life in December-January 1790-1791. Purchased from the great-great grandson of the artist. In the original silver oval frames and enclosed in the original case. Special price $35,000.00." The funds were donated anonymously. See also Ruth Davidson, "In the Museums. The Robertson Miniatures of George and Martha Washington," *Antiques* 71, no. 2 (1957): 166.

[66] John Fleming, New York, to Kenneth Chorley, New York, TLS, 3 February 1956, file W-1956, John F. Fleming, Inc., Records (1955-1988), Grolier Club, New York.

Williamsburg, but, according to the signature line, based on a version of the Martha Washington miniature that was owned by the sitter's grandson George Washington Parke Custis. In his 1859 volume *Mount Vernon and Its Associations* (New York), Lossing described the Custis miniature, "now at Arlington House" that "was first engraved for the *American Portrait Gallery*, about the year 1833."[67] He reproduced the engraving of Martha in both *Mount Vernon and Its Associations*, and in his 1859 *Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution* (New York), citing Custis's miniature the source.[68]

Archibald likely worked from his own 1791 miniature of George Washington to make the oil portrait for Buchan, which he completed by May 1792 (Fig.1.6). In the painting, Washington seems younger than his sixty-one years, and more robust than in the miniature. His demeanor is more

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[67] Benson J. Lossing, *Mount Vernon and Its Associations, Historical, Biographical, and Pictorial* (New York: W. A. Townsend, 1859), 260-61.

[68] Benson J. Lossing, *The Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution, or, Illustrations, by Pen and Pencil, of the History, Scenery, Relics, and Traditions of the War for Independence*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1859), 2:634. It is possible that Archibald made versions of the miniatures to present to George and Martha Washington, who subsequently gave them to Custis. The current location of the Custis miniatures is not known. Arlington House in McLean, Virginia, which is now part of the National Park System, has no record of them.

assertive and his features are more distinctive. His face is broader, his nose is thinner, and his eyes are less sunken and tired. His lips are set in a thin line. His hair is curled and lightly powdered. He is shown against an undefined gold background wearing the dark blue and buff uniform of a general, with brass buttons and gold epaulets, over a buff waistcoat and a white shirt with a ruffle.

> A comparison of Archibald's depiction of Washington's uniform with contemporary renderings of nearly identical military uniforms in portraits—such as Gilbert Stuart's 1793-94 General Horatio Gates (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)—indicates that Archibald used either an actual uniform or at least a portrait showing one, in an attempt to get the details right. In Archibald's rendering, however, much of the intricate detailing—especially in the epaulets, which should have been decorated with stars designating Washington's rank as general—is missing and, consequently, much of its elegance and monumentality are lost.

The finished portrait was engraved by R. Dudensing of New York on 1 May 1792, about which Washington wrote to Buchan:

> I should have had the honor of acknowledging the receipt of your letter on the 28th of June last, had I not concluded to defer doing it till I could announce to you the transmission of my portrait, which has just been finished by Mr. Robertson of New York, who has also undertaken to forward it. The manner of the execution of it does no discredit, I am told, to the artist, of whose skill favorable mention has been made to me. I was further induced to intrust the execution to Mr. Robertson, from his having informed me that he had drawn others for your Lordship and knew the size which best suited your collection.[69]

Shortly after May (the precise date is not known), Archibald gave the portrait to Colonel Tobias Lear, Washington's private secretary, to deliver to Buchan in Scotland. Buchan received the portrait at Dryburg Abbey in Melrose at the end of 1793, and is reported to have been well satisfied with it.[70]

By the early 1900s the Buchan portrait had disappeared. On 13 January 1914 the Earl of Buchan

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[69] Quoted in Jared Sparks, ed., *The Writings of George Washington; Being His Correspondence, Addresses, Messages, and Other Papers, Official and Private, Selected and Published from the Original Manuscripts; with a Life of the Author, Notes and Illustrations*, 12 vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1847), 10:229-30. Washington refers to the portrait and to the letter of 1 May 1792 in another letter, to the Earl of Buchan dated 20 June 1792. That letter, which is not included in any edition of Washington's writings, is in the collection of the Rosenbach Museum and Library, Philadelphia. For a description of Dudensing's engraving, see Charles Henry Hart, *Catalogue of the Engraved Portraits of Washington* (New York: The Grolier Club, 1904), 116.

[70] The reason for the delay in Buchan's receipt of the portrait is not known. Morgan and Fielding, 189.

published a letter in *The Scotsman* stating that "this portrait (Washington's) is not in my possession, nor, so far as I can ascertain, in that of any member of my family."[71] In their 1931 study of Washington portraits, John Hill Morgan and Mantle Fielding listed its location as "Portrait disappeared." In 1939, however, A. E. Haswell Miller, keeper of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, found the portrait, unrecognized as *Portrait of a Naval Officer*, in the Earl of Buchan family collections at Almondale House in Scotland. In 1951 the Earl of Buchan presented the restored painting to Sulgrave Manor, Washington's ancestral home in Northamptonshire, England.[72]

The Williamsburg miniature relates to Archibald's equestrian portrait of Washington in uniform, now in the collection of the Museum of the City of New York (Fig.1.7). The work, in watercolor on paper, is not dated, but it was almost certainly painted after the commissioned portrait and before it was exhibited—as *A Portrait, in Water Colors of General Washington at the Battle of Monmouth*—at

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[71] The article, which is quoted in ibid., 191, is cited there incorrectly. The original source is unknown.

[72] "Portrait of George Washington. Lord Buchan's Gift to Sulgrave Manor," *Times* (London), 8 August 1951; and "'Lost' Portrait of Washington, Lord Buchan's Gift to Sulgrave Manor," *Scotsman* (Edinburgh), 8 August 1951.

Longworth's Shakespeare Gallery in New York in 1802.[73] Washington appears seated on horseback, dressed in a military uniform of dark blue coat with red lapels, epaulets, and sash, and tall, shiny black boots. As in the miniature and commissioned oil, Washington looks fairly young and faces slightly to his right. His nose is thin, and, typical of all of Archibald's images of him, his countenance appears virtually expressionless. The proportions of the horse are strange—its body is huge, but its head is relatively small.

The composition recalls an engraving of Washington on horseback made by C. Shepherd, after a drawing by Alexander Campbell, published in London in 1775 (Fig.1.8). Shepherd was a well-known print seller, and his Washington engraving was circulated in great numbers in England, France, Germany, Holland, and Spain during the late 1770s. According to Morgan and Fielding, "these Shepherd prints alone furnished to Europe a representation of Washington's appearance, and for that reason alone they have considerable importance."[74] Robertson would almost certainly

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[73] Smithsonian Institution, "Pre-1877 Art Exhibition Catalogues Index" [resource online]; available at http://siris-artexhibition.si.edu/ipac20/ipac.jsp?profile=aeciall#focus; Internet; accessed 13 March 2006.

[74] Morgan and Fielding, 53.

have known the equestrian print by Shepherd, and could have used it as the basis for his composition.

Archibald was committed to advancing the fine arts in New York. On 5 March 1804 he patented a technique for preparing marble as a support for painting:[75]

> It has long been a desideratum in the Art of painting in Miniature, or with water colours, to find something to fix the colours upon which should possess the smoothness and durability of Ivory, but be of greater extent than an elephant's tooth. Mr. Archibald Robertson, a distinguished Artist of New-York, has discovered that certain hard and well polished Marbles possess this two-fold quality of receiving water-colours perfectly well, and of being made as long and as broad as the artist pleases. Conceiving this to be a valuable improvement in this polite art, Mr. Robertson has secured to himself the advantage to be derived from it, by a Patent under the United States.[76]

Archibald painted at least one portrait of Washington in watercolor on marble using this technique (Fig.1.9). The work, which is in the collection of the New-York Historical Society, measures 12 ¾ by 10 ½ inches, and can be dated to the period between 1804, when Archibald patented the technique, and 1817, when he exhibited it at the American

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[75] United States Patent Office, *List of Patents for Inventions and Designs, Issued by the United States, from 1790 to 1847: With the Patent Laws and Notes of Decisions of the Courts of the United States for the Same Period* (Washington, D.C.: J. & G. S. Gideon, 1847), 323.

[76] "Discovery in Painting," *National Intelligencer, and Washington Advertiser*, 14 March 1804.

Academy of the Fine Arts in New York as a "Portrait of George Washington, originally painted for the Earl of Buchan—on marble."[77] An inscription in Archibald's hand on the work's original wooden backing reads: "79 Liberty Strt. N. York / George Washington First President of the United States / Originally Painted by Archibald Robertson / From The Life Dec^{r} 1791 at Philadelphia."

Again, Washington is shown facing to the viewer's right in three-quarter profile. In this example, however, he is seated against a neoclassical background comprising a portico-like space with a drape, a column, and some sky with clouds. The setting is one found in the European tradition of state portraits. Archibald likely derived the specific details, particularly the column and rose-colored velvet drape, from Stuart's 1796 Landsdowne Portrait of Washington (National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian

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[77] American Academy of the Fine Arts, *Catalogue of Paintings, Busts, Drawings, Models, and Engravings. Exhibited by the American Academy of the Fine Arts, 1817. The Second Exhibition* (New York: T. and W. Mercein, 1817). The New-York Historical Society has determined that their painting on marble of George Washington is the one exhibited in the 1817 American Academy of the Fine Arts exhibition. New-York Historical Society, *Catalogue of American Portraits in the New-York Historical Society*, 2 vols. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1974), 2:863-64. Archibald exhibited the portrait at the American Academy again in 1826, 1827, and 1828. Mary Bartlett Cowdrey, *American Academy of Fine Arts and American Art-Union*, 2 vols. (New York: New-York Historical Society, 1953), 2:307-8.

Institution, Washington, D.C.), which was instantly the most famous and most frequently copied representation of Washington. In the New-York Historical Society portrait, Washington's face is rounder than in Archibald's previous depictions. His nose is thin, the corners of his eyes sag, and his lips are set in a thin line. His hair is tightly curled and heavily powdered. He is depicted wearing a brown jacket and waistcoat with brown buttons, and a white shirt with a ruffle.

Archibald presented this portrait to the American Academy of the Fine Arts when he was elected Academician in 1826. In an accompanying letter to the Academy's president John Trumbull, Archibald laid claim to an intimate association with Washington by emphasizing that he painted him in private sittings, when he was dressed not in his ceremonial black coat but "in the Citizens dress" in which the artist "was accustomed to see him." A consummate patriot, Washington's clothing was "of American manufacture." Archibald believed the picture more valuable as an historical artifact than as a work of art. He continued:

> I could easily have presented a picture in which I think I might have displayed more of acquaintance with the Art—But, the subject of an original Portrait of the great Father of our Country was paramount; and I wished to deposit this peculiarly interesting Picture

> to myself, where it may perhaps be of more comparative value and utility as a Public Document, at some future day, than elsewhere—[78]

At some point, likely following the American Academy's demise in 1842, the marble portrait was returned to Archibald's widow. Upon her death in 1865, she bequeathed it to her son Anthony Lispenard Robertson, and at his death in 1868 it descended to the Archibald's youngest daughter Mrs. W. D. Craft.[79] In her will, dated 18 May 1885, it was bequeathed to a great nephew, Tarrant Putnam, Esq., of New York City, whose widow presented it to Dr. John E. Stillwell, who gave it to the New-York Historical Society.[80]

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[78] Archibald Robertson, New York, to John Trumbull, New York, ALS, 20 January 1826, American Academy of the Fine Arts Papers, New-York Historical Society, New York (hereafter AAFA-NYHS).

[79] According to Goddard, when the work was in Mrs. Craft's possession it was severely damaged by one of her stepdaughters: "In such a fit this girl secreted a mallet, and rising in the night, undertook to destroy every work of art she could reach . . . . she struck this marble portrait with the mallet and cracked it in seventeen places. Happily, not one blemish crossed the features." The work was repaired shortly after by a restorer at Tiffany and Company in New York. Goddard, 4-5.

[80] There are two additional—and apparently incorrect—accounts of how the marble portrait of Washington eventually came into possession of the New-York Historical Society. Morgan and Fielding state that Mrs. W. D. Craft willed it to her grandnephew, Tarrant Putnam, whose widow presented it to Dr. Stillwell, who gave it to the Society. Morgan and Fielding, 192. Putnam argued that Craft—in her will dated 18 May 1885—gave the portrait to the Society, but the gift was legally revoked on 25 January 1889 and the

Sources including exhibition records and catalogues of Washington portraits indicate that Archibald likely made several additional representations of Washington, which are now unlocated. In his 1932 *Portraits of Washington*, Gustavus Eisen attributes to Archibald two small paintings on marble, *The William Lanier Washington* and *The Williamson Marble*.[81] There is no current public record of either of these works. Another unlocated portrait of Washington by Archibald is his *Apotheosis of Washington*, which was exhibited in the 1816 exhibition of the American Academy of the Fine Arts in New York.[82]

Painting a portrait of George Washington was one of the most certain ways for a portrait painter in the early republic to achieve notice. Archibald's portraits of the president were well received and helped to establish his reputation as a miniaturist in New York City. Through his social connections, and his business of teaching drawing and painting to the children of New York's refined upper class at the Columbian Academy, Archibald received a steady

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portrait went to Putnam instead. Tarrant Putnam, "Archibald Robertson's Portrait of Washington," *New York Genealogical and Biographical Record* (1920): 345.

[81] Gustavus A. Eisen, *Portraits of Washington*, 3 vols. (New York: Robert Hamilton & Associates, 1932), 2:483-85.

[82] Cowdrey, 2:307.

stream of portrait commissions. Among his subjects were wealthy merchant Gerard De Peyster, revolutionary leader and secretary of the treasury Alexander Hamilton (Fig.1.10), leading Federalist William Loughton Smith, and political and mercantile leader Major General Pierre Van Cortlandt (Fig.1.11). He also painted members of his family, and made several self-portraits.

Most of the known miniatures by Archibald were painted before 1805. In the "Treatise on Miniature Painting" he wrote for his brother, Andrew, in 1800, he outlined his technique in painstaking detail, emphasizing overall "the universal rule that the fewer colors you use the better—the greater simplicity the better . . . . stick to simplicity, which is the only wonder worked."[83] Archibald frequently painted his subjects with elongated heads and thin, sharp noses. Their demeanors are generally reserved, with unsmiling mouths though often with expressive eyes. Art historian Dale T. Johnson has noted that Archibald's works are similar in style to those of John Ramage, New York's leading miniaturist during and after the Revolution.[84] Like Ramage, Archibald worked in a clear, linear style and built

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[83] Archibald Robertson, "Treatise on Miniature Painting," 25 September 1800, transcribed in E. Robertson, 22.

[84] Johnson, 185.

up his forms through a series of fine hatchings. He explained to Andrew: "*In working shades* of any kind I always use straight strokes, unless something very extraordinary demands a curved or waved line—such as in hair."[85] He painted his faces with great detail, but advised a more general treatment for costumes:

> Put on with clean spirited strokes, without hammering at, or torturing to make it better, for here, everything depends, almost, on the *spirit* of the stroke . . . . In white drapery, you can work the shades in a proper wash, as the linen requires no dark shades—but should it require, finish it only as background *not highly—as the face should be, to the highest degree possible*.[86]

His earlier works are usually oval in format and small in size. Later works, such as the marble George Washington in the New-York Historical Society, are often larger and not as carefully rendered. Archibald also made portraits for engravings, which included a representation of the Reverend John M. Mason that was engraved and sold by John Dixey in August 1804,[87] and a portrait of Alexander Hamilton engraved by William Rollinson and published in 1802

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[85] Archibald Robertson, "Treatise on Miniature Painting," 31.

[86] Ibid., 29.

[87] "Rev. John M. Mason," *New-York Evening Post*, 8 August 1804.

(Fig.1.10).[88] It is not known whether Hamilton sat for his portrait, or whether Archibald based the print on a work by another artist. By 1818 he had made a miniature of Hamilton (unlocated), which he exhibited that year at the American Academy of the Fine Arts.[89]

Typical of Archibald's finest late-eighteenth-century miniatures is his *Major General Pierre Van Cortlandt* of about 1795 currently in The Metropolitan Museum of Art (Fig.1.11). Pierre Van Cortlandt (1762–1848), whose name is engraved on the back of the miniature's rose gold case, was a major general in the New York State Militia. He was the son of Lieutenant-Governor Pierre Van Cortlandt, who accompanied George Washington on his triumphal entry into New York in November 1783. In 1801, the Pierre Van Cortlandt who is the subject of this miniature married Catharine Clinton, daughter of New York Governor George Clinton. He also represented Westchester County in Congress in 1811–12, and later became president of the Westchester County Bank.

Like most of Archibald's portrait subjects, Van Cortlandt is depicted with a long, thin face and angular

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[88] "Be It Remembered," *New-York Evening Post*, 29 August 1804.

[89] Cowdrey, 2:307.

features. His blue eyes are lively, and his closed lips turn up in the corners in a slight smile. His cheeks are flushed, and a fine shadow appears on his chin. His hair is powdered and tied back with a black ribbon that appears over his right shoulder. He wears a black coat with gold buttons; white highlights on his shoulder and collar suggest the fabric may be velvet. His delicately rendered waistcoat is embellished with a blue, white, and black embroidered border and a pattern of red fleurs-de-lis. Contrary to the artist's own advice, the white linen of his shirt is likewise rendered in fine detail with elaborate gray shadowing. Van Cortlandt appears in three-quarter profile, turned slightly to face the viewer's right. The background is painted in shades of blue that become increasingly gray at the edge of the ivory. The work shows the artist at the apex of his skills as a portraitist and a draftsman.

In addition to painting portraits, Archibald executed a number of drawings and watercolor views of New York City and other local subjects. Among the finest are three scenes of lower Manhattan from about 1798, now in the collection of the New-York Historical Society. The works, all in graphite, ink, and watercolor on paper, demonstrate his skill in rendering architectural details. They also reflect

his adherence to the writings of Reverend William Gilpin, the eighteenth-century English aesthetician who popularized the concept of the picturesque in his illustrated tours through England, Scotland, and Wales.

Federal Hall, New York City (Fig.1.12) depicts a view facing north up Wall Street toward Trinity Church. New York's City Hall, which was refurbished in 1788–89 from plans prepared by Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant for the use of the new federal government, stands at the corner of Wall and Nassau Streets. The Congress of the United States met there from March 1789 to August 1790, when the federal capital was moved from New York to Philadelphia, and it was the site of Washington's inauguration on 30 April 1798.

Archibald indicated the democratic nature of the building by emphasizing a variety of activities happening around its periphery. A group of men in the left foreground are engaged in a construction job, conveying a sense of growth and opportunity in the city. Standing under the tree across the street is an impressive carriage, possibly the conveyance of the fashionable women who stroll down the middle of the street. Another woman, probably a domestic worker, walking a baby and a dog, turns her head to survey the scene. Archibald used the figures to enhance the picturesque nature of the city street, exemplifying

Gilpin's suggestion that outdoor scenes are more picturesque when they include the human figure. The figures are also suggestive of democracy, as manual laborers, fashionable women, and a nanny with her charge all go about their business in view of this important symbol of the new nation.

A related work in the collection of the New-York Historical Society is *Saint Paul's Chapel and Brick Presbyterian Church, New York City*, also from about 1798 (Fig.1.13). At right is St. Paul's, a chapel of Trinity Church on Broadway and Fulton Street in the Georgian style, said to be designed by Thomas McBean, and completed in 1766. McBean had studied under London architect James Gibbs, the most eminent disciple of renowned English architect Christopher Wren, and his design for St. Paul's was inspired by English church architecture. The building's dominant features—temple-front portico, Ionic columns, pediment, and decorated tower—gave visual expression to the desire for order, balance, and harmony that denoted the genteel way of life enjoyed by Trinity Church's refined parishioners.[90] George Washington walked to St. Paul's

[90] For an analysis of the status of Trinity Church and St. Paul's Chapel in eighteenth-century New York society, see Burrows and Wallace, 176-77.

Chapel to pray after his inauguration as president in 1789; his customary pew in the north aisle remains a popular tourist attraction. In the center of the print facing Beekman Street is the Brick Presbyterian Church, erected in 1766-68 for the First Presbyterian Church, and known by that name until 1809. The Brick Presbyterian Church on Beekman Street was demolished in 1856.[91] In 1810 the First Presbyterian Church moved to Fifth Avenue and 37th Street, and in 1937 moved to its current location at Park Avenue and 85th Street.

Archibald rendered the scene carefully, highlighting his skill as a draftsman. He delineated the iron railings outside of the townhouse at left in the foreground, each of the posts in all of the fences, and even individual stones in the pediment of the Brick Presbyterian Church and in the façade of St. Paul's. As in his *Federal Hall*, Archibald populated this city view with several figures arranged in distinct groupings: a fashionable couple strolling at center, a mixed group talking in the foreground, and, at

[91] David Meerse, "Brick Presbyterian Church," in Kenneth T. Jackson, ed., *The Encyclopedia of New York City* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 137.

left, two children walking away from the viewer. A horse-drawn cart proceeds at right.[92]

The figures in *Northeast Corner of Wall and William Streets, New York City* (Fig.1.14) are primarily men conducting business in the three buildings depicted at center: the Bank of New York, established in 1784, still occupies the same site at the corner of William Street and is the oldest bank in the city; the New York Insurance Company; and the Branch Bank of the United States. In 1798, Wall Street contained residences as well as businesses and was New York's social center. In this depiction the artist focused less on the neighborhood's people than on its buildings, rendering architectural elements in meticulous detail.[93] Archibald, whose father was an architect, learned the fundamentals of architectural draftsmanship in Scotland. [94] At the Columbian Academy he offered instruction

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[92] *Saint Paul's Chapel and Brick Presbyterian Church, New York City* was reproduced as an engraving in the 1856 *Manual of the Common Council of New York*, opp. p. 109, where the drawing is erroneously ascribed to David Grim. I. N. Phelps Stokes, *The Iconography of Manhattan Island, 1498-1909*, 6 vols. (New York: Robert H. Dodd, 1918), 1:458.

[93] *Northeast Corner of Wall and William Streets, New York City* was reproduced as an engraving in the 1866 *Manual of the Common Council of New York*, p. 549. Stokes, 1:458.

[94] Goddard wrote that Archibald studied architecture with his father. Goddard, 6. He also likely learned draftsmanship and perspective at the Trustees' Academy.

in architecture as soon as the school opened, in October 1791.[95] On 20 February 1802 the Common Council of New York announced a competition to design a new courthouse and city hall. A total of twenty-six plans were submitted, including one by Archibald, which has not survived.[96]

Archibald's commitment to promoting the fine arts intensified during his second decade in New York. In 1802 he published a drawing book, *Elements of the Graphic Arts*, in which he addressed the need for a museum or gallery in New York where American artists could improve and exhibit their own works. He protested:

> We have no public exhibitions unless the decorations of the greater number of the saloons, and drawing rooms of most of those of the first rank in this and the neighboring states, executed by their particular friends or domestic relations, can be called a public exhibition; and indeed it could not be expected, that those who exercise this art only for the simple pleasure derived from it, would be prevailed upon to exhibit their works, as professional artists in Europe are accustomed to do; but we may look towards the period, when the efforts of genius will be more publicly brought forward for the gratification of those, who take pleasure in admiring one of the most instructive and delightful of the fine arts.[97]

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[95] "Archibald Robertson, Limner," *Daily Advertiser*, 11 October 1791.

[96] Damie Stillman, "New York City Hall: Competition and Execution," *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 23, no. 3 (1964): 129.

[97] Archibald Robertson, *Elements of the Graphic Arts* (New York: David Longworth, 1802), 16.

Shortly after penning his rallying call, Archibald joined friends Robert R. Livingston and John Trumbull, among others, as a founding member of the American Academy of the Fine Arts. Conceived of by Livingston as a repository of plaster casts taken from antique sculptures in the Louvre, the academy was intended to develop the aesthetic taste of artists and the public alike. Archibald was actively involved in the American Academy until the end of his life. He was elected Academician on 31 December 1816. On 5 May 1817 he was elected officer, a position he held until 14 January 1834.[98] He exhibited there annually from 1816 to 1820, and again from 1926 to 1828.[99]

Archibald achieved the pinnacle of his career when he was placed in charge of the department of the fine arts in connection with the celebration of the opening in 1825 of the Erie Canal, which connected Lake Erie with the Atlantic Ocean. It is impossible to overstate the excitement generated by this triumph of eight years of human labor. Extensive preparations were made for the grand fête held on

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[98] "Appendix A: Members of the American Academy of the Fine Arts," in Carrie Rebora, "The American Academy of the Fine Arts, New York 1802-1842" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1990).

[99] Cowdrey, 2: 307-8. For more on Archibald's role in the history of the American Academy, see chapter 5 of this dissertation.

26 October 1825 to celebrate the arrival of the first canal boat, which was to sail from Buffalo to New York. All of the city's most prominent men were involved in the program, including mayor Philip Hone and governor DeWitt Clinton. Charles Rhind, an Aberdeen native and the Robertsons' cousin, occupied the position of "Admiral of the Day."

In his position as chairman of the Department of Fine Arts, Archibald oversaw the design and production of all works of art related to the event, including the invitation card, which was designed and engraved by Asher B. Durand, and a set of commemorative lithographs depicting the fleet of ships that would proceed from Buffalo to New York. Archibald's personal contributions to this set were a lithograph titled *A View of the Fleet Preparing to Form in Line* (Fig.1.15) and two maps, one showing the course of the canal and one showing the canal's connection with other North American waterways.

The report Archibald submitted to Richard Riker, the chairman of the Committee of the Erie Canal Corporation, was published in Cadwallader D. Colden's *Memoir . . . Presented to the Mayor of the City, at the Celebration of the Completion of the New York Canals*, which also included engravings and lithograph illustrations made under

Archibald's supervision.[100] The report is significant in the history of American printmaking because it is one of the earliest American publications to rely extensively on lithography for illustrations. In his report published in Colden's *Memoir*, Archibald included a history of the technique, which, he wrote, "was the result of a regular and skillful series of well-planned experiments by Mr. Alois Senenfelder, of Munich, the capital of Bavaria" six or eight years earlier.[101] Archibald traced the transmission of lithography to America, confidently concluding that "every candid eye, which views these very interesting first essays of the art executed in America, but will allow, that neither Germany, France, or England, could show equal specimens executed during the first six months after its introduction into these countries."[102] The Corporation of New York, as a tribute of respect to the king and people of

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[100] Cadwallader D. Colden, *Memoir, Prepared at the Request of a Committee of the Common Council of the City of New York, and Presented to the Mayor of the City, at the Celebration of the Completion of the New York Canals* (New York: Printed by order of the corporation of New York, 1825). The *Memoir* is also available online courtesy of the University of Rochester, at http://www.history.Rochester.edu/canal; Internet; accessed 4 May 2005.

[101] Archibald's "Department of Fine Arts Report" appears in Colden, 343.

[102] Ibid., 351.

Bavaria—the birthplace of lithography—sent the king a copy of the *Memoir*. The king accepted the gift and sent to the corporation "a splendid present of specimens of that art."[103] Archibald's enthusiastic promotion of the art of lithography in America through this widely distributed publication is an important aspect of his legacy.

Archibald's work for the Erie Canal celebration marked the culmination of his career as an artist. According to his autobiographical manuscript he gave up painting in the early 1820s to devote himself thoroughly to his lifelong interest in literature. He spent the last decade of his life, during which he was nearly blind, in retirement at his home in New York.[104]

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[103] Gloria Gilda Deák, *Picturing America, 1497-1899: Prints, Maps, and Drawings Bearing on the New World Discoveries and on the Development of the Territory That Is Now the United States*, 2 vols. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), 1:231.

[104] *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928-36) (hereafter *DAB*), s.v. "Robertson, Archibald."

CHAPTER TWO

ALEXANDER ROBERTSON: LIFE AND WORK

The goal of this chapter is to examine the central role Alexander Robertson played in the development of early- nineteenth-century American landscape painting. Historically scholars have documented Archibald's biography more thoroughly than that of Alexander because he is generally considered the more influential of the two brothers. Archibald is the one who had received the invitation to New York to open the city's first art school, had met and painted George Washington, which established him as among the most significant painters of his period, and, perhaps most important, had left an autobiographical manuscript for later historians to build on.

Most historians have considered Alexander as noteworthy for little more than being a follower of Archibald—an accessory to his brother's success rather than an influential artist and educator in his own right. None of Alexander's writings survive, and far fewer of the works of art known to have been painted by the Robertsons have been attributed to him. This is the first extended study of his life and work.

In his capacity as both an artist and a teacher, Alexander played a key role in disseminating the picturesque mode of landscape painting in New York. He made sketches of sites in New Jersey and along the Hudson River, and in 1799 ventured as far as Canada to paint the natural scenery. This chapter incorporates a discussion of several examples of his landscapes, most of which were made in watercolor and ink on paper. Considerable attention is given to his "Picturesque American Landscapes," an important series of four prints made from his drawings in 1800 and 1802 by the renowned London engraver Francis Jukes. Alexander also painted portrait miniatures. Two examples in the collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum are considered at the end of the chapter.

Alexander Robertson was born in Aberdeen, Scotland, on 13 May 1772.[1] He was the second son, after Archibald, of William and Jean Ross Robertson. It has long been held that Alexander studied at King's College, Aberdeen, before coming to America, although an examination of university records reveals no evidence of his having attended the

[1] Different sources give Alexander's birth as 1768 and 1772. On the basis of his obituary in the New York *American* on 27 May 1841, which states that died "in the 70th year of his age," 1772 is correct.

school.[2] It can be assumed, however, that reports of Alexander studying drawing and painting with Archibald in Aberdeen are true.[3] In the summer of 1792 Alexander went to London where he reportedly spent five months studying miniature painting at the Royal Academy with Samuel Shelley (1750–1808).[4] Shelley, who was born in London and spent his career there, specialized in portrait miniatures and also painted allegorical subjects.[5] He exhibited at the Royal Academy almost every year from 1774 to 1804, but there is no evidence that he was employed there as in instructor.[6]

It is impossible to confirm the length of Alexander's stay in London or the precise nature of his activities there. It is almost certain that he did not officially enroll in any course at the Royal Academy. Archival research reveals no record of Alexander in the Registers of

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[2] Anderson, ed., *Roll of Alumni in Arts of the University and King's College, 1596-1860*; idem, *Officers and Graduates of University & King's College, Aberdeen MVD-MDCCCLX*. Listings for "Alexander Robertson" do appear in *Roll of Alumni* for the years 1598, 1649, 1662, 1669, 1671, 1699, 1706, 1711, 1712, 1720, 1760, 1776, and 1781—all too early to refer to the Alexander Robertson under discussion.

[3] Goddard, 1.

[4] Dunlap, *History*, 1:425.

[5] Bénézit, 12:741-42.

[6] Graves, 7:103-6.

the Royal Academy of Schools or in the record of contributors to the Royal Academy's exhibitions.[7]

In the winter of 1792 Archibald invited Alexander to come to New York to assist at the Columbian Academy. Alexander left Aberdeen in May,[8] embarked on a ship at Liverpool,[9] and arrived in New York by October 1792. In a newspaper advertisement printed on his arrival, the brothers characteristically overstated Alexander's training, claiming he had "lately arrived from the Royal Academy of painting in London, where he has been under the tuition of the most celebrated artists."[10] Alexander taught with Archibald at the Columbian Academy of Painting until 1802, when a personal disagreement prompted the dissolution of their partnership and Alexander left to establish his own school, the Academy of Painting and Drawing. The chronologies of the schools, and the teaching practices in use there, are discussed in chapter 4 of this dissertation.

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[7] A letter from Elizabeth King, Research Assistant, Royal Academy of Arts, London, to the author, New York, 20 May 2005, confirms that Alexander was not enrolled at the Royal Academy. For confirmation that Alexander did not contribute to the Academy's exhibitions, see Graves, 6.

[8] E. Robertson, 3.

[9] Dunlap, *History*, 1:425.

[10] "Painting and Drawing at the Columbian Academy," *Daily Advertiser*, 8 October 1792.

Alexander became an influential teacher and artist who was committed to promoting the arts in New York. In 1817 he was elected to membership in the American Academy of the Fine Arts. He served as the academy's secretary from 1817 to 1825 and as keeper from 1820 to 1835. He exhibited at the academy annually from 1816 to 1821, and again in 1824, 1826 to 1827, and 1833. From 1820 to 1831, he operated his Academy of Drawing and Painting in the space occupied by the American Academy, using their collection of paintings, sculpture, and prints as instructional tools.

Alexander played a key role in disseminating the picturesque mode of landscape painting in America. Unlike Archibald, who painted primarily portraits, Alexander focused on depicting American scenery. He made landscapes in New York and its environs, and with Archibald took frequent sketching trips north along the Hudson River, where he recorded views of hills, towns, and great estates. Typical of sketches he made on these trips are his views of *Clermont, Seat of Mrs. Livingston* (Fig.2.1) and *Poughkeepsie* (Fig.2.2), both made in September 1796 and now in the collection of the New-York Historical Society. In these works Alexander imposed precise renderings of buildings onto more generalized landscapes.

In 1799 he made a sketching trip "to the Lakes and Canada" with an unidentified friend of his brother Andrew from London.[11] At the American Academy in 1816 he exhibited four paintings of Niagara Falls: *Niagara. The rapids, taken from near the Table Rock, looking south*; *The Falls of Niagara, as seen from the American side*; *The Rapids of Niagara, as seen from near Chippawa, looking north*; and *The Falls of Niagara, as seen from below the Table Rock* (all unlocated).[12] In 1990 a painting attributed to Alexander, an oil on canvas titled *View of Niagara Falls with Travellers and Indian Guides* (private collection), was sold at auction in Canada.[13] Five years earlier the same canvas had been exhibited by the Corcoran Gallery as the work of an unidentified artist, and, in fact, there is little to support the earlier attribution to the work to Alexander, as it is much more sophisticated than other examples from his known oeuvre. [14]

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[11] E. Robertson, 55.

[12] Cowdrey, 2:305.

[13] Joyner Canadian Fine Art, *Canadian Fine Art Auction*, sale cat., 20 November 1990, lot 129, illustrated.

[14] The canvas was exhibited in the Corcoran Gallery of Art's 1985 exhibition "Niagara: Two Centuries of Changing Attitudes, 1697–1901." It appears as *View of Niagara Falls*, artist unidentified, in Jeremy Elwell Adamson, *Niagara: Two*

Alexander's landscape views represent artistic conventions derived from the style and writings of William Gilpin, which were disseminated by artists like Alexander in America during the last decades of the eighteenth century. Gilpin made a distinction between the appreciation of real scenery and its pictorial potential. He maintained that a landscape as found in nature was rarely suitable for depiction; rather, it needed to be manipulated into a satisfactory composition that balanced the untamed with the cultivated, the rough with the smooth. Consistent with Gilpin's philosophy, Alexander almost always inhabited his landscapes with figures, adding narrative interest and, more importantly, informing the viewer that the American landscape was a civilized place.

Alexander rendered natural forms according to the conventions taught at the Columbian and, after 1802, at his own Academy of Painting and Drawing. The system is outlined in Archibald's 1802 drawing book *Elements of the Graphic Arts* (Fig.4.6), which is examined in chapter 4 of this dissertation. Alexander depicted tree foliage with round, looping outlines. He achieved volume and shadow in the fore- and middle-ground with strong diagonal patterns. He

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Centuries of Changing Attitudes, 1697-1901 (Washington, D.C.: Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1985), 24, 156, no. 171.

indicated the most distant forms by drawing faint outlines. His landscapes are characterized by generalized views of nature, not close observations of its details. His style does not seem to have developed much over the course of his career for there is little to distinguish his earlier works from later examples.

About 1800 Alexander executed the most influential works of his career, a series of four landscape views that were reproduced in aquatint by the English engraver Francis Jukes in London. Entitled "Picturesque American Landscapes," the scenes included *New York from Hobuck Ferry House New Jersey* (Fig.2.3), *Mount Vernon in Virginia the Seat of the Late Lieut. General George Washington Commander in Chief of the Armies of the United States* (Fig.2.4), *Passaic Falls in the State of New Jersey* (Fig.2.5), and *Hudsons River from Chambers Creek Looking Thro' the High Lands* (Fig.2.6). The prints were published in London and New York in two pairs. *New York from Hobuck* and *Mount Vernon* were issued on 31 March 1800; *Passaic Falls* and *Hudsons River* were issued on 1 January 1802. The I. N. Phelps Stokes Collection at the New York Public Library holds one of the few complete sets of the four Robertson-Jukes prints.

Francis Jukes gained prominence in London as perhaps the leading aquatint etcher of his time. Aquatint, a method of etching tone that creates an effect similar to a wash drawing, was established in the seventeenth century and was popularized in England about 1775 by the landscape prints of Paul Sandby. Jukes based most of his aquatint plates on compositions by notable painters; he was also William Gilpin's publisher.

The collaboration of Alexander Robertson and Francis Jukes on "Picturesque American Landscapes" reflects widespread interest on behalf of the American public in local scenery. According to contemporary newspaper advertisements, New Yorkers could purchase works from the "Picturesque American Landscapes" "at the different print shops" and at Alexander's drawing academy.[15] Art historian Edward Nygren wrote of the late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century taste for landscape: "What was sought and admired in America as well as England was the varied prospect, the mixture of wild and improved nature which gave the promise of progress and bore the trace of civilization. Such landscapes were close at hand."[16] Serial

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[15] "Academy of Painting & Drawing," *Morning Chronicle*, 1 October 1802.

[16] Nygren, 32, 37.

views of landscapes had long been a part of the European artistic tradition. In America, artists who were contemporaries of the Robertsons—George Beck, William Birch, and William Winstanley, among others—proposed and executed series similar to the "Picturesque American Landscapes" and, beginning in 1787, various American magazines published local landscapes engraved after their drawings.[17]

A preliminary drawing of the Robertson-Jukes view from Hobuck (Hoboken) is in The Metropolitan Museum of Art (Fig.2.7). Made in 1796, *New York from Hobuck* shows the 1772 Van Boskerck farmhouse in the middle distance at left, a docked two-masted ship at the center of the composition, and a remote but highly detailed topographical view of New York City in the distance. A coach or covered wagon stands in front of the house, and two small figures appear at the end of the dock at center.

The Von Boskerck family probably emigrated from Denmark or Holland in the early eighteenth century to Hoboken, where they reportedly maintained ownership of several ferry lines to Manhattan.[18] The two ships at the

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[17] James Thomas Flexner, *American Painting: The Light of Distant Skies 1760-1835* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1954), 116.

center of the composition hint at the source of the family's wealth, which the 1772 date on the house suggests was fairly recently acquired. New York historian I. N. Phelps Stokes suggested that the Van Boskerck farmhouse was probably the first summer home of the artist after his arrival from Scotland,[19] but there is no evidence to support this claim.

The work exemplifies the formulaic method of drawing taught at the Robertsons' Columbian Academy of Painting. The tree foliage, for instance, is highly stylized and indicated generally by round, looping outlines. Volume and shadow are rendered by a series of crosshatched lines. The approach resulted in a dichotomy between the unspecific, natural forms scattered across a generic landscape in the fore- and middle-ground, and the precisely rendered Van Boskerck farmhouse and topographically accurate view of the growing city in the distance. The insertion of two small figures on the dock at the center of the composition

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[18] Van Boskerck Letters (1), Bergen County, New Jersey, provided by USGenWeb Archives [resource online]; available at http://ftp.rootsweb.com/pub/usgenweb/nj/bergen/bios/vanbltr1.txt; Internet; accessed 2 December 2005.

[19] Stokes, 1:459. See also I. N. Phelps Stokes and Daniel C. Haskell, *American Historical Prints: Early American Views of American Cities, Etc. From the Phelps Stokes and Other Collections* (New York: The New York Public Library, 1932), 74.

exemplifies Gilpin's suggestion that landscapes are more interesting when they include the human figure. In this scene the figures also introduce the theme of enterprise and labor, as the two men tend to the boat preparing for its journey across the river to New York. Alexander manipulated found nature to create a picturesque scene comprising both the dense metropolis of Manhattan, and the bucolic, pastoral land surrounding the Van Boskerck's home.

On 31 March 1800, Francis Jukes in London and Alexander Robertson in New York simultaneously issued the print version of *New York from Hobuck Ferry House, New Jersey* (Fig.2.3), which differs from the drawing in several respects. In the print, the trees in the foreground are denser and have replaced the small patch of grass and flowers at lower right in the drawing. The house no longer bears the date 1772, and the coach or covered wagon has disappeared. There are more boats on the water, including a large tri-masted vessel flying the American flag from its stern. There are also two groups of figures in addition to the original group on the dock. In the foreground at left, a standing man points to the tree while his seated companion looks forward across the river. In the middle-ground at right, two men, one seated and one standing, survey the scene on the water. The result is increased

contrast between nature in the foreground and the growing metropolis in the distance. The figures add interest to the composition by provoking narrative associations.

The second print issued in the "Picturesque American Landscapes" series, *Mount Vernon in Virginia* (Fig.2.4), reflects two prevailing emotions on behalf of the American public at the time: reverence for the estate's owner, George Washington, who had died in 1799; and pride in American progress and cultural refinement as reflected in the house's architecture and surrounding landscape. Thomas Birch, William Goombridge, Francis Guy, and Archibald and Alexander Robertson were among numerous artists of their generation to depict impressive estates in Maryland, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. Nygren wrote:

> Frequently placed on elevated sites, the villas overlooked the lands of their owners. With their rolling lawns and natural settings, these estates of free men in a free society spoke to the success of the American experiment: commodious and tasteful, they were, by English standards, modest in scale as befitted the citizenry of a temperate republic.[20]

A drawing by Alexander of Clermont, the Livingston family estate on the Hudson River in New York, is in the collection of the New-York Historical Society (Fig.2.1). Dated 1796, both the orientation of the house on the estate and this view of it follow familiar conventions. The

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[20] Nygren, 25.

Livingston family had owned the land on which Clermont is situated since 1686, when Robert Livingston (1654–1728), who had emigrated to the New World from Scotland, received a crown grant from King James II for Livingston Manor. The manor comprised 160,000 acres stretching from the Hudson River to what is today the western boundary of Massachusetts, including ten miles of riverfront. Clermont, originally a 13,000-acre estate at the extreme southwest corner of the manor, was Robert Livingston's gift to his son, Robert (1688–1775), who became known as Robert "of Clermont."[21]

Robert of Clermont built the original house in about 1750 on the east bank of the Hudson River in what is now Germantown, in Columbia County, New York. In October 1777 the British, led by Sir John Vaughn, burned the house, as the Livingstons were well-known patriots. It was rebuilt in 1778–1781 under the supervision of Margaret Beekman Livingston (1724–1800), daughter-in-law of Robert of Clermont and mother of the Robertsons' patron Robert R. Livingston.[22]

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[21] For a brief account of the history of the house in the context of the development of the Hudson River Valley, see Gregory Long, *Historic Houses of the Hudson River Valley: 1663–1915* (New York: Rizzoli; Albany, N.Y.: Preservation League of New York State, 2004), 77-83.

Clermont—a four-square, rectangular house, with a symmetrical façade of five bays, a low-pitched roof, and a roof balustrade—was built in the Georgian style, which was extremely popular among the American elite living along the coast in the eighteenth century. Based on English design during the reigns of George I (1714-1727), George II (1727-1760), and George III (1760-1820), the Georgian style in America symbolized cultural awareness and refinement.[23] Alexander, who frequently traveled along the Hudson River seeking subjects for his landscapes, likely visited Clermont with Robert R. Livingston, who was an important supporter of him and Archibald. He made at least two other drawings of the Livingston estate, *Mrs. Livingston's Clermont*, dated 6 September 1796 (Fig.2.8), and *On the Hudson River from Clermont* (Fig.2.9), dated 19 September 1798. Unlike the New-York Historical Society's drawing, these small sketches focus on the landscape rather than the house itself.

The Historical Society's view of the estate highlights Alexander's skills in both landscape drawing and in

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[22] For the reconstruction of Clermont in the context of the Livingston family's role in the Revolution, see Clare Brandt, *An American Aristocracy: The Livingstons* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1986), 124-26.

[23] Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), 100-138.

architectural drawing and perspective. The house, in precise detail at left, overlooks a more generalized view of the lawns, the Hudson River, and the Catskill Mountains in the distance. The two trees at right balance and frame the composition. Alexander drew the landscape using his typical vocabulary of drawing strokes: tree foliage in round, looping outlines; volume and shadow in the fore- and middle-ground achieved with a strong zigzag pattern; and the most distant forms indicated with a very light outline. The result, while true to the scene, presented a generalized view of nature in keeping with eighteenth-century sensibilities.

Among the Robertsons' finest watercolors is a view of the New Jersey estate of Robert R. Livingston's brother-in-law, Colonel John Stevens III (1749–1838). Painted in 1808 by Archibald or Alexander, *Hobuck* (Fig.2.10) depicts the house built by Stevens on Hobuck Island in 1784. Known as the "Stevens Villa," it was one of the most noted homes of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Like Clermont, the Stevens Villa was built in the Georgian style to convey a sense of refinement and awareness of European culture. Situated above a rolling lawn with a view across the river to New York City, the estate reflected the success of its owner.

The Robertsons probably met John Stevens through Livingston, who in 1770 married Stevens's sister, Mary. Though the watercolor's owner, the New Jersey Historical Society, attributes it to Archibald, Alexander is more likely the author of the work, for he—unlike Archibald—is documented to have made landscapes in New Jersey and to have painted estate views. Knowing that Alexander had created several views of his brother-in-law's estate on the Hudson, Stevens likely commissioned *Hobuck* from him. The watercolor descended in the Stevens family to Emily Lewis Stevens, who bequeathed it to the New Jersey Historical Society in 1973.

The Robertson-Jukes print depicting Washington's estate at Mount Vernon (Fig.2.4) is rendered in Alexander's formulaic but lyrical style. As in the views of Clermont and the Stevens Villa, here the artist again emphasizes the estate's favorable position overlooking the Potomac River and its extensive, well-tended grounds. He likely based his original image of Mount Vernon on some of the print material that abounded in New York following Washington's death, as there is no evidence to suggest that Alexander ever traveled to Virginia.

In the print, a small standing figure, barely visible in the shadows cast by two trees in the middle-ground at

right, adds picturesque interest to the scene and highlights the impressive scale of the 4,000-acre Mount Vernon estate. The house itself demonstrates Alexander's skill as a draftsman: each windowpane is delineated precisely, as are the roof tiles and even the weathervane on the building's center cupola.

A version of *Mount Vernon* attributed to Alexander, painted in oil on a pine panel and dated about 1795 to 1800, was sold by Kennedy Galleries in New York in 1975 and is now unlocated (Fig.2.11). The composition is nearly identical to the print. In the oil, the artist has added two groups of figures: a man, woman, and dog, standing at the fence at lower center; and two men, one of whom appears to be George Washington, on the porch of the house. A group of cows has replaced the solitary figure walking in the shadows of the trees at right. The cows convey that Mount Vernon was, in fact, a working farm.

The Robertson-Jukes print of *Mount Vernon* was widely disseminated. The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Center, Williamsburg, Virginia, has in its collection a watercolor after the print, painted by amateur artist Susan Whitcomb at the Literary and Scientific Institution in Brandon, Vermont in 1842. The watercolor bears a close resemblance

to the engraving, but is more stylized, especially in the trees, which are drawn in simulation of needlework.

Alexander's original watercolor for the third Robertson-Jukes print in the *Picturesque American Scenery* series, *Passaic Falls in the State of New Jersey*, is in the collection of the New Jersey Historical Society (Fig.2.12). Dated 9 July 1796 at lower left, it depicts a tranquil view of the majestic falls and river. Alexander emphasized the enormous stone walls that surround the falls—a geological wonder in their own right. Three carefully rendered native Americans on the riverbank in the foreground, each of whom holds a rifle, appear to be hunting. Their attention is focused to the trees at the right; the standing figure at left points his arm toward the vegetation, and the squatting and seated figures turn their heads to look. In the distance, three figures paddle in a canoe.

The aquatint version of *Passaic Falls in the State of New Jersey* (Fig.2.5) differs from the original drawing in significant ways. The distance between the foreground and the falls appears to be shorter, adding a sense of immediacy and drama to the scene. The canoe is gone and the water is much more turbulent, both as it comes down the falls and as it flows around the river's bend. The trees that frame the scene in the foreground at right and left

are less dense than in the watercolor, thereby opening up the composition.

Alexander replaced the three Native American figures in the foreground with a single fisherman, depicted smaller relative to the scene than those in the watercolor, thus emphasizing man's subordination to the natural world. At the same time, the presence of the figure informs the viewer that despite the turbulence of the waters at left and the inhospitable appearance of the sheer rock faces, the place was accessible for leisure pursuits.

The Robertson-Jukes view of Passaic Falls was popular and enjoyed wide dissemination in New York and abroad. It was reproduced as a dark blue transfer print on the side of a ceramic, lidded gravy bowl produced in about 1825 to 1830 by Enoch Wood and Sons in Burslem in the Staffordshire region of England (Fig.2.13). The bowl's design, in molded pearlware with blue underglaze, reflects a widespread public fascination with waterfalls. In his history of American landscape painting before 1830, Bruce Robertson discusses the role of waterfalls in art of the period: "Waterfalls assumed an importance for topographical landscape which they had not before [about 1760],

particularly Niagara, which came to symbolize the American continent."[24]

Passaic Falls is the only major waterfall close to New York City, within easy reach of late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century tourists in search of scenic natural features. It was the subject of several eighteenth-century depictions including an engraving by Paul Sandby after a drawing by Thomas Pownall, *A View of the Falls on the Passaic* (1761), and a watercolor by Thomas Davies, *South View of Passaic Falls, New Jersey* (1766, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto). Sandby's print emphasizes the site's romantic, wild nature, whereas Davies's shows it as a placid, welcoming place. Alexander situated his view of the scene somewhere between these two extremes: the highly stylized water is turbulent as it comes down the falls at left, and becomes increasingly calm after it turns the bend at right.

The view depicted in the fourth Robertson-Jukes print, *Hudsons River from Chambers Creek* (Fig.2.6), is along the Hudson near West Point, where the river narrows considerably and dramatic promontories form steep walls along its banks. The dense vegetation in the foreground

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[24] Bruce Robertson, "Venit, Vidit, Depinxit: The Military Artist in America," in Nygren and Robertson, 86.

contrasts with the abstract, very generalized promontories in the distance. Alexander's composition is strikingly similar to that of a drawing by Gilpin engraved and published posthumously in the volume *The Last Work Published of the Rev. William Gilpin . . .* (London, 1810)(Fig.2.14). In both scenes, the river and its banks are the site of leisure pursuits.

In Alexander's work, three figures—a single woman carrying a basket, and a woman and a man walking together, the man carrying a walking stick—approach the river's edge from left. The path they travel is well worn. Numerous sailing vessels enjoy the calm conditions on the water. Alexander's skillful manipulation of light and mood suggests the extent of the vista with simple, elegant strokes that barely suggest boats in the distance. The image at once glorifies the majesty of America's natural attractions and celebrates the countryside as a place for leisure and recreation.

Viewed as a group, the overall effect of the "Picturesque American Landscapes" is an impressive display of the variety and abundance of America's natural landscape. *New York from Hobuck* and *Mount Vernon* highlight the cultivated landscape and emphasize the material ways in which Americans have benefited from their cultivation of

the land. *Passaic Falls* and *Hudsons River* glorify the country's natural wonders and depict the wild landscape as places of leisure. Formally, the aquatints give the impression of a harmonious group of landscape watercolors. The four prints share the same pinkish, late afternoon light. The shadows are long, but the skies are blue with large, fluffy white clouds. Trees frame each view, and figures wearing combinations of red, white, and blue inhabit the foregrounds.

In September 1803 Andrew Robertson, by then well established as a miniature painter in London, showed a selection of Alexander's landscapes to Benjamin West. Andrew reported that West was "quite delighted" with the drawings, which West said "reminded him of the country." West disapproved, however, of Alexander's generalized treatment of the terrain in four views of the Hudson River, and recommended that Alexander represent nature more accurately. Andrew continued:

> He says there is much beauty in your execution, but less nature. He would recommend the camera obscura to any artist, whether portrait, history, or landscape . . . . The river appears by no means so immense as it really is—ships, etc., too large . . . . He thinks before they are engraved 'twere well to let some one look at them. I am sure he will readily do it if you

> send them to him. At any rate you must write him a letter of thanks for me.[25]

Alexander seems not to have acted on West's suggestions. His landscapes produced after 1803 do not indicate that he incorporated the use of a camera obscura to construct his compositions or to render details more accurately. Instead he continued to work according to Gilpin's principles of the ideally constructed picturesque landscape.

Although he was primarily a landscape painter, Alexander also painted a small group of portrait miniatures. The Smithsonian American Art Museum has in its collection two examples: *Dr. William Beekman* (Fig.2.15) and a *Portrait of a Gentleman* (Fig.2.16). Both were painted about 1795 and exhibit the hallmarks of Alexander's portrait style. The figures' faces are round, their necks are thick, and their chests are somewhat stocky. The faces are not as carefully modeled as those by Archibald, and in general are more mechanically painted. The coloring in Alexander's miniatures is broadly executed, showing little of the subtle gradations seen in Archibald's work.

Dr. William Beekman (1754–1808) was the eldest son of James and Jane Keteltas Beekman of New York City. During

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[25] Andrew Robertson, London, to Alexander Robertson, New York, 18 September 1802, transcribed in E. Robertson, 84-85.

his lifetime William was the subject of several portraits, the earliest of which was painted by John Durand when William was thirteen (1766, Beekman Family Association). According to Philip L. White's history of the Beekman family, James Beekman spared no expense on the education and refinement of his six children. William and his brothers attended school and had tutors at home before they enrolled at "Prince Town Colledge," now Princeton University, in 1769. Following his graduation in 1773, William took instruction in French from a Mr. Cozani in New York. He also took dancing lessons from a Mr. Vinay.[26]

Alexander painted William Beekman in about 1795, when Beekman was about forty years old. His full, flushed cheeks and smooth skin make him appear more youthful. His hair is powdered and tied back with a black ribbon that appears over his left shoulder. He wears a blue coat, a white waistcoat, and a white ruffled shirt. Beekman appears in three-quarter profile, posed to face slightly to the viewer's left. The background is a uniform shade of blue.

Comparison of this miniature to Archibald's depiction of Pierre Van Cortlandt (Fig.1.10) demonstrates the elder brother's superiority as a portraitist. Archibald's work is

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[26] Philip L. White, *The Beekmans of New York in Politics and Commerce 1647-1877* (New York: New-York Historical Society, 1956), 479-83.

more finely wrought, particularly in the details of the sitter's clothing. Archibald carefully detailed the white, black, and red embroidery on the waistcoat, carefully delineating the fleur-de-lis pattern. Alexander, on the other hand, rendered his sitter's coat and waistcoat more generally. The lack of finish in the background relative to Archibald's Van Cortlandt miniature is another indication of Alexander's more perfunctory technique.

As a landscape painter, however, Alexander was clearly Archibald's superior. In works such as his "Picturesque American Landscapes," he played a critical role in disseminating the picturesque mode in America. It was this conservative style that the Robertsons further popularized through their teaching at the Columbian Academy of Painting and the Academy of Painting and Drawing.

CHAPTER THREE

THE NEED FOR AN ART SCHOOL IN NEW YORK

New York had no school to train professionals or amateurs in the fine arts until Archibald Robertson opened the Columbian Academy in 1791. Despite its emerging status after the American Revolution as the country's financial, social, intellectual, cultural, and, briefly, political capital, aspiring artists in New York in the late eighteenth century were forced to go to Europe for training. By the beginning of the Revolution in 1775, America's three great native-born artists—Benjamin West, John Singleton Copley, and Gilbert Stuart—had all moved to England in pursuit of professional education and patronage. Stuart would return to America in 1793, but only after he had completed his training abroad, established his reputation as a portrait painter in London and Dublin, and been assured of commissions and patronage in the United States.

But, as Lillian Miller argues in her study of the encouragement of the fine arts, the successful careers of these expatriates bolstered Americans' faith in their countrymen's inherent genius by providing proof of a

special, native talent in painting.[1] This conviction led a group of enlightened New York civic leaders in 1791 to invite Archibald Robertson to New York to open an academy at which that innate American genius in the visual arts could be cultivated.

This chapter presents four distinct, but often intersecting, motivations behind the desire to establish an academy for drawing and painting in New York: emulation of European, particularly Scottish, Enlightenment culture; political ambition on behalf of individuals, groups, and the city as a whole; new concern for the trappings of refinement among the upper and middle classes; and the need for professional training for portraitists and architects, as well as doctors and mathematicians whose studies relied heavily on their ability to draw. These motivations reflect the prevailing republican philosophy in New York in the post-revolutionary period, which centered on attempts to educate and improve the citizenry for the greater good of the nation. The practical need to train professionals in marketable skills, whether portrait painting or mechanical drawing, coexisted with the idealistic desire to introduce gentlemen and ladies to the genteel practices of sketching and watercolor painting.

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[1] Miller, *Patrons and Patriotism*, 11.

Education was a cornerstone of enlightened thought in the new republic, a primary means of shaping political virtue and self-discipline, and leading citizens considered it their duty to instruct their fellow citizens in these communal responsibilities. Following the evacuation of the British in November 1783, a number of learned organizations were established in New York, including the Medical Society (ca. 1783), the Society for Encouraging Useful Knowledge (1784), the Philological Society (1786), the Calliopean Society (1788), and the New York Society for Promoting Agriculture, Arts, and Manufactures (1791). King's College was reorganized and reopened as Columbia College in 1784 and the American Museum—an institution devoted to collecting and preserving materials related to American history—was opened by John Pintard in 1790.

In 1788 Connecticut-born lexicographer and educational reformer Noah Webster urged:

> Americans, unshackle your minds and act like independent beings. . . . You have now an interest of your own to augment and defend: you have an empire to raise and support by your exertions and a national character to establish and extend by your wisdom and virtues. To effect these great objects, it is necessary to frame a liberal plan of policy and build it on a broad system of education.[2]

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[2] Noah Webster, "On the Education of Youth in America [Boston, 1788]," in *Essays on Education in the Early Republic*, ed. Frederick Rudolph (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, Harvard University Press, 1965), 77.

Even though Webster strongly advocated the role of education as central to the working of a free government, he derided education in the arts as pure "folly": "Nothing can be more fatal to domestic happiness in America than a taste for copying the luxurious manners and amusements of England and France."[3]

Webster's views echoed in many ways those of the most famous New England reformer from the previous generation, Benjamin Franklin, who objected to the encouragement of the arts during the early years of national development out of fear that the people might develop expensive tastes before they possessed the means of satisfying them. Other New Englanders, including most notably John Adams, saw no reason for the country to cultivate the arts, believing that indulgence in them would weaken the moral strength of the nation.

For many New Yorkers of the post-revolutionary period, however, the arts became a fundamental means of achieving their social, political, intellectual, and professional goals. The need for a formal program of art training in New York emerged as a concern in intellectual circles as early

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[3] Ibid., 71.

as 1784. Although a small number of portrait painters working in New York during the British occupation—such as William Rowand and John Lawrence—offered private lessons in drawing and painting, these informal arrangements were sporadic, short-lived, and ultimately of little consequence to the development of the arts in New York.[4]

In 1784, the year of its original charter, the Regents of Columbia College proposed to include painting and architecture in the school's curriculum. Recorded in their official minutes of December 14 is the recommendation "that besides the Professorship of the French Language already established [at a meeting on 15 May 1784] the following— Extra Professorships to be formed in this University . . . Oriental Languages . . . German D° . . . Low Dutch D° . . . Civil History . . . Architecture . . . Commerce . . . Agriculture . . . Music . . . Painting." [5] Although it was not until 1906 that Columbia College established a Department of Fine Arts—and on 7 January 1908 appointed Kenyon Cox the first full Professor of Painting—it is clear

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[4] "William Rowand," *(New York) Royal Gazette*, 6 December 1777; and "John Lawrence," *Rivington's New-York Gazette, and Universal Advertiser*, 6 December 1783.

[5] Trustees of Columbia College, "Minutes of the Trustees of Columbia College, Volume 2, Part 1, 4 May 1784 to 22 February 1809," [transcription], TD, University Archives and Columbiana Library, Columbia University, New York.

that the original Regents considered the study of drawing and painting to be an important element of a Columbia College education.[6]

In November 1784 French nobleman Chevalier Alexander Marie Quesnay de Beaurepaire announced a plan to open in New York an "Academy of polite Arts" to teach subjects such as French, dancing, drawing, and painting.[7] Quesnay had come to America from France in 1777 to serve under Lafayette in Virginia. In the fall of 1778 he retired from military service because of illness and remained in Virginia until 1780, when he moved to Philadelphia, where he ran a school for four years. Quesnay was not successful in his plan to open an academy in New York. He was in the city for only one year, 1784/85, and does not appear to have made any significant impact on its cultural life. An anonymous

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[6] For Cox's appointment, see "New Columbia Professors," *New York Times*, 7 January 1908, 14. The initial reason for shelving the plan to hire a professor was likely financial. The minutes from a meeting on 31 January 1787 read: "It was then Moved, by Dr. Mason, That as the Funds of Columbia College do not at present admit of supporting a Professorship of the French Language, that the said Professorship be abolish—." Trustees of Columbia College, "Minutes of the Trustees of Columbia College, Volume 2, Part 1, 4 May 1784 to 22 February 1809." While the minutes do not refer specifically to the professorship of painting, it can be assumed that there were no funds for that position either.

[7] Alexander Marie Quesnay, "To the Citizens of New-York," *New York Gazetteer and Country Journal*, 16 November 1784.

chronicler of his efforts lamented: "Unfortunately . . . his zeal had not the effect which it merited—His aims, though deserving of the highest Praises and Encouragement, were not seconded as they ought to have been."[8] Quesnay spent the next decade working to open an academy in Richmond, Virginia, but, lacking sufficient funds, returned to France in 1796.[9]

In 1791 three prominent New Yorkers—John Kemp, Samuel Bard, and Robert R. Livingston—determined to address their city's need for an academy for instruction in drawing and

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[8] "Society of Sciences and Fine Arts, in the City of Richmond, in Virginia," *Maryland Journal and the Baltimore Advertiser*, 2 September 1788.

[9] For Quesnay's efforts in America, see Denis I. Duveen and Herbert S. Klickstein, "Alexandre-Marie Quesnay de Beaurepaire's Mémoire et prospectus, concernant l'Académie des Sciences et Beaux Arts des Etats-Unis de l'Amérique, établié à Richemond, 1788," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 63 (July 1955): 278-85; Richard Heywood Gaines, "Richmond's First Academy, Projected by M. Quesnay de Beaurepaire," *Proceedings of the Virginia Historical Society* 11 (1892): 167-75; Alexandre Marie Quesnay de Beaurepaire, *The Academy of Sciences and Fine Arts of the United States of America; being an outline of the history of the Academy of Sciences and Fine Arts of the U.S.A. established at Richmond, Virginia on May 8th, in the year 1786* (Richmond, Va.: Richmond Academy of Arts, 1931); Alexandre Marie Quesnay de Beaurepaire, *Mémoire et prospectus, concernant l'Académie des sciences et beaux arts des États-Unis de l'Amérique, établie à Richemond, capitale de la Virginie* (Paris: Cailleau, 1788); John G. Roberts, "An Exchange of Letters between Jefferson and Quesnay de Beaurepaire," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 50 (April 1942): 134-42; and John G. Roberts, "The American Career of Quesnay de Beaurepaire," *French Review* 20 (May 1947): 463-70.

painting. Wishing to model their city's cultural institutions on European, particularly Scottish, examples, Kemp, Bard, and Livingston decided to invite a Scots painter to establish New York's first art academy. Thomas Gordon, an associate of Kemp and professor at King's College in Aberdeen, Scotland, recommended Aberdeen's leading portrait painter and sole drawing teacher, Archibald Robertson, for the position.

Kemp, Bard, and Livingston were members of New York City's cultural and intellectual elite, and shared close family and professional connections to Scotland. Kemp, a distinguished professor at Columbia College, was born and trained in Aberdeen; Bard, a prominent physician and a patron of civic and cultural institutions, had studied medicine in Edinburgh; and Livingston, an influential attorney, politician, and cultural leader, descended from a prominent Scottish family. Inviting a Scots painter to their city to open an art school coincided with their various civic interests.

In his 1987 study of the intellectual life of New York, Thomas Bender identifies Livingston and Bard as key figures among the city's cultural improvers in the early republic. According to Bender, beginning in about 1750 the city's political and economic elite became its intellectual

leaders as they founded such institutions as King's College and the New York Society Library (both 1754), St. Paul's Chapel (1766), and New York Hospital (1771). Seeking to raise New York to the level of a provincial city, they set out to implant the sort of enlightened culture fostered in Europe, especially Scotland.

The influence of Scotland on America's revolutionary politics and early republican culture is well documented in an extensive body of literature. Among the earliest sources is Bernard Bailyn's and John Clive's 1954 article "England's Cultural Provinces: Scotland and America."[10] The debate about the Scottish intellectual origins of the American Revolution was opened by Gary Willis's 1978 book *Inventing America, Jefferson's Declaration of Independence*.[11] More general surveys of the influence of Scotland on American intellectual life are George S. Pryde's 1957 *The Scottish Universities and the Colleges of Colonial America*, Richard Sher's and Jeffrey Smitten's 1990 *Scotland and America in the Age of Enlightenment*, and Stewart J. Brown's 1996 *William Robertson and the Expansion*

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[10] Bernard Bailyn and John Clive, "England's Cultural Provinces: Scotland and America," *William and Mary Quarterly* 11 (April 1954): 200-213.

[11] Garry Wills, *Inventing America: Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1978).

of Europe.[12]

Bender argues that from 1750 to about 1840 the specific model to which New Yorkers looked for their intellectual charters was Edinburgh, a city whose intellectual style he describes as aggressive, secular, and polished, and where, as in New York, the small and intimate scale of elite society precluded much differentiation and specialization. The result was that men of intellect and men of political and economic power were unavoidably associated; in fact, they were very often the same men. In both Edinburgh and New York, the "urban elites," Bender wrote, "were not cultural patrons; they were practitioners."[13]

The thriving intellectual life that characterized Edinburgh in the second half of the eighteenth century attracted numerous artists to the city and excited public

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[12] George S. Pryde, *The Scottish Universities and the Collegess of Colonial America*, Glasgow University Publications, new ser. (Glasgow: Jackson, 1957); Richard Sher and Jeffrey Smitten, *Scotland and America in the Age of Enlightenment* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990); Stewart J. Brown, *William Robertson and the Expansion of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[13] Thomas Bender, *New York Intellect. A History of Intellectual Life in New York City, from 1750 to the Beginnings of Our Own Time* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univeristy Press, 1988), 10.

interest in their activities. Edinburgh's principal art school at the time was the Trustees' Academy School of Art, established in 1760 by the Board of Trustees for Improving Fisheries and Manufactures with the aim of improving design in the linen industry. One of the most influential figures in the history of the Trustees' Academy was Scottish painter Alexander Runciman, Archibald's instructor during his tenure as master of the school from 1772 to 1785.

Organizations such as the Board of Trustees for Improving Fisheries and Manufactures were important models for similar groups in America such as the New York Society for Promoting Agriculture, Arts, and Manufactures, which Livingston helped to establish in 1791. It is almost certain that Livingston, Kemp, and Bard were aware of the curriculum students followed at the Trustees' Academy—comprising both mechanical and fine arts—and that they wanted New York's first drawing and painting academy to be organized similarly.

John Kemp (1763–1812) was an esteemed professor at Columbia College.[14] Born in Achlossan, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, he graduated from Marischal College, Aberdeen, in 1783, and immediately emigrated to America, where he taught

[14] "John Kemp," *New York Gazette*, 16 and 18 November 1812. See also *DAB*, s.v. "Kemp, John."

in the academy at Dumfries, Virginia, for two years. On 4 April 1785 he was appointed to teach mathematics for one year at Columbia College, and relocated to New York. A 1786 public examination of his students, in which each participant was required to draw a number out of a box and explain the Euclidian theory to which it referred, was so successful in demonstrating his students' knowledge and his own skill as a teacher that he was appointed Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy at age twenty-three.[15] Kemp was awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from King's College, Aberdeen, in 1787, and a foreign fellowship in the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1792. On 8 May 1795 he received the additional charge of Professor of Geography at Columbia.

In addition to his duties at Columbia, Kemp was also active in a number of New York cultural institutions including the New York Society Library. When Kemp died in

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[15] At most American colleges during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the fields of mathematics, physics, and astronomy were taught by one professor. It was not until 1859 that Columbia College appointed a professor of pure mathematics, William G. Peck, although in 1861 he changed to mathematics and astronomy. David Eugene Smith and Jekuthiel Ginsburg, *A History of Mathematics in America before 1900*, The Carus Mathematical Monographs (Chicago: The Mathematical Association of America, 1934), 45. See also Florian Cajori, *The Teaching and History of Mathematics in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1890; reprint, Wilmington, Del., and London: Scholarly Resources, 1974).

New York on 15 November 1812 Columbia College paid for his funeral. He was memorialized as an energetic and zealous professor: "His course of instruction requiring constant modification from the discoveries and improvements continually making in Physical science, demanded and received a rigour of application, which he carried to every practicable, and to many an imprudent length."[16] Today, Kemp is best known for advising his former student DeWitt Clinton on his design for the Erie Canal.

Samuel Bard (1742-1821) sought to reform medical education and accreditation in New York City and to elevate the status of medical professionals in general.[17] He studied medicine from 1760 to 1765 in London and Edinburgh. In 1765 he helped found New York's first medical school in conjunction with King's College (later Columbia College). The school was later absorbed by the College of Physicians and Surgeons, of which Bard became the second president in 1811. In 1769 he helped found New York Hospital (now New

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[16] "John Kemp," *New York Gazette*, 18 November 1812.

[17] The standard bibliography on Bard is John Brett Langstaff, *Doctor Bard of Hyde Park, the Famous Physician of Revolutionary Times, the Man Who Saved Washington's Life . . .*, introduction by Nicholas Murray Butler (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1942). See also John McVickar, *A Domestic Narrative of the Life of Samuel Bard, M.D., LL.D., Late President of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of the University of the State of New York* (New York: Printed by A. Paul for Columbia College, 1822).

York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center), which was granted a royal charter by George III in 1771 and initially treated mostly charity cases. Throughout his career Bard also maintained an extensive private practice; his most notable patient was George Washington.

Bard was also dedicated to expanding New York's cultural institutions. He was active in the effort to rebuild Trinity Church after it was destroyed in the Revolutionary War. He was a leader in the successful effort to transform King's College into Columbia College, and was appointed Professor of Natural Philosophy under the college's 1784 charter. He was instrumental in revitalizing the New York Society Library in 1772, and in 1804 was a founder of the New-York Historical Society. His advocacy of an art academy for New York in 1791 was linked to his efforts on behalf of a whole network of civic institutions—including hospitals, learned societies, and the college.

Robert R. Livingston (1746-1813)—often referred to as "Chancellor Livingston" to distinguish him from his father, a lawyer, merchant, and provincial supreme court judge—was raised mostly in New York City, where he kept a residence throughout his life, and graduated from King's College in

1765.[18] He studied law with his cousin William Livingston and Judge William Smith, Jr., who, with John Morin Scott, had formed a group known as the New York Triumverate. Beginning in the 1750s the Triumverate worked to elevate the status and quality of the legal profession, and the general level of intellectual life in New York City.[19]

Livingston joined the bar in about 1768, and in 1770 married Mary Stevens, the daughter of an important New Jersey landowner. He practiced law with John Jay, a friend

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[18] The standard biography on Livingston is George Dangerfield, *Chancellor Robert R. Livingston of New York, 1746-1813* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1960). See also Brandt, *An American Aristocracy: The Livingstons*; idem, "Robert R. Livingston, Jr., the Reluctant Revolutionary" in *The Livingston Legacy: Three Centuries of American History*, Richard T. Wiles and Andrea K. Zimmerman, eds. (Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y.: Bard College, 1987); Joseph Livingston Delafield, "Chancellor Robert R. Livingston of New York and His Family," *Sixteenth Annual Report, 1911, of the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society* (Albany: J. B. Lyon, 1911), 311-356; Frederic De Peyster, Jr., *A Biographical Sketch of Robert R. Livingston. Read Before the N. Y. Historical Society, October 3, 1876* (New York: New-York Historical Society, 1876); John Wakefield Francis, *An Address Delivered on the Anniversary of the Philoxian Society of Columbia College, May 15, 1831 [in memory of Robert R. Livingston]* (New York: G. and C. and H. Carvill, 1831); Ruth Piwonka, *A Portrait of Livingston Manor 1686-1850* (Clermont, N.Y.: Friends of Clermont, 1986); and Thomas Twyman, *Chancellor Robert R. Livingston: His Influence on Foreign Affairs, 1781-1804* (master's thesis, American University, Washington, D.C., 1961).

[19] For the New York Triumverate, see Dorothy R. Dillon, "The New York Triumverate: A Study of the Legal and Political Careers of William Livingston, John Morin Scott, William Smith, Jr." (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, New York, 1949).

from King's College, from 1768 to 1770. In 1773 he was appointed City Recorder for New York, but he was removed from the post in 1775 because of his sympathy for the growing revolution. In 1775 he moved to Philadelphia to attend the Second Continental Congress, and, probably to cement New York to the revolutionary cause, was named to the committee of five charged with drafting the Declaration of Independence.[20]

Following the death of his father in 1775, Livingston inherited "Clermont," the family's vast, tenanted estate on the Hudson River, and the 500,000-acre Hardenburgh patent in the Catskills. When his grandfather and father-in-law died later that same year, he inherited roughly 250,000 acres in Dutchess County, New York, and Stevens property in northern New Jersey. In May 1777 he was appointed Chancellor of New York, the state's highest judicial office, a post he held for twenty-four years. Livingston suffered directly during the Revolution when the British, on a march through the Hudson Valley in 1777, burned Clermont and his own family's adjacent residence, "Belvedere." He served as a delegate to the Continental

[20] The surviving record, however, shows no evidence of Livingston's influence on the committee or on Thomas Jefferson's text, and, having left Philadelphia to participate in the New York Convention of 1776-1777, he was not even present to sign the Declaration of Independence.

Congresses in 1779-1781 and 1784-1785, and after ratification in 1781 of the Articles of Confederation, Congress elected him Secretary of Foreign Affairs between 1781 and 1783.

Livingston is best known for negotiating the Louisiana Purchase during his 1801-1804 term as Minister to France under President Thomas Jefferson. An enthusiastic Francophile, Livingston returned to Clermont at the end of his term with a trove of luxury goods—tapestries, furniture, paintings, and engravings—and numerous French books to augment his already impressive collection. While in Paris, Livingston also made arrangements to send to the fledgling American Academy of Fine Arts several plaster copies of classical statues, including a Laocoön, a Venus, an Apollo, two fighting gladiators, and a Germanicus, which he believed would be sufficient "to open your galery."[21] Inviting a Scottish painter to New York to open an art academy was certainly in line with Livingston's endeavors to elevate intellectual life and foster an interest in the fine arts in the city.

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[21] Robert R. Livingston, Paris, to Janet L. Montgomery, New York, 1 August 1802, quoted in Dangerfield, 515, n. 37. The standard source on Livingston and the American Academy of the Fine Arts is Carrie Rebora, "The American Academy of the Fine Arts, New York 1802-1842" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1990).

After the American Revolution, politicians and civic leaders like Livingston employed the visual arts in their formation of a national identity.[22] Artists and non-artists alike forged connections between painting, sculpture, and architecture and patriotism and nationalism. The philosophical traditions of the Enlightenment had endowed the fine arts with a social and national value that helped to justify the nationalist cause.[23] As the arts played an increasingly key role in the nation's—and the city's—self-conception, it became increasingly necessary to encourage and retain native talent by offering art instruction in New York that could begin to rival that available in Europe. Inviting Robertson to New York to establish an art academy should be seen as a manifestation of these nationalist ambitions.

At the local level, New York's politicians employed the arts in public displays to promote such agendas as ratification of the federal Constitution and selecting New York as the new nation's capital. The Federal Convention completed its draft of the Constitution on 17 September

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[22] My understanding of the ideological terms of nationalism and national identity is informed by Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1991).

[23] For more on the subject of the visual arts and nationalism, see Miller, *Patrons and Patriotism*.

1787 and sent it to Congress. Congress in turn sent the document to the states for ratification. From December 1787 through the summer of 1788, state conventions met to consider the proposed frame of government. As one by one the states cast their votes, they mounted celebrations called Federal Processions, which became increasingly elaborate and generally incorporated a large parade and feast. [24]

The New York Federalists—led by Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and Robert R. Livingston—mounted their Federal Procession on 23 July 1788 to coincide with the ratifying Convention in Poughkeepsie. [25] Though it was almost an anticlimax because the Constitution had already been adopted by the ratification of the required nine states, the Grand Federal Procession was planned as a demonstration of popular support for the Constitution that would influence the Convention in its favor. The delegates voted

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[24] For descriptions and analyses of the ceremonies that marked the ratification of the Constitution in Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Virginia, see Whitfield J. Bell, Jr., "The Federal Processions of 1788," *The New-York Historical Society Quarterly* 46 (1962): 5-39.

[25] The bibliography on the ratification of the Constitution in New York is extensive. For a useful summary, see Robin Brooks, "Alexander Hamilton, Melancton Smith, and the Ratification of the Constitution in New York," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 24 (July 1967): 339-58.

in favor of ratification the day following the procession, July 24.

The New York Federalists enlisted French architect Pierre Charles L'Enfant to supervise and design their procession, which, though not as long as Philadelphia's, was more elaborate with costumes, insignia, and allegorical representations more fully detailed and realized than in other cities.[26] It is possible to view the aim of the procession as not only to rally popular support for the new Constitution, but also to demonstrate New York's cultural superiority over Annapolis, Boston, and Philadelphia.

The parade, begun at ten o'clock by thirteen shots fired from the federal ship *Hamilton*, moved from "the Fields" (now City Hall Park), down Broadway, past the Fort to Great Dock Street, through Hanover Square to Queen (now Pearl) Street, along Chatham, Division, and Arundle (now Clinton) Streets. Horsemen with trumpets and an artillery company led the procession, followed by thousands of men arranged by profession in ten divisions, each preceded by a white banner. The groups included gentlemen farmers, tailors, grain measurers, bakers, brewers, butchers,

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[26] For the New York Procession, see Sarah H. J. Simpson, "The Federal Procession in the City of New York," *New-York Historical Society Quarterly Bulletin* 9(July 1925): 39-57; and Stokes, 5:1228-30.

tanners and curriers, breeches makers, glove makers, printers, pewter workers, members of the bar, the Philological Society, physicians, and the faculty and students of Columbia College, including John Kemp.

The group proceeded to Nicholas Bayard's farm, where dinner for 6,000 persons was served at long banquet tables under an elaborate canvas pavilion designed by L'Enfant. The structure consisted of three principal pavilions connected by colonnades. The center pavilion was tallest, surmounted by a dome and a figure of Fame with her trumpet proclaiming the new era, holding a scroll, emblematic of the three great epochs of the Revolution: Independence, Alliance with France, and Peace.[27] The two outer pavilions were connected by a semicircular table from which extended ten colonnades ending in smaller pavilions, one for each of the ten ratifying states. Each pavilion was decorated with curtains and laurel wreaths. A transparent painting of Washington by an unknown artist is supposed to have been exhibited at the banquet. At Wall Street another transparent painting was shown, this representing thirteen stars enclosed in a circle, ten burning brightly for those

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[27] The description of the figure of Fame is from H. Paul Caemmerer, *The Life of Pierre Charles L' Enfant, Planner of the City Beautiful, the City of Washington* (Washington, D.C.: National Republic Publishing, 1950), 97.

states that had ratified, a half obscured star for New York, which had yet to vote, and unlit stars for North Carolina and Rhode Island, the final two states to ratify.[28]

That the Federalists enlisted the Frenchman L'Enfant to work on the parade and design the pavilion is an important indication of New York's cultural ambitions in the postrevolutionary period. L'Enfant studied architecture and the fine arts in Paris at the Academie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture under his father, who was Painter in Ordinary to the King in his manufacture of Gobelin tapestries. In August 1776, as a twenty-two year old Lieutenant of Infantry in the French Colonial troops, L'Enfant volunteered to fight for American Independence. The Federalists were New York's cultural elite; they were predominantly merchants, lawyers, former officers in the Continental Army, Anglicans, socially prominent, wealthy, and college educated. That these men, led by Livingston, Hamilton, and Jay, enlisted L'Enfant to supervise the procession demonstrates a consciousness of the importance of the visual arts in rallying public interest and support for their agenda, as well as an acknowledgement that only a European-trained artist and architect was suited for the job.

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[28] Ibid., 108.

For Livingston, the fine arts were not only a tool to gain political advantage for New York City, but also a means by which one could achieve personal honor and social reward. Drawing was deemed a necessary accomplishment for enlightened men and women in the early republic, and together with the study of taste became an important part of the education of genteel youth.[29] For young ladies especially, drawing and painting were popular pastimes designed to attract suitors and attest to a family's prosperity. Like the refined craft of needlework, sketching in pencil and painting in watercolor were meant to busy idle hands and to invite observation and display accomplishment.[30] Etiquette books of the period even instructed young women to give examples of their work to male friends: "Ladies' gifts to gentlemen should be of the most refined nature possible; little articles not purchased, but those deriving a priceless value as being the offering of their gentle skill, such as a trifle from

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[29] For a discussion of the development of the importance of taste in America, see Bushman.

[30] Ann Bermingham, "Elegant Females and Gentlemen Connoisseurs: The Commerce in Culture and Self-Image in Eighteenth-Century England," in Ann Bermingham and John Brewer, eds., *The Consumption of Culture, 1600-1800: Image, Object, Text* (London: Routledge, 1995), 489-513.

their needle, or a picture from their pencil."[31] A typical portfolio of a young woman's works might include pencil sketches, watercolors or embroideries of landscapes, biblical scenes, or still lifes.

Livingston enrolled his own two daughters, Elizabeth Stevens and Margaret Maria, in drawing classes at the Columbian Academy in January 1793. [32] Betsy and Peggy, as they were known, were then young girls, aged thirteen and ten respectively. The payment for Betsy covered "5 months private tuition at drawing" and supplies including a drawing book, two lead pencils, and india ink. Peggy also received five months private tuition at drawing, but her supplies included just the drawing book and two lead pencils.

Advising young ladies to be accomplished in needlework and painting is another example of the ways in which early American culture emulated that of Europe. Cultural historian Ann Bermingham has demonstrated how, over the course of the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, drawing became a marker of class in England, something used to

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[31] An American Lady, *True Politeness; A Hand-Book of Etiquette for Ladies* (New York: Manhattan Publishing, n.d. [18--]).

[32] Receipts for payment to Mr. Robertson, ADS, 3 January 1793, Robert R. Livingston Papers, 1707–1862, New-York Historical Society, New York.

identify and locate individuals in the social order. "Taste, and practices like drawing that signal taste, can be learned, and once learned they can become the tools of social improvement."[33] Thus drawing became a social practice rather than a purely aesthetic one.

Historian Richard Bushman has described how the arts came to function in America in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when gentility came to shape the structure of society and refinement and vulgarity became the most conspicuous signs of class. More than wealth or occupation, manners and style of life divided people in their everyday exchanges with one another. “By the Revolution,” Bushman argues, “those who lacked taste generally lacked power.”[34] The implication was that good taste could and should be attained by the upper classes and applied to all they possessed and influenced. Livingston, a wealthy, refined, and enlightened gentleman, was convinced of his duty to forward the social progress of his country’s citizenry by bringing a European artist to New York to teach them to draw and paint.

For others, learning to draw was a professional necessity. That Samuel Bard considered the practice of

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[33] Bermingham, *Learning to Draw*, x.

[34] Bushman, 97.

drawing an integral facet of the medical training he received in Edinburgh is demonstrated in several letters he wrote to his father, John Bard, in New York, from 1762 to 1765.[35] In one letter he describes: "reviewing my notes taken at Doct. Cullens lectures, & making drafts of some furnaces & other chemical instruments (for I draw all he recommends especially such as have improvements of his own)." [36] Bard took drawing lessons during the summer of 1763 as part of a series of classes that supplemented his medical course. He wrote to his father in September that in addition to studying Botany and Latin, he spent "three hours in the week at Drawing."[37] In another letter from that September, Bard gives an additional account of his summer studies, which included courses in rhetoric and the "belles letters," "which altho' no physical class I am far from

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[35] These letters are in the "Bard collection of manuscript and printed material by or about John and Samuel Bard, with genealogical charts of families related by marriage to their descendants" (hereafter Bard Collection), New York Academy of Medicine, New York.

[36] Samuel Bard, Edinburgh, to John Bard, New York, ALS, 30 January 1763, Bard Collection, New York Academy of Medicine, New York.

[37] Samuel Bard, Edinburgh, to John Bard, New York, [date illegible] September 1763, ALS, Bard Collection, New York Academy of Medicine, New York.

thinking unnecessary to the character of a gentleman."[38]

Bard studied drawing again the following summer as part of a program to supplement his medical course. He wrote to his father:

> I am at present engaged in a variety of studies, as I hinted above. I attend a class of Rhetorick, which I neglected last winter that I might not interfere with more important business—I likewise attend the Botanical class and the Infermery—besides which I have two private tutors, what come in to me; with one I spend an hour every day in writing and speaking Latin; with the other I am endeavoring to improve myself in French—and lastly I spend three hours a week with a most excellent Drawing Master—so many branches together with reading practical authors, intirely fill up my time, and are attended with a considerable expence, but I hope I shall never resent it, and that it will one day be returned to me with interest.[39]

Bard's reference to his "most excellent Drawing Master" suggests that he had studied with more than one, and understood and appreciated good quality instruction. From these letters it is clear that Bard believed drawing well to be an important practical part of medical training. In addition, he considered the study of drawing, like that of French and the *belles lettres*, to be integral to developing the character of a gentleman.

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[38] Samuel Bard, Edinburgh, to John Bard, New York, ALS, 4 September 1763, Bard Collection, New York Academy of Medicine, New York.

[39] Samuel Bard, Edinburgh, to John Bard, New York, ALS, 2 June 1764, Bard Collection, New York Academy of Medicine, New York.

Proficiency in drawing was also essential to the study and application of mathematics. The range of skills taught to college students in New York are described in an outline of John Kemp's courses at Columbia College in the 1794 publication *The Present State of Learning in the College of New-York*:

> The first Mathematical class are taught arithmetic in a scientific manner, and algebra as far as quadratic equations. The second class study the elements of Euclid, trigonometry, the application of trigonometry to the mensuration of heights and distances, of surfaces and solids, land surveying and navigation. The third class study conic selections, the doctrine of the sphere and cylinder, the projection of the sphere, spherical trigonometry, the higher branches of algebra, the doctrine of chances and annuities, the application of algebra to geometry, and the doctrines of fluxions.[40]

Kemp's courses in natural philosophy—comprising the fields of mechanics, hydrostatics, hydraulics, pneumatics, optics, electricity, magnetism, and astronomy—were so popular that his syllabus was published and distributed and provision was made for the general public to attend some of his lectures.[41]

Kemp likely considered proficiency in mechanical drawing a prerequisite for his courses, whose curricula

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[40] Columbia University, *The Present State of Learning in the College of New-York* (New York: Printed by T. and J. Swords for Columbia College, 1794), 5-6.

[41] Ibid., 6.

relied on students' designing and recording their own demonstrations and experiments because textbooks were not generally available at most colleges until the middle of the nineteenth century.[42] According to *The Present State of Learning in the College of New York*, printed in 1794, Columbia College was "provided with an elegant and extensive apparatus for Mechanical Philosophy and Astronomy. There are about six hundred experiments performed each year during the course."[43] As Bard's letters demonstrate, proficiency in mechanical drawing would have been essential for diagramming and recording the hundreds of experiments that Kemp and his students performed annually.[44]

After graduation, drawing would have been put to practical use in surveying, navigation, and map-making, "the chief application of elementary mathematics" in late-

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[42] In the late eighteenth century, American colleges used mathematical textbooks imported from Europe, mostly from England. American reprints of English texts appeared by 1800. The earliest American edition of Euclid appeared in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1784. See Smith and Ginsburg, 37-42; and Cajori, 55-86.

[43] Columbia University, *The Present State of Learning*, 6.

[44] For descriptions of the notebooks of two University of Pennsylvania (then University of Philadelphia) students, Samuel Miller (1788) and Robert Brooke (1793), see Smith and Ginsburg, 31-32.

eighteenth-century America.[45] In his study of map making in the United States from 1600 to 1900, John R. Short describes the wide variety of maps produced in the late eighteenth century, including "landownership maps, county and city atlases, fire insurance maps and even reprints of old maps—especially useful in lawsuits regarding property disputes."[46] Simeon DeWitt, who was appointed Surveyor General of the State of New York in 1784 and was one of the most significant cartographers in the early republic, studied surveying and mathematics at Queens (now Rutgers) College in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

An abundance of recent scholarship on cartography has demonstrated that maps played a key role in establishing the image of the American nation in the early republic.[47]

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[45] Ibid., 42.

[46] John R. Short, *Representing the Republic: Mapping the United States, 1600-1900* (London: Reaktion, 2001), 145.

[47] The subject of cartography and map-making in early America is well documented in numerous recent studies. See, for example, Martin Bruckner, "Lessons in Geography: Maps, Spellers, and Other Grammars of Nationalism in the Early Republic," *American Quarterly* 51 (June 1999): 311-43; J. B. Harley, "Maps, Knowledge, and Power," in *The New Nature of Maps* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001): 51-82; David N. Livingstone and Charles W. J. Withers, eds., *Geography and Enlightenment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); and Short. See also David Jaffee, "Curiosities Encountered: James Wilson and Provincial Cartography in the United States, 1790-1840," in *Common-Place* 4, January 2004 [journal online]; available from

Short summarizes the argument:

> Despite political independence the new republic still had the difficult task of creating a national identity. An important part of this endeavor was the construction of a national geography that included geographic description in a comparative as well as a distinct cartographic representation. The creation of an "American" geography and an "American" cartographic representation was an integral part of the need to create an intellectual independence from Britain and forge the necessary cohesion over disparate states and regions.[48]

The United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, was one of the earliest institutions to incorporate mechanical drawing into its curriculum for the practical application of mathematics, including especially cartography, when, in 1807, the academy appointed a Swiss national, Christian Zoeller, instructor of drawing. After the institution was reorganized, from 1812 to 1817, the first academic faculty was composed as follows: Col. Jared Mansfield, professor of natural and experimental philosophy; Andrew Ellicott, professor of mathematics; Alden Partridge, professor of engineering; and Zoeller, professor of drawing.[49] Succeeding Zoeller in this post were a series of distinguished artists including English painter

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http://www.common-place.org/vol-04/no-02/jaffee/; Internet; accessed 30 September 2005.

[48] Short, 106.

[49] Cajori, 85.

Charles Leslie in 1833, who was later Professor of Painting in the Royal Academy in London, and American Robert Weir in 1834. Weir was James McNeill Whistler's drawing instructor at West Point from 1851 to 1854. Before leaving America in 1855 to pursue his career as a painter in Europe, Whistler was employed for a year in the Coast and Geodetic Survey as a draftsman.

It was not until 1864 that Columbia College hired an "Assistant in Drawing" as a faculty member in their newly established School of Mines. The School of Mines trained students in physics, mechanics, geology, chemistry, civil and mining engineering, mineralogy, metallurgy, and, after 1881, architecture.[50] Recognizing the importance of drawing to the training and application of their respective fields of study, Kemp and Bard worked to establish an independent art academy in New York that could satisfy their students' needs.

As members of New York's intellectual and cultural elite, Kemp, Bard, and Livingston worked to shape their

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[50] For the School of Mines, see "The Columbia College School of Mines," *New York Times*, 30 March 1865, 9; and Columbia University, *An Historical Sketch of Columbia College, in the City of New York, 1754-1876* (New York: Printed for the College by MacGowan & Slipper, 1876). When Columbia College hired William Robert Ware as Professor of Architecture in 1881, architecture was "one of the regular studies of the School of Mines curriculum." "Columbia's New Professorship," *New York Times*, 10 May 1881, 8.

city in the image of the great capitals of Europe, specifically Edinburgh. Establishing New York's first art academy was a key component of their program. They believed an art school would bring political and economic advantage as well as cultural refinement and sophistication to their city and its citizens. To ensure the legitimacy and success of their endeavor, they wanted New York's academy to be modeled on traditional European drawing schools and run by an established European painter. Kemp, a native of Aberdeen, Scotland, who was well connected to that city and its intellectual life, contacted Professor Gordon at King's College there and asked for a recommendation. In 1791 Gordon extended the New Yorkers' invitation to the leading drawing master and portrait painter in Aberdeen, Archibald Robertson.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE COLUMBIAN ACADEMY OF PAINTING AND THE ACADEMY OF PAINTING AND DRAWING: CHRONOLOGY AND TEACHING PRACTICE, 1791-1835

Archibald and Alexander Robertson each taught drawing and painting in New York for more than thirty years. Archibald founded the Columbian Academy of Painting in 1791; it operated through 1823. Alexander taught at the Columbian Academy until 1802, when he opened his school, the Academy of Painting and Drawing, which was closed in 1835. The following history of the schools—the first comprehensive examination of the Robertsons' teaching careers—is derived from a range of archival sources, including letters, newspaper advertisements, tax assessment records, municipal government meeting minutes, city directories, and assorted documents in related manuscript collections such as those of the American Academy of the Fine Arts in the New-York Historical Society.

A primary goal of this chapter is to clarify the muddled history of the two academies. Even the most recent art historical sources have confused the facts, thereby propagating incorrect information about these two institutions that played crucial roles in the development of American art. The chapter also examines the pedagogical

tools used by the brothers at their respective schools—plaster casts of antique statues, copies after old master paintings, and prints. Archibald's own texts are key sources for examining his teaching method. In 1800 he wrote his first instruction manual, "Treatise on Miniature Painting," which he addressed to his youngest brother, Andrew, who was then training as a portrait painter in London.[1] This was followed in 1802 with his publication of drawing book *Elements of the Graphic Arts*, the first drawing manual printed in the United States.[2] Although there are no surviving writings on the arts by Alexander, it is assumed that his teaching practice closely followed that of Archibald.

According to an announcement in New York City's principal newspaper, *The Daily Advertiser*, on 11 October 1791 Archibald Robertson opened his drawing academy at 89

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[1] Archibald Robertson's "Treatise on Miniature Painting" is transcribed in E. Robertson, 21-40. In subsequent references to the treatise, page numbers refer to E. Robertson.

[2] Elliot Bostwick Davis, "Training the Eye and the Hand: Drawing Books in Nineteenth-Century America" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1992), 57-58. According to Davis, founders of smaller drawing schools soon realized that publishing instruction books was a lucrative endeavor, and often printed them to supplement the schools' incomes.

William Street in New York.[3] He held classes on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday mornings, at ten o'clock for women and at noon for men, and taught "drawing of heads, figures, landscapes, flowers, patterns for sewing, architecture, perspective, &c." He offered reasonable rates and home instruction for those who preferred private lessons.

Archibald also advertised his services as a portrait and miniature painter. He highlighted his European credentials to distinguish himself from his competition, claiming that he had "been under the particular tuition of Mr. West and Sir Joshua Reynolds for several years." The other portrait painter in town, New York-born Philip Parisen, also advertised in the October 11 issue of the *Daily Advertiser* in which Archibald made his debut, but could lay no such claim to European training or expertise in his simple offer "to take the most correct Likenesses in Miniature, profile Painting and Black Shades."[4] Archibald's

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[3] "Archibald Robertson, Limner," *Daily Advertiser*, 11 October 1791.

[4] "Miniature Painting," *Daily Advertiser*, 11 October 1791. Philip Parisen was probably born in New York City; the date of his birth is not known. His father, Otto, was born in Berlin, Germany, emigrated to New York City in the early 1760s, and was active as a miniature painter until about 1800. Philip Parisen taught drawing in New York and, in 1795, in Charleston, South Carolina. For Parisen, see Peter Hastings Falk, *Who Was Who in American Art, 1564-1975, 400*

advertisements were always exaggerated to give him the advantage over any competitor.

Archibald was also in demand as a portrait painter, such that a year later, in the winter of 1792, he sent for his younger brother Alexander to come to New York to work with him. Alexander left Aberdeen that May.[5] On 8 October, Archibald announced his brother's arrival in the *Daily Advertiser*. The notice emphasized Alexander's European training, claiming he had "lately arrived from the Royal Academy of painting in London, where he has been under the tuition of the most celebrated artists." Upon Alexander's arrival, Archibald was able to expand his business by offering additional classes for men on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday evenings.[6]

The Columbian Academy remained at 89 William Street until 1793, when it moved to 90 William Street. By 1795, it had moved to 135 William Street.[7] A fire in late 1795 or early 1796 forced the school's final relocation, to 79

Years of Artists in America, Rev. ed., 3 vols. (Madison, Conn.: Sound View Press, 1999), 3:2518.

[5] E. Robertson, 3.

[6] "Painting and Drawing at the Columbian Academy," *Daily Advertiser*, 8 October 1792. Soon after, they settled into a schedule of teaching one class each for men and women three days a week.

[7] See William Duncan's New York Directories for 1792–1796.

Liberty Street, just west of Broadway, by February 1796.[8] The Robertsons' home and school shared the same space, as was typical for New York artisans and merchants until the end of the eighteenth century. Architectural historian Dell Upton has written that the household of an artisan during the Robertsons' time almost always included their servants, employees, and apprentices.[9]

Archibald and Alexander modeled the Columbian Academy on traditional European drawing schools, where the typical curriculum centered on teaching amateurs the rudiments of drawing.[10] By April 1794 the school was referred to in advertisements as the Columbian Academy of Painting, rather than the Columbian Academy. The choice to emphasize painting over drawing is reflected in the ever-expanding range of subjects in which the Robertsons offered

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[8] "Archibald and Alexander Robertson, Limners" *Daily Advertiser*, 13 February 1796.

[9] In about 1800 merchants began to move away from their stores and residences, slowly at first, then in earnest about 1820. Artisans followed suit about 1830. Dell Upton, "Inventing the Metropolis: Civilization and Urbanity," in Catherine Hoover Voorsanger and John K. Howat, eds., *Art and the Empire City: New York, 1825-1861* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000), 15-16. See also Diana di Zerega Wall, "The Separation of Home and Workplace in Early Nineteenth-Century New York City," *American Archaeology* 5 (1985): 185-86.

[10] For the history of European drawing schools, see Bermingham, *Learning to Draw*.

instruction. In 1792 they taught "the arts of designing and drawing (in India ink, water colours, chalks, etc.) of heads, figures, landscapes, flowers, patterns, architecture, and perspective,"[11] but by 1794, this had changed to "Heads, Figures, Historical Subjects, Landscapes (of which many are of the most remarkable scenes in this country)."[12] Though Archibald specialized in portrait miniatures, and Alexander in landscapes, their professional status and European background gave them a degree of aesthetic authority that enabled them to offer instruction in fields—history painting, for example—that exceeded their own areas of expertise.

The Robertsons worked outside of America's long-standing artisanal tradition of apprenticeship, which reigned throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and was based on a years-long one-on-one system of professional training through immersion in a craft.[13] Instead they offered instruction in a broad range of

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[11] "Painting and Drawing at the Columbian Academy," *Daily Advertiser*, 8 October 1792.

[12] "Columbian Academy of Painting," *Diary; or, Evening Register*, 30 April 1794.

[13] Apprenticeship was widely practiced until about 1820, when it went into rapid decline. For more on the apprenticeship system, see Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City & the Rise of the Working Class, 1788-1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).

skills—extending to architectural drawing and portrait painting—to students whose levels of proficiency and experience were equally broad. Some of their students had professional ambitions—among them John Vanderlyn and John Henri Isaac Browere—others were the fashionable young of New York City like Cornelia Ludlow and Margaret Livingston, for whom skill in drawing was a valuable sign of refinement. Unlike the apprenticeship system, where the novice worked for his training, the Columbian Academy was a moneymaking venture. The school not only provided a continuous revenue stream in the form of student tuition, it also introduced the Robertsons to members of New York's upper classes from whom they could hope to receive commissions for portraits and for paintings of their estates.

The Robertsons' principles of art, as revealed in Archibald's portrait miniatures and Alexander's landscape paintings, were rooted in the style popularized in late-eighteenth-century Britain by artists such as Sir Joshua Reynolds. Archibald's male sitters appear elegant and confident, the females lovely and gentle. Faces, he believed, should be "rather too plump than too skinny," the attitude should be "animated, the background gay." The dress, he believed, should be "the same as is worn by the

person who sits," but if it is "stubborn and unpictureseque, an artist of any decent taste cannot be much at a loss to make it so."[14]

The Robertsons' landscapes reflected particularly the writings of William Gilpin, who popularized the concept of the picturesque in his illustrated tours to various parts of England, Scotland, and Wales. In his 1802 drawing book *Elements of the Graphic Arts*, Archibald introduced Gilpin's ideas to his American audience:

> What is Picturesque is what will interest us, and have great effect when reduced to a picture;—for instance, an ugly old beggar, may and often does become a very picturesque object.
>
> What is beautiful and lovely in nature, may and often does (when in even the hands of the ablest artists) become impossible to be beautiful in a picture; it is only talents, genius, and a cultivated taste that can tell, whether any object in nature is picturesque; that is, become interesting when made into a picture, and to strike the imagination: in general, what is admired as the loveliest scenes in nature, is very unfit to have this effect, when reduced to a picture. On the other hand, rude rugged scenery, perhaps as disgusting to a common eye, as the beggar is in general, may become the most fit subject for the pencil; but, when these two unite, then the object in nature, and its copy in a picture, become excellent. A picturesque object will always interest when reduced to a picture - a beautiful object in nature may make but an indifferent picture; but make the beautiful object picturesque, and we shall have every thing that is to be desired.[15]

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[14] Archibald Robertson, "Treatise on Miniature Painting," 33.

[15] Archibald Robertson, *Elements of the Graphic Arts*, 6.

Archibald was committed to a logical, programmatic approach to teaching the arts, and firmly believed that genius could be cultivated. "The art of drawing, admits of rules and demonstrations," he wrote, "and those who think it is excluded by some occult quality, inspired by genius alone, labor under a mistake."[16] He recommended the class setting over private tuition, stressing that most students would benefit by emulating and learning skills from their more advanced classmates.[17]

By examining correspondence between Archibald, Alexander, and Andrew Robertson, newspaper advertisements, and Archibald's 1800 "Treatise on Miniature Painting" and 1802 drawing book *Elements of the Graphic Arts*, it is possible to reconstruct the curriculum followed at the Columbian Academy and the Academy of Painting and Drawing.

In painting and drawing, Archibald consistently advocated simplicity of form and execution. In "Treatise on Miniature Painting" he declared, "it ought to be an universal rule that the fewer colors you use the better—the greater simplicity the better."[18] The treatise provides a

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[16] Ibid., 3.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Archibald Robertson, "Treatise on Miniature Painting," 22.

precise record of Archibald's exacting method for painting miniatures, as indicated in the document's subheadings: On Preparing the Ivory; Of Colors; Of Setting the Palette; First Sitting; Second Sitting; Preparing for Third Sitting; Of Placing Sitters in Middle of Picture; To Expunge Errors; Third Sitting and Finishing; Process of Work on the Face; On the Mode of Working; Of Working Background; How Much Neutral Tint; Of Hair; Unpowdered Hair; Powdered Hair; Of Executing Linen; Drapery with Body Color; Skies in Body Color; Of Drawing Curved Strokes; What Colors Work Best; Of Finishing with Saliva; Process of Making Shade; Of the Distance in the Eye in Work; What Are Proper Lights; How to Correct; How the Light Falls on the Face; Of Coloring a Face; Of Attitude; The Pre-Eminence of This Style; How Gum Arabic is Used; and Of Landscape.

Archibald's second instructional text, *Elements of the Graphic Arts*, was typical of eighteenth-century drawing books that emphasized learning to draw the body as the basis for all further subjects. Students were directed to master the parts of the body before progressing to the full figure. Landscape drawing, and oil and watercolor painting techniques, were introduced only after students had mastered drawing the figure. Throughout their careers the Robertsons espoused copying from classical models as the

best way to appreciate the fine arts and learn to master drawing skills. In 1799, Archibald enthusiastically advised Andrew, then embarking on his career as a painter: "Study much of the antique faces and practise the drawing from the best busts. To confirm your studies in your mind, copy some literally—and sometimes after studying a bust, draw it from recollection."[19]

The first chapter of *Elements of the Graphic Arts* teaches students to draw the figure by using a series of "approved proportions" derived from measurements of famous classical statues (Fig.4.1). In her study of American drawing books, Elliot Davis observes that *Elements of the Graphic Arts* was one of the earliest American examples to describe rendering the female face in profile. The technique became the preferred manner for beginners during the nineteenth century.[20] Archibald instructed his students to rely on a proportional system based on an equilateral triangle:

> In a profile, the proportions to the head are the same as in front face; the only remarkable circumstance is, to fix the situation of the ear—as it is in the front face, so the top and bottom of the ear, is on the same

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[19] Archibald Robertson, New York, to Andrew Robertson, Aberdeen, 25 May 1799, transcribed in E. Robertson, 12.

[20] Elliot Bostwick Davis, "American Drawing Books and Their Impact on Winslow Homer," *Winterthur Portfolio* 31, no. 2/3 (1996): 155.

> line as the nose; and the outermost distance of the ear from the front of the face is found by forming an equilateral triangle; the length of the face from the roots of the hair to the chin, being the base—the outermost point from the face, gives the utmost distance from the ear.[21]

Later American drawing books, such as Henry Williams's *Elements of Drawing* (Boston, 1814) and Rembrandt Peale's *Graphics* (Philadelphia, 1834), advocated similar geometric methods. "You will first commence with the lunar circle, and then the line of the eye," Williams advises beginners. "You must divide the eye by lines into four parts, strike the horizontal and perpendicular lines . . . which will enable the young beginner to understand the division of the eye, and get good proportions."[22] The beginner should master every feature separately before attempting to draw a whole head. Faces should be drawn in correct order—eye, brow, nose, nostril, mouth, hairline, ears, forehead. "The body," Williams recommends, "is to be drawn in a similar manner, by squares, points, and distances."[23] (Fig.4.2)

In *Graphics*, Peale refers to the triangle system of making faces in profile more specifically: "The proportions of the human face, in profile, may be drawn on a triangle,

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[21] Archibald Robertson, *Elements of the Graphic Arts*, 6.

[22] Henry Williams, *Elements of Drawing* (Boston: R. P. & C. Williams, 1818), 4.

[23] Ibid., 8.

the perpendicular line of which must be divided into three parts; the upper one for the forehead, the middle space for the nose, and the lower division for the mouth and chin."[24] (Fig.4.3) Peale tells his reader that the system of comparing relative proportions should be applied to all drawings "where parts are numerous."

An ability to render figures was central to Archibald's own business of making portraits, the profession many of his students would have hoped to follow. It was also the basis of what he termed "the nobler style" of history painting, which had been elevated to the pinnacle of late-eighteenth-century artistic achievement by Sir Joshua Reynolds's *Discourses* at the Royal Academy in London. Even though Archibald himself did not make historical works, he considered it his pedagogical responsibility to foster that dignified mode of painting in America.

The second chapter in *Elements of the Graphic Arts* is devoted to landscape, "not only a very desirable accomplishment, but a very agreeable amusement."[25] Archibald stresses the importance of geometry and design in his

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[24] Rembrandt Peale, *Graphics* (New York: J. P. Peaslee, 1835), 75.

[25] Archibald Robertson, *Elements of the Graphic Arts*, 6.

approach to drawing landscapes, providing detailed technical instruction in rendering perspective and in measuring distances and angles. Students learned a vocabulary of drawing and painting strokes designed to produce a landscape quickly and easily: tree foliage in round looping outlines (Fig.4.4); volume and shadow created with strong zigzag patterns; and the most distant forms indicated with a very light outline. The painter's function, Archibald taught, was to generalize nature and extract the essence of a landscape, not to imitate its details.

In *Elements of the Graphic Arts* Archibald also introduced to his students the fundamentals of architectural drawing and perspective (Fig.4.5). Buildings that appear in Archibald's own work, including his series of New York watercolors (Fig.1.11-1.13), and in works by Alexander such as his view of Clermont (Fig.2.1), demonstrate the degree of specificity attainable within the method's programmatic confines.

The Robertson's pupils applied the technical instruction outlined in the drawing manual to a range of architectural subjects and landscapes, which they rendered in ink and watercolor. In 1967 Kennedy Galleries published a series of examples that include two undated watercolors

by Cornelia Ludlow (1788–1865), a socially prominent descendant of Gabriel Ludlow (1736–1808) and a Robertson pupil, which demonstrate the Robertsons' approach (Fig.4.6-4.7). Ludlow's compositions follow those of the Robertsons: a tree in the corner foreground, its foliage rendered with a series of looping outlines, frames the scene; a building, with precisely rendered details, stands in the middle distance; a faint watercolor wash indicates elements in the far distance.

Two scenes of Cambridge College in Massachusetts by an unidentified Robertson pupil demonstrate the conventions outlined in *Elements of the Graphic Arts*, as well as the prescribed progression from ink to watercolor (Fig.4.8-4.9). In both the drawing and the watercolor, a large tree in the foreground at right frames the composition. The artist rendered its foliage, and that of the smaller trees and bushes in the middle distance, with a series of looping strokes. The college building is drawn precisely with an effort toward accurate perspective. In the watercolor, the artist added a figure driving a horse-drawn cart, an example of the picturesque conventions the Robertsons encouraged.

The third chapter of *Elements of the Graphic Arts* covers Archibald's theory of painting, which he divides

into four sections: invention, composition, design, and coloring. He provides technical instruction in painting in oil, watercolor, and crayons "formed of different colored earths, and made into the consistence of chalks."[26] This is followed by a history of painting encompassing "the Antients," and "the Moderns" of Italy, France, England, and America. He cites Copley, Trumbull, and West as examples of American genius, and calls for "an antique academy on this side of the Atlantic" to foster and retain their caliber of artistic talent:

> The author after many years attention to the abilities of those under his tuition, can add his testimony, that if an antique school of the fine arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture were established, the name of the American school would rank as high as any of her predecessors; he has done all in his power for this purpose, and this short treatise is made expressly for the purpose of giving a true idea of the art, and assisting the young pupil in his studies, and directing them to the proper point.

Archibald concludes by enthusiastically announcing the recent establishment of the American Academy of the Fine Arts: "Since writing the above, I have the satisfaction to add, that since this work went to press, a society of the most respectable characters in this state is formed, which will assist in confirming my expectations, of the eminence

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[26] Archibald Robertson, *Elements of the Graphic Arts*, 8.

to which the fine arts promise to arrive in this country, and particularly this city."[27]

The Robertsons used copies of famous paintings, plaster casts of antique sculptures, and prints from Europe both as sources for their own work and as instructional aids for their students. Copies of European old master paintings, let alone originals, were rarely found in America in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Archibald and Alexander depended on Andrew in London to obtain paintings and prints on their behalf. Andrew also sent some of his own works for criticism and for use at the school.[28] In 1802 Alexander advertised some recent arrivals:

> A. R. is happy to announce to his Pupils who are at present in the country, that he has just received, by the Two Friends, from his attentive correspondent in London, the most valuable addition to his collection ever yet come to hand, consisting of select and picturesque views in England, Wales, and Ireland, in a series of progressive lessons, from the young pupil to the finished scholar. The choice part of this collection consists of twelve original paintings, from the pencil of Mr [Thomas] Walmsley, an artist of the most distinguished merit and reputation, and with great expence and difficulty procured, being much

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[27] Ibid., 16.

[28] Andrew wrote his father from London: "I have been busy since I came, finishing and copying the pictures that are going to America." Andrew Robertson, London, to William Robertson, Aberdeen, 8 July 1801, transcribed in E. Robertson, 45.

> sought after. The subjects of these paintings are admirably adapted for patterns to copy after.[29]

Even though Alexander exaggerated Walmsley's status as an artist, the Irishman's landscape paintings were clearly valuable pedagogical tools in New York.[30] By 1797, the Robertsons had accumulated a study collection which they began to advertise, boasting that they were "in possession of a very select, valuable and extensive collection of paintings and prints of every description . . . to which is continually added original views of the most remarkably and picturesque scenes in this country, as well as the most esteemed modern London publications."[31]

Archibald and Alexander continued to run the Columbian Academy together until 1802, when a personal disagreement ended their domestic and professional partnership. Alexander left to establish his own school, the Academy of Painting and Drawing, at 17 Dey Street; Archibald stayed

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[29] "Academy of Painting & Drawing," *Morning Chronicle*, 1 October 1802.

[30] Thomas Walmsley was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1763, and died in Bath, England, in 1805 or 1806. He painted mostly landscapes, and also made the decorations for the Crow Street Theater in Dublin. One of his landscapes is in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

[31] "Columbian Academy of Painting," *New-York Gazette and General Advertiser*, 9 October 1797.

with the Columbian Academy on Liberty Street, [32] and lived on Liberty Street for the rest of his life.[33] Andrew Robertson describes the new arrangement in a June 1802 letter to the artists' sister, Katey:

> By my last letter from New York I understand that Archy and Sandy have made a new arrangement of their business. Archy is to paint and Sandy is to teach. Therefore their partnership is no longer necessary. Sandy will be much more comfortable than before . . . . He removes to No. 17, Day Street. I believe Charles [Rhind] and he will live together, being both unmarried, their society will be more similar.[34]

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[32] The majority of published sources get this part of the chronology wrong. Most recently, Claire A. Conway wrote: "In 1802 the brothers ended their partnership, and Alexander managed the school alone for several years." Claire A. Conway, "Alexander Robertson," in Avery et al., *American Drawings and Watercolors*, 338. Likewise, Dale T. Johnson wrote that "in 1802 Alexander left to open his own drawing academy, and Archibald renamed the original school the Academy of Painting." Johnson, 184-85. In 1967, Maria Naylor wrote: "In 1802, the two brothers ended the partnership in the Academy. Thereafter Alexander managed the school alone while Archibald devoted himself to painting portraits and miniatures. In a way, the elder brother was still active in teaching since the drawing book Archibald published in that very year must have been used prominently in the studies at the Academy." Naylor, 17.

[33] That Archibald remained on Liberty Street until his death was ascertained through Assessed Valuation of Real Estate Records, Ward 3, 1807-35, available on microfilm at the Municipal Archives, New York. See also Longworth's New York City Directories through 1835.

[34] Andrew Robertson, London, to Katey Robertson, Aberdeen, 25 June 1802, transcribed in E. Robertson, 74-75. Charles Rhind was born in Aberdeen, Scotland, probably the son of Alexander Rhind; his date of birth is not known. According to Goddard, he was a cousin of Archibald and Alexander Robertson. Robertson correspondence indicates that Rhind was in New York by 1802 (though he does not appear in city

Letters Andrew wrote attempting to reconcile his brothers indicate that the reasons for the split were personal. On 23 July 1802 Andrew wrote to Archibald about the importance of family and expressed his desire to be united for the sake of their mother:

> Poor thing . . . she has now only one wish, to see us all collected, and give us her blessing before she sinks to rest for ever. . . . Before you went to America, you did all you could, formed one with the family, and while in Edinburgh, and also in London, but I cannot account for the change now.[35]

Andrew wrote to Alexander in February 1803 that he remained "determined to persist in my endeavour to reconcile you."[36] His efforts were in vain; the brothers never lived together again.

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directories until 1810) and that he was a close friend of Alexander. He married Susan Fell between 1804 and 1808, the exact date is not known. Rhind became a successful merchant and diplomatic agent. He was also an amateur painter. In 1831 he sailed for Constantinople on a war vessel, which was sold to the Ottoman government. A panorama of Constantinople that Rhind painted, which William Dunlap described as "very interesting" was probably based on this trip. See *DAB*, s.v. "Rhind, Charles." For Rhind's panorama, see William H. Dunlap, *Diary of William Dunlap (1766-1839). The Memoirs of a Dramatist, Theatrical Manager, Painter, Critic, Novelist, and Historian* (New York: New-York Historical Society, 1930), 803.

[35] Andrew Robertson, London, to Archibald Robertson, New York, 23 July 1802, transcribed in E. Robertson, 77-78.

[36] Andrew Robertson, Aberdeen, to Alexander Robertson, New York, 26 February 1803, transcribed in ibid., 93.

Following the split, advertisements published by the Robertsons indicate an emerging competition between the Columbian Academy of Painting and Alexander's new Academy of Painting and Drawing. In September 1802 Archibald advertised that at the Columbian he continued to add to his numerous collection of prints, which he called patterns, and was "in daily expectation by the first arrivals, to receive some very superior additions in figures and landscapes, by the first artists."[37] To maximize visibility, he also added to his advertisement a graphic incorporating a palette and the Latin motto, "NON LINGUA PINXIT APELLES," ("there is no language to match the paintings of Apelles") (Fig.4.10). The same graphic appears on the title page of *Elements of the Graphic Arts*, and is also reported to have appeared as a sign that hung at the academy.[38]

By incorporating the Latin phrase about Apelles into his logo, Archibald forged an explicit connection between his enterprise and classical art, thereby elevating his own status as an artist and teacher. According to Pliny's

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[37] "Columbian Academy of Painting," *Commercial Advertiser*, 21 September 1802.

[38] Archibald's graphic appears in several newspapers in the New-York Historical Society, and in a clipping in the Archibald Robertson Papers, Rosenbach Museum and Library, Philadelphia (2005.212.3), where it is annotated: "Sign in Archibald Robertson's studio in his house."

Natural History, the ancient Greek painter Apelles was the only artist active in the late fourth to early third century B.C. who was allowed to paint Alexander the Great. In his lost treatise on painting, Apelles is supposed to have emphasized the importance of discipline and practice in the arts. The proverb "Never a day without a line" was attributed to him and may come from this ancient treatise. Like Apelles, Archibald in *Elements of the Graphic Arts* emphasized the need for discipline in artistic training.

In October 1802 Alexander placed a competing advertisement—the longest and most detailed yet—for his Academy of Painting and Drawing, boasting that he had "spared neither pains nor expence in procuring from London a collection of patterns of every description, selected by an artist of the first consideration, who regularly forwards every work of merit immediately on its being published."[39] Alexander was also selling his four-print series "Picturesque American Landscapes" at various print shops and at the academy. Like the Columbian Academy of Painting, Alexander's enterprise functioned as a studio, a school, and a gallery. By the beginning of 1804, Andrew Robertson was congratulating Alexander on the success of

[39] "Academy of Painting & Drawing," *Morning Chronicle*, 1 October 1802.

his venture, and giving advice for expansion.[40] In September 1806 Andrew sent to Alexander a "Plan of Study" for pupils in drawing, advising him to:

> Select a few of your best pupils and go on; they will teach themselves and one another, with no trouble to you. Parade their sketches once a week, select the best and hang them up in honour. Camera obscura, ne plus ultra in drawing from nature, campstool, portfolio, slight frame with points stuck round.[41]

In 1808 Andrew Robertson wrote his own "Treatise on Miniature Painting" and sent it to Alexander in New York. Alexander used the treatise at his academy, and shared it with his colleagues.[42] It became an influential work that was studied in America and in England by aspiring miniaturists.[43]

There is virtually no documentation of Archibald's teaching activities at the Columbian Academy following Alexander's departure in 1802, but it can be assumed that he continued to attract students for more than twenty

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[40] Andrew Robertson, London, to Alexander Robertson, New York, 7 February 1804, transcribed in E. Robertson, 114.

[41] Andrew Robertson, London, to Alexander Robertson, New York, 9 September 1806, transcribed in ibid., 166.

[42] Ibid., 157.

[43] Andrew Robertson wrote another text on aesthetics, which his daughter Emily Robertson published in 1896 as *Elementary and Practical Hints as to the Perception and Enjoyment of the Beautiful in Nature and in the Fine Arts* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1896).

years. Longworth's New York City directory lists the Columbian Academy annually through 1823.[44] At that time, Archibald retired, giving up his school and his career as a painter. In his autobiographical manuscript he attributed the decision to his desire to pursue a lifelong interest in literature.[45] A more likely cause is that Alexander's success at the Academy of Painting and Drawing contributed to putting Archibald out of business.

By June 1820, Alexander had moved his school out of his house and into the space leased to the American Academy of the Fine Arts in the prestigious New York Institution of Learned and Scientific Establishments, located in the Old Almshouse on Chambers Street behind City Hall.[46] From 1820 until 1831 his Academy of Painting and Drawing was based in the American Academy's rooms in the New York Institution. The association between Alexander's Academy and the American Academy and New York Institution was undoubtedly advantageous for Alexander in many ways. He paid no rent,

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[44] In his autobiographical manuscript, Archibald wrote that he continued painting until 1821. However Longworth's city directory continues to list the Columbian Academy through 1823.

[45] Archibald Robertson, "Biographical Memoir of the Author."

[46] *Longworth's American Almanac, New-York Register, and City Directory* (New York: Thomas Longworth, 1820), 331, 373.

and he was able to utilize the American Academy's collection as his primary teaching tool.

The New York Institution was organized by the Common Council of New York in 1816 to house several of the city's leading learned societies, each of which held a lease to the city government that required payment of one peppercorn per year as rent. The original constituent organizations were the New York Society Library, the New-York Historical Society, John Scudder's American Museum, the U.S. Military and Philosophical Society, John Griscom's Chemistry Laboratory, the Literary and Philosophical Society of New York, and the American Academy of Fine Arts. The New York Institution thus became the center of the city's cultural life.[47]

The American Academy of the Fine Arts was reorganized and revitalized when it became part of the New York Institution in 1816. The American Academy housed a studio, library, and gallery, and owned a significant collection of paintings, prints, and plaster casts taken from antique

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[47] Subsequent tenants included the Bible Society, John Pintard's Savings Bank, the Lyceum of Natural History, the Society for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb, and the United Society of Journeymen and Shipwrights and Caulkers. Many other organizations applied for space but were denied. *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1784-1831*, 19 vols. (New York: City of New York, 1917), 8:515. For the intellectual origins and aspirations of the New York Institution, see Bender, 64-66.

sculptures, of which Alexander was elected Keeper on 18 January 1820.[48] As Keeper, Alexander earned an annual salary of $200 and had unlimited access to the academy's extensive collection, which had no rival in New York.

For eleven years, from 1820 until 1831, Alexander ran his independent Academy of Painting and Drawing in the American Academy's space at the New York Institution, using the American's exceptional collection of casts and pictures as his primary teaching tool. In November 1821 he temporarily renamed his school, advertising it as the "New-York Institution, Department of the Fine Arts," and announced that, "in addition to the means formerly possessed, the valuable stock of the academy is, by permission of the board, made extensively useful to the pupil." [49] In 1824 Alexander again advertised that his pupils at the New York Institution "have the use and benefit of the valuable and extensive collection belonging

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[48] Alexander was elected Secretary on 18 January 1817. He was Secretary and Keeper from 1820 to 1826, and Keeper from 1826 to 1836. "Appendix A: Members of the American Academy of the Fine Arts," in Rebora, 495-531. For the Academy's collection, see "Appendix B: Paintings and Sculpture Formerly in the Collection of the American Academy of the Fine Arts," in Rebora, 532-47.

[49] "New-York Institution, Department of the Fine Arts," *New-York Evening Post*, 5 November 1821.

to the Academy of Arts."[50] Under this new arrangement, which was formalized in 1826, Alexander relinquished his annual salary as Keeper in exchange for free use of the academy's space and collection for his school.[51]

Plaster casts were of particular value for students because they provided almost exact replicas of antique sculptures. They varied in quality and in size, from miniature to full-scale versions, and were priced accordingly. In Europe, casts were used at most small drawing schools, and also at large academies such as the Royal Academy in London. Archibald's collection at the Columbian Academy contained miniature versions of famous statues including *Castor and Pollux*, *Venus de Medici*, *Apollo Belvedere*, *Hebe*, *Venus de Belle Face*, a *Fighting Warrior*, a *Norman Orator*, a *Dancing Faun*; busts of *Apollo*, *Eros*, and *Faustina*; and casts of various human anatomical parts and a horse. In an undated document in the American

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[50] "New York Institution, Department of the Fine Arts," *New-York American*, 30 October 1824.

[51] An 1830 report in the American Academy's archive reads: "Within the last four years the salary of the Keeper has been discontinued & he has been allowed the use of one of the rooms & the use of the pictures to be copied by his pupils." A. H. Rogers, "Report of the committee appointed to investigate the present State of the Academy," ADS, 18 November 1830, AAFA-NYHS. The committee recommended that the Academy abolish the position of Keeper to save money. However, Rebora shows that Alexander retained his position as Keeper until January 1836.

Academy of the Fine Arts papers, Archibald proposed to lend his casts to the organization under the conditions that they be repaired and stored in a suitable cabinet, and that Archibald be allowed to use them at any time at the American Academy or to take them to his house. The casts must have been small and relatively inexpensive, as a note at the end of the document reads: "A few plain shelves neatly adjusted will be but a trifling expense—&a few dollars will repair the casts."[52]

In contrast, during the decade that Alexander's Academy of Painting and Drawing was housed in the New York Institution, his students had the unparalleled advantage of working from the full-size, high-quality collection of casts owned by the American Academy. In his examination of American painter John Wesley Jarvis's teaching practice, art historian Mark Mitchell provides a useful analysis of the pedagogical value of the American Academy's casts,

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[52] Archibald Robertson, "Proposal to lend the Academy of Arts busts, statues, etc . . . From His collection," ALS, undated, AAFA-NYHS. The records do not indicate whether the loan ever happened. According to his will, Archibald still owned the casts when he died. Archibald Robertson, Last Will and Testament, ADS, 20 October 1831, Archibald Robertson Papers, Rosenbach Museum and Library, Philadelphia. The casts were eventually given to the National Academy of Design, where they were destroyed in a fire in 1906. Mark Mitchell, Assistant Curator, National Academy of Design Museum, New York, to the author, New York, email, 3 March 2006.

which were incredibly expensive and would have been beyond the means of most artists and instructors:

> By their life-sized scale, if nothing else, these casts would have encouraged students in the belief that they were studying an exact copy of the original work. This elevation of the model simultaneously elevated the seriousness of the students' task and the expected result. Drawing among the casts of the American Academy differed in no significant way from doing so in academies in Paris, Rome, or London. Students at the European institutions likewise worked in galleries full of full-scale casts. The step from an amateurish drawing school with only a handful of miniature casts to the full-scale collection of the American Academy is groundbreaking.[53]

Alexander would have been able to hold drawing classes using these casts whenever a special exhibition was not mounted, at which times the casts were moved out and classes suspended.[54]

Like casts, prints were of central importance in the training of amateur and professional artists during the period. As art historian Diana Strazdes has written, much of the amateur's activity focused on collecting, coloring,

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[53] Like Alexander Robertson, Jarvis held art classes at the American Academy while he was keeper of the collection (from about 1812 to 1815). Mitchell, 34-35.

[54] During an exhibition in the spring of 1829, the American Academy of the Fine Arts offered its collection of "statuary and casts" to the National Academy of Design "during the interval of the exhibition." John L. Morton, Secretary, National Academy of Design, New York, to Alexander Jackson Davis, Secretary, American Academy of the Fine Arts, New York, ALS, 12 April 1829, AAFA-NYHS.

and tracing prints.[55] That the Robertsons referred to their study prints as “patterns” emphasizes their primary function as guides.

The Robertsons were continually adding to their respective collections of engravings of figures and landscapes “by the first artists” from ancient to modern times, which they acquired from print sellers in New York and from Andrew in London. They also incorporated into their curricula engravings made from their own drawings.[56] The prints would have been kept in portfolios or, more likely, organized in large books of various sizes. Records of specific prints in their collections do not survive. The most detailed account comes from an advertisement that Archibald ran in 1804: “From ITALY—among a large collection of the works of the first masters, are some of the capital pieces of Raphael, Michael Angelo &c. Of Landscapes, a

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[55] Diana Strazdes, "The Amateur Aesthetic and the Draughtsman in Early America," *Archives of American Art Journal* 19, no. 1 (1979): 20.

[56] In 1802 Alexander advertised that he had received “from London a collection of patterns of every description . . . . To this foreign supply are added select and picturesque American views in Upper and Lower Canada, as well as in the United States, finished from sketches taken by A. R. on the spot.” “Academy of Painting and Drawing,” *Morning Chronicle*, 1 October 1802.

choice selection of the best works of the celebrated Peranesi, which are no less rare than greatly excellent."[57]

Alexander's teaching practice flourished during the ten years that he operated his school in the American Academy's space at the New York Institution. In 1828 he placed a newspaper notice in which he reflected on the success he had achieved as an instructor since his arrival in New York in 1792:

> The system heretofore pursued for the last 35 years in this city by him is continued with all the advantages so long a practice has enabled him to improve. To the increasing stock of his own collection for the use of his pupils, they have, by the liberal indulgence of the Directors of the Academy of Arts, the use of their valuable collection for study and practice.
>
> The successful and eminent talents of American genius which the subscriber has had the good fortune to elicit, it is hoped is already known—he only wishes to remind the public that his time and best exertions are, as heretofore, devoted to this object.[58]

When the New York Institution lost municipal support, and its lease, in 1831, Alexander resumed operating his academy out of his home.[59] Longworth's city directory shows that he lived and worked at 7 Albany Street in 1832, at 16

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[57] "At the Columbian Academy of Painting," *Daily Advertiser*, 26 November 1804.

[58] "Drawing and Painting," *New-York American*, 19 May 1828.

[59] See Alexander Robertson entries in *Longworth's American Almanac, New-York Register, and City Directory*, 1821-32. For the New York Institution's demise, see Bender, 76.

Hammond Street in 1833, and at 64 Bedford Street in 1834 and 1835, the final year for which he or his school is listed. Alexander's frequent change of address can be attributed to financial trouble. Though neither Robertson had an independent fortune when they arrived in America, Archibald gained financial security when he married the socially prominent and wealthy Eliza Abramse. Alexander's wife, Mary Provoost (sometimes spelled Prevost or Provost), though socially prominent because she was a niece of Bishop Samuel Provoost, was not wealthy, and the family struggled financially throughout Alexander's life.[60]

The field of art training in New York changed greatly during the Robertsons' lives, culminating in the National Academy of Design in 1826 and the emergence of life drawing as the epitome of fine arts instruction. Though Archibald drew from live models during the course of his training with Alexander Runciman in Edinburgh, there is nothing to suggest that he incorporated life drawing into the curriculum at the Columbian Academy. His students drew from casts of classical sculpture but not from live figures. As the city's most prominent art instructors in about 1800,

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[60] Emily Robertson wrote: "Alexander Robertson was an amiable and talented man, but he had a numerous family and small means, which weighed on him through life." E. Robertson, 285.

and as directors and officers of the American Academy of the Fine Arts, the Robertsons exerted a great deal of influence on the progress of the arts in New York. They could have incorporated life drawing into the curricula at their schools, but chose not to do so. It is impossible to be certain of the reason, but there are several likely factors in their decision not to teach drawing from live models. First, life drawing was not often part of art training in Scotland until the founding of the Royal Scottish Academy in 1826. As Archibald wrote in letters to his brother Andrew, studying from life was important only for painting historical subjects, not for the portrait miniatures and landscapes in which he and Alexander excelled. Second, New York's most influential patrons—notably Robert R. Livingston, who brought Archibald to New York and founded the American Academy—believed that the genius of American artists would flourish through assiduous study and emulation of the antique, not by studying from nature.

By the 1820s a new generation of artists was advocating the study of nature over the antique. The shift is illustrated by comparing Archibald's *Elements of the Graphic Arts* to "Practical Directions for Miniature Painting," the treatise composed by miniature painter and

art instructor Thomas Seir Cummings in 1834. In 1802 Archibald wrote that "without a perfect knowledge of the proportions, nothing can be produced," and that the only way to learn about proportion was by studying works by classical sculptors who had "excelled nature; they never having found any man so perfect in all particulars, as some of their figures are."[61] Archibald saw no reason to study nature because Greek and Roman sculpture provided more perfect forms. Cummings, on the other hand, wrote that students could only gain success by "a careful study of nature, judiciously examined by a mind previously accustomed to a careful study of the antique."[62]

The opening of the National Academy of Design in 1826 permanently altered the landscape of art training in New York. The academy's exhibits and training programs reflected the cultural nationalism of the early decades of the nineteenth century and favored contemporary art over that of the past. By 1826, American artists and patrons had begun to show a marked preference for modern works and to reject the classical sculptures and old master prints and paintings on which the Robertsons had established their

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[61] Archibald Robertson, *Elements of the Graphic Arts*, 4.

[62] Thomas Seir Cummings, "Practical Directions for Miniature Painting, by T. S. Cummings, Esq.," quoted in Mitchell, 109.

method. At the beginning of their New York careers in 1791 and 1792, the Robertsons had been at the forefront of art training. By the end of their careers, they were regarded as relics of the past.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE LEGACY OF ARCHIBALD AND ALEXANDER ROBERTSON

Archibald and Alexander Robertson stimulated the development of American art during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in ways previous scholars have underestimated. The Robertsons established New York City's first art school, the Columbian Academy of Painting, where they trained professional artists and popularized the amateur pursuits of drawing and watercolor painting as signals of bourgeois gentility. Alexander popularized the picturesque mode of landscape painting through works such as his "Picturesque American Landscapes," an important series of four prints made from his drawings in 1800 and 1802 by the renowned London engraver Francis Jukes. Archibald wrote *Elements of the Graphic Arts*, the first drawing book ever published in America, in 1802. Later that year he helped to found the American Academy of the Fine Arts, an institution intended to instruct artists and to elevate the public's taste. Beginning in 1820, as Keeper of the American Academy, Alexander increased artists' access to the Academy's collection of casts, paintings, and prints by holding his classes in their galleries. In his work for

the Erie Canal celebrations in 1825, Archibald promoted the art of lithography in the United States. This investigation of their legacy demonstrates that the Robertsons played a vital role in disseminating a conservative taste and artistic style in New York.

The first section in this chapter is devoted to examining the Roberstons' legacy as manifested in the careers of their students. Using three pupils as case studies, I will explore the impact of their association with the Robertsons on their works and careers. The artists discussed are history painter John Vanderlyn (1775-1852), sculptor John Henri Isaac Browere (1792-1834), and miniaturist Anne Hall (1792-1863), one of the first women to be elected an artist in the National Academy of Design, and the only woman to be elected a full member before 1900.

The second section in this chapter concerns the Robertsons' roles as patrons of the arts through their active membership in the American Academy of the Fine Arts. The American Academy's unaccommodating policies toward New York artists precipitated events that led eventually to the founding of the National Academy of Design in 1826. A major goal of this chapter is to correct the longstanding misapprehension that Archibald supported the faction of artists, led by Samuel F. B. Morse, who opposed John

Trumbull and the Academy's directors and who established the National Academy of Design as an alternative venue for training and exhibiting. In fact, Archibald and Alexander both served faithfully and, according to surviving records, quietly as officers of the increasingly conservative American Academy through the middle of the 1830s. The apparent contradiction between their decades-long dedication to instruction of American artists, and their steadfast compliance to the Academy's disobliging policies toward those same artists, is examined in detail.

The Robertsons trained their students using a curriculum derived from traditional European drawing schools: making copies after casts, paintings, and prints, and progressing from the rudiments of drawing to watercolors and, finally, oil painting. In his study of New York culture from 1797 to 1817, historian George Gates Raddin summarized: "At the Robertsons' academy the pupil did not learn to draw; he learned to copy, and this practice left a marked impression—with very few exceptions—on the painting and drawing produced in New York at this time."[1]

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[1] George Gates Raddin, Jr., *The New York of Hocquet Caritat and His Associates, 1797-1817* (Dover, New Jersey: The Dover Advance Press, 1953), 21-22.

There is a relative scarcity of known Robertson students, especially considering that they taught for more than thirty years (see "Appendix: Students of the Robertsons"). There are neither surviving class rosters nor account books showing payments received. Instead references to pupils come from indirect sources: biographies of artists whose careers are well documented, such as John Vanderlyn; early histories of American art, such as William Dunlap's 1834 *History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States*; and scattered documents in related archives, such as receipts for payment to the Robertsons found in the Robert R. Livingston Papers at the New-York Historical Society. Despite the limitations inherent in the present study, it is informative to scrutinize a small group of case studies—Vanderlyn, Browere, and Hall—to determine the impact of the Robertsons' conservative painting and teaching style on art of their period.

John Vanderlyn (1775–1852)

Of the American painters who studied with Archibald and Alexander Robertson at the Columbian Academy of Painting, John Vanderlyn is the most prominent. Subsequent to studying with the Robertsons, Vanderlyn was informally apprenticed to Gilbert Stuart in New York and Philadelphia

before completing his training in Paris. Because Stuart is better known and more highly regarded as a painter than either of the Robertsons, his impact on Vanderlyn's art has received more scholarly attention.

The grandson of a portrait limner and son of a sign and house painter, Vanderlyn was born in Kingston, New York, on 15 October 1775. He showed an early interest and proficiency in the arts, which was encouraged by his family. He had access to brushes and colors and it is likely that he learned the fundamentals of technique from his father. According to his first biographer, Robert Gosman, he made ink sketches at the age of ten and painted landscapes and portraits in his teens. His ink wash drawings of rural scenes seem to be composites conceived from prints, imagination, and direct observation of the Kingston countryside. According to Vanderlyn scholar William Oedel, from this early period the artist was concerned with the intricacies of architecture and human activity and with devising a picturesque composition. His *Harbor Scene* (1789, private collection; reproduced in Oedel, 484) attests to this interest.

In the autumn of 1792, at age 17, Vanderlyn left Kingston for New York City to begin an informal apprenticeship as an artist. He took a job with Thomas

Barrow, an English-born coach painter who sold artists' supplies and imported fine engravings. Most New York artists frequented the shop and knew Barrow personally. Gilbert Stuart was a regular customer while he was in New York from 1793 to 1794, and befriended Vanderlyn, inspiring the teen in his pursuit of a career as a painter.

Vanderlyn remained in the city for nearly two years, from the fall of 1792 until about the summer of 1794. During this time he received his first formal art training under Archibald and Alexander Robertson at the Columbian Academy of Painting. This early training influenced Vanderlyn's life and work in ways that previous scholars have not sufficiently explored or assessed. Gosman's account of these years is based on letters and papers lent him by Vanderlyn, and on conversations with the artist about 1848. He wrote:

> During his stay at Barrow's, Vanderlyn had the advantage of attending in his leisure hours the drawing school of Alexander Robertson of New York, the only real advantage of the kind accessible to the aspirant, an advantage afforded him by the generous self-prompted kindness of John Pintard a New York merchant. [2]

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[2] The most detailed account of Vanderlyn's early years and his studies with the Roberstons appears in Robert Gosman's unpublished "Biographical Sketch of John Vanderlyn, Artist." There are two drafts of this biography in the Hoes Collection, Senate House Museum, Kingston, New York. There is also a typed copy at The New-York Historical Society, which incorporates both drafts. Gosman, a newspaper editor

By the time he met Vanderlyn in 1792, John Pintard was one of the most successful merchants in New York City. Like Robert R. Livingston, he was also active in supporting the city's emerging cultural institutions. In 1790, under the auspices of the Tammany Society, he organized a historical museum called the American Museum, which was housed in a building on Spruce Street. He described his endeavor to then Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson: "The object of this institution is to collect and preserve whatever relates to our Country in art or nature, as well as every material which may serve to perpetuate the memorial of national events and history . . . . The plan is a patriotic one and if prosecuted may prove a public benefit."[3] Like many of his contemporaries, Pintard encouraged the development of a national art to prove to the world that the new republic was capable of cultural achievement.

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from Kingston whose parents were friends of Vanderlyn, began his biography of the artist in 1848-49 but left it unfinished after Vanderlyn's death in 1852. It is transcribed in Louise Hunt Averill, "John Vanderlyn, American Painter (1775-1852)" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1949). I will refer to it as Gosman (Averill), and follow Averill's pagination. Thus, for Vanderlyn's two years of study at the Columbian Academy, see Gosman (Averill), 303-304.

[3] Quoted in Margaret Heilbrun, "NYork, NCentury, N-YHS," *The New-York Journal of American History* 65, no. 1 (2003), 26.

Providing the financial means for Vanderlyn to study with the Robertsons is one important example of his work on behalf of the emerging national culture.[4]

Gosman described the training Vanderlyn received at the Columbian Academy:

> Robertson was a Scot, a miniature painter as well as drawing master, and of no marked talent in either walk. He was however a respectable teacher for the times, and his school was much encouraged by most of the opulent families of the city. Among the fellow pupils of Vanderlyn, were John R. Murray, Isaac G. Ogden, the Macomb brothers, and others subsequently known in the commercial annals of New York.[5]

At the Columbian Academy, aspiring professional artists like Vanderlyn worked alongside the sons of the city's socio-economic elite. John R. Murray (1774–1851), the son of John Murray, a merchant and civic leader after whom the New York City neighborhood of Murray Hill was named, became one of Vanderlyn's close friends. In later years, the younger Murray became a successful merchant and one of Vanderlyn's most important supporters and patrons. Isaac G. Ogden would later become a member of the New York state senate from 1815 to 1819, and 1823 to 1826.[6] The Macomb

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[4] For more on Pintard's cultural endeavors, see James Grant Wilson, *John Pintard, Founder of the New-York Historical Society* (New York: New-York Historical Society, 1902).

[5] Gosman (Averill), 303.

brothers were wealthy, powerful, and extremely fashionable. Their father, Alexander Macomb, owned the mansion at Number 39 Broadway that George Washington had rented in 1790 as his official presidential residence, for which he paid a breathtaking twenty-five hundred dollars per year.[7]

Gosman also provides a frank assessment of the Robertsons' artistic skills relative to some of their students. He wrote that Vanderlyn studied with Alexander, who was "of no marked talent," although presumably both Archibald and Alexander oversaw Vanderlyn's training. Vanderlyn rapidly attained a level of skill comparable to that of his teachers. Gosman wrote:

> Going beyond the India ink and water colour limits of general pupilage, Vanderlyn executed some fine pen drawings of the passions after Le Brun. It is not improper to say that the scholar had gone beyond the master, and that Mr. Robertson frankl[y] admitted this after being convicted of some errors in perspective by his pupil.[8]

Vanderlyn's early portraits show the influence of the training he received from Archibald and Alexander at the Columbian Academy. An impressive 1793 posthumous pen and

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[6] For the Ogden family, see William Ogden Wheeler, *The Ogden Family in America, Elizabethtown Branch, and Their English Ancestry* (Philadelphia: Printed for private circulation by J. B. Lippincott, 1907).

[7] Burrows and Wallace, 31.

[8] Gosman (Averill), 303-4.

ink drawing of his brother Gerardus, who had died in 1784, clearly reflects the Robertsons' linear approach (Fig.5.1). Vanderlyn drew the figure's head in profile according to the method Archibald would later codify in *Elements of the Graphic Arts*. He developed the form first in outlines, then filled the interior with parallel hatchings to indicate areas of light and dark. By doing so, he achieved an effect of three-dimensional volume. Archibald recommended this same technique to his brother, Andrew: "In working shades of any kind I always use straight strokes unless something very extraordinary demands a curved or waved line—such as in hair . . . in long locks I use the curve . . . but in shades, straight hatches."[9] As was the Robertsons' method, Vanderlyn was required to draw works such as this—in pencil or ink on paper—before he could progress to painting.

In 1794 Vanderlyn also worked briefly with Gilbert Stuart. Sponsored by his family, or perhaps still by Pintard, he moved in with Stuart, presumably at Stuart's studio on Stone Street, near the Columbian Academy. Stuart, who was busy with numerous portrait commissions during his year-and-a-half stay in New York in 1793-94, enlisted

[9] Archibald Robertson, "Treatise on Miniature Painting," 31.

Vanderlyn's assistance in a variety of minor tasks.[10] According to Oedel, Stuart also allowed Vanderlyn to copy his recently finished portraits of Judge Egbert Benson (Stuart: ca. 1793-94, John Jay Homestead, Katonah, N.Y.; Vanderlyn: 1794, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, N.Y.) and Senator Aaron Burr (Stuart: ca. 1793-94, New Jersey Historical Society, Newark; Vanderlyn: unlocated).

This exercise, Oedel explains, provided an important lesson for Vanderlyn, not only in the stylistic attainments of one of the most skilled portraitists of the period, but also in the effectiveness of copying from recognized masters.[11] Though we know that copying from prints and paintings (primarily copies of European old master pictures) was part of the curriculum at the Columbian Academy, the extent and caliber of the Robertsons' study collection during Vanderlyn's years there is not known. It was not until late 1797 that their advertisements began describing their "very select, valuable and extensive collection of paintings and prints of every description, well calculated for improvement, and suited to the variety

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[10] For Stuart in New York in 1793-94, see Barratt and Miles, 101-28.

[11] William T. Oedel, "John Vanderlyn: French Neoclassicism and the Search for an American Art" (Ph.D. diss., University of Delaware, 1981), 31.

of taste."[12] Moreover, Gosman states that Vanderlyn produced only works in ink and watercolor at the Columbian Academy. He learned to paint in oil on canvas later from Stuart.

After Vanderlyn left New York in the summer of 1794, Senator Aaron Burr, who had been impressed by the young artist's replica of his portrait painted by Stuart, paid Vanderlyn's expenses to live with Stuart in Philadelphia and work as Stuart's studio assistant. Vanderlyn moved to Philadelphia about mid-July 1795 and remained with Stuart until late spring of 1796. He learned oil painting techniques from Stuart by observing his work, preparing canvases, and blocking out the basic arrangement of compositions.

Under Burr's patronage, Vanderlyn went to France in 1796, becoming the first American painter to study in Paris. He developed a reliable neoclassical technique under his teacher François-André Vincent, who had an independent atelier in the Musée du Louvre. In 1799, before Vanderlyn had completed his training, political and financial reversals forced Burr to withdraw his financial support. Nonetheless, Vanderlyn managed to remain in Europe for most of the next sixteen years, where he built his reputation as

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[12] "Columbian Academy of Painting," *New-York Gazette and General Advertiser*, 9 October 1797.

a painter of portraits and historical subjects. He exhibited at the Paris Salon for several years beginning in 1800, and spent almost two years in Rome, from 1805 to 1807. His *Caius Marius on the Ruins of Carthage* (Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco), painted in Rome in 1807, won him a gold medal at the 1808 Salon.

Vanderlyn's history paintings reveal the influence of Stuart in their brushwork and oil painting technique, and of Vincent in their French neoclassical style. But, even after training in Paris, he continued to make portraits that demonstrate the influence of his training with the Robertsons. A pencil drawing of Robert Fulton from 1798 (Fig.5.2) provides evidence of his initial training. In this work, as in the earlier portrait of Gerardus Vanderlyn, the artist reveals himself as a linear, direct draftsman, working in a literal style.

The Robertsons' influence on Vanderlyn manifested itself in areas other than his portrait style. During his years abroad Vanderlyn's enduring ambition was to go home to establish the high art of historical painting in America. As early as 1812 he conceived of opening a drawing school in New York to supplement his income upon his return to the United States. In a letter to David B. Warden, the American Consul in Paris, he wrote that the Robertsons had

proven that such a venture could succeed. He described: "a Drawing school that I have it in contemplation to establish, to devote my leisure hours to, on the success of which I may count with some certainty—judging from that which the Robertsons have experienced there for these 15 years, to my knowledge."[13] Vanderlyn's plan came to fruition within months of his return to the United States in the autumn of 1815.

The Columbian Academy undoubtedly served as the model upon which Vanderlyn based his art school, which he opened in May 1816 in New York City. His partners in the venture were a Mr. Milbert and Louis-Antoine Collas, a friend from Vincent's atelier who had traveled with him to New York. The men announced the opening of their "Academy of Drawing and Painting" in the 1 May 1816 edition of the *New York Evening Post*. According to the text of the advertisement, the school was intended primarily for children:

> Parents and guardians are respectfully informed, that the above named professors will teach in their establishment everything that relates to portrait, miniature, historical, landscape and botanical painting, and also to military topography; that it will be their study to direct the attention of their pupils exclusively to the best models, and to render

[13] John Vanderlyn, Paris, to David B. Warden, Paris, 15 April 1812, Coykendall Collection, Senate House Association, Kingston, New York, transcribed in Averill, 238.

> imitation of them easy demonstrations, suited to the age of those who may be confided to their care.
>
> The Academy will be opened at 9 o'clock, A.M. on Monday the 2d of May, for ladies—and on Tuesday, the 3d, for gentlemen, at the same hour, at No. 24 Park Place, in the house adjoining that of Mr. King, where further information may be obtained in relation to their establishment.[14]

Nothing more is known of Vanderlyn's school. Based on its description in the *Evening Post*, however, it is clear that its curriculum replicated that of the Columbian Academy, where students received instruction in the same specialties. Vanderlyn's school apparently folded within the year.[15] Oedel has hypothesized that Vanderlyn lost interest in the venture following the 1816 revitalization of the American Academy of the Fine Arts, to which he promptly began directing his attention.

Vanderlyn was eager to claim a prominent position within the academy, and thus the artistic community of New York. On 16 May 1816, the day the academy finalized its lease for new space in the New York Institution, he petitioned the academy's officers "to be accommodated with

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[14] "Messrs. Vanderlyn, Collas, and Milbert," *New York Evening Post*, 1 May 1816.

[15] Oedel, 417. Art historians Kevin Avery and Peter Fodera wrote that Vanderlyn's school "foundered after several months." Kevin J. Avery and Peter L. Fodera, *John Vanderlyn's Panoramic View of the Palace and Gardens of Versailles* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1988), 18.

an apartment for the exhibition of his paintings."[16] The request was granted in June, and Vanderlyn immediately began renovating the two rooms that had been allotted him. In July he opened his exhibition, which included several of his own works painted in Paris and Rome, including his *Ariadne Asleep and Abandoned by Theseus on the Island of Naxos* (1812, dated 1814, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia). This and other works in the exhibition that depicted female nudes are reported to have disturbed several viewers, including the academy's Keeper, John Rubens Smith, who resigned in protest against the "indecent pictures." Vanderlyn's exhibition was forced to close in September, when the academy opened its own inaugural show to the public. The closing precipitated a series of events, detailed by Rebora, that resulted in fierce animosity between Vanderlyn and officers of the academy.[17] The Robertsons' roles in the events are discussed later in this chapter.

John Henri Isaac Browere (1792–1834)

One of America's first professional sculptors, John Henri Isaac Browere was actively engaged in portraiture in

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[16] AAFA-NYHS, quoted in Oedel, 418.

[17] For a detailed discussion of Vanderlyn's exhibition and his association with the American Academy, see Rebora, 102-59.

New York City in the 1810s through the 1840s.[18] He had received his earliest training in the fine arts from Archibald Robertson at the Columbian Academy of Painting. The precise dates of his study there are not known, but likely fall between 1811, when he married Eliza Derrick in New York, and 1812, when he went to teach school for three years in Tarrytown, New York. He could also have studied with Archibald during the period between his return to New York City in 1815 and his departure for Europe in 1816 to study sculpture.

Also undocumented is the curriculum Browere followed at the Columbian Academy. It can be assumed, however, that he made drawings after Archibald's collection of casts, prints, and paintings. He may also have studied miniature painting, thus introducing him to the field of portraiture in which he would be engaged for the rest of his career. Upon his return to New York from Tarrytown he went to work as a portrait and miniature painter before developing an interest in sculpture. His first work in this medium was a

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[18] The standard source for Browere is Charles Henry Hart, *Browere's Life Masks of Great Americans* (New York: Doubleday and McClure, 1899). More recently, see David Meschutt, *A Bold Experiment: John Henri Isaac Browere's Life Masks of Prominent Americans* (Cooperstown, N.Y.: New York State Historical Association, 1988). See also Wayne Craven, *Sculpture in America*, rev. ed. (Newark, Del.: University of Delaware Press; New York and London: Cornwall Books, 1984), 90-92.

plaster mask of Alexander Hamilton (Fig.5.3) modeled from a 1794 portrait miniature by Archibald that is now lost but was engraved by William Rollinson in 1802 (Fig.1.10).[19]

In 1816 Browere was among the first Americans to go abroad to study sculpture. He accompanied his brother, the captain of a trading vessel, to Italy, and spent nearly two years traveling on foot through Austria, England, France, Greece, Italy, and Switzerland.[20] It was probably while living in Paris that Browere learned the technique of making life masks for which he became best known.[21]

The life mask is, by its nature, one of the most faithful renderings of the human physiognomy. The artist applies to the face a soft material such as wax or plaster, which gradually hardens and when removed serves as a mold from which a cast can be taken in plaster or wax. Artists almost always make some alterations to the mold by hand, especially when it is desired to represent the eyes open. The experience of sitting for a life mask is generally uncomfortable and can even be hazardous. The process requires the insertion of breathing tubes or straws into

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[19] Meschutt, 29.

[20] Hart, *Browere's Life Masks of Great Americans*, 13.

[21] Craven, 90.

the nostrils, and the plaster generates heat as it dries.[22] According to tradition, George Washington was nearly suffocated when Jean-Antoine Houdon made his mask at Mount Vernon in 1785.

In the decade following his return to America in 1817, Browere traveled around the country making life masks of eminent men for his proposed national gallery of portrait busts. He received valuable support and encouragement from Archibald, who promoted his former student's work in New York and influenced several civic leaders to sit for their portraits with Browere.

The American tradition of assembling collections of portraits for public viewing was adopted from Europe in the post-revolutionary era. Important early collections include Charles Willson Peale's "Gallery of Distinguished Personages," a group of more than sixty oil portraits he painted beginning in 1780, which were housed in his Peale Museum (est. 1786) in Philadelphia until the collection was disbursed in 1854; Thomas Jefferson's "cabinet of worthies," a semiprivate assemblage of over eighty painted or sculpted portraits of worthy republicans which he

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[22] Harald Osborne and Marc Jordan, "Death Masks and Life Masks [from OCWA]," *Grove Art Online*, Oxford University Press [database online]; available from http://www.groveart.com; Internet; accessed 10 January 2006.

gathered from 1786 until his death in 1826; John Trumbull's large oil painting the *Declaration of Independence* (1787-1820, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Conn.), for which he collected likenesses all over the Unites States from 1789 until 1794; and the pantheon of oil paintings created over forty years beginning in 1790 for City Hall in New York.[23] Such galleries of prominent citizens were celebrations of collective greatness, an idea with particular importance in republican America.

For his gallery, Browere, between 1825 and 1828, made life masks in plaster of John Quincy Adams (Fig.5.4), Thomas Jefferson (New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown), Alexander Hamilton (New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown), New York mayor Philip Hone (New-York Historical Society), and painter Gilbert Stuart (Redwood Library, Newport, R.I.), among others. To finish the portrait bust, Browere simply applied the life mask to a toga-draped chest and shoulders. By 1828 Browere had

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[23] For a history of portrait collections assembled for public viewing, see 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). For the municipal collection in New York, see Deborah Bershad Addeo, "The New York City Hall Portrait Collection, 1790-1830" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 2005).

gathered a sufficient number of portrait busts made from life masks to open his "Gallery of Busts" in New York City. According to sculpture historian Wayne Craven, Browere hoped to have the federal government finance the casting of these in bronze, forming a kind of national portrait gallery, but the funds were not forthcoming.[24]

Following Browere's return from Europe, Archibald backed his former pupil by promoting his work in various ways. In 1821 Browere exhibited a selection of his paintings and sculpture at the gallery of the American Academy of the Fine Arts. Archibald authored the following announcement addressed "to the American Public," dated New York, 21 May 1821, endorsing the effort:

> Having for many years been intimately acquainted with John H. I. Browere, of the City of New York, I deem it a duty which I owe to him as an artist, and to the public as judges, to say that from my own observation of his works both as a painter, poet, and sculptor, I think him endowed with a great genius by nature and first talents by industry. This my opinion, his works lately exhibited in the Gallery of the American Academy of Fine Arts, New York, fully justify and is amply corroborated by all, who with unprejudiced eye, view the works of his hand.[25]

Archibald further supported Browere's career by encouraging potential subjects to sit for their life masks

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[24] Craven, 91.

[25] Quoted in Hart, *Browere's Life Masks of Great Americans*, 15-16.

with the sculptor. In July 1825 Archibald joined physician and scientist Samuel Latham Mitchill in penning an endorsement of Browere's enterprise and method to Charles Carroll, the last signer of the Declaration of Independence. The letter, addressed to Browere, read:

> I approve your design of executing a likeness in statuary of the Honorable Charles Carroll of Carrollton. When you shall present yourself to him within a few days, I authorize you to employ my testimony in favor of your skill, having submitted more than once to your plastic operation. I know that you can perform it successfully without pain and within a reasonable time. The likenesses you have made are remarkably exact, so much so that they may be truly called facsimile imitations of the life. Your gallery contains so many specimens of correct casts that not only common observers, but even critical judges bear witness to your industry, genius and talents. I foresee that your collection of busts already well advanced and rapidly enlarging, will, if your labors continue, become a depository of peculiar and intrinsic value.[26]

One year later, in July 1826, Carroll wrote to Archibald this account of the sitting and the completed bust (1826, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, N.Y.):

> Mr. Browere has produced and read to me several letters from sundry most respectable personages; on their recommendation and at his request that I sat to him to take my bust. He has taken it, and in my opinion and that of my family, and of all who have seen it, the resemblance is most striking. The operation from its commencement to its completion was

[26] Samuel L. Mitchill, to John H. I. Browere, New York, 8 July 1825, quoted in ibid., 62

> performed in two hours, with very little inconvenience and no pain to myself. This bust Mr. Browere contemplates placing, with many others, in a national gallery of busts. That his efforts may be crowned with success is my earnest wish. That his talents and genius deserve it I have no hesitation in pronouncing.[27]

Archibald's efforts on behalf of his former student reflect not only his dedication to his pupils and to the development of American art, including sculpture, but also his dedication to establishing institutions to foster what he termed "American genius" in the arts. To Archibald, Browere's "Gallery of Busts" would have represented the best of American genius through both the accomplishments of its sitters, and in the impressive endeavor of its artist. Browere left his great ambition unfulfilled when he died in 1834 at the age of forty-four.

Browere's portrait gallery was exhibited at the Chicago World's Fair in 1934, one hundred years after his death, but was otherwise little known. In 1940 Stephen C. Clark, Sr., purchased the collection, which then numbered seventeen busts and four masks, from the artist's descendents and placed it on loan to the Ostego Historical Society in Cooperstown, New York. That same year he

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[27] Charles Carroll, Doughoregan Manor, Maryland, to Archibald Robertson, New York, 29 July 1826, quoted in ibid., 115-16.

commissioned Roman Bronze Works to make bronze casts of the seventeen busts—and one of Gilbert Stuart at the Redwood Library in Newport, Rhode Island. In 1960, he bequeathed both the original plasters and the bronze casts to the New York State Historical Association.[28] Today, all of the bronzes and several of the plasters are on view there in the Fenimore Art Museum.

Anne Hall (1792–1863)

Among the most notable miniature painters to have studied with the Robertsons in New York is Anne Hall. Hall was elected an artist of the newly established National Academy of Design in 1827, associate member in 1828, and became a full member in 1833, making her the only woman to be a full member before 1900.[29] She was particularly noted for her delicate renderings of women and children, shown alone or in groups, which she began exhibiting at the American Academy of the Fine Arts as early as 1817. After the founding of the National Academy, she contributed

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[28] Meschutt, 7-8.

[29] The other women elected artist in 1827 were Julia Blight Fulton, Emily Maverick, Maria Maverick, and Rosalba Peale. Fulton and the Mavericks were elected associates in 1828, but none of the group became full members. See "Appendix: Members," in Eliot Clark, *History of the National Academy of Design, 1825–1953* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954), 245-75.

miniatures to their annual exhibitions regularly from 1828 to 1852.[30]

Born in Pomfret, Connecticut, in 1792, Hall learned miniature technique from Samuel King in Newport, Rhode Island. In the mid-1820s, she moved to New York and began to study painting with Alexander Robertson at his Academy of Painting and Drawing. Neither the precise dates of her study at Alexander's Academy nor the curriculum she followed there are documented; according to Dunlap, she received instruction in oil painting.[31] During the mid-1820s, when Hall is supposed to have studied there, Alexander's academy was housed in the space leased to the American Academy in the New York Institution. Thus Hall benefited from using as models the academy's valuable collection of full-size casts, prints, and paintings.

From its inception in 1791, the Columbian Academy offered instruction to both males and females. In this respect, as in others examined in previous chapters of this dissertation, Archibald and Alexander followed the model of

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[30] There is no monographic source for Hall. See Falk, 2: 1424; and George C. Groce and David H. Wallace, *The New-York Historical Society's Dictionary of Artists in America 1564-1860* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1957), 283.

[31] Dunlap wrote that Hall studied with Alexander "for a time." Dunlap, *History*, 1:425.

Europe, where young people of both genders attended drawing schools as a sort of finishing school. In America in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, great numbers of girls and young women learned the skill of painting as part of their genteel education. By the early 1800s private schools, either coeducational or for girls only, were established in Connecticut, Delaware, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania. Instruction in drawing, watercolor painting, and painting on glass and velvet were often part of the curriculum. Private drawing schools, like the Columbian Academy, were another venue for women to learn to draw and paint.

Alexander's estimation of female artists is not recorded. However it can be assumed that his views were in line with those of Archibald, who in 1802 wrote of his and Alexander's students who "do honor to American genius, both professional, and of those who cultivate the graphic arts for instruction and pleasure; particularly ladies, whose performances are not only the admiration of the present day, but will very probably be held up as models at a future period."[32] Dunlap extolled the work of Alexander's

[32] Archibald Robertson, *Elements of the Graphic Arts*, 16.

female students, who included Margaret and Elizabeth Livingston, Cornelia Ludlow, and Adriana Vethake: "Several young ladies under the tuition of Mr. Alexander Robertson, have attained skill in the painting of landscape in oil. A copy from Ruysdael by Miss Stora [*sic*], I remember as exciting my surprise and giving me much pleasure."[33] The reference is most likely to Catherine Storer, a landscape painter from Albany, New York, who exhibited at the Boston Athenaeum in 1833, the American Academy of the Fine Arts in 1835, and the America Art-Union in New York in 1846 and 1849.[34]

It is not known how many of the Robertsons' female students became professional artists. Of the group, Anne Hall had the most successful and best-documented career. In 1834 Dunlap wrote: "Miss Hall stands very prominent among our best painters of miniatures."[35] Among her finest works is the miniature *Mrs. William Beekman Ver Planck and Her Son William Beekman Ver Planck* of about 1825–30, in the

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[33] Her name appears as "Storer" in the index. Dunlap, *History*, 1:426.

[34] See entries for Catherine Storer in Groce and Wallace, 607; and Chris Petteys, *Dictionary of Women Artists: An International Dictionary of Women Artists Born Before 1900* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1985), 676.

[35] Dunlap, *History*, 1:425.

collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art (Fig.5.5).[36] The work demonstrates Hall's signature style and subject matter: delicately rendered women and children, shown alone or in groups and often holding flowers. In this example, Mrs. Ver Planck is seated on an upholstered sofa, her head turned very slightly toward her son, who is depicted standing on the sofa and placing a flower in his mother's hair behind her ear. Despite the intimacy of the gesture, the double image of mother and son lacks warmth or affection. Both figures appear stiff and rigid, and the

[36] The Metropolitan Museum's identification of the sitters is incorrect. William Beekman Ver Planck was born 1770 and died 1804. He married Melinda Gordon in 1798. They had a daughter, Mary Ann Catherine (*b.* 1799) and two sons, William Gordon Ver Planck (*b.* 1801) and Philip Alexander (*b.* 1804). William Gordon Ver Planck married Mary Elizabeth Hopkins in 1826. They had two sons, Samuel Hopkins (*b.* 1827) and James Gordon (*b.* 1838), and two daughters, Melinda Gordon (*b.* 1829) and Mary (*b.* 1832). Thus there is no instance of a Mrs. William Beekman Ver Planck having a son called William Beekman Ver Planck. The figures in the miniature must be either Mrs. William Beekman Ver Planck and her son William Gordon Ver Planck—which would date the picture to about 1801—or, more likely Mrs. William Gordon Ver Planck and her son Samuel Hopkins Ver Planck—which would date the picture to about 1827. If Anne Hall (1792-1863) is indeed the painter, the sitters must be Mrs. William Gordon Ver Planck and her son Samuel Hopkins Ver Planck. The Metropolitan's date of ca. 1825-30 for the work fits with this attribution. For the Ver Planck genealogy, see George Norbury Mackenzie, *Colonial Families of the United States of America*, 7 vols. (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing, 1966), 1:546-49. See also William Edward Ver Planck, *The History of Abraham Isaacse Ver Planck, and His Male Descendants in America* (Fishkill Landing, N.Y.: John W. Spaight, 1892).

mother does not acknowledge her child, focusing her attention instead to the viewer. Mother and son share the same large eyes, light brown hair, and rosy complexions, but there is no further connection. Mrs. Ver Planck's white gown contrasts with the bright blue drape over her right arm. Her hair is neatly and fashionably set in ringlets around her ears and a braided bun atop her head. The boy is also dressed in white, with a dark greenish gray sash around his waist.

Hall probably painted this miniature in New York around the time she was studying with Alexander at his Academy of Painting and Drawing. Her contemporaries compared her miniatures to portraits by Sir Joshua Reynolds and Sir Thomas Lawrence and to the miniatures of Edward Greene Malbone.[37] This is the portrait painting tradition Archibald and Alexander popularized in New York over more than thirty-five years of teaching and exhibiting. Integral to the development of her miniature style was Hall's experience as a student making copies after European old master paintings. This, according to Dale Johnson, imbued her with a lasting interest in Madonna and Child

[37] Johnson, 128-129.

compositions, which she adapted to family groups—such as the Ver Planks—throughout her career.[38]

Perhaps more important for the progress of Hall's career as a painter was the impact of the Robertsons' encouragement of woman artists, both amateurs and professionals, in their early New York art academies. By welcoming female artists at the Columbian Academy and the Academy of Painting and Drawing, Archibald and Alexander Robertson established an important precedent of encouraging and supporting women artists in New York. It was this tradition of encouragement and support that enabled Hall to pursue a career as a fine artist and to be elected a full member of the National Academy of Design.

American Academy of the Fine Arts

Archibald Robertson was one of the founders of the American Academy of the Fine Arts when it was established in 1802. He was elected Academician on 31 December 1816. On 5 May 1817 he became a director; he held that position until 14 January 1834, the year before his death.[39] For almost twenty years he was a strong supporter of the academy's conservative program of patronage. He contributed

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[38] Ibid., 128.

[39] See "Appendix A: Members of the American Academy of the Fine Arts," in Rebora.

portrait drawings and miniatures to the academy's first exhibition in 1816 and to subsequent exhibitions through 1828. Upon his election to Academician in 1826, he presented to the academy his portrait of Washington painted in watercolor on marble (Fig.1.9).

Alexander regularly contributed works, primarily landscapes, to the academy's exhibitions from 1816 through 1833. He was an associate member of the academy by 31 December 1816, when he was elected Academician. On 18 January 1817 he was elected Secretary. On 18 January 1820 he was elected Keeper of the Academy's collection of paintings, drawings, prints, and casts, making him responsible for their care and maintenance and, more importantly, controlling access to the works. From 1820 to 1831 he operated his independent Academy of Painting and Drawing in the American Academy's space, employing works from its collection as models for his students.

The American Academy's stated mission was to enlighten the public and educate artists. Under the direction of John Trumbull, who served as president for nineteen years, from 1817 to 1836, the academy functioned instead as an organization for art patrons, neglecting the needs of artists themselves. Trumbull enforced a twenty-five-cent admission fee that effectively discouraged the lower

classes from entering the gallery, and he prohibited artists from sketching or copying paintings in the gallery except for occasional limited early-morning hours. Furthermore, the academy never offered formal art classes. The discrepancy between the academy's stated mission and its effective function precipitated the founding in 1826 of the National Academy of Design as an alternative training and exhibition venue for artists in New York.[40]

Many of the Robertsons' biographers have incorrectly asserted that they supported the faction of artists led by Samuel F. B. Morse who opposed John Trumbull and the Academy's officers and who established the National Academy of Design. In 1920 Archibald's niece Geraldine Winslow Goddard wrote a version of his role in the dispute between the American and the National that became the basis of several subsequent incorrect accounts:

> A contest arose as to the advisability of combining instruction with the exhibition of pictures. Archibald Robertson strenuously maintained the necessity for such a course. The opposition, led by Trumbull, as obstinately combated it . . . . Our National Academy of Design, incorporated in 1826, was the direct result of the discontent created by the mistakes of its predecessor. This discontent finally resulted in forming a nucleus around Robertson which placed him in the position of leader of the new party. These

[40] For a detailed discussion of the American Academy's role in the formation of the National Academy of Design, see "Two Academies of Art," in Rebora, chap. 6.

> adherents vigorously endorsed his theories regarding the exhibition of paintings and methods of teaching, and from this parent organization emanated the modern Academy of Design, which still follows the original methods and from the first has owed its success to the tenacity of purpose and largeness of view which inspired its founder.[41]

Whether for lack of correct information or to enhance her family's legacy by aligning it with the National Academy of Design, Goddard greatly exaggerated Archibald's activism on behalf of this group of New York artists. As Carrie Rebora (Barratt) established in her study of the American Academy, neither Archibald nor Alexander Robertson was part of the faction of artists who broke from the American to establish the National Academy of Design. In fact, both remained strong supporters of the American Academy through 1834 (Archibald) and 1835 (Alexander).

Archibald, however, did make some early attempts to incorporate art instruction into the American Academy's program and to encourage artists to participate in its annual exhibitions. At the academy's 6 December 1817 meeting, Archibald controversially reported: "The principal object of an Academy of the Fine Arts viz!—the establishment of schools has not been attended to."[42]

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[41] Goddard, 7.

[42] American Academy of the Fine Arts, Meeting Minutes, AD, 6 December 1817, AAFA-NYHS.

According to Rebora, academy director William Dunlap quickly changed the subject to avoid discussing Archibald's potentially divisive statement. Another academy director, David Hosack, answered Archibald at the next meeting, on 3 January 1818, by explaining that a formal school was senseless given the academy's inadequate treasury and that no artists had applied to the academy for instruction anyway.[43] According to meeting minutes, Archibald never again broached the subject of the academy's school.

Archibald's steadfast compliance to Trumbull's disobliging policies toward artists at the academy is difficult to comprehend, particularly in light of his own thirty-year career teaching painting and drawing to aspiring artists in New York. Possible reasons comprise complex personal and financial concerns. Trumbull was respected and admired as New York's leading artist for much of the period of his presidency, and Archibald likely wanted to retain his good standing with him and with other influential New Yorkers who served as academy officers. Furthermore, Archibald and Trumbull had been friends ever since they met at a dinner at George Washington's home in

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[43] Dunlap later falsely recollected that John Trumbull "overruled" Archibald's report and "defeated it by his influence with the board, who being mostly not artists were governed by his opinions." Dunlap, *History*, 1:402.

Philadelphia in 1791. They were similar in temperament and shared similar aesthetic interests. Both were ardent adherents of the conservative European academic tradition, and recommended to younger painters the study of antique sculptures and masterpieces of European painting.

In addition to the personal advantages of maintaining a close association with Trumbull, Archibald almost certainly benefited financially from the regulations restricting artists' access to the collections of the American Academy. As proprietor of the Columbian Academy of Painting, a private art school whose curriculum relied upon his own extensive collection of casts, prints, and copies of European paintings, Archibald likely felt threatened by the possibility of the academy opening its more impressive collection, free of charge, to artists for study and copying.

The academy's full-size casts were far superior to Archibald's smaller versions, and its collection of paintings, which included original works by European masters such as a portrait of Benjamin West by Sir Thomas Lawrence (Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Conn.), a portrait of Peter Van Brugh Livingston by Henry Raeburn (Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Conn.), and a group of thirty-four oil sketches of subjects

from Herculaneum by Giovanni Battista Piranesi (eleven survive in the Wadsworth Atheneum of Art, Hartford, Conn.), was also far superior.[44] If the American Academy were to open its doors to artists without restriction, Archibald would have had a more difficult time enticing people to pay for access to his own, less remarkable collection at the Columbian Academy. The establishment of a formal art school sanctioned by the American Academy, where artists could receive instruction from Academy artist-members, would have had even more devastating consequences for Archibald's career and livelihood.

Alexander would have been even less amenable to a program allowing artists free, unrestricted access to the academy's collections. From 1820 to 1831, while he was operating his independent Academy of Painting and Drawing in the academy's space in the New York Institution, and using its collection as models, he had no incentive to push for increased access. At the height of the conflict between the academy and the non-member artists, Alexander himself was commanding a fee from artists for access to the exact same collection.

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[44] See "Appendix B: Paintings and Sculpture Formerly in the Collection of the American Academy of the Fine Arts," in Rebora.

As their newspaper advertisements emphasized, Archibald and Alexander charged their students as much for instruction in painting and drawing as for use of their study collections. There were no public art museums in New York during the period, and aspiring artists relied on private collections—such as those owned by the Robertsons—as models for instruction. If the American Academy began offering free access to their superior works, the Robertsons would have had a difficult time convincing aspiring artists to pay a premium to study theirs.

It was not until September 1825, almost eight years after his initial proposal to open a school at the American Academy, that Archibald again attempted to arouse artists' interest in the institution. Along with William Gracie and Frederick Gore King, he formed the committee planning the discourse to accompany the fall exhibition who arranged the exhibition as a benefit to establish an "Artists' Fund." The fund was intended to provide premiums for artists and to allow them free access to the academy, whose collections were previously available only to dues-paying members and to private citizens willing to pay the twenty-five cent admission fee. The committee report explained that the Artists' Fund would "create a new excitement, and urge the

exertion of the students to that desirable point which will elicit the native talent of city and state."[45]

The effort was too little too late. The academy failed to foster "a new excitement" among artists or even to garner support among its membership for the Artists' Fund. Motivated by the unsupportive policies of the American Academy—specifically the lack of training for artists, the preponderance of old masterpieces and conservative American art in their exhibitions, and the fact that they gave more thought to distributing invitations to city officials for exhibition previews than to inviting artists to enter their own works—a group of artists under the leadership of Samuel F. B. Morse formed the New York Association of Artists, also called the Drawing Association, in November 1825. Although the Drawing Association was originally formed as an extension of the American Academy, relations between the two groups quickly deteriorated. On the evening of 14 January 1826, Morse announced to his colleagues that "we have assumed a new attitude in the community." He recommended that they should leave "the Academy of Fine Arts as much out of our thoughts [as possible] . . . and

[45] AAFA-NYHS, quoted in Rebora, 227.

binding our attention to our own affairs, act as if no such Institution existed."[46]

The series of events that followed, which Rebora details in her dissertation on the American Academy, culminated in the establishment of the National Academy of Design in 1826. Neither Archibald nor Alexander, however, emerges as a key figure in the ensuing controversy between the American and the National. By all accounts, they were positioned at the center of the proceedings, but remained neutral in their attitude toward the National Academy.

The apparent contradiction between their decades-long dedication to instruction of American artists and their resolute observance of the academy's unaccommodating policies toward those same artists must be understood in light of their somewhat idiosyncratic teaching philosophy. Working within the eighteenth-century convention that artists developed skill and talent by studying and imitating European masters from the past, the Robertsons believed that European models were indispensable if

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[46] National Academy of Design, Meeting Minutes, 14 January 1826, National Academy of Design, New York, quoted in Rebora, 244. For more of Morse's writings and lectures, see Earl Lind Morse, ed., *Samuel F. B. Morse: His Letters and Journals*, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1914); and Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr., ed., *Lectures on the Affinity of Painting with the Other Fine Arts, by Samuel F. B. Morse* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1983).

American art were to achieve international standing. For Archibald, Alexander, and their contemporaries such as Trumbull, the history of art began with the antique and concluded with eighteenth-century European academic painting. By 1825, however, Americans had begun to think in different terms.

In her history of American art patronage, Lillian Miller wrote that the taste of the emerging generation of artists "was formed by studying the works of their contemporary Americans. The cultural nationalism of these decades increasingly came to embrace a philosophy of the contemporaneous which rejected the past."[47] As Samuel F. B. Morse stated in his speech defending the existence of the National Academy, "the encouragement of national genius is more directly promoted by giving *practice* to our own artists in the highest department of painting, than by any efforts to place before them the best *models*."[48] Thus, the Robertsons' steadfast allegiance to the American Academy's programs and policies, and their lack of support for Morse and the National Academy of Design, should not be seen as

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[47] Miller, *Patrons and Patriotism*, 102.

[48] This was Morse's reply to a review of his speech by Franklin Dexter that appeared in the *North American Review*. See Thomas Seir Cummings, *Historic Annals of the National Academy of Design* (Philadelphia: George W. Childs, 1865), 61.

discouragement of American art. Rather, the Robertsons were part of the old establishment, and believed the single best way to encourage American genius was to imitate the well-known masterpieces of European art.

CONCLUSION

When Archibald Robertson came to America from Scotland in 1791, there was no school of art in New York City. He opened the Columbian Academy, where he and Alexander directed the first program in New York dedicated to training amateurs and professional aspirants in the visual arts. The curricula at their schools evolved over the years; training in oil painting eventually augmented the basic instruction they offered in drawing and watercolors. Three of their students became highly regarded artists in their respective fields of history painting, sculpture, and miniature painting. Vanderlyn went on to study in Paris and to become one of America's first important history painters. Browere also studied in Paris and became one of the country's first professional sculptors. After honing her portrait painting style with Alexander, Hall established her reputation as a miniaturist and became the first woman elected as full member of the National Academy of Design.

The Robertsons left their mark on American art not only by offering the earliest sustained effort to train artists at home, but also by establishing the model for art schools in New York that would persist into the nineteenth

century. Their teaching collection of casts, prints, and paintings—the first of its kind in New York—was a major gift to aspiring artists training in a city with no public art museum. Archibald's drawing book, *Elements of the Graphic Arts*, was the first published in America and, like the Columbian Academy, established a model that would endure into the nineteenth century. In addition, the Robertsons cultivated public interest in the fine arts by disseminating prints after their portraits and landscapes, and by supporting organizations such as the American Academy of the Fine Arts.

Significantly, Archibald and Alexander were key figures in an artistic exchange that occurred in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries between New York and Edinburgh. By modeling the curriculum at the Columbian Academy after the one he had followed under Alexander Runciman at the Trustees' Academy, Archibald afforded New York artists an opportunity to receive training comparable to what was available in Europe.

But the field of art training changed greatly during the Robertsons' lives. Beginning in the 1820s, artists such as Samuel F. B. Morse initiated programs to foster American art culture and patronage, and a professional American art culture emerged for the first time. Parallel developments

in New York and Edinburgh—including demands for exhibition venues for local contemporary artists, and for life-drawing classes—culminated in the founding of the National Academy of Design and the Royal Scottish Academy, both in 1826.

The Robertsons continued to teach art through the 1830s but they never achieved the level of status of later New York City art instructors—Thomas Seir Cummings, John Wesley Jarvis, and Morse, among others. In part, the expansion of the field of art training and improving quality and popularity of American art, for which they had so tirelessly labored, led to their demise. At the beginning of their New York careers, the Robertsons were at the forefront of art training. By the end, American artists and patrons had begun to prefer modern American works over the copies of Old Master paintings on which the Robertsons had established their teaching method. Thus the Robertsons, like their study collection, came to be viewed as relics of the past.

APPENDIX

STUDENTS OF THE ROBERTSONS

This list includes professional artists and amateurs who, according to the sources cited in the footnotes, studied with Archibald and/or Alexander Robertson in Aberdeen or in New York at the Columbian Academy of Painting or the Academy of Painting and Drawing. Life dates appear where known.

Alexander, Francis (1800–1880)[1]

Browere, John Henri Isaac (1792–1834)[2]

Cummings, Thomas Seir (1804–1894)[3]

Hall, Anne (1792–1863)[4]

Inman, Henry (1801–1846)[5]

Jones, Miss F.[6]

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[1] *DAB*, s.v. "Alexander, Francis;" Dunlap, *History*, 2:429; Falk, 1:79-80; Groce and Wallace, 4-5; and Stebbins, 206.

[2] *DAB*, s.v. "Browere, John Henri Isaac;" Falk, 1:458; Groce and Wallace, 84; and Hart, *Browere's Life Masks of Great Americans*, 13-14.

[3] Hart, *Browere's Life Masks of Great Americans*, 14.

[4] Dunlap, *History*, 2:369; Falk, 2:1424.

[5] Hart, *Browere's Life Masks of Great Americans*, 14.

[6] Receipt of payment to Alexander Robertson on behalf of Miss J. Jones for tuition and supplies, June 1810, reproduced in John Wakefield Francis, *Old New York: Or,*

Livingston, Elizabeth (1780-1829)[7]

Livingston, Margaret (1783-1818)[8]

Ludlow, Cornelia (1788-1865)[9]

Macomb brothers[10]

Murray, John R. (1774-1851)[11]

Peacock, Francis (1723-1807)[12]

Ogden, Isaac G.[13]

Robertson, Eliza Abramse (d.1865)[14]

Rutherford, Louisa (1792-1857)[15]

Reminiscences of the Past Sixty Years. With a Memoir of the Author, by Henry T. Tuckerman (New York: W. J. Widdleton, 1865), 7.

[7] Receipt of payment to A. Robertson on behalf of Betsy Livingston for tuition and supplies, ADS, January 1793, Robert R. Livingston Papers, New-York Historical Society, New York.

[8] Receipt of payment to A. Robertson on behalf of Peggy Livingston for tuition and supplies, ADS, January 1793, Robert R. Livingston Papers, New-York Historical Society, New York.

[9] Naylor, 26.

[10] Gosman (Averill), 303-4.

[11] Ibid.; and Mondello, 5.

[12] Francis Peacock arrived in Aberdeen as a dancing master in 1744. According to Morgan and Fielding (188), Archibald received dance lessons from Peacock in exchange for drawing lessons.

[13] Gosman (Averill), 303-4.

[14] Naylor, 15.

Storer, Catherine[16]

Vanderlyn, John (1775-1852)[17]

Vethake, Adriana[18]

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[15] Ibid., 25.

[16] Dunlap, *History*, 2:426.

[17] Gosman (Averill), 303-4.

[18] Falk, 3:3405-6; and Groce and Wallace, 649.

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The Bard collection of manuscript and printed material by or about John and Samuel Bard, with genealogical charts of families related by marriage to their descendants

New-York Historical Society, New York
Library
American Academy of the Fine Arts Papers
John Vanderlyn Papers
Robert R. Livingston Papers
Museum
Artist and object files

Rosenbach Museum and Library, Philadelphia
Archibald Robertson Papers

Royal Scottish Academy Archives, Edinburgh
Minute Book of the Incorporated Society of Artists

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