THE NEW YORK CITY HALL PORTRAIT COLLECTION, 1790-1830

by

DEBORAH BERSHAD ADDEO

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Art History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
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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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THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

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by

Deborah Bershad

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Since 1790, New York City has commissioned portraits to commemorate the lives and deeds of "those great and good men who have done honor and service to our Country." Generals, presidents, military and naval heroes, foreign dignitaries, New York State Governors, and New York City Mayors make up this diverse collection, housed in the same three-story federal-style building for almost two centuries. The collection contains portraits by some of America's most renowned painters, including John Trumbull, John Vanderlyn, Thomas Sully, John Wesley Jarvis, George Catlin, Charles Wesley Jarvis and Samuel F. B. Morse.

Unlike many other collections that have been dispersed over time, the City Hall portrait collection remains largely intact. Moreover, the collection is still on view in the building for which many of the commissions were originally intended. The New York City Hall portrait collection thus provides us with a series of portraits that require study not just individually, but also as a group, for they were commissioned as a series of works by and for municipal government.

As New York City, along with the rest of the nation, moved from the monarchical to democratic forms of government, traditional forms of visual representation, particularly portraiture, came into question. The goal of this study is to provide a detailed analysis of the changes in the meaning of portraiture, through a close examination of the

first forty years of the City Hall collection, from 1790 to 1830 -- covering the post-Revolutionary period, federalism, and the initial growth of the mercantile city. This study will explore the diverse motivations behind the portrait commissions, particularly in relationship to notions of nationalism, patriotic pride, and the role of the arts in the development of a sense of civic identity. In order to clarify these motivations, the discussion focuses on the commissioning process, including who proposed the commission, the political circumstances surrounding the sitter, the process used for the selection of the artist, relationships among the artists and those involved in the selection process, the artists' responses to the commissions, and the reception of the portrait by the press and by the public.

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My interest in the City Hall portrait collection was a natural outgrowth of the almost twenty years I worked at the Art Commission of the City of New York (six of which I had the honor to serve as Executive Director), the agency that is the curator of this outstanding collection. I thus wish to extend my warm thanks to Deputy Mayor Patricia E. Harris, who many years ago gave me the opportunity to work in City Hall, and to the Art Commission members and associates, who have continued to protect and preserve this important historic treasure.

Thanks are also due to the librarians, archivists, and staff of the Art Commission, the Municipal Archives, the New-York Historical Society, the New York Public Library, the Yale University Library, Columbia Library, the United States Military Academy at West Point, the Kingston Senate House Museum, Baltimore City Hall, the Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford; the Peale Museum, Baltimore; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Lafayette College, Easton, Pennsylvania. James Cheever of the United States Naval Academy Museum, Annapolis, was especially helpful regarding the heroes of the War of 1812. I also wish to thank my readers, whose expertise and insights provided helpful guidance in shaping the final text. And I would like to acknowledge the kindness of scholars Charles di Giacomantonio of the First Federal Congress Project, George Washington University, and Pamela Scott. Their knowledge of Federal Hall was indispensable.

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INTRODUCTION

Since 1790, the City of New York has commissioned portraits to commemorate the lives and deeds of "those great and good men who have done honor and service to our Country."[1] Generals, presidents, military and naval heroes, foreign dignitaries, New York State Governors, and New York City Mayors make up this diverse collection, housed in the same three-story federal-style building for almost two centuries. The collection contains portraits by some of America's most renowned painters, including John Trumbull, John Vanderlyn, Thomas Sully, John Wesley Jarvis, George Catlin, Charles Wesley Jarvis and Samuel F. B. Morse. It depicts individuals who were instrumental in the founding and development of the United States and the rise of New York as a great port city and commercial state within a young nation, including George Washington, George Clinton, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay and DeWitt Clinton.

The New York City Hall portrait collection provides an unusual opportunity to study changes in the meaning of portraiture in New York City and the nation, from the years after the Revolution through the early years of the republic. Unlike many other collections that have been dispersed over time, the City Hall portrait collection remains largely intact. Moreover, the collection is still on view in the building for which many of the commissions were originally intended. The collection was located in the second City Hall on Wall Street and Nassau Street between 1790 and 1812[2]. With the construction of

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[1] Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1784-1831, Volume XIV, 38-9. (Hereafter MCC) The phrase refers to the commissioning of a portrait of the Marquis de Lafayette.

[2] While no records have been located regarding the relocation of the collection from the second City Hall or Federal Hall to the third City Hall, we do know that the Mayor's Office was relocated to the present-day building in 1812.

the third and current City Hall, the collection was moved to the new building at Broadway and Murray Street, where it remains today.

The New York City Hall portrait collection thus provides us with a series of portraits that require study not just individually, but also as a group, for they were commissioned as a series of works by and for municipal government. The collection offers an exceptional window into the processes behind the creation of the earliest American public art, commissioned to represent the emerging democracy. As Executive Director of the Art Commission, I served as curator of the portrait collection for many years. During that time, I realized that, despite the collection's significance, there was no catalogue for this collection, nor was there a comprehensive analysis of the collection and its acquisition. There are only a few publications that address the City Hall collection as a whole. Most of these are brief articles that present "highlights" of the collection,[3] reproduce a few of portraits, and present anecdotes related to one of the portraits, sitters, or artists.

A few scholarly publications have addressed the collection holistically, most notably William Gerdts' essay "Natural Aristocrats in a Democracy: 1810-1870," which discusses the collection within the broader context of the growing portrait tradition in the U.S. during the early nineteenth-century. Gerdts compares the commissioning of portraits in Boston, Philadelphia, and New York, and briefly notes "the picture gallery at New York City Hall," which he suggests was a "dependable source of prestigious public

[3] Edith Gaines, "Portraits in New York's City Hall," Antiques 80 (October 1961), 346-49; Donald J. Gormley, "Portraits in City Hall," Pace Magazine (Winter 1965), 5-8; Edith Holzer and Harold Holzer, "Portraits in City Hall, New York," in Portrait Painting in America, ed. Ellen Miles (New York: Main Street/Universe Books, 1977), 15-24. Gaines, p. 346, does, however, make an intriguing comment regarding the 1812 commissions for the portrait collection that: "Here was the New City Hall, with its bare walls: What more natural than that the city fathers should commission portraits of the men in the forefront of the battle to preserve the new republic?"

patronage."[4] However, Gerdts' essay covers a considerable period and range of material. Consequently, although he deals with many of the significant portraits and artists in the collection, Gerdts does not address the social, political, or economic basis for the commissioning of the works in the collection.[5]

Of interest as well is the unpublished dissertation of Brandon Brame Fortune, "Portraits of Worthies and Public Portraiture in the Early American Republic, 1780-1820."[6] Fortune contends that the commissioning of portrait collections in the post-Revolution period had the goal of honoring, in an appropriately "republican" and egalitarian fashion, specific individuals, and to subsequently (through the viewing process) develop a sense of public virtue in the citizenry. She deals with five significant collections: Thomas Jefferson's assemblage of portraits, John Trumbull's work for his painting Declaration of Independence, Peale's gallery in his Philadelphia Museum, Delaplaine's collection,[7] and the New York City Hall portrait collection.

While Fortune's thesis offers an exciting new perspective on early American portraiture, she focuses on the textual evidence regarding the formation of "pantheons of worthies." She is concerned with the way in which early portrait collections addressed a need for "the honor due to a group of persons" or "collective meritocracy."[8] Within this argument, the City Hall collection primarily serves as an exemplar within a broader landscape of ideas. However, among these collections, the City Hall collection is unique.

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[4] William H. Gerdts, "Natural Aristocrats in a Democracy," in American Portraiture in the Grand Manner (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, November 17, 1981-January 31, 1982), 39.
[5] In the same publication, Marvin Sadik's "Heroes for a New Nation," 21-26, also mentions the two earliest Trumbull portraits and briefly recaps the artist's life.
[6] "Portraits of Virtue and Genius: Pantheons of Worthies and Public Portraiture in the Early American Republic, 1780-1820" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1987).
[7] Joseph Delaplaine's Repository of the Lives and Portraits of Distinguished Americans was an on-going project, including engraved portraits and biographies of sitters. Ibid., 46.
[8] Ibid., xxiii.

It was the only collection commissioned by politicians, acquired with public funds, on behalf of the citizens of the newly formed republic. While the collection falls within Fortune's broad theoretical framework of the development of visual pantheons, her thesis does not address the uncommon aspects of its creation.

As New York City, along with the rest of the nation, moved from the monarchical to democratic forms of government, traditional forms of visual representation, particularly portraiture, came into question. During the colonial period, public art commissions undertaken by government primarily served as visual symbols of centralized authority, best demonstrated by the numerous portraits of King George III dispersed throughout the British colonies. While the iconography and style of portraits continued to depend upon visual traditions established during the colonial period, after 1788, with the ratification of the Constitution and the establishment of representative forms of government, new meanings, and new visual forms were required to represent a new symbol of authority—the electorate.

The goal of this study is to examine the political and symbolic use of early American portraiture, through the first forty years of the City Hall collection. New York City, as national capital immediately after the ratification of the Constitution, had a special role to play regarding representation. Its earliest public art commissions under the new federal Constitution had national as well as municipal significance. As the first federal capital, New York anticipated leading the nation in all endeavors.

Nonetheless, the first portraits in the City Hall collection were not commissioned until after the removal of the federal capitol to Philadelphia in 1790. This loss of political pre-eminence was demoralizing to New Yorkers, who had gambled staggering amounts

on the financial and political gains of fixing the capital in their city. The effect of this loss was evident to the young DeWitt Clinton, who in 1790 wrote in a letter: "The people are much exasperated…. The ingratitude of Congress stares them in the face….this devoted City will never be the residence of sovereign power."[9] Clinton also noted the enhancements of docks, streets, and other public spaces undertaken by New Yorkers with the comment "the departure of Congress will throw a damp on these spirited improvements."[10]

Clinton would be one of the driving forces behind the development of the City Hall portrait collection. With an eye towards New York's pre-eminence and his own political capital, the canny Clinton recognized that New York would no longer be a center of governmental power, even forecasting in the same letter the future removal in 1797 of the state capital to Albany:

> After our state representatives are apportioned according to the census the Majority will probably be for Albany as the seat of government—federal hall will then be a theatre of common council legislation.

New York's prestige would have to come from some other source. I will argue that the loss of political prestige was the galvanizing force behind the decision of New Yorkers like Clinton to establish its pre-eminence in other arenas, particularly the arts.

Although little documentation exists regarding the first ten years of the New York City Hall portrait collection, it is evident that Clinton played a pivotal role in the development of a municipal portrait collection after he was appointed Mayor in 1803.[11]

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[9] DeWitt Clinton letter to Dr. Clinton, July 20, 1790, in John W. Francis, Old New York, Reminiscences; New York: Extended to thirteen volumes by the addition of drawings, engravings and autographs, Volume XI, supplement (New York: New-York Historical Society, 1895), 1458.

[10] Ibid.

[11] The direct election of New York City's Mayor was not instituted until 1833.

Clinton's interest in and support of the arts and sciences is well documented,[12] and he articulated his vision for New York as a new Athens on several occasions, most notably in his October 23, 1816 speech celebrating the opening of the revitalized American Academy of the Fine Arts.[13] His peculiar combination of idealistic and pragmatic attitudes towards the "arts and sciences" culminated in "Clinton's Ditch," the Erie Canal that assured the City's economic growth and domination for decades. Although viewed as a feat of engineering today, the "arts and sciences" of the early nineteenth century did not countenance the specializations and divisions of the later century. This phrase could encompass the fine arts as well as the mechanical and technical, and Clinton was an ardent supporter in all fields.

However, Clinton's ability to stake a claim for artistic pre-eminence depended on the co-operation of others, most notably the artist, John Trumbull. For a political pragmatist like Clinton, Trumbull was the ideal artist to commission for the City's portraits, combining an irreproachable political pedigree[14] with the European training and patriotic fervor needed to create a new public art celebrating a new nation. Like Clinton, Trumbull came from a political family (Trumbull's brother as well as his father served as Governor of Connecticut). And like Clinton, Trumbull, who resided in New York for twenty-seven years, was an integral part of New York City society and saw himself as a national leader in his field.

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[12] See, for example, Kenneth Robert Nodyne, "The role of DeWitt Clinton and the Municipal Government in the Development of Cultural Organizations in New York City, 1803-1817" (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1969).

[13] See also his *1814 Memorial to the Legislature of New York* on behalf of the New-York Historical Society, where he argues for "that magnanimity of soul which cultivates the *arts and sciences* amidst the horrors of war." My emphasis; quoted in William Campbell, The Life and Writings of DeWitt Clinton (New York: Baker and Scribner, 1849), xxxiii.

[14] In addition to his service as an aide to General Washington, Trumbull was the son of Connecticut Governor Jonathan Trumbull, renowned for his early and avid support of the War for Independence.

Because of his personal prestige, Trumbull's contribution of the first dozen portraits in the collection established the preeminence of the City Hall collection. As Clinton noted in 1816: "The portrait collection of this city,…is entitled to great praise in its tendency…to encourage the Fine Arts, by displaying to advantage the compositions of our best painters." That the vast majority of portraits in the collection in 1816 were by Trumbull, recently elected as President of the American Academy of the Fine Arts, would not have been lost on the artist or on any other members of the audience. New York's preeminence in the arts in the first 25 years of the new republic was in large part due to Trumbull the painter as well as Trumbull the arts advocate.

And surely his "project" of a national art—the creation of a series of history paintings commemorating the players and events of the momentous founding of the new nation—should not be divorced from Trumbull's municipal portrait commissions. Rather, Trumbull's contribution of the first dozen portraits to the City Hall collection should be seen as a cohesive part of his larger ambitions for a new national art. The artist's unwavering patriotism and concentration on creating a national art supplies the link between his national project and these municipal portraits. Long before the Congressional commission of four large panels for the Capitol,[15] the New York City Hall provided the first venue for public presentation of what was one the most significant portions of Trumbull's project, the "historical portrait." Unlike a simple record of mundane facts, these "historical portraits" showed their sitters as protagonists within the

[15] The Congressional resolution approving the commission of four panels, "commemorative of the most important events of the American revolution, to be placed, when finished, in the Capitol of the United States," was initiated in the Senate on January 13, 1817, and approved February 6, 1817. See John Trumbull, The Autobiography of Col. John Trumbull, ed. Theodore Sizer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), 257, 257n11.

sweeping narrative of history, idealizing the individual and elevating the portrait to an intellectual endeavor.

Trumbull only relinquished his ascendance over the collection when, during the War of 1812, John Wesley Jarvis assumed the unofficial position of municipal portraitist.[16] Jarvis's series of portraits mark a transition in style in the portrait collection. Rejecting Trumbull's restrained and elegant neo-classicism, which expressed the values of a Federalist New York, Jarvis essayed a robust naturalism that presented the naval and military heroes of 1812 as ordinary, though well-bred men.

The social and political meaning of this and subsequent stylistic changes is particularly compelling because the Common Council, which governed the City of New York, specifically commissioned the portraits through legislative action. The City Hall portrait collection is thus a formal record of what political leaders and government officials viewed as appropriate public art. Their diverse motives, particularly in relationship to notions of nationalism, patriotic pride, and the role of the arts in the development of a sense of civic identity, although not always explained in textual evidence, can be teased out in part from the images themselves. In order to further elucidate these meanings, my discussion will focus on the commissioning process, including who proposed the commission, the political circumstances surrounding the sitter, the process used for the selection of the artist (including discussion of existing conventions or guidelines for commissioning portraits), relationships among the artists and those involved in the selection process, the artists' responses to the commissions, the

[16] Trapped in England after traveling there in 1808 for his health, Trumbull did not return to New York until the fall of 1815, by which time Jarvis was firmly ensconced in his role as painter of the heroes of 1812.

reception of the portrait by the press and by the public, and how the portraits were installed and displayed.

Overview of the New York City Hall Portrait Collection

There are 108 portraits in the City Hall portrait collection. With the exception of one portrait of New York City Constable Jacob Hays currently on loan to the Police Museum, all of these portraits are currently on display in City Hall. The 108 paintings include forty-three New York City Mayors; twenty-five New York State Governors; fifteen military or naval heroes (whose portraits were usually commissioned to commemorate a specific event); nine U.S. Presidents; four U.S. Vice Presidents; ten federal, state, or city officials;[17] five foreign dignitaries; three U.S. Senators; two explorers; three Art Commission presidents; and one architect, John McComb, who was responsible for the construction of City Hall.[18] Therefore, well over half the collection represents individuals who directly served New York City and New York State.

Of the 108 portraits in the collection, forty-four are full-length, ranging in size from 109 by 73 inches to 88 by 60 inches. These life-size full-length portraits are substantially larger than the traditional canvas of the English tradition that, as Ellen Miles points out in an enlightening discussion of portrait sizes,[19] measured about 80 by 50 inches. The large canvases selected for the City Hall commissions provided ample room

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[17] This includes New York City Comptrollers, High Constable, City Clerk and Warden of the Port; a New York State Supreme Court Judge and an Appellate Court Justice; the first Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court and first Secretary of the U.S. Treasury.

[18] Several of the sitters served in various capacities (for example, DeWitt Clinton, who was both New York City Mayor and New York State Governor, or Martin Van Buren, who was both New York State Governor and U.S. President), hence the discrepancy between the number of portraits and the numbers within each category.

[19] Ellen G. Miles, "Fame and the Public Self in American Portraiture, 1735-1865," in A Brush with History, Paintings from the National Portrait Gallery (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 2001). The discussion of the sizes of the City Hall portraits depends on Miles' scholarship on English traditions and their impact on American portraiture.

for artists to add information about the sitter through various compositional elements. As Gilbert Stuart declared: "Backgrounds should contain whatever is necessary to illustrate the character of the person…the person should be so portrayed as to be read like the bible without notes."[20] The grand size of these City Hall portraits ensured that character could be generously illustrated.

In the fifteen military and naval portraits, additional elements include battle scenes (which may be depicted in the background), horses, subordinates, and weapons. The full-length figures of New York State Governors and other officials are usually depicted in rooms decorated with books, papers, maps, chairs, tables, rugs, and classical architectural elements.[21] With only two exceptions, full-length portraits in City Hall were reserved for U.S. Presidents, New York State Governors, and military and naval heroes.[22]

However, the large scale of the portraits did not simply provide an opportunity for information about the sitter. Fortune notes: "Many of these portraits [in the New York City Hall collection] were rather grandiose full lengths, which created a sense of opulence missing from other American collections."[23] The political and social meaning of opulence will be discussed in relation to the development of the portrait collection, the elaborate renovation of Federal Hall, and the later construction of the third City Hall.

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[20] "Notes on Painting by Matthew Harris Jouett from Conversations with Gilbert Stuart in 1816," in John Hill Morgan, Gilbert Stuart and His Pupils (New York: New-York Historical Society, 1939), 84-85; quoted in Miles, A Brush with History, 30.

[21] The use of these elements for specific portraits will be discussed in detail in the following chapters.

[22] The only exceptions are Henry Clay (there are two full-length portraits of Clay) and Alexander Hamilton, whose portrait by John Trumbull will be discussed in a later chapter. The Marquis de Lafayette, who might be considered a foreign dignitary, was renowned for his military service to the Revolution.

[23] Fortune, op. cit., p. 64.

New York opulence will be contrasted with what Charles Willson Peale termed his "plain style," the exact and unadorned portraiture that he painted for public display.[24]

A review of the collection suggests that bigger really was better as far as the Common Council was concerned, and in general this approach gained momentum through the nineteenth-century. Aside from the forty-four full-length portraits, of the sixty-four remaining works in the collection, four of them range between the full-length and "half-length" size of 50 by 40 inches, so-called because its dimensions represented half of the traditional full-length canvas. An additional thirty-two portraits range between the half-length size of 50 x 40 inches down to just above the "kit-cat" size[25] of 36 by 28 inches. These thirty-six larger format portraits have sufficient space to show a waist-length (or knee-length) figure; some with books, papers, or other items relevant to the individual depicted. A review of these sixty-four portraits also shows that the larger half-length formats gained in popularity after 1830, and that most of the earlier half-lengths conform to either the "kit-cat" or "bust" format.

Despite the widespread use of the "kit-cat" format in other collections,[26] there are only fourteen portraits out of the 108 in the City Hall collection that have similar dimensions. They range in size from 33 by 26 inches up to 36 by 30 inches. Even these more modest paintings permit room for at least one of the sitter's hands, so that a suitable gesture or even an identifying element could be squeezed in.

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[24] Brandon Brame Fortune, "Charles Willson Peale's Portrait Gallery: persuasion and the plain style," in Word & Image, 6, no. 4 (October –December 1990), 308-324.

[25] The "kit-cat" format (named for Sir Godfrey Kneller's series of portraits of members of a London club which were painted between 1703 and 1721) was very popular during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

[26] Miles, A Brush with History, 32-33; see also Fortune, "Portraits of Virtue," 68-69, where she discusses the sizes used by Charles Willson Peale, Charles Bird King, and Joseph Delaplaine. Fortune makes the point that in these early collections larger sizes were less common, due to questions of cost.

There are thirteen portraits in the collection that have dimensions similar to what was called by some a "bust."[27] This smaller format allowed for only the most minimal treatment of the sitter, as its name suggests. And there is only one example in the City Hall portrait collection of what Thomas Sully called a head-size, or 25 by 20 inch portrait.[28]

Looking at the dimensions of the works over time, it is striking that twenty-two, or fully half of the full-length portraits in the City Hall collection were commissioned before 1830. Despite the more diminutive size of the earlier half-length portraits, the number and size of the full-length paintings demonstrates New York City government's early willingness to lavishly spend public monies n public art. [29]

The New York City Hall portrait collection stands in marked contrast with the development of portrait collections in other municipalities such as Charleston, Philadelphia, and Boston. Certainly, the New York City Hall collection was not the only significant collection of portraits during this period. There were considerable privately owned collections[30] which were available for public enjoyment, such as Charles Willson Peale's gallery of "noted worthies," displayed as part of his museum on the second floor of Independence Hall. However, Peale's portraits were not acquired by the City of Philadelphia until 1854. That was when, due to financial mismanagement by his heirs,

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[27] Miles, A Brush with History, 33, explains that it was also called a "three-quarter length," as it was half the size of a "half-length."

[28] The portrait of Christopher Columbus by Samuel F.B. Morse.

[29] "For most painters, the prices…doubled as one moved from smaller to larger canvases." Miles, A Brush with History, 33. See also Neil Harris, The Artist in American Society: The Formative Years 1790-1860 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966), 64: "A Russian visitor observed in 1812 that American portraitists asked healthy fees because their expenses were steep; good brushes sold in Philadelphia for one dollar apiece, and canvases of bust size cost at least three dollars."

[30] Privately owned collections in homes were available for viewing by those members of the public who could obtain an introduction to the owner. These collections were important resources for early American artists, as Trumbull recounts in his discussion of his visit to Copley's home. Autobiography, Reminiscences and Letters of John Trumbull (New York & London: Wiley and Putnam, 1841), 11.

the artist's collection was auctioned off. The City was able to purchase only a portion of the collection, though some of Philadelphia's civic-minded citizens purchased others for donation to the City, or for subsequent re-sale to the City at cost.[31] The only other comparable collection of importance sponsored by a municipality and acquired by public monies, was in Charleston, South Carolina.[32] However, this collection had merely four portraits until after 1825.[33] And despite several abortive attempts by Congress to commission portraits, the federal government also lagged well behind New York in creating a portrait collection,[34] a circumstance that underscores the unique nature and national scope of New York's commitment to this endeavor.

The predominance of direct commissions by the City of New York as the basis for the City Hall collection is thus thrown into relief by the lack of comparable commissions in other collections. New York City's portrait commissions were the clearest demonstration of a deliberate and considered interest in public art on the part of municipal government. As will be revealed, expenditure of funds on what many Americans viewed as a luxury, particularly in the early days of the republic, could be extremely controversial. Nevertheless, the City Hall collection continued to grow, even during the most difficult and troubled periods of political, social, and economic turmoil.

Chapter 1 investigates the change in New York City portraiture from the late eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century. It will focus on the first two portraits in the collection—President George Washington and Governor George Clinton. The

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[31] Doris Devine Fanelli, History of the Portrait Collection, Independence National Historic Park (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2001).
[32] A smaller collection of half-length portraits was commissioned by Baltimore and will be addressed in Chapter 4 below.
[33] Fanelli, Independence National Park, 63. See also, Anna Wells Rutledge, "Paintings in the Council Chamber of Charleston's City Hall" in Portrait Painting in America, op. cit., 25-30.
[34] Lillian B. Miller, Patrons and Patriotism: The Encouragement of the Fine Arts in the United States, 1790-1860 (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 35-9.

highly politicized public reception of the two earliest paintings will be reviewed in relation to the colonial tradition of portraiture and the iconoclasm of the revolution. This chapter also addresses the selection of John Trumbull as the artist for the commissions, and the importance of his familial and political connections with New York society and the federal government.

Chapter 2 deals with the interim period from 1790 to 1804, and attempts to explain the new political, economic, and social conditions in New York that facilitated the formation of the portrait collection. Although no portraits were commissioned from 1790 to 1804, this intervening break saw the formation of an organization devoted to the fine arts, the emergence of a new governmental bureaucracy, a developing generation of professional politicians, and, eventually, a Common Council that was willing to pay for public portraiture. A key figure in the commissioning of the next group of portraits was Mayor DeWitt Clinton, whose interest in and support for cultural endeavors were critical. His passion for asserting the preeminence of New York through cultural supremacy is discussed as a precursor and prerequisite to the formation of the City Hall collection.

In addition, this chapter addresses the expansion of a "culture of celebration" and its relationship to portraiture, exploring in particular how portraits were used in public celebrations. On the most basic level, the use of portraits in parades, fetes, processions, and other celebratory venues provided access to these images for those citizens who previously would have not had any exposure to them. But as portraits became a standard feature of celebrations, a more pressing question emerges: what did the portrait symbolize in these events? And how did this proliferation of images impact the City Hall portrait collection?

Chapter 3 focuses on the next wave of commissions, a series of ten portraits by John Trumbull completed in four years for the City. Trumbull had important political connections, had trained in Europe, and was a member of the same social and economic class of men who commissioned this new series of portraits. This latter quality in particular was critical for his early success. In addition, Trumbull's relationship with DeWitt Clinton, who was appointed New York City Mayor in 1803 and later elected Governor of New York State, will be discussed.

The War of 1812, although taking place within a relatively brief period, was to have a major impact on the City Hall portrait collection, with nine portraits commissioned by the Common Council in less than three years. Chapter 4 examines how portraiture became part of the political theater of the period, accepted and expected as part of celebrations aimed at bolstering patriotic fervor. Both the celebrations and portrait commissions were adroitly used by the politicians of the period to bolster their personal and political reputations, in response to the growing power of public opinion and the ever-expanding electorate.

The final chapter covers the transitional period from 1819 to 1830. By 1830, when this study ends, only five years after the opening of the Erie Canal, New York City would economically exceed other American port cities. The surge in the city's economy would be accompanied by dramatic changes in governance, such as electoral reform that would further erode the class structure of the late eighteenth century and the political authority of the upper class. And, as the mercantile capital of the nation for the next three decades, New York City would provide fertile soil for the fine arts. The economic boom

would be echoed by a concomitant development in the production of the arts and luxury goods.[35]

The preceding transitional period, including a brief and buoyant postwar recovery, saw the Common Council continue to assert the city's preeminence through the arts. In 1816, the Council had dedicated the old public Almshouse for the use of the New York Institution of Learned and Scientific Establishments: here seven organizations, including the American Academy of Fine Arts, the New-York Historical Society, the Literary and Philosophical Society, the New York Society Library and John Scudder's Museum took up residence just behind City Hall. And while the years from 1819 to 1830 included portrait commissions of (by-now) customary mayoral and gubernatorial portraits, three portraits of General Andrew Jackson, President James Monroe, and the Marquis de Lafayette were also commissioned. These three portraits will be discussed in relationship to specific political issues of the period, with a distinct emphasis on how these public portraits visually represented the new constituents and viewers of the 1820s.

The City Hall portrait collection was the first municipally funded public gallery. From 1790 to the present, it housed the earliest examples of truly public art in the new republic—art that was paid for with public monies, commissioned by elected representatives of the public, and on view for the public. Selected for their patriotic and educational value, as reminders to posterity of the deeds and virtues of the current generation, these portraits were hung in the politically charged and official environment of City Hall.

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[35] See Art and the Empire City, New York, 1825-1861, exhibition catalogue (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000) for a comprehensive discussion of the various manufacturers of luxury items and the production of fine arts during the antebellum period.

Today, politics and aesthetics in public art remain irretrievably connected, and public art is still judged on both artistic merit and political meaning. The creation of the earliest American public art meant giving visual form to the emerging democratic government. New meanings and new images were required to represent a new symbol of authority—the voters. While the City Hall portrait collection supplied citizens with images of contemporaries and heroes, it provided more. These images were a visual manifestation of the wishes and desires of the men who commissioned these portraits, as well as the men who painted them. By closely looking at the collection and its history we can reveal, in part, the aspirations that informed the creation of the earliest American public art.

THE NEW YORK CITY HALL PORTRAIT COLLECTION, 1790-1830
CHAPTER ONE: PUBLIC PATRONAGE AND THE FIRST PORTRAIT COMMISSIONS

Introduction

American independence brought a new relationship between government and art. Prior to the revolution, portraits of the monarch commissioned by the Common Council were visual representations of the essentially hierarchical relationship between the king and his subjects. These colonial portraits symbolized the potency and grandeur of the sitter, while reminding the viewer of their dependency upon the king and upon his representatives, the colonial governors. The sweeping changes in government structure brought about by the War of Independence— from a system based on monarchical, central authority to one that would, by the early nineteenth-century, derive its power from "the people" or electorate—would have a dramatic effect on the establishment and development of a new municipal portrait collection.

The Common Council's first two portrait commissions were a municipal government's first attempt to represent in visual form the changes from colonial governance to a new republican structure. And in the absence of a comparable effort on the part of the federal government, such an attempt by New York City represented a national effort. In 1790, when the portraits were commissioned, the new republican structure outwardly retained some of the forms of the old colonial government, most notably, the Common Council. The Council, which passed municipal ordinances and regulations, was composed of the Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen and Assistant Aldermen who represented seven wards.[1]

[1] Two additional wards in the northern end of the city were added in 1803.

However, unlike today's chief executive, the Mayor, as well as the Recorder, was not elected. Instead, the Mayor and Recorder were both appointed by the New York State Council of Appointment, composed of the Governor and one state senator from each of four districts.[2] The role of this powerful state Council guaranteed that state and local politics would remain closely intertwined until its elimination in 1821.[3] Its authority was widely acknowledged by all New Yorkers: by 1800, the Council controlled over 800 positions; by 1821, it controlled 15,000 posts throughout New York State and New York City.[4]

The appointive New York City Mayor presided over the Common Council, but was not allowed to vote except in case of a tie. Upon authorization by the Council, he was responsible for issuing the warrants on the city treasurer, though in his absence, the Recorder or deputy mayor might perform that function. His judicial duties included service as presiding justice of the Mayor's Court and the Court of General Sessions, and as a member of the Court of Oyer and Terminer. The Mayor also granted tavern licenses, acted as commissioner of excise under the law of 1788, served as clerk of the market,

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[2] The Council of Appointment, established in 1777, was granted the power to fill all important, profitable, non-elective government posts. If a majority in the Assembly supported the governor, he could count on getting the Council he wanted, and could thus control an immense system of patronage. But if a majority opposed him, this Council would become a hotbed of opposition.

[3] The direct election of New York City's Mayor was not instituted until 1833; after 1821 and before the institution of popular suffrage, the Mayor was elected from among the Common Council members, like today's Speaker. Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898 (NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), 522.

[4] The potential largess of this Council should be compared with the Federal government, which in 1800 held only 3,000 offices in all, including numerous minor positions. Howard L. McBain, DeWitt Clinton and the Origin of the Spoils System In New York (NY: AMS Press, Inc., 1967), 28, 32. McBain notes that Governor George Clinton dominated the councils of appointment during the revolutionary period and subsequent period of confederation; however, by 1789, Clinton was aware that his political control over the state had weakened. On the generally reduced authority of executives as a reaction to the abuses of the colonial period, see also Evan Cornog, Birth of Empire: Dewitt Clinton and the American Experience (NY and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 25, 37; and Stanley Elkins and Eric McKitrick, The Age of Federalism: The Early American Republic, 1788-1800 (NY: Oxford University Press, 1993), 10.

water bailiff, made numerous appointments, and had extensive licensing powers. [5] These rights of appointment and licensing meant that the mayoralty was a potentially lucrative post, for the Mayor's salary was derived from fees associated with these activities.

The Recorder, also appointed by the State, was the chief legal officer of the Corporation. He was also an active member of the Common Council, with voting power, and could serve with full authority whenever the Mayor was absent. The Clerk of the Common Council, another State appointee, was responsible for keeping the Council's minutes; served as clerk of the Mayor's Court and the Court of General Sessions of the Peace; drew "all licenses, bond, grants and other writings"; sealed all documents requiring the seal of the corporation; and registered and recorded all mortgages and deeds. His income was derived from tavern-license fees until 1800, when the Council allocated the sum of $500 annually for his salary.[6]

The Common Council or Commonalty included an Alderman and Assistant Alderman from each district or ward. Assistant Aldermen generally enjoyed the same powers as the Aldermen; the primary exception was that assistants had no judicial responsibilities.[7] During the first two decades of the post-war period, the majority of aldermen and assistants were either merchants or lawyers; there were no professional politicians. But although these Council members had substantial businesses or practices, they were responsible not only for enacting legislation, but also for ensuring that its provisions were carried out.

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[5] The Mayor named the high constable, the chief marshal and his deputy marshals, the deputy clerks of the market, markers and sealers of weights and measure, a deputy water bailiff, scavengers, cartmen, inspectors of hay, public porters, packers, cullers, and common criers. Sidney Pomerantz, New York, An American City, 1783-1803. A Study of Urban Life (Port Washington, NY: Ira J. Friedman, 1965), 37-40.

[6] Ibid., 42, 44-45.

[7] The quality and social status of men selected for either office was roughly equivalent, and the Commonalty was usually composed of individuals of personal prestige and substantial financial standing in their community. Ibid., 46.

Prior to the revolution, imperial and provincial officers, whose political powers were derived directly from the crown, were at the top of late eighteenth-century society. While the war abolished their legal authority,[8] landed gentry, whose authority and wealth depended on their large estates, still remained a force in state and city politics. However, the strongest political force in city government was the professional class, [9] composed of merchants, traders, and lawyers, followed by the middle class of lesser merchants and master workmen. Poorer landholders, clerks, journeymen, laborers, and mechanics were not yet eligible to vote.

The right to vote for Common Council members, or Aldermen and Assistant Aldermen, was limited to freeholders (those who owned estates within the city valued at over forty pounds a year)[10] and freemen, or those who held the "freedom of the city." Restrictions on suffrage meant that, despite dramatic changes in government, New York City's political and social structure initially remained hierarchical, though it would become increasingly flexible as suffrage requirements were loosened and eventually eliminated.[11]

The Federalists, who in 1788 had advocated ratification of the Constitution on the grounds that it was preferable to "anarchy and Convulsions,"[12] dominated New York City politics in the first decades after ratification. While anti-Federalists (later known as

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[8] Hendrik Arnold Hartog, "The Properties of the Corporation: New York City and Its Law, 1730-1870" (Unpublished dissertation, Brandeis University, 1981), Chapter 1, 17.

[9] Pomerantz, An American City, 46, notes that an analysis of the occupations of the members of the Common Council from 1783 to 1801 reveals that there were of the approximately 114 individuals who served, thirty-six merchants, twenty-three lawyers, three sailmakers, three curriers, two brewers, two pewterers, two silversmiths, and two chocolate manufacturers. The professions of the twenty-three remaining could not be identified. However, many of the professional class that ran the Common Council were drawn from the landed gentry, or married into that powerful group.

[10] Oscar T. Barck, New York City during the War for Independence (Port Washington, NY: Ira J. Friedman, Inc., 1966), 12-13.

[11] Regarding the limited effect of the revolution on land ownership see Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898 (NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), 281-3.

[12] Alexander Hamilton's words, quoted in Burrows and Wallace, Gotham, 288-89.

Republicans) expressed concerns about the concentration of power in a central authority, the Federalists, led by New Yorker Alexander Hamilton, sought to create a unified government that could address factionalism and insurrection, and restore trade and credit. This latter issue was of particular importance to almost everyone in the city. Even the lowliest mechanic had an awareness of the city's reliance on trade as its economic engine and source of general prosperity.

Nevertheless, the issue of suffrage and the concepts of liberty, equality, and "government by the people" that had served as watchwords throughout the Revolution would eventually undermine the power of the Federalists. As early as 1790, the Federalist Common Council's attempt to create a new visual language representing the "public" and new nation ran afoul of these concepts. While today we assess the two portraits by John Trumbull of George Washington and George Clinton as examples of Trumbull's finest work, the public's reception of these portraits was less enthusiastic.

It should be pointed out that the 1790 commissions were not the first time that the New York City Common Council had commissioned portraits. During the colonial period, in 1766, inspired by the repeal of the Stamp Act, the New York City Common Council had commissioned portraits of King George III and of William Pitt, the Earl of Chatham.[13] The portrait of His Majesty was commissioned by the Council and painted

[13] Helen Burr Smith and Elizabeth V. Moore, "John Mare; A Composite Portrait," The North Carolina Historical Review 44 (1967), 18-51; Helen Burr Smith, "John Mare, New York Portrait Painter," New York Historical Society Quarterly 35 (October 1951), 355-399. Pitt, who served as prime minister during the War of Independence, was beloved by the colonies for his support of their rights and his leadership in the repeal by Parliament of the hated Stamp Act. The Minutes of the Common Council of June 10, 1766 (Smith and Moore, 22) note: "Mr. Mayor Informed this Board that William Davis of this City Mariner hath lately Delivered to him to be Presented to this Board the picture of the Right Honourable William Pitt, Sat in an Elegant and Genteel frame, and this Board in order to Demonstrate the Great value and esteem they have for the person of so great a Patriot & friend to America as the said William Pitt, do hereby in turn for the Compliment of the said William Davis, ORDER that the Freedom of this Corporation be prepared & presented to him, & that the Clerk prepare one accordingly & deliver the same to Mr. Mayor who is desired

by John Mare Jr., a New York painter who later moved to North Carolina and renounced portraiture for politics and trade. Mare received the princely sum of £24 for his services.[14]

Although no trace has been found of this early portrait, it was presumably based on one of the many prints available that made the face of the king known to his subjects. Intended to express the power of the sitter and evoke the reverence of the viewer, portraits of monarchs and aristocrats were traditionally hung in legislative meeting rooms or governor's residences throughout the British colonies.[15] They were commissioned to create and demarcate the relationship between the sitter and the party commissioning the work, to demonstrate the subservient quality of that relationship, and to flatter the sitter.

The deferential political relationship expressed through these visual images was understood and increasingly resented by rebellious colonials. An equestrian sculpture of King George III by Joseph Wilton, put up in 1770 by the General Assembly of the colony of New York,[16] was torn down from its pedestal in Bowling Green only six years later in 1776 (Figure 1). This act of violence, like the many similar ones that took place

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to present it to the said William Davis with the thanks of this Board." Whether the portrait of Pitt was commissioned of an English artist, bought by Davis abroad, or accepted from him as a gift is unclear from the entry. However, the bestowing of the Freedom of the City upon Davis indicates that the portrait was a highly valued acquisition.

[14] Smith and Moore, "John Mare," 22-23. Edwin J. Perkins, The Economy of Colonial America (NY: Columbia University, 1980), 145-167, estimates that by the 1770s the median income per capita for the free white population was £13 and states that "a typical family of five lived quite satisfactorily on £65" per year. The payment to Mare would have thus been substantial.

[15] Allan Ramsay, the English portrait painter, had created the official state portraits of George III and Queen Charlotte shortly following the 1761 coronation of the king. Copies of these paintings by his studio were dispersed throughout the Empire, and the colonial Governor of New York, Lord Dunmore, not to be outdone by his peers, ordered full-length portraits of his Majesty and the Queen in 1770. Ellen G. Miles suggests that it was expected that Governors would commission these portraits out of their own pockets. She notes records of payments between October 1769 and April 1770 included full-length portraits for the Governors of the Bahamas, New York, and West Florida. Other commissions were completed for New Jersey, and a number of unspecified "Ambassaders and Governors." Miles, "The Portrait in America, 1750-1776," in American Colonial Portraits, 1700-1776 (Washington D.C.: National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1987), 53,

[16] Arthur Marks, "The Statues of King George III and the Iconology of regicide" in The American Art Journal 13 (Summer 1981), 61.

throughout the American colonies, was a demonstration against the visible manifestations of monarchical power, against art. Using ropes to pull the sculpture down to the ground, destroying the sculpture, these rebellious New Yorkers were symbolically destroying the king. The early iconoclastic impulses of the revolution were thus symbolic acts of tyrannicide.[17]

The Common Council's first portrait commissions after the revolution--the portraits of George Washington and George Clinton—must be understood within the context of the City's prior commissions. Viewed by their contemporaries through their fears about the return of monarchy and the fragile nature of the early republic, these first two commissions were startlingly controversial. As premature attempts to represent the new republic they were dismal failures. In fact, the portrait of George Washington was viewed by many as one of the first steps towards the restoration of the monarchy.

The Politics of the First Commission

On July 19, 1790, the Common Council passed its resolution approving the commissioning of a portrait of President Washington, to be undertaken by Mr. Trumbull and placed in City Hall (Figure 2). The first public portrait commission for New York's municipal government was thus a group decision, rather than the effort of one individual. Indeed, it would seem that action by a group, whether at the instigation or suggestion of an individual or not, was customary in New York governmental during the period immediately following the Revolution. This practice had been strengthened by a general reliance on the "committee structure" during the Revolutionary period, for example in the early General Assembly of New York State:

[17] Ibid., especially pp. 67-68 for this point.

> Like legislative bodies generally, the General Assembly of New York conducted much of its business through regular standing committees and special committees. Service on these boards enabled many New York leaders from all parts of the province to learn committee routine, procedure and record keeping which was turned to good account in later years. [18]

Local committees were the backbone of the revolutionary movement.[19] The committees of correspondence formed during the War of Independence ensured the execution of the orders of the Continental and Provincial Congresses.[20] And throughout the war, committees took on the responsibilities of governance, guaranteeing the safety of citizens, setting up systems of communication throughout the colonies, enacting laws, assuming police and judicial responsibilities, and even raising funds for the poor.[21] The pressures of war meant that these committees took over all the functions of government in both wartime and peace, including defense, taxation, food rationing, and law enforcement.[22]

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[18] "These committees drafted laws, made investigations of finance, taxes and Indian relations, drew up state papers, made reports, cooperated with committees of the Council, welcomed new governors, and performed numerous other duties. The Assembly's committee of correspondence, used at least as early as 1755 and continued down to the Revolution, exchanged intelligence with New York's agent in London, with members of Parliament, and with other colonies." Hugh M. Flick, "The Rise of the Revolutionary Committee System" in History of the State of New York, ed. Alexander C. Flick (Port Washington, NY: Ira J. Friedman, 1962), III, 213-4.

[19] Peter Nelson, "The Rise of the Revolutionary Committee System" in The American Revolution in New York, Its Political Social and Economic Significance (Albany, NY: State University of NY, 1926), 27-46.

[20] One of the first actions of the first Provincial Congress of New York, which met on May 22, 1775, was to appoint a "standing committee of correspondence" of seven members which would in turn have committees appointed in every county, town, and district of the province. Flick, "Revolutionary Committee," 237.

[21] "Five kind of committees came into existence [during the Revolution]: (1) those for a special emergency; (2) local committees; (3) committees of correspondence; (4) state committees to carry on the work of government or some phase of it; and (5) the committees of the Legislature which were assigned some particular task and acted under law with a greater degree of caution." Nelson, The American Revolution, 44-46.

[22] The Committees of Correspondence "were called upon to hire arms, to collect ammunition, to disarm the non-associators and Tories, and to send the weapons thus obtained to the Provincial Congress. They were instructed to have assessors, collectors and county treasurers elected, to receive loans, and to supervise the election of delegates to the Provincial Congress. They were requested to make a return of the army recruits, and to take a local census. They were empowered to fix the price of tea and food and to grant passes to travelers. And they were authorized to try suspected persons and to punish them, to sequester their property, and to imprison those who failed to answer a summons to appear." Flick, "Revolutionary Committee, 237.

Committee action was an early attempt to create a form of political representation that reflected the will of the people. Nevertheless, due to the limitations on suffrage in the City, the Common Council of this period represented a minority of New Yorkers. Thus, although the Washington portrait had been commissioned by a group of duly elected representatives, the commission proved to be political dynamite. Those excluded from the process, or those with anti-Federalist views, interpreted the Common Council's action as non-representative. Despite the Council's efforts, the first portrait commission was not a popular one, in either sense of the word.

A month after the Common Council passed their resolution to commission the portrait of President Washington, an article[23] entitled *MUNIFICENCE* appeared in the New-York Journal & Patriotic Register. Signed *Vox Res Publica* (or voice of the republic), the work was a scathing critique[24] of the portrait commission:

> If the [Common Council] mean to patronize American genius, and they are infected with the liberal enthusiasm of Amateurs, they have an ample field. The American genius might exercise the powers of the brush, in a picture which should represent the fathers of this city assembled in common council, when the important question—picture or no picture—agitated the expressive countenances of aged wisdom….It is an inauspicious moment, for the wise fathers of a republican city, to pay a prodigal compliment to the [President]…

The author goes on to suggest that "injudicious flattery" by the people leads to abuses of power by their leaders,[25] and argues that memorials of any kind should be commissioned

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[23] "Munificence," The New-York Journal, & Patriotic Register, Friday, August 20, 1790.

[24] Newspapers of the period were usually comprised of advertisements, notices of events, excerpts from various books, and editorials, either penned by the publisher or mailed in for printing by usually anonymous authors. Most newspapers also included a "poetry corner," where sentimental or satirical verse would be printed.

[25] "The injudicious flattery of the people have often intoxicated their rulers, and sanctioned their usurpations. When a free people flatter without judgment, it indicates a servility of spirit, and slavery is at no great distance. A republican people should be frugal of flattery to any living character; and should reserve their plaudits until the curtain drops on the actor. They can then view the whole conduct of the actor; and if meritorious, let the air resound with your applauses. Then let busts adorn the niches of your

only after the death of the sitter, for flattery "to the living rulers is always dangerous and seldom sincere." It is not until a leader dies, that his true worth may be assessed by the people, and only then, if merited "let busts adorn the niches of your municipal palaces, let the marble, seemingly alive, and the equestrian statue, adorn your squares."

Vox's reference to an equestrian statue emphasizes the anti-monarchical thrust of his argument. Before the revolution, the only equestrian statue ever erected in New York City was the statue of King George III by Joseph Wilton at Bowling Green,[26] destroyed in 1776 (Figure 3). *Vox Res Publica* makes an explicit connection between President Washington and King George III, noting that despite the city's "liberal enthusiasm," the judgment of history on Washington must be suspended until his death. As long as he lives, Washington, like any other leader, remains suspect: a potentially ambitious and unscrupulous character.[27]

As *Vox* indicates, contemporary viewers would interpret this portrait, or rather, the act of commissioning this portrait, politically. Much of the public reception of and comments on the portrait was not focused on aesthetics—on what the portrait would look like, on whether it would be a good or close likeness. Rather, the concern voiced in this and other articles indicated a frank distrust of not only the Common Council, who was commissioning the work, but of the sitter, President Washington, as well.

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municipal palaces, let the marble, seemingly alive, and the equestrian statue, adorn your squares. Flattery to the living rulers is always dangerous and seldom sincere. American republicans, watch with jealousy the living rulers, and perfume the ashes of the worthy dead. This posthumus (sic) praise is wise in point of prudence, and safe in point of policy." Ibid.

[26] In 1803, there was an equestrian statue of Washington erected in Vauxhall Gardens, a pleasure resort for daytrippers. A comprehensive description of the unveiling of the monument can be found in the New-York Evening Post, July 2, 1803.

[27] For a discussion of the original eighteenth-century meanings of Washington's character, see Barry Schwartz, "The Character of Washington: A Study in Republican Culture," American Quarterly 38, no. 2 (Summer 1986), 202-222.

And Washington was plainly singled out. For by the time *Vox* had penned *MUNIFICENCE*, the Common Council had commissioned a second portrait. On August 10th, the Council resolved that

> His Excellence the Governor of this State be requested to permit Mr Trumbull to take his Portrait to be placed in the City Hall as a Testimony of the Respect which this Corporation bear towards him[28]

Yet *Vox* did not comment on the portrait of New York State Governor George Clinton (Figure 4). Certainly, as chief state executive, he wielded great influence in the state, despite the curtailment of his powers by the Council of Appointment and Council of Revision. [29] However, without the national popularity of Washington, Governor Clinton hardly posed the same potential threat of centralized authority as the President. As Clinton was an avowed anti-Federalist who had consistently advocated state's rights against the centralized structure of a federal government, and because he had campaigned vociferously against the ratification of the Constitution, it is possible that his fellow anti-Federalists viewed him as untainted by monarchical ambitions.

The omission of his portrait from *Vox*'s commentary might suggest that Washington's portrait had simply provided the Federalists and their counterparts with another arena for political battle. It could be argued that Washington's portrait was commissioned simply because the Federalists, who dominated the Common Council,

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[28] Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1784-1831, I: 573 (hereafter MCC).

[29] Both Councils were created in 1777, with the formation of a new state government. The Council of Revision, composed of the governor, the chancellor (who presided over a court of equity), and the judges of the Supreme Court, was empowered to veto legislation passed by the two houses, the Senate and Assembly. (members of the Senate were elected from four senatorial districts and held office for four years, while Assemblymen, who proportionally represented counties based on population, served terms of only one year). The Council could veto bills within ten days of receiving them only required a quorum to exercise this prerogative, and in order to be overruled, a two-thirds majority in both houses was needed. As an unprecedented legal obstacle between enactment and implementation of legislation, this Council provided a new "safeguard" against any abuse of either populist power or executive discretion, and was apparently the brainchild of Chancellor Robert R. Livingston. See George Dangerfield, Chancellor Robert R. Livingston of New York, 1746-1813 (NY: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1960), 90.

were Federalists. That is to say, that as Federalists, they supported a strong central government and believed in the expression of political and governmental strength through opulent art, grand architecture, and all the trappings of the traditional aristocrat.

Certainly Washington's weekly levees at his New York home on Cherry Street, his elegant horse-drawn carriage driven through the winding streets of lower Manhattan, and Vice President Adams' insistence on an appropriate title for both himself and the President, were just some of the ways in which the Federalists symbolically placed themselves on an equal footing with the European powers.[30] But these attempts to assert authority were viewed by their enemies in the worst possible light—as active efforts to symbolically subjugate a recently freed people. And once the people submitted to these symbols, "slavery is at no great distance."

There are, however, several compelling reasons why the Federalist composition of the Common Council was not an adequate explanation of or cause for the portrait commissions. First, the Federalists dominated the Common Council until 1800. But despite their political ascendancy, it would be eleven years before another resolution to commission a portrait was approved by the Common Council. Without such a remarkable hiatus, a cogent argument might be made for the Common Council's portrait commissions as continuations of the accepted colonial practice. But, given the lapse of time between the first two portraits commissioned by the Council and subsequent commissions, the notion of a continuous tradition seems at best unconvincing.

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[30] Simon P. Newman, Parades and the Politics of the Street; Festive Culture in the Early American Republic (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 50-52. For example, Washington held his weekly receptions or *levee*s as they came to be known, in a room without chairs. By removing the chairs from the room, although Washington stood (unlike the British monarch, who would normally be seated), no one else could be seated in his presence. And, despite regular expeditions on foot and on horseback, Washington also used an elegant cream-colored coach, a luxury that-was roundly criticized by some for its anti-republican appearance.

Second, why would the Federalist Common Council commission the portrait of the leading anti-Federalist in New York State, Governor George Clinton? As no written documentation of the Federalists' perspectives on this particular issue has come to light, we may speculate that they thought that Clinton's portrait would provide "political cover" for the earlier commission. In order to defuse criticism, the Common Council might have commissioned Clinton's portrait in order to appear to be equitable in their treatment of their political opponents. While possible as a motive, this speculation is a sign that simple political loyalties are insufficient to account for the Council's actions.

Third, by 1790, the political meaning of the fine arts of painting and sculpture within the new republic had not yet been determined. Political affiliation was no guarantee of a position for or against the fine arts.[31] While portraiture could be discussed as intimating monarchical ambitions, there was at the same time a general recognition that the history of the nascent country and its founders should be recorded both in written and visual form for future generations.

What then, was the rationale for the Common Council's commissioning of the first post-Revolution portrait? The antagonistic reaction of *Vox Res Publica* may be tied to anti-Federalist politics, but it hardly seems a simple reflection of those politics. Instead, the Common Council's actions were complicated by specific events taking place in New York City, referred to in *Vox*'s comments regarding "an inauspicious moment to pay a…compliment."[32]

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[31] Thus the foremost Republican, Thomas Jefferson, was a staunch advocate and appreciator of the fine arts, while John Adams, one of Federalism's leading lights, viewed art as an unnecessary luxury and was concerned with its corruptive influence. That the meaning of portraiture was politically "up for grabs" is especially evident when one looks at Republican DeWitt Clinton's role in commissioning portraits for the City Hall collection.

[32] Munificence," The New-York Journal, & Patriotic Register, Friday, August 20, 1790.

The Compromise of 1790

On July 9, 1790, Congress passed the Residence Act. This act, which was signed into law on the 16th by President Washington, endorsed the removal of the federal government from New York City in 1790. Adding insult to injury, for the next ten years, while a new city was planned and eventually built on the banks of the Potomac, New York's traditional rival, Philadelphia would serve as the nation's capital.

Yet only three days after the President signed the legislation that would doom New York City to political obscurity, the Common Council approved its resolution commissioning the first portrait in its collection—a portrait of the President. The removal of Congress seems to have been the spark for the commissioning of the full-length portrait of President George Washington, and the subsequent commission of the full-length portrait of Governor George Clinton. With this commission, New York sought to hold on to its status as the nominal capital of the nation, asserting its preeminence and sophistication by a municipal compliment to the President.

It is now accepted by most historians that the "Compromise of 1790"[33] was arranged--at least in part--by Jefferson, Hamilton,[34] and Madison over dinner at Jefferson's house at 57 Maiden Lane on or around June 20th. Regarded as one of the

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[33] For an overview of the compromise, see Joseph Ellis, "The Dinner" in Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation (NY: Vintage Books, 2000), 48-80. Ellis' account draws upon several other authors, including Jacob E. Cooke, "The Compromise of 1790" in The William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 27, no. 4 (October 1970), 523-545; Kenneth R. Bowling, "Dinner at Jefferson's: A Note on Jacob E. Cooke's 'The Compromise of 1790'" in The William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 28, no. 4 (October 1971), 629-48; and Norman K. Risjord, "The Compromise of 1790: New Evidence on the Dinner Table Bargain" in The William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 33, no. 2 (April 1976), 309-14.

[34] Although Hamilton was a key player in the Compromise, he had argued for retaining Congress in New York. While discussing the qualifications of a candidate to the Congress at a public meeting, he noted: "that as the residence of Congress would doubtless be esteemed a matter of some import to the city of New York, and as it would certainly be contended for, -- our representative should be a man well-qualified in oratory to prove that this city is the best station for that honorable body." New York Packet, March 3, 1789, 2.

most important bargains in American history,[35] the compromise resolved two issues that had reached deadlock in the newly formed Congress: the location of the nation's capital[36] and the assumption of state debts by the federal government.[37]

A review of the New York City newspapers of the period demonstrates that, until the location of the capital was resolved, numerous articles about apparently unrelated subjects, investments, improvements and political decisions, were brought back to the issue of where the government would finally make its home.[38] For example, in the New York Packet, of January 13, 1789, a notice on the establishment of the New York Society Library asserted that a primary reason for the foundation and support of such a library was to answer a Congressional need, and thus provide an additional inducement for Congress to remain in New York City.[39]

Indeed, recognizing the financial benefits that could accrue from housing the federal government, New York made a Herculean effort to accommodate Congress. The expensive renovation of Federal Hall (still unpaid for by the time Congress departed) and the numerous improvements to the city's infrastructure, all testified to New York City's concern for Congressional comfort. The Common Council had gone so far as to close the streets surrounding Federal Hall with chains[40] (although this was the busiest commercial

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[35] Cooke, "The Compromise," 523.

[36] Sixteen possible sites had been proposed by spring 1790, including Baltimore, New York, Philadelphia, the Potomac, the Susquehanna, and Trenton. The Continental Congress had sat at Philadelphia, 1774-76, 1777, 1778-83; Baltimore, 1776-77; Lancaster, 1777; York, 1777-78; Princeton, 1783; Annapolis, 1783-84; and Trenton, 1784, before moving to New York in 1785.

[37] Ellis, "The Dinner," 69-70. New Yorkers were generally in favor of assumption, believing that it would restore foreign confidence in American financial markets.

[38] New York Packet, January 13, 1789, page 3.

[39] The 3,000-volume collection of the New York Society Library was housed in a third floor southeast corner room in Federal Hall from June 1789 until 1795. Kenneth Bowling, ed., Documentary History of the First Federal Congress, 1789-1791, Volume VIII, (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University, 1972), 653-4.

[40] "Mr. Recorder laid before the Board a Letter from his Excellency the President of Congress directed to Mr Mayor enclosing a Request of congress 'that the President address a Letter to the mayor of this City informing him that the Debates of Congress being frequently interrupted by the passing of Carriages,

area in the City) so that the Congressional members would not be disturbed by the noise of traffic and to evict two schools previously housed in the building so that the members would not be disturbed by the sounds of children.[41]

After the various and complex efforts New York had made to please Congress, the apparent ingratitude of that body was a severe blow to the city. The public opined that the removal was linked to assumption,[42] as a satire printed in The New-York Journal of August 31, 1790, demonstrates.[43] The piece, perhaps deliberately, was printed adjacent to an item on the President's departure from New York. In the article, Miss Assumption "was lately delivered of twins, a girl and a boy, the girl was baptized *Philadelphia*, the boy was christened *Potowmacus*."[44] The satire continues with a black-bordered death notice for the feeble twin Potowmacus, the offspring of

> a deluded female….if he had lived, the wilderness of the antient (sic) dominion would have blossomed like the rose, and our sweet scented tobacco would have perfumed the mountains of *Allegheny*.

Congress are desirous of ordering Chains to be provided for preventing such Interruption during their daily Sessions if the Measure is not disagreeable to the police of the City' Whereupon the Board came to the following Determination. This Board being cheerfully disposed to accommodate the United States in Congress assembled to the utmost of their Power Do hereby signify their Consent & Approbation that, that honble Body should order Chains to be drawn across the Streets from the North East, South East & South West Corners of the City Hall to prevent the Noise of passing Carriages during the Hours of their daily Sessions." MCC,Volume I, July 21, 1785.

[41] "It being suggested that the Schools in the city Hall greatly disturb Congress in their deliberations—Ordered that Mr. Riggs & Mr. Grahams remove their School immediately from the City Hall." MCC, Volume 1, March 16, 1785.

[42] Insight into New Yorkers' perceptions is illustrated by a letter from DeWitt Clinton to Dr. Clinton, July 20, 1790, in John W. Francis, Old New York, Reminiscences; New York: Extended to thirteen volumes by the addition of drawings, engravings and autographs, Volume XI (NY: New York Historical Society, 1895), 1458. DeWitt Clinton specifically links the two issues of removal and assumption, and discusses how Congress's removal will negatively affect the city's economy.

[43] "Taken from Mr. F[reneau]'s Gazette of the United States," The New-York Journal, & Patriotic Register, August 31, 1790.

[44] A reference to the Potomac river.

It concludes with a note that "The charitable part of the sex, supposes her (Miss Assumption) deluded by the promises of a Mr. Residence."[45]

New Yorkers responded to this calamity with a variety of responses that ranged from the bitter condemnation of Philadelphia,[46] (that "self-boasted Athens of the World"[47] as it was termed) to gloomy thoughts that "mirth and sociability and everything worth living for, will soon be fled to the banks of the Delaware, our city will be deserted and become a wilderness again, peopled with wolves, its old inhabitants."[48] The city's exertions (and Congress's ingratitude) were even memorialized in satirical verse and popular song.[49]

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[45] See also the New-York Daily Gazette, July 23, 1790, 699: "….blame the friends of Conogochegue ….Let those who pay no debts at home, Compel their neighbors to assume…"; and "Poetics. From the Poughkeepsie Journal," New-York Daily Gazette, September 18, 1790, which begins "In digging the cellar of the Government House in the old Fort, the fragment of a fable was found, supposed to be written by the Ghost of Federal Hall, lately murdered…." The poem is about a debate between an honest mastiff and some Spaniel Dogs on "Where they would chuse to dwell."

[46] "Characteristic Sketch of a New-Yorker and a Philadelphia," The New-York Journal, & Patriotic Register, Monday, November 8, 1790, emphasizes the unsociable and dull nature of the Philadelphians versus the warmth, friendliness, generosity and cleanliness of New Yorkers; while The Daily Advertiser, October 4, 1790, includes an extract of a letter from Philadelphia stating that "On the building to be appropriated to the use of the House of Representatives in this city, it was thought by some artists, that a dome covered with strong glass ought to be raised in imitation of the dome Cupola in your Federal Hall at New-York. One of the projectors, being asked his real reason….answered that his whole view in proposing it, was, that it might *throw a better light upon their proceedings*." Two days later, The Daily Advertiser ran another letter from Philadelphia, noting that a prejudice against Philadelphia as national capital had resulted from their "having no lobsters wherewith to entertain the members of that august body;" and noting that this problem had now been resolved by bringing lobsters from Amboy. See also the satirical poem "Peter Pindar Pennsylvaniensis's Petition" in the New-York Packet, November 25, 1790, mocking New York irreligion and lack of culture: "New York! We envy not your cloysters; inflam'd by beer and oysters, Where Friars and where Nuns, their orgies keep. We Philadelphians! envy not your greetings; We more prefer our solemn meetings, Where Christians never sleep. A drowsy sermon may to rest invite, But here the Play-house promises delight. In Philadelphia each shall be a gay house; since we have got both Congress and the Play-house."

[47] New York Packet, January 18, 1791, quoted in Pomerantz, An American City, 109.

[48] "Happy Dick" in Daily Advertiser, July 12, 1790 and New-York Packet, July 13, 1790, argues for New Yorkers to "come home to our own resources,".

[49] See "The Removal," The New-York Journal, & Patriotic Register, August 10, 1790, a poem that recounts all of the efforts New York made to retain the Congress: "Have we not to our utmost strove, Fro fear the CONGRESS should remove, At dull debates no silence broke, And walk'd on tiptoe while they spoke…Put some things up, pull'd others down, And rais'd our streets thro' half the town. Have we not toil'd through cold and heat, To make the *Federal Hall* complete, Thrown down our fort, to give them air, And mov'd our guns, the Lord knows where?" As the poem notes, many of New York City's streets required grading as part of the new improvements, so that these streets would properly meet up with other existing streets. Part

The extreme emotions evoked by Congress's removal, and the commissioning of the two portraits fast on the heels of the Congressional decision, suggests that the commission was a means by which the Common Council could re-assert their prestige and by extension, that of the city. Historian Richard Bushman has shown how the concepts of the personal qualities of taste, delicacy, and sensibility were promulgated in the eighteenth century as a means of social and class distinction. Bushman has suggested that the qualities of taste and elegance, so often referred to in the literature of the time, were not merely passive or internal attributes. Possession of these qualities was linked to action upon the world. It was insufficient simply to possesselegance and taste ; one's character could only be demonstrated through positive achievements.[50] In this circumstance, the two 1790 portrait commissions could be interpreted as visible proof of New Yorkers' taste and elegance.[51] They would be the perceptible signs of equal social status; a means of affirming power and taste comparable to that of both the supplanted monarchy and the soon to be departed Congress.[52] This first portrait commission would thus serve social, political, psychological, as well as aesthetic ends.

Having had the chief executive of the nation and the Congress residing in New York City had elevated local city politics and given a weighty significance to daily life.[53]

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of improvements included demolition of the old Fort George which had blocked fresh breezes from the water. For a satiric song; see "A New Song," New York Morning Post, August 4, 1790 (Washington, D.C.: George Washington University, First Federal Congress Project, http://www.gwu.edu /~ffcp/exhibit/p12/p12_5.html; accessed 30 August 2004).

[50] Richard Bushman, The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1992), 96.

[51] Bushman points out that the measure of taste that was used for the colonies was consistently England, and preferably London; for example, he discusses European prototypes adapted by Americans in the design of urban spaces in "Chapter V: Cities and Churches."

[52] See below for a discussion of the "code of honor" that also supports this rationale for these two early commissions.

[53] Pomerantz, An American City, 93, notes that even after the removal of Congress, New Yorkers were absorbed in state and national issues to an inordinate extent, and that only occasionally did municipal issues attract popular attention to an equivalent degree.

The loss of this significance would be counterweighted by the Common Council's commemorative act. That George Washington was the first President of the United States, that he had served first in New York City, that the first inauguration had been in New York, that with George Clinton he had presided over the liberation of the city when the British evacuated, that Clinton was the "chief executive" of the state,[54] and had also achieved national importance,[55] all of these reasons explain the selection of the sitters and the apparent reasons why the city "memorialized" them.

Contemporaneous commentary on the portraits reveals that these commissions actually were viewed as social as well as political gestures. Shortly after Congress's decision had been finalized by President Washington's assent, the following item appeared in The New York Journal & Patriotic Register, signed "A BURGHER—whose eyes are open"[56]:

> *The* CHATECHISM (sic) *of* PRUDENCE. Is it prudent in a city, which is reduced to pay its debts by *lottery,* to incur the superfluous expences (sic) of *disinterested* flattery? Is this *canvass* (sic) compliment to be discharged by a *Picture Lottery*, and entrusted to responsible and respectible (sic) commissioners! If the expences of this *disinterested* compliment are to be discharged by assessments, will the citizens, deluded by federal tricks, and oppressed by federal burdens, chearfully (sic) submit to a *Picture Tax*!

Although "A Burgher" was a disgruntled critic of the Common Council's actions, his comments speak directly to, and thus recognize the high-minded and chivalrous pose of the Council. The portrait of Washington is understood by the writer to demonstrate the Council's attempt to assume a disinterested and gentlemanly position vis-à-vis "federal tricks" and "federal burdens."

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[54] It was not until 1797 that the state legislature moved to Albany from New York City.
[55] Cornog, Birth of Empire, 13.
[56] The New York Journal, & Patriotic Register, July 30, 1790; quoted in Thomas E.V. Smith, The City of New York in the Year of Washington's Inauguration (New York: Anson D.F. Randolph & Co., 1889), 48.

Moreover, it is significant that like *Vox Res Publica's* cautionary comments, "Burgher" also cast a jaundiced eye upon these types of "canvass compliments" to the executive. The anti-executive stance is even more explicit in the following item that appeared in The New-York Journal the following week on this matter, entitled INDEPENDENCE OF MIND:

> When the C[or]p[oratio]n had an informal conversation on the subject of the *picture*, there appeared a decided majority against this expensive and disinterested compliment. When the minority called for the *yeas* and *nays,* there was a *miraculous convertion* (sic). No man should be magistrate in a republican community, who is not independent of the smiles and frowns of the *court*.

This overtly critical commentary first castigates the Common Council for their weakness in bowing to the pressure of the "court" (a double allusion to the Mayor's Court of the Common Council and the "republican court" of President Washington). The writer thus evokes the aristocratic atmosphere surrounding the President, while noting that there was a decided majority against the portrait. Of especial interest is the phrase "this expensive and disinterested compliment," applied to the portrait itself. This use of the term "disinterested" demonstrates that the disapproving author himself characterizes the behavior of the Common Council as falling within the gentlemanly code of conduct.

Interestingly, the term "disinterested" appears in the title of another item in the same paper on the same day:

> DISINTERESTEDNESS. If the Corporation are solicitous for the fame of *disinterestedness*, and have a right to squander the city treasure for the purpose of *disinterested flattery*; we would advise them to exhibit the portraits of Mr. M[orri]s,[57] in the Senate chamber, & the miniature of the

[57] This is probably a reference to Robert Morris, who served as Senator from Pennsylvania at this time. Morris was a renowned financier and supporter of the Revolution who had served as delegate to the Continental Congress. In 1776, he was appointed Special Commissioner of Finance, 1776; served as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention, 1787; an United States Senator from 1789-95; and was President

> modest V_____n, in the chamber of _____. This would show the world, that resentments have no hostile abode in the passive breasts of the wise & honorable fathers of the city, & that they acquiesce in the national policy and necessity of a removal, and in the c[onstitutiona]l agency of the executive in adjournments. *S*. [58]

Though the political perspective of the writer is demonstrated by the thinly veiled negative comment on the "c[onstitutional] agency of the executive," a prerogative that he calls into question, the focus on the term "disinterestedness" as the primary theme of *S*'s criticism demonstrates that these portrait commissions were generally understood as actions within a specific code of conduct. The lack of self-interest demonstrated by the Council's behavior, while criticized by "*S*," was one of the hallmarks of gentlemanly behavior. The Common Council thus showed that they could rise above mere pecuniary concerns and demonstrate their attachment and loyalty, first to the President, and then to the Governor.

The Common Council's first portrait commission was thus not the result of straightforward party loyalties, Federalist versus Republican. In 1790, the notion of political parties that would represent divergent views within one political structure was simply not yet part of the established political discourse. Personal loyalties and the code of honor still informed the politics of the period, resulting in what was a gentlemanly gesture in response to a political crisis.

That this commission was in direct response to the particular political events of 1790 seems even more obvious when one observes that the Council declined to commission any additionalportraits until 1804.[59] Given the controversy around the first

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Washington's first choice as Secretary of the Treasury (he declined the post and recommended Alexander Hamilton).

[58] "Disinterestedness," The New-York Journal, & Patriotic Register, Friday, August 6, 1790.

[59] Although the next action to commission a portrait by the Common Council was in 1801, the commission was not actually awarded until 1804.

portrait commission, this substantial gap was not surprising. The initial commissions did not set a precedent or establish a model for public art that would or could be readily followed. Rather, the first portrait commission was a limited action, or a reaction, to respond to a specific woe: the loss of prestige for New York as Philadelphia became the nation's capital. And as the following hiatus demonstrated, this gesture was at best a premature effort to create a new form of visual representation of the nascent republic. It was an action that had severe consequences, becoming a focal point of negative attention, criticism, and discussion about social mores and political ambiguities, and resulted in a backlash that closed the door on portrait commissions for over a decade.

Trumbull and the First Two Portrait Commissions

As noted previously, the response of the Common Council to the Residence Bill was legislation of its own.[60] Present at the meeting were Richard Varick, Mayor; Samuel Jones, Recorder; Aldermen Jeremiah Wool, Wynant Van Zandt, Isaac Stoutenburgh, Daniel McCormick, Theophilus Beekman and John Wylley; and Assistant Aldermen Stephen McCrea, John Van Dyk, John Pintard, William I. Elsworth, Peter T. Curtenius and George Janeway. On July 19, 1790, the Common Council voted that "the President of the United States be requested to permit M^{r} Trumbull to take his Portrait, to be placed in the City Hall as a Monument of the Respect which the Inhabitants of this City bear towards him." After acting on ordinances for paving streets and permitting construction of a new house on Broadway, the Council passed the resolution.[61]

The Daily Advertiser of July 21, 1790 also carried the following item:

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[60] MCC, I: 565.

[61] The Council then moved on to the pressing business of substituting small notes issued by the City as a substitute for the counterfeit small change that was circulating in New York. The business of the day was concluded with the decision to advance £20 to George Janeway, Assistant Alderman, as a deposit towards the sinking of a new well at the Alms House. MCC, I: 873.

> Yesterday, the Mayor waited on the President of the United States, and presented the request of the Corporation that he would honor them with permitting Mr. Trumbull to take his portrait to be placed in City-Hall, as a mark of the respect the Citizens of New-York entertain of his virtues. The President was pleased to express the favourable impression occasioned by this application, and cheerfully granted the request. We understand that this circumstance has been for sometime contemplated, but the measure was not brought forward in the Corporation until the question of the residence of Congress was finally settled, lest any charge might have been imputed against the *disinterestedness* of the citizens on this occasion.[62]

The prestige of the commission was not lost on Trumbull, who, in a letter of August 30, 1790 to his mentor Benjamin West, called the Council Chamber in the second City Hall (where his portrait of President George Washington was to be hung) "the most elegant Room in America."[63] With this comment, Trumbull recognized that the importance of the commission devolved not merely from the sitter, but also from the location of the commission—New York City.

The commission was undoubtedly a coup for Trumbull, but the question remains, how did Trumbull obtain not only this commission, but also the next twelve portrait commissions for the City Hall collection? Although Trumbull lived for almost 27 years in New York,[64] he was not a native New Yorker. The artist was born in Lebanon,

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[62] My emphasis; Daily Advertiser, July 21, 1790. Quoted in part in I.N. Phelps Stokes, Iconography of Manhattan Island, Six Volumes (New York: Robert H. Dodd, 1915-1928)V: 1270. The commission was of general interest, and was noted in The Massachusetts Magazine, July 1790, 445, (with a New York, July 21 byline) which reported that "Yesterday the Mayor waited on the President of the United States, and presented the request of the Corporation that he would honor them with permitting Mr. Trumbull to take his portrait, to be placed in the City Hall, as a mark of the respect the citizens of Newyork (sic) entertain of his virtues. The President was pleased to express the favourable impressions occasioned by this application, and cheerfully granted the request." See also the Pennsylvania Packet, July 23, 1790; quoted in John Hill Morgan and Mantle Fielding, The Life Portraits of Washington and Their Replicas (Philadelphia and Lancaster, Pennsylvania: Printed for the Subscribers, Lancaster Press, Inc., 1931), 166.

[63] Quoted in Brandon Brame Fortune "Portraits of Virtue and Genius: Pantheons of Worthies and Public Portraiture in the Early American Republic, 1780-1820," (Ph. D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1987), 64; and in Autobiography of Colonel John Trumbull, Patriot-Artist, 1756-1843, ed. Theodore Sizer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), 326 (hereafter Sizer, Autobiography).

[64] He resided in New York from 1804-1808, 1815-1837, and 1841 till his death on November 10, 1843.

Connecticut in 1756,[65] the youngest son of Jonathan Trumbull, who was representative to the Connecticut General Assembly, and later Governor of the State.[66] One of the most prominent leaders of the War of Independence, responsible for organizing and equipping much of the army, Governor Trumbull linked Connecticut to the revolutionary network of the Committees of Correspondence in 1772. The Governor's political influence was considerable and provided his son with impeccable political credentials.

Although his family suffered a severe financial setback in 1766, when four ships belonging to their firm were lost, Trumbull received an education fitting his elevated station. He first attended Nathan Tisdale's school in Lebanon, where his "taste for drawing began to dawn early." Notwithstanding his interest in art,[67] at the age of fifteen Trumbull was sent to his father's *alma mater*, Harvard, to follow a more respected course of study in a learned profession, such as divinity or law. While he pursued his education,

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[65] See Helen A. Cooper, editor, John Trumbull: The Hand and Spirit of a Painter (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1982), 2-19, for a comprehensive chronology of Trumbull's life. His Autobiography contains many anecdotes not touched upon here, but it should be noted that due to a childhood accident, Trumbull had the use of only one eye. Some critics have argued that his large-scale work suffered due to this misfortune. See especially Sizer, Autobiography, 325-27.

[66] Irma B. Jaffe, John Trumbull: Patriot-Artist of the American Revolution (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1975), 21-23; Sizer, Autobiography, 8n23. See also John Trumbull, Autobiography, Reminiscences and Letters of John Trumbull (New York & London: Wiley and Putnam, 1841), 2 , (hereafter Trumbull, Reminiscences) where Trumbull notes that his father, "having been governor of the state of Connecticut, by annual election, during the entire war of the Revolution; …was the only person who, being first magistrate of a colony in America, before the separation from Great Britain, retained the confidence of his countrymen through the Revolution and was annually reelected governor to the end of that eventful period."

[67] Trumbull, Reminiscences, 5. "In reading of the arts of antiquity I had become familiar with the names of Phidias and Praxiteles, Zeuxis and Apelles." Of interest in this comment is that his impressions of ancient art were initially derived from literary rather than visual sources. Ibid., 10. Jules Prown notes that Trumbull's earliest exposure to visual arts was predominantly through prints, some of which would have been reproduced in these literary works. He argues that this exposure resulted in "strong contrasts of light and dark and an almost harsh linearity and flatness, a lack of plasticity" in the early paintings. See "John Trumbull as History Painter"in John Trumbull: The Hand and Spirit of a Painter, ed. Helen A. Cooper (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1982), 24.

he was able to tutor himself in the arts by examining engravings and paintings in the college's collection, and reading Hogath, de Piles, du Fresnoy, LeBrun, and others.[68]

After graduating from college in July 1773, the following year Trumbull formed a small company of militia who trained themselves in military exercises.[69] In April 1775, shortly after the Battle of Lexington, Trumbull was made an adjutant of the first Regiment of Connecticut, serving under General Joseph Spencer. Three months later, in July, General Washington arrived in the northeast. Known for his artistic skill, Trumbull was assigned to provide a correct plan of the enemy's works. His drawing was shown to Washington and brought him into the General's circle.[70] Shortly thereafter, Trumbull was appointed second aide-de-camp to General Washington, a position he held only briefly,[71] being promoted in the field in June 1776 to deputy adjutant-general.[72]

However, his promotion was not formalized with a commission from Congress, an irregularity that irritated Trumbull. A full eight months later, in February 1777, he received the long-awaited commission; however, it was dated September rather than June. Trumbull fired off angry letters to Congress,[73] sending back the commission and asking that its date be corrected. Congress declined to make the change, and Trumbull returned

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[68] Regarding Trumbull's familiarity with aesthetic theory, see Jaffe, John Trumbull, 22. Trumbull displays the Hogarth book in an early self-portrait painted July 1777 in a style clearly indebted to Copley. Trumbull acknowledged John Singleton Copley's influence on him in his Reminiscences, 11, noting that on his way to enroll in college, he was introduced to Copley, "an elegant looking man, dressed in a fine maroon cloth, with gilt buttons—this was dazzling to my unpracticed eye!—but his paintings…riveted, absorbed my attention, and renewed all my desire to enter upon such a pursuit."

[69] Reminiscences, 15. It was accepted practice for gentlemen to recruit, outfit, and lead groups of militia.

[70] Ibid., 22-23.

[71] Sizer, Autobiography, xix: "he was Washington's aide-de-camp for only 19 days—and he traded on that exalted position all his life."

[72] Deputy adjutant-general is a rank equivalent to Colonel. However, he could assume the title of Colonel, a commissioned position, only upon receiving his commission; although he held the commission only briefly, this was the title he used until his death.

[73] See John Trumbull, Letter to John Hancock, President of Congress, Providence, R.I., February 22, 1777, and John Trumbull, Letter to James Lovell, Member of Congress, Providence, R.I., February 22, 1777, reprinted in Sizer, Autobiography, 39-42. Lovell replied "Congress is greatly piqued at the style and manner of your demand," and advised Trumbull to write a more apologetic letter of request.

to civilian life,[74] first going to Lebanon and then traveling to Boston where he could pursue his artistic studies with greater freedom. It was there that he met a "club" of young men that included "Rufus King, Christopher Gore, William Eustis, Royal Tyler, Thomas Dawes, Aaron Dexter, &c., &c.—men who in after life became distinguished."[75]

While Trumbull's resignation may seem inexplicable to us today, he was not the only army officer to resign his commission in what has been interpreted as a fit of pique.[76] The son of one of the most powerful and respected men in the cause of American Independence, Trumbull had served directly under the highest military authority. Like other men of privilege, he believed that his personal honor and reputation were as important as the fate of a yet to be formed nation. While the American cause had his support, the code of honor that Trumbull and his contemporaries lived by would not permit him to countenance situations that might be perceived as insulting or belittling. And like other officers with backgrounds of privilege and power, Trumbull felt no compunction in expressing his dissatisfactions to what was a still embryonic government of his social peers. What we might view as arrogance might better be understood as absolute confidence in one's worth, a quality that would prove invaluable to Trumbull in his subsequent artistic endeavors.

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[74] Trumbull notes that he served in 1778 as a volunteer aide-de-camp to General Sullivan, who was attempting to recover Rhode Island from the British. Ibid., 51.

[75] Sizer, Autobiography, 50. Trumbull would maintain a life-long friendship with King, a prominent New Yorker and federalist. Gore was already a close friend of Trumbull's from his years at Harvard.

[76] Colonel Henry Beekman Livingston, the brother of Chancellor Robert R. Livingston, took the same action when he became convinced that his services were unappreciated. In addition to feeling overlooked, "he chafed at the ill breeding of many of his fellow officers." Sensitive to these points of honor, Livingston resigned his commission on November 19, 1778, and fired off a strong letter to the President of Congress stating that he was "not yet so callous to the Impressions of Insult as to be insensible of the repeated Indignities offered me in the Promotion of Officers my inferiors." Regarding Livingston's resignation, Dangerfield suggests, "Colonel Livingston suffered from the assumption—unfortunately by no means an uncommon one—that the War of the American Revolution ought to have been a gentleman's war." George Dangerfield, Chancellor Robert R. Livingston of New York, 1746-1813 (NY: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1960), 110-111.

Still, it was not until Trumbull traveled to London in July 1780,[77] that he was able to make progress in his art under the tutelage of one of the most successful painters of the period, Benjamin West. American-born West, who traveled to Europe in 1760 and settled in London three years later, was one of the most prominent artists in late eighteenth-century London. President of the Royal Academy from 1792 until his death, he also served as teacher and advisor to three generations of American artists who crossed the Atlantic to study with him.[78]

Unfortunately, Trumbull's studies ended when he was arrested and charged with treason, and then imprisoned in Tothill-fields Bridewell for almost eight months.[79] Trumbull believed that his arrest and imprisonment was in revenge for the execution of Major John André. News of the treason of Benedict Arnold and the death of André had reached London on November 15th, only five days before he was arrested. Horace Walpole described Trumbull's activities while incarcerated:

> Mr. Trumbull…during his confinement, amused himself with painting…Some beautiful strokes of the above gentleman's pencil were admired in the royal academy, without an idea that they came from the gloom of prison.[80]

Trumbull was apparently released through the good offices of Edmund Burke, to whom the artist had written on May 10, 1781, and again on May 19, 1781 to request his

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[77] Trumbull, Reminiscences, 63-66. Trumbull left for Paris in May 1780 on financial business for family and friends, and arrived mid-June 1780. With the collapse of this financial project, he left for London with an introduction to West procured from Benjamin Franklin.

[78] Trumbull's introduction to West also brought him into contact with Gilbert Stuart, who was studying with West at the time. Jaffe, op. cit., p. 46. For West's influence on American art, see Dorinda Evans, Benjamin West and His American Students (Washington, D.C.: National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1980).

[79] Trumbull, Reminiscences, 68-78, 316-329.

[80] Horace Walpole, Anecdotes of Painting in England (1760-95), (New Haven: Yale University Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1937) vol. 5 , 112; quoted in Cooper, Hand and Spirit, 6.

assistance. [81] Upon his release in June, he remained in London only a few days, and then returned to America via Amsterdam, the most direct route.

Arriving in Lebanon, Connecticut after a six-month voyage, for the next two years Trumbull worked with his brother David provisioning the American army. [82] As the War of Independence drew to a close, his father again urged him to take up the study of law. Nonetheless, Trumbull desperately wished to continue his artistic studies and his father eventually relented. In 1783, the Governor sent a letter of introduction to the Earl of Dartmouth and a letter to Edmund Burke, commending Trumbull "to his [Burke's] future protection."[83]

In spite of his nine months in an English prison, Trumbull would return to England three more times, and eventually spend a total of more than twenty years there. His connections with England originated with his family, which had long-standing affiliations through trade. In addition, Trumbull would eventually marry a British citizen, Sarah Hope Harvey, in 1800, a decision that would impact his later career. Although Trumbull's behavior seems oddly apolitical, especially given his family's ardent support of the revolution, the years he spent in England can be explained by his view of the world as a gentleman. Although two nations might be embroiled in bitter and deadly warfare,

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[81] Trumbull then sent a letter of thanks to Burke on June 25, 1781. See Letters from John Trumbull to Edmund Burke, May 10, 1781, Tothill Fields Bridewell, and June 25, 1781, York Buildings, John Trumbull Papers, Connecticut Historical Society; the above two letters are photocopies from the Northamptonshire Record Office; see also Letter from John Trumbull to Edmund Burke, Tothill Fields, Bridewell, May 19, 1781, John Trumbull Papers, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University.

[82] Jaffe, John Trumbull, 54.

[83] Jonathan Trumbull, Sr. to the Earl of Dartmouth, October 13, 1783; reprinted in Benjamin Franklin Stevens, comp., Facsimiles of Manuscripts in European Archives (Wilmington, Delaware: Mellifont Press, 1970), 2107; cited in Cooper, Hand and Spirit, 7; Trumbull, Reminiscences, 88-90. William Legge, Earl of Dartmouth was the Secretary of State for Colonies under King George III. On October 19, 1781, Lord Cornwallis was defeated at Yorktown and surrendered; when news of the defeat reached London, the House of Commons voted to end the war and negotiations for a peace treaty began. Preliminary treaties began in November 1782, and on September 3, 1783, the Treaty of Paris was signed.

with a letter of introduction and the word of a gentleman for surety, Trumbull felt secure enough to travel into the lion's den.

Moreover, although an undisputed patriot, as an educated, relatively affluent, and socially and politically well-connected gentleman, Trumbull had little sympathy for the more radical democratic elements of the American Revolution. Like many of his economic and social class who had supported independence, his vision of the new American nation preserved class distinctions and chivalric tradition, which would be leavened with the Christian virtues of charity and piety. Although his letters home frequently expressed a longing for his native country, Trumbull must nevertheless have appreciated a society where painting was considered a gentlemanly pursuit rather than a tolerated trade.

Trumbull's second visit to London proved more fruitful than the first. Arriving in January 1784, he threw himself into a rigorous regimen of study, starting with the study of anatomy at five in the morning and ending the day with classes at the Royal Academy.[84] Like Copley, Stuart, and other young Americans seeking to study art abroad, Trumbull studied with West, working daily in West's studio, a spacious house with three exhibition galleries and workshops. Trumbull was such a regular frequenter of West's abode, that although he did not actually reside there, he used his mentor's address when exhibiting at the Royal Academy.[85]

Even though almost immediately upon his arrival in London Trumbull had contemplated painting scenes of the American Revolution, it appears that the suggestion

[84] Cooper, Hand and Spirit, 7.
[85] Evans, West and His American Students, p. 83.

for such a series came from West.[86] Certainly West's own efforts at modern historic painting[87] had set an important precedent for the way in which an aspiring artist might commemorate recent events in the birth of a new nation.

Oswaldo Rodriguez Roque notes that Trumbull subordinated portraiture to history painting, writing to his brother in 1785[88]:

> portraits continue to be insupportable to me.—I wish to rise above the necessity of painting them & there is a line, untrodden in any eminent degree but by one man, which offers me a more easy & elegant support if I can acquire the necessary powers of execution…If I do succeed it makes me master of my time. & disengages me from all the trumpery & caprice & nonsense of mere copying faces--&places me the servant not of Vanity but Virtue.

That line was modern history painting, and the one man, Benjamin West. Yet despite his comments regarding portraiture, Trumbull continued to work in this lesser genre as well. In 1785 he managed to show three portraits at the Exhibition of the Royal Academy,[89] one of which was even noticed in the London Times: "Portrait, by Trumbull. One of Columbius' (sic) sons, who have become candidates for fame in the pursuit of the pencil."[90]

Some of Trumbull's portrait commissions during these years were the result of a financial "necessity of painting them," portraits being one of the few types of artwork for

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[86] In a letter to his brother Jonathan, dated May 24, 1786, Trumbull wrote "Mr. West…has propos'd to me a subject of the History of this Country, at once popular, sublime, & in every respect perfect to the pencil….I shall enter upon it without delay." John Trumbull Papers, New York Public Library. Jaffe, John Trumbull, 70-71; Prown, "History Painter," 27-30, notes that West had asked Charles Willson Peale to procure drawings of the American Army uniforms, "to enable me to form a few pictures of the great events of the American contest." Not surprisingly, he abandoned this endeavor, which would undoubtedly have endangered his relationship with his patron, King George III.

[87] Notably West's *Death of General Wolfe*, painted in 1770 and displayed at the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1771.

[88] John Trumbull, Letter to Jonathan Trumbull, Jr., January 18, 1785, quoted in Oswaldo Rodriguez Roque, "Trumbull's Portraits," in Cooper, Hand and Spirit, 98.

[89] Jaffe, John Trumbull, 71.

[90] "Exhibition of the Royal Academy at Somerset House," The London Times, Monday, 2 May 1785, 2, The Times Digital Archive 1785-1985.

which there was a seemingly inexhaustible market. However, his forays into portraiture over the next decades were also often undertaken in support of the larger project: creating a series of history paintings documenting the major events in the American Revolution. Even during this early period of travel abroad, Trumbull had realized that in order to accurately depict and document the events leading up to the formation of the new republic, he would have to collect portraits of the men who had been actors upon the stage of history.[91]

In concert with his success at portraiture, Trumbull dedicated himself to following in West's footsteps.[92] After two years of assiduous study, he completed two historic scenes drawn from the Revolutionary war: *The Battle of Bunker's Hill* and *The Death of General Montgomery*. At West's urging,[93] Trumbull sought to have the paintings copied and engraved. Since no engravers were available to undertake the work in London, this venture required a trip to Paris, where he accepted Thomas Jefferson's invitation (extended at an earlier meeting during the summer of 1785) to visit him.[94]

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[91] See for example his letter to brother Jonathan, dated 24 May 1786, in which he notes "the portraits of Genl Washington, Greene, Gates &c, &c are necessary in my future pictures." John Trumbull Papers, New York Public Library.

[92] Later that year, on September 13, 1785, Trumbull again wrote to his brother Jonathan: "You remember the aversion which I always had expressed to portrait painting. I have just finished my first considerable attempt at Historical composition with much more success than my friends or myself expected—so much that Mr W pronounces my success in this line as certain if I persevere in it—There is only one cause which can prevent me from eminence except bad health & that is the want of money—The Vanity of men tempts them to give money even for bad portraits—but historical works must possess high merit before they meet with positives." John Trumbull Papers, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University.

[93] Trumbull, Reminiscences, 94-5.

[94] "He [Jefferson] had a taste for the fine arts, and highly approved my intention of preparing myself for the accomplishment of a national work. He encouraged me to persevere in this pursuit, and kindly invited me to come to Paris, to see and study the fine works there, and to make his house my home, during my stay…I was most kindly received by him. My two paintings, the first fruits of my national enterprise, met his warm approbation, and during my visit, I began the composition of the Declaration of Independence, with the assistance of his information and advice." Ibid., pp. 95-6. See also Cooper, op. cit., p. 8; she notes that Jefferson's papers indicate that they met the following summer of 1786.

Trumbull, who during this trip was engaged in recording the portraits of the French military heroes of the American Revolution for his project, arrived in July 1786,[95] and stayed with Jefferson until September.[96] While there, he became acquainted with "all the principal artists and connoisseurs in Paris,"[97] visiting Jacques-Louis David in his studio in the Louvre; the Luxembourg Palace and Versailles, and numerous private collections where he saw the "beautiful works of Correggio, Raphael, Titian, Guido, &c."[98] Leaving Paris, Trumbull toured through the north for a month, traveling to Frankfurt to meet Antonio di Poggi,[99] who was to oversee the engraving of his two paintings.

Returning to London in November 1786, Trumbull began to work in earnest on the *Declaration of Independence,* probably the best known of his works.[100] A year later, having heard from his publisher Poggi about the British victory at Gibraltar, he began *The Sortie made by the Garrison of Gibraltar*. While at work on this project, Trumbull returned to Paris in 1787 with the *Declaration*, and the *Surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown*, in order to paint from life the portrait of Jefferson in the former and French officers in the latter.[101]

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[95] Trumbull, Reminiscences, 95-119, for an account of his stay in Paris. This act of patronage was to have profound implications for Trumbull's work; Jefferson is usually credited with inspiring Trumbull to paint "The Declaration of Independence," and was certainly responsible for providing Trumbull with information on the participants and chamber where the Continental Congress met.

[96] As noted in Trumbull's record of his daily schedule, Jefferson seems to have full participated in the Paris art scene, which included visits to the houses and studios of contemporary painters as well as to the major public and private collections in the area.

[97] Trumbull, Reminiscences, 95; Jaffe, John Trumbull, 96.

[98] Trumbull, Reminiscences, 117.

[99] Ibid., 126-7.

[100] "I resumed my labors,..and went on with my studies of other subjects of the history of the revolution, arranged carefully the composition for the *Declaration of Independence*, and prepared it for receiving the portraits, as I might meet with the distinguished men who were present at that illustrious scene." Trumbull, Reminiscences ,147; see also Cooper, Hand and Spirit, 76-81.

[101] That summer he had painted Adams from life for the *Declaration,* noting "In the course of the summer of 1787, Mr. Adams took leave of the court of St. James, and preparatory to the voyage to America, had the

By February of 1789, Trumbull had completed three versions of *The Sortie*, the largest of which he arranged to have exhibited at the Spring Gardens[102] from April to July. He invested heavily in this display, renting the space for £151.4,[103] and having a frame especially carved for the painting, ornamented in the center with:

> a gothic gate & key are the armorial bearings of Gibraltar, in allusion to the ruins of the ancient Moorish castile still existing there: and to the place being the Key of the Mediterranean: On one side is a … gun carriage invented during the Siege….on the other side a Mortar, & the Grate afterwards used for heating shot—shells shot—musical instruments Flags &c [104]

Trumbull noted that the painting was generally well received, and comments that before its public exhibition, the connoisseur Walpole had viewed the work and passed favorably upon the work. [105] Moreover, the painting was positively reviewed in The Times:

> This painting, under all the disadvantages of being exhibited as a single performance, and so nigh to the best efforts of the English school,[106] is certainly possessed of very considerable merit:--the artist has artfully and properly availed himself of a very happy subject, and placed that subject in the most prominent point of encomium. The scene represents the completion of the greatest and most fortunate attempt during the war, and arrests the attention at that amiable crisis, when the British Officers are at one view exercising their dauntless courage and exquisite generosity….The disposition of the middle groups is very happy, and the perspective of the different distances is well conformed to…The finishing in this picture is delicate in the extreme, and does not injure the effect, which is sometimes the case in miniature touches… Upon the whole, this is a performance doing much credit to Mr. Trumbull as an artist; and we

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powder combed out of his hair. Its color and natural curl were beautiful, and I took that opportunity to paint his portrait in the small Declaration of Independence. Trumbull, Reminiscences, 148.

[102] Better known as Vauxhall, Spring Gardens was a pleasure garden which included a long gallery known as the Picture Room. Henry C. Shelley, Inns and Taverns of Old London (Boston: L.C. Page, 1909; accessed 8 June 2004) available from http://www.building-history.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Primary/Gardens1.htm; Internet.

[103] Jaffe, John Trumbull, 135.

[104] "Description of the Sortie," undated manuscript, John Trumbull Papers, Connecticut Historical Society. According to the notes, this part of the frame was left in London; when the painting was displayed "the whole was backed by a Curtain of Crimson Damask." See Jaffe, John Trumbull, figure 114, for a sketch of the frame; the sketch is now in the collection of the Boston Athenaeum.

[105] Trumbull states that before it was exhibited, Horace Walpole viewed *The Sortie* at West's studio and declared it "the finest picture he had ever seen, painted on the northern side of the Alps." Ibid., p. 150.

[106] It was displayed during the same period as the Exhibition of the Royal Academy.

> think the subject such as Englishmen will be heartily disposed to encourage. National subjects, like the death of Wolfe, and others which might be mentioned, have always received the patronage of the country.[107]

With increased skill, a modest success at showmanship, and having garnered approbation from the London press,[108] Trumbull was ready to return to America to see if he could generate support for his project of a series of history paintings depicting events from the Revolutionary War. [109]

Before his return, he stopped in Paris[110] where he met the Marquis de Lafayette, who had been appointed commanding general of the National Guard in July 1789. There, Trumbull witnessed firsthand the destruction of the Bastille and the general chaos and disorder in the streets, and was charged by the Marquis with delivering personally to President Washington, Lafayette's thoughts on the impending confusion and bloodshed

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[107] The 1789 review article was entitled "Review of the Picture, now Exhibiting, Representing the Sortie of the Garrison at Gibraltar," appeared in The London Times, Friday, 4 June 1789; p. 3; Issue 1172; col B; The Times Digital Archive 1785-1985. Oddly enough, Jaffe, John Trumbull, 135; Cooper, Hand and Spirit, 62; and Prown, "History Painter," 35, all state that the painting was not reviewed in the press. Nor is the review noted in Oswaldo Rodriguez Roque, "John Trumbull's *The Sortie Made by the Garrison of Gibraltar*," Apollo Magazine (May 1980), 375- 377, nor in Jean Lambert Brockway, "Trumbull's *Sortie*," The Art Bulletin 16, no. 1 (March 1934), 4- 13.

[108] His decision may also have been based on the recognition that, having started his studies relatively late, that he must press forward quickly. See his letter to Jonathan Trumbull, Jr., September 25, 1784, where he states, "I am…a Student…among boys, some of who draw better than I do." Quoted in Cooper, Hand and Spirit, 7.

[109] Although offered the post of secretary by Jefferson in the summer of 1789, Trumbull declined: "The greatest motives I had or have for engaging in, or for continuing my pursuit of painting, has been the wish of commemorating the great events of our country's revolution…my future movements depend entirely upon my reception in America." In this letter, Trumbull outlined his scheme for offering a subscription for prints from a series of pictures depicting significant events in the War of Independence, after first soliciting "the public protection of Congress." Quoted in Sizer, Autobiography, 160-162. Trumbull's reluctance to assume this post may have had other, more personal motives. J. Meredith Neil notes: "The unintentionally treacherous character of American patrons can be clearly seen in the correspondence of Jefferson. He repeatedly pledged his efforts to improve American taste by encouraging native artists...Jefferson had high hope for Trumbull, 'a young painter of great and increasing reputation.' Yet Jefferson filled most of his letters from Paris to Trumbull in London with requests to run errands that would insult the pride of any competent craftsman, let along a sensitive and insecure painter. " Toward a National Taste, America's Quest for Aesthetic Independence (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1975), 60.

[110] West had given him a letter to Benjamin Franklin, dated October 8, 1789, attesting to his achieving "the first class" in artistic skill. Benjamin Franklin Papers, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia.

that would beset France during the first years of the French Revolution.[111] Shortly afterwards, Trumbull returned to London, sailing from there to New York, where he arrived November 26, 1789.[112]

Having discharged his responsibilities and advised President Washington of the state of political affairs in France, Trumbull traveled home to Lebanon. His father had died in 1785, and his brother Jonathan was now a member of Congress, which was due to meet in New York in December.[113] Trumbull returned with his brother to New York in January 1790, recognizing that during Congress's sessions, he would have the opportunity to obtain "many of the portraits for the *Declaration of Independence*, *Surrender of Cornwallis*, and also that of General Washington in the battles of Trenton and Princeton." After all, as Trumbull noted, in New York, "all the world was assembled there."[114]

From his return to the New York in November 1789 to July 1790 when he received the commission from the Common Council, Trumbull strengthened his political connections with the newly formed federal government. His previous connection with Washington was a boon,[115] and as Congressman,[116] his brother also afforded him access to the highest levels of government. Moreover, his good friend Jeremiah Wadsworth of Hartford was a Congressman.

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[111] Trumbull, Reminiscences, 151-152.
[112] This is the date Trumbull gives in his Reminiscences; however, a letter from Trumbull to Franklin in the Benjamin Franklin Papers, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, is dated New York, November 25, 1789.
[113] Trumbull, Reminiscences, 163. His friend, Jeremiah Wadsworth was also a member of the first, second, and third Congresses, and a Federalist. See Sizer, Autobiography, 163.
[114] Sizer, Autobiography, 164.
[115] It was no accident that Washington's name appeared at the head of the list of subscribers for Trumbull's prints. See below.
[116] Jonathan Trumbull served as Connecticut's representative to the House from 1789 to 1795, served as Speaker of the House during the Second Congress, Senator from 1795-1796, Lieutenant Governor of Connecticut from 1796-1797, and then Governor of the State from 1797-1809.

Other political friends included Rufus King, who Trumbull had met previously in Boston. King had moved to New York in 1788, served in the New York state assembly, and then had been elected to the U.S. Senate in 1789.[117] Trumbull also had family ties with Mayor Richard Varick, a staunch Federalist, who had served as Mayor. Varick had known the Trumbull family since the war, even looking after Jonathan Trumbull's daughter (the artist's niece) during her visit to New York in 1784.[118]

Shortly after his arrival in New York, Trumbull was invited to dine with Washington—he was the only guest at that dinner party who was not an official of the new government.[119] Little more than a week later, the President and First Lady visited Trumbull to view his paintings[120] and were apparently duly impressed, for between February and July Washington recorded fourteen sittings for Trumbull.[121] These sittings were critical for the completion of three major battle pieces *The Capture of the Hessians at Trenton*, *The Death of General Mercer at the Battle of Princeton*, and *The Surrender*

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[117] King, a staunch federalist, served as U.S. Senator from 1789 to 1796, when he resigned to become the Minister to Great Britain, serving in that capacity from 1796 to 1803.

[118] For Varick's biography and career, see John George Rommel, Jr., "Richard Varick: New York Aristocrat" (Unpublished PhD. Dissertation, Columbia University, 1966); for Trumbull's nieces, 17, 87. Varick is listed as a subscriber to Trumbull's engravings in Reminiscences, 343;see also a List of Subscribers for Declaration of Independence, n.d., John Trumbull Papers, Connecticut Historical Society.

[119] Edgar P. Richardson, "A Penetrating Characterization of Washington by John Trumbull," Winterthur Portfolio III (1967), 3. The other gentlemen who dined with Washington on January 14, 1790 were Senators John Henry and William Maclay, Congressmen Jeremiah Wadsworth, Jonathan Trumbull, Jr., William Floyd, Elias Boudinot, Henry Wynkoop, Joshua Seney, John Page, Richard Bland Lee and George Mathews. John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., The Diaries of George Washington, four volumes (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1925), 4: 70-71. .

[120] On January 23, 1790. Richardson, "A Penetrating Characterization," 3.

[121] Ibid. Washington writes on February 19, March 22, and July 6th, that he "Sat for Mr. Trumbull for my Picture in his Historical pieces." Fitzpatrick, Diaries of Washington, 4: 145. According to Benson J. Lossing, ed., The Diary of George Washington, from 1789 to 1791; Embracing the Opening of the First Congress, and His Tours through New England, Long Island, and the Southern States, together with His Journal of a Tour to Ohio in 1753 (Richmond, VA: Press of the Historical Society, 1861), 103-4, Trumbull dined with Washington on a second occasion, Thursday, March 11, 1790. The entry in this edition reads: "The following gentlemen dined here to-day, viz: Mr. Read, of the senate, the Speaker, and following gentlemen of the House of Representatives, viz:--Messrs. Gilman, Goodhue, Aimes, Wadsworth, [Jonathan] Trumbull, Benson, Lawrence, Peter Muhlenberg, Wynkoop, Vining, Carroll, Contee, Madison, Page, and Sumpter—also Judge Bedford and Mr. John Trumbull."

of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown, all of which include Washington as a central figure in the composition.[122] Upon concluding these sittings, Trumbull completed a small, twenty by thirty-inch full-length portrait as a gift for Mrs. Washington that was "thought very like."[123]

During the same period, Trumbull sought subscribers for his engraving project, and in April 1790, he publicly offered his subscription for the two first engravings from the pictures of *Bunker's Hill* and *Quebec*.[124] His list of subscribers reads like a political *Who's Who*, with George Washington heading the group and listed to subscribe for four sets of prints; John Jay, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton and George Clinton, and most U.S. Senators and Representatives also subscribed.[125] Prominent New Yorkers who supported Trumbull's project included the Mayor Richard Varick, Aldermen Daniel McCormick and John Pintard, Chancellor Robert Livingston, his brother and future Mayor Edward Livingston, U.S. Senator Philip Schuyler (Hamilton's father-in-law),[126] Rufus King, and New York State Attorney General Egbert Benson.

Thus, although Trumbull was not a native New Yorker, his personal and familial connections assisted him in penetrating New York City society. Certainly, the relatively sophisticated New Yorkers would have discerned his professionalism and artistic skill.

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[122] Richardson, "A Penetrating Characterization," 4. See also Cooper, Hand and Spirit, 63-75, 82-3.
[123] Sizer, Autobiography, 326. Trumbull had already painted a small, full-length portrait of Washington in 1780 (when in London), from memory. The portrait is now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. See Theodore Sizer, The Works of Colonel John Trumbull, Artist of the American Revolution (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967), Figure 90.
[124] Trumbull, Reminiscences, 164. Trumbull first announced his artistic project on 23 January 1790, in the Gazette of the United States, 327.
[125] A list of subscribers may be found in Trumbull's Reminiscences, 339. See also Account Book, John Trumbull Papers, New-York Historical Society. The first entry in the book is for 2 April 1790.
[126] Trumbull also maintained a very friendly relationship with Angelica Schuyler Church (one of Philip Schuyler's daughters) and her husband John Barker Church. John Church, who Trumbull had known since 1777, generously offered to support the young artist while he was abroad in 1786. See Sizer, Autobiography, 93-95; see also John Trumbull Papers, New York Public Library, for letters regarding Trumbull purchasing personal items for the Churches.

His talent combined with his success in England, his personal relationship with Washington and other government officials, and his high-minded and publicly articulated sentiments regarding his "national project" were powerful inducements to award him the commission.

Shortly after opening the subscription to his printing project, in May 1790, Trumbull went to Philadelphia to obtain more portraits for his "great work,"[127] and to seek additional subscribers to his prints. For the next four years, he traveled the Eastern seaboard "collecting portraits for the history paintings." [128] Lacking a permanent residence in New York at this time,[129] upon receipt of the commission, Trumbull asked the Mayor for use of a room in City Hall in which he could paint. His request was referred to and approved by the Senate, and Trumbull painted the first City Hall portrait in "that room of the City Hall, in which the Portraits of the King and Queen of France are placed."[130]

Trumbull's portrait of Washington (Figure 2), the commission which inaugurated the City Hall collection, was probably based on his small-scale portrait given to Martha Washington (Figure 5). [131] The smaller portrait shows Washington standing next to a white horse, with his right arm leaning on the saddle, reins in his right hand.

> …in this picture every part of the Dress, the Horse & horse furniture, were carefully painted from the real objects:--the background represents the

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[127] Trumbull, Reminiscences, 164. Roque, "Trumbull's Portraits," 101, comments that many of the wonderful miniatures by Trumbull, oil on mahogany, were likenesses captured for this project.
[128] Cooper, Hand and Spirit, 10.
[129] Theodore Sizer Papers, Archives of American Art.
[130] John Adams, letter to Richard Varick, New York, July 22, 1790; copy in the Theodore Sizer Papers, Archives of American Art. These portraits, commissioned by Congress, were taken in 1790 first to Philadelphia and eventually to Washington, D.C., where they remained until their destruction by the British in 1812.
[131] John Trumbull to Elizabeth Parke Custis, May 1, 1829; cited in Cooper, Hand and Spirit, 118. In 1802, Elizabeth Custis inherited the painting from Mrs. Washington; the painting is now in the collection of the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum.

> encampment of the American Army at Verplanck's point on the North River in 1782—and the reception there which I saw of the French Army returning from the capture of Yorktown.[132]

A comparison of the smaller portrait with the City Hall painting shows a striking similarity of pose. In both portraits, the horse (wearing the same harness and bridle with rosettes) bites its leg, providing a graceful counterpoint to Washington. It has been suggested that the City Hall portrait was not done from life, as the last sitting noted in Washington's diary was dated July 12th, before Trumbull received the commission from New York. However, George Washington's manuscript diaries from July 15, 1790 to March 20, 1791 are missing, and it is unknown if in fact Washington sat for this painting.[133] Whether the City Hall portrait was painted from life, or not, the strong similarities between the two paintings suggest that the smaller portrait was used by Trumbull as a study for the larger painting.

Apparently Trumbull worked fairly quickly on this major commission, for by the end of August he was writing Benjamin West:

> I have several small portraits of the President one in particular which I have done for Mrs. Washington…is thought very like--& I have been

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[132] Verplanck's Point, though little-known today, is opposite Stony Point. It was the first river crossing above New York City controlled by the Americans, and was thus a key to communication between the northern and southern colonies. The British attempted to take the crossing several times, hoping to cut off Washington's access. In his Military, historic and political memoirs quoted in Richardson, "A Penetrating Characterization," 8-9, the Comte du Rochambeau described the meeting of the French and American army depicted by Trumbull: "The general [Washington], wishing to show his respect for France…had us pass between two ranks of his troops, clothed, equipped, and armed for the first time…, partly in materials and arms brought from France, partly from English stores taken with the army of Cornwallis and which the French Army had generously given over to the American army."

[133] Fitzpatrick, Diaries of Washington, 4: 145, notes that the diaries from July 15, 1790-March 20, 1791 are missing. See also Donald Jackson and Dorothy Twohig, eds., The Diaries of George Washington, six volumes (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1979), 6: 94. The last relevant entry is July 13th of the same year: "Tuesday 13th. Again sat for Mr. Trumbull from 9 until half past 10 oclock." In this edition, as in the Fitzpatrick edition, there is no diary for the period from mid-July 1790 till March 1791. In the Lossing edition, the last entry for month of July 1790 is Wednesday, the 14th; the journal then jumps to March 21, 1791, which accords with the loss of the journal. (See also the Library of Congress web site for detailed information on the history of the Washington diaries: http://www.memory.loc.gov/ammem/gwhtml/gwintro.html; accessed 8 July 2004.)

> tempted to disobey one of your injunctions[134] & to attempt a large Portrait of him for this city which I am now finishing—the figure is near seven feet high compos'd with a horse, & the back ground the evacuation of this Place by the British at the Peace:--the Harbour & Fleet with a Part of the fortifications & Ruins of the Town:--How I have succeeded I hardly dare judge:--the world have approved the resemblance, it is to Hang in the most elegant Room in American & in a very perfect light.[135]

Trumbull depicts Washington at the moment when the last British soldiers are departing.

> I represented him in full uniform, standing by a white horse, leaning his arm upon the saddle; in the background, a view of Broadway in ruins, as it then was, the old fort at the termination; British ships and boats leaving the shore, with the last of the officers and troops of the evacuating army, and Staten Island in the distance…Every part of the detail of the dress, horse, furniture, &c. as well as the scenery, was accurately copied from the real objects.[136]

Evacuation Day, commemorating the departure of the British troops in 1783, was a major holiday for New York City, celebrated on November 25th with parades and public dinners up until the early twentieth century. It is not surprising that this momentous occasion was also commemorated in the City's first post-war portrait. Trumbull shows the exodus of the British at a far distance, in the lower left corner of the portrait, the harbor filled with the sails of ships that will carry them away. A large American flag flies above Fort George, shown enclosed with a wooden wall or paling. Bowling Green Park is just north of the fort and enclosed with a circular ironwork fence.[137] Between the

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[134] Sizer, Autobiography, 325-6, suggests that because of Trumbull's monocular vision, West had advised him to work in a smaller format. Jaffe, John Trumbull, 157-8, argues that Trumbull's facility with smaller works may be due to his early self-training, when he copied small engravings.

[135] John Trumbull to Benjamin West, August 30, 1790; quoted in Sizer, Autobiography, 326. Sizer goes on to state that the portrait "still hangs in the same room, the Governor's, in New York City Hall." Ibid. However, the room Trumbull mentioned in his letter was in the second City Hall on Wall Street and Nassau Street, not the third and current City Hall where the portrait is hung today, and to which Sizer refers.

[136] Trumbull, Reminiscences, 164.

[137] "An infantry and artillery detail meanwhile discovered that the enemy, in a parting insult, had nailed the royal ensign to the flagstaff of Fort George and greased the pole to prevent its removal. John Van Arsdale, a sailor wearing cleats, climbed up and replaced it with the Stars and Stripes while a throng of spectators cheered their approval." Burrows and Wallace, Gotham, 260.

front legs of the horse can be seen the pedestal in Bowling Green Park[138] where the equestrian statue of King George III had once stood before it was torn down by the Sons of Liberty (Figure 6).

The inclusion of the pedestal by Trumbull was thought to be in bad taste by one Englishman, who commented:

> The destruction of a lifeless image by an angry mob could add but little to the fame of the artist's hero—instead of it, he throws a blemish on the man he meant to exalt, for we must consider that no better emblem than a broken pediment offered itself to point out the great actions of the principle figure. [139]

But it seems that Trumbull could have selected no better emblem, since the pedestal at Bowling Green was a charged political symbol that served as a reminder of the actions of the people against the tyranny of monarchs. It remained untouched in Bowling Green Park for thirty-five years, until it was finally removed in 1818. Even then, some New Yorkers complained that this "simple memorial of a people's valour" should have remained in place as a reminder of the past.[140]

The juxtaposition of Washington and the bare pedestal suggests a deliberate comparison by Trumbull between the English monarch and the new leader of the nation. The pedestal, which supported the statue of the monarch on horseback high above the people, is contrasted with the portrait of Washington, who has dismounted, and stands gracefully, hat in hand, next to his mount. Washington's casually elegant posture

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[138] This equestrian statue of King George III had been commissioned by the Common Council in 1766 when the Stamp Act was repealed; it was erected four years later amidst great festivities, where it stood for six years, when it was pulled down on July 9, 1776 (the date that the New York Provincial Congress gave its assent to the Declaration of Independence) and supposedly melted for use as bullets. Ibid., 203, 213, 232.

[139] Richard Barrett's Journal, New York and Canada 1816: Critique of the Young Nation by an Englishman Abroad, ed. Thomas Brott and Philip Kelley (Winfield, KS: Wedgestone Press, 1983), 12-14. See also Thomas Brott letter to Annette Kuhn, 27 June 1980, George Washington File, City Hall Portrait Collection Files, Art Commission of the City of New York.

[140] New-York Evening Post, 19 May 1818, quoted in Marks, "The Statues of King George III," 74.

contrasts with the hieratic pose of the destroyed statue of King George. And Washington, dressed in modern uniform, is further distinguished from the equestrian statue of the monarch, who had been depicted as a Roman emperor in imperial garb.[141] Yet although represented at a moment of hard-won triumph—the Evacuation--Washington's face has a contemplative almost pensive cast. Rather than remembering his victories, Trumbull shows him soberly reflecting upon the complexities he faced as president of the new nation in 1790.

The public reception of Trumbull's portrait included a strong outcry against what some republicans viewed as the monarchical pretensions of the Federalists. Happily for Trumbull, there were critics who were interested in aesthetics, and viewed the portrait as a successful painting. The Gazette of the United States[142] carried the following paragraph on September 18, 1790:

> It is finished by Trumbull—and a fine thing it is; designed and executed in his superiour style of excellence. It is a full length, in his uniform of blue and buff—boots and spurs—head uncovered,--most nobly relieved, in contrast with a luminous cloud and fine light sky—nearly a front position, with his right hand and arm thrown on the saddle of an elegant white horse, with the inimitable ease—the beast in the action of biting the middle joint of his near foreleg:--this position of the horse throws his neck to great advantage, while it leaves the PRESIDENT's head, as it ought to be, the most conspicuous object in the picture. There are distant prospects of particular and interesting scenes, as accompaniments. The whole piece is designed to convey to posterity an idea of THE MAN, at that most interesting period, when he finished his career of military glory—the evacuation of New-York. It is therefore a warm and highly animated business in every respect.

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[141] Marks, "Statues," 73-4.

[142] Gazette of the United States, 18 September 1790, 599. This article was reprinted in the State Gazette of North-Carolina, Edenton,8 October 1790; and The Virginia Herald and Fredericksburg Advertiser, Fredericksburg, 30 September 1790. It also appeared in The Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser, 28 September 1790, with the following paragraph appended: "Governor Clinton's picture is in hand, painted at the expense of the corporation; an account of it will be given. The price given for each is an hundred guineas." John Trumbull File, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Unlike the political commentaries discussed earlier, this writer's appreciative reception of the Washington portrait by Trumbull focuses on the portrait as an object in and of itself, rather than on the politics of the sitter or patron. His relatively sophisticated analysis notes the painting's luminous quality, and how Trumbull's composition supports the viewer's focus on the sitter, while creating a graceful visual counterpoint to the General. Although the "interesting scenes" are not discussed, the critic notes that the portrait is "a warm and highly animated business," suggesting the strength of sentiment elicited when viewing this depiction of Washington. For the writer, Trumbull has accomplished the most important component of his commission: to convey to posterity an understanding of Washington at the end of his military career.

A few weeks later, The New-York Journal, & Patriotic Register, which had previously printed several political commentaries on the portrait commission that pilloried the supposed monarchical ambitions of the Federalists, carried a brief review of "The Picture of the President":

> Much has been said on the subject.—We have few connoisseurs, or amateurs (sic), in this country, and few can give their opinion, of this performance, with science and judgment. It is sufficient, that the citizens view the performance with pleasure, admiration, and astonishment. Some additional accompaniments may improve this celebrated piece; and with all deference, and modesty, one idea is suggested.—suppose the painter should put his brush into gravy, and give us the "human face divine" of the Poet Laureat.[143]

Politically in accord with the newspaper's previous attacks, the writer first suggests that any assessment of the portrait is suspect, as most opinions will lack "science and judgment." His comment that "the citizens" will assess the adequacy of "the [Trumbull's]

[143] The New-York Journal, & Patriotic Register, 5 October 1790 (article dated 2 October 1790).

performance" suggests that they, rather than connoisseurs or amateurs are the arbiters of taste.

The final comments about improving this "celebrated piece" are more oblique. The reference to the "human face divine" is a quote from Book III of John Milton's Paradise Lost.[144] In this book, Milton invokes his muse, "holy light," seeking inner illumination. He laments that light has not returned to him, nor has the "sight of vernal bloom, or Summers Rose, Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine." He asks that his blindness be healed so "that I may see and tell Of things invisible to mortal sight." By evoking Milton's work, the writer may be referring to his own inner blindness, or more probably, to Trumbull's. Certainly his comment about "gravy" suggests that Trumbull should be painting a more commonplace, or down-to-earth subject.

Similarly, the writer's comment regarding the Poet Laureate may be a reference to the recently appointed English Poet Laureate, Henry James Pye.[145] Pye was made Poet Laureate in 1790, probably as a reward for his support of Pitt, the Earl of Chatham, in the House of Commons. This purely political appointment was viewed as absurd, and his birthday odes were a constant cause for contempt. By comparing Trumbull to the Poet Laureate, the writer suggests that his work has no artistic value, but is, like Pye, the product of a royal sinecure.

Only a few weeks after commissioning Trumbull to paint the portrait of Washington, on August 10, 1790, the Common Council: "Resolved, that his Excellency

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[144] Book III, line 44 in John Milton, Paradise Lost, ed. Scott Elledge (New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1975), 64.

[145] The title Poet Laureate was not an official royal office until 1668, when John Dryden assumed the post. The office is a lifetime appointment, and the laureate is responsible for composing poems for court and national occasions. At the time of each laureate's death, it is the duty of the prime minister to nominate successors from which the reigning sovereign will choose.

the Governor of this State be requested to permit M. Trumbull to take his Portrait to be placed in the City Hall as a Testimony of the Respect which this Corporation bear towards him."[146] The Washington portrait was finished in by the end of August, for on September 2, 1790, the council ordered a warrant issued to pay Trumbull £186/13/4[147] "for a portrait of the President of the United States." However, the Clinton portrait was not completed until July 1, 1791, when the Common Council ordered that the Mayor issue his warrant on the Treasurer on July 1, 1791, to pay him the same amount.[148] Apparently neither portrait was framed until the second was completed, for on July 1, 1791, the Council also ordered that "Aldn. McCormick & Messrs. Van Dyk & Pintard be a committee to take order for obtaining proper frames for the portraits in the City Hall of the President of the United States and the Governor of this State."[149]

Despite the gap of a year in execution, the Governor's portrait has many similarities to the Washington portrait (Figure 4). The canvases are almost identical in size (the Clinton painting is one inch shorter in length than the Washington) and very similar in color and treatment, suggesting that Trumbull considered them a pair, to be placed in the same chamber. Like the Washington portrait, Clinton is shown outdoors, in military uniform, on a promontory, with a small scene of activity behind him. Clinton, like Washington, looks off into the far distance and gazes into an unknown eternity. At

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[146] MCC, I: 573. The wording of this resolution is only slightly different than the request to Washington: "The President of the United States be requested to permit M[r] Trumbull to take his Portrait, to be placed in the City Hall as a Monument of the Respect which the Inhabitants of this City bear towards him." The word Monument is replaced with Testimony, and the word City with Corporation.

[147] "Ordered that Mr Mayor issue his Warrt on the Treasr to pay Mr John Trumbull the Sum of £186:13:4 for taking the Portrait of his Excellcy the Governor," Ibid., I: 652. The exchange rate was $4.55 per British pound; in today's currency, the portraits cost around $15,000 each.

[148] Trumbull, Reminiscences, 166.

[149] MCC, I: 591. See also James W. Smith, "Letters Catch Up with Portrait of Washington in N.Y. City Hall," New York Sun, 21 February 1947, 10, where the author refers to two letters in his collection regarding the Washington portrait. He notes that Trumbull, in a 25 September 1790 letter to Varick apologizes for the delay in providing "a plain simple design [for the frame]…at the same time that its effect on the eye will be rich."

the bottom corners of the painting are cannonballs, two at the lower left and one at the lower right. Immediately behind Clinton's feet lies a cannon that has fallen off its mounting. The lively battle scene shows a British regiment with flags flying charging up a hill. Clearly the engagement has begun and the British have already endured a barrage of fire. Fallen bodies lie in awkward heaps as a British officer bearing a sword and a flag turns to rally his troops. A body of water is visible to the left and beyond the soldiers, and an American ship can been seen to Clinton's left; an unidentified vessel appears to his right.

In his Autobiography, Trumbull reminisced that the scene was "British troops storming Fort Montgomery in the Highlands (where the general commanded,) and the burning of two frigates in the North River; this background is one of my favorite compositions (Figure 7)."[150] It is clear that Trumbull took great care to accurately depict the Highlands, showing the rugged terrain of the Battle of Forts Clinton and Montgomery that took place on October 6, 1777. The two forts, which were on the west side of the Hudson River, had been constructed to defend the Highlands in 1776. After an initial feint on the east side of the river, the British had convinced the Americans that they would attack there, drawing troops away and weakening the Forts' defenses. Following their initial skirmish, the British then approached and offered the Americans clemency, noting that with their 2,100 troops they vastly outnumbered the 700 Americans. Their offer was rejected and the British, who gained control of the Forts, overwhelmed the American forces.[151]

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[150] Trumbull, Reminiscences, 166.
[151] Gerald C. Stowe and Jac Weller, "Revolutionary West Point: 'The Key to the Continent'" in Military Affairs 19, no. 2 (Summer 1955), 89-91.

Clinton barely escaped from the battle, and his survival was due only to his knowledge of the surrounding terrain. Trumbull's selection of an engagement that was a British rather than an American victory at first glance seems an incongruous choice for the portrait of the chief executive of the state. But this choice is consonant with Trumbull's other earlier paintings of American losses (such as *The Death of General Montgomery)*, which highlight bravery and individual character in the face of disaster. Although an American loss, the battle was an exemplar of courage in the face of overwhelming odds, and must have appealed to Trumbull's romantic and chivalric sensibility.

Jules Prown has suggested that these two portraits are stylistically indebted to the 1635 portrait of *Charles I* by Sir Anthony Van Dyck, a painting that greatly impressed Trumbull when he viewed it at Versailles(Figure 8).[152] There are important visual similarities, including the placement of the sitter on a promontory with a background scene below and behind, the atmospheric palette depicting sky and water that recalls the colors of the Van Dyck, and the wonderful details of the surrounding vegetation, particularly in the Clinton portrait. Trumbull's paintings also bear striking similarities to Joshua Reynolds' portraits of *Captain Robert Orme* (Figure 9) and *Colonel George K. H. Coussmaker* (Figure 10).[153]

Trumbull was familiar with Reynolds' work and had met him on several occasions in London. He recounts two particular incidents: the first, when as a student he had been wounded by Reynolds' criticism; the second when Reynolds had complimented

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[152] Trumbull, Reminiscences, 112: "Went to Versailles…Saw here the whole length portrait of King Charles I, engraved by Strange—the most perfect and loveliest of Vandyck's portraits that has come to my view."

[153] The relationship is especially vivid vis-à-vis the Washington portrait, in which the horse's head bears a striking similarity to the horses' heads in the two Reynolds' portraits.

his work, mistakenly thinking it was by the hand of West. Characteristically, Trumbull comments "Sir Joshua was at least as much disconcerted as I had been…the account between us was fairly balanced."[154]

As a student of West's, Trumbull had access to the social and intellectual world within which West moved.[155] He would have known of Reynolds's discourses on art, delivered annually at the Royal Academy,[156] and would have been familiar with Reynolds's comments on portraiture. Although Reynolds, in developing his hierarchy of categories of subject matter, like other eighteenth-century theoreticians placed history painting at the top, portraiture could--particularly when it depicted a hero—be elevated. By the creation of a special category of "historical portrait,"[157] Reynolds connected portraits "painted in the Historical Style," with "history painting," that is, narrative painting that included inspirational, moral, or philosophical content. According to this hierarchy, this "historical style" of portraiture surpasses the simple portrait, viewed as a mere mechanical record of a particular person. The historical portrait exalts the stature of

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[154] Trumbull writes of his encounter with Reynolds in his Reminiscences, 91-3.

[155] A "Memorandum of Books packed July 1803," *Inventories*, New-York Historical Society, Trumbull papers, Misc. MSS., lists in Trumbull's library West's Lecture on painting, Hogarth's *Analysis of Beauty*, Sir Joshua Reynold's works, *Essais* de Montaigne, Montequieu's *Spirit of Laws*, Martin's *Law of Nations*, Fresnoy's *Art of Painting*, Winckelman's *Letters*, De Piles on Painting, Walpole's *Anecdotes of Painters* and Vasari's *Viti di Pittori*.

[156] Reynold's discourses were first printed separately as they were completed from 1769 to 1790; the first seven appearing in a collected edition in 1778. In 1797, after Reynold's death, all fifteen were issued together. See Robert R. Wark, "A Note on the Text and Collation," in Sir Joshua Reynolds, Discourses on Art, ed. Robert R. Wark (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1975), 283.

[157] *Discourse V, Delivered to the Students of The Royal Academy on the Distribution of the Prizes, December 10, 1772*: "I cannot avoid mentioning here a circumstance in portrait-painting…When a portrait is painted in the Historical Style, as it is neither an exact minute representation of an individual, nor completely ideal, every circumstance ought to correspond to this mixture…It is not to my purpose to enter into the question at present, whether this mixed style ought to be adopted or not; yet if it is chose, 'tis necessary it should be complete and all of a piece…Without this union…a work can have no marked and determined character, which is the peculiar and constant evidence of genius. But when this is accomplished to a high degree, it becomes in some sort a rival to that style which we have fixed as the highest." Ibid., 88-89.

the portrait to an intellectual endeavor, and in turn elevates the painter of this more dignified subject to a nobler level.[158]

For Trumbull, both the Washington portrait and the portrait of Clinton were history paintings, or "historical portraits." In keeping with Reynold's concept, both portraits included representations of significant events in the War of Independence. Rather than simply "recorded for posterity," the two sitters are shown as protagonists within the panoramic saga of revolution. These two early works were thus consonant with Trumbull's project "to preserve and diffuse the memory of the noblest series of actions which have ever presented themselves in the history of man."[159] Moreover, for Trumbull, the portraits that he undertook were, in many instances, a lesser but critical part of his noble project—without those portraits, a true and accurate record of the men who founded the nation would not exist.

As noted in the Minutes, with the precipitate removal of the federal government in August 1790, New York's newly renovated Federal Hall had once more become City Hall. John Adams, then Vice President and President of the Senate, sent a letter of thanks to Mayor Varick dated August 12, 1790, advising him that "it is the wish of the Senate, that the Corporation will permit such articles of furniture &c. now in use in the City-Hall, as have been provided by Congress, to remain for the use of that Building."[160] The two portraits by Trumbull were hung in City Hall, where they impressed visitors to the City, such as the southerner John Drayton, who, traveling through New York in 1794, recorded:

> Federal-Hall, is built upon Wall-street and fronts Broad-street, in the same manner as the government house does Broad-way. This, is an elegant and

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[158] Dorinda Evans, "Survival and Transformation: The Colonial Portrait in the Federal Era" in The Portrait in Eighteenth-Century America, ed. Ellen Miles (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1993), 130.
[159] John Trumbull letter to Thomas Jefferson, 11 June 1789, printed in Trumbull, Reminiscences, 158.
[160] The letter is reproduced in Stokes, Iconography, V: plate 56; for Stokes' discussion of it, see ibid., 1272.

> grand building, well adapted for a senatorial presence. Here, I saw portraits of the president, of the secretary of the treasury, and of the present governor of this state; executed by colonel Trumbull as large as life: and as far as I could judge good likenesses. The background of the president's portrait, represents a part of New-York, and the British fleet sailing up the narrows.[161]

Portraits in City Hall and Federal Hall

Trumbull's first two portraits were commissioned to be installed within what was at the time the most significant public building in New York City, were painted by Trumbull in that building, and were thus inextricably associated with the building and its social and symbolic meanings. The renovation of the second City Hall had taken place when New York was selected as the first capital of the new nation. Its new architectural style expressed the importance of the City, and, by providing spaces that were elegant and appropriate to a nation's status, was also viewed by the Common Council as an inducement to attract and retain Congress. Like the first portrait commission in 1790, the renovation of the second City Hall was the revolutionary generation's attempt to create new public spaces and new heroic symbols within an existing framework of colonial art and architecture.

The earliest recorded reference to the second City Hall was in May 1696, when the Common Council agreed "By a Majority of Vote…that a Citty Hall be built."[162] By October 16, 1699, the foundation was complete and a committee was appointed to oversee construction.[163] Still, it was not until the spring of 1704 that the Council ordered

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[161] John Drayton, Letters written during a tour through the northern and eastern states of America (Charleston, South Carolina: Printed by Harrison and Bowen, 1794), 22-24.
[162] Stokes, Iconography, IV: 394.
[163] The committee was directed to make an estimate of materials needed "What Stone Bricks Lime Timber and Other Materialls (sic) will be Nessessary (sic) to be provided and Employed for ye building of the New Citty (sic) Hall the Next summer and also what will be the Charge thereof." MCC, II: 92, 95-96.

all books, accounts, and papers relevant to the construction be delivered to the Treasurer of the City,[164] suggesting that the building was for all intents and purposes completed.

Additions and changes were made to City Hall over time, including the construction of a new cupola in 1738 (Figure 11). [165] The later addition of a third story in 1763 is reflected in a pen and ink drawing by Pierre Eugène du Simitière labeled "Sketch of the State House at New York." [166] This depiction shows a relatively simple brick Georgian building, comparable to many of the town halls or state houses throughout New England and the mid-Atlantic (Figure 12).

The most substantial modifications to the building took place when the building was converted to accommodate Congress.[167] In December 1784, then-Mayor James Duane[168] informed the Common Council that Congress, during its session in Trenton,

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[164] On April 11, 1704, they ordered: "that Mr. Johannes Provoost doe (sic) deliver unto the Treasurer of this City all Books Accts papers and writings belong to or Relating to the building of the City Hall and that his Receipt be a sufficient discharge unto him for the same," Ibid., 261.

[165] An 1818 drawing by David Grim is the only drawing that documents the building in a detailed fashion before the 1763 addition of a third story in 1763. Grim, who at the time was 82 years old, drew from memory plans and an elevation of the building, as it existed seventy-three years earlier, in 1745. Grim was thus depicting the building as he saw it when he was about nine years old. According to Stokes, Iconography, I: 272, this is the only detailed visual record prior to the renovation of City Hall in 1763 when a third story was added. The plan is located in the New-York Historical Society and reproduced in the Manual of the Common Council (1855), opposite 584. Additional written documentation on the building before the addition of the third story may be found in London Magazine, August 1761, 400, which contains a description of the building, and a plate on the facing page with a panoramic view of the city. City Hall is labeled number thirteen.

[166] Reproduced in Stokes, Iconography, III: plate 4-A and discussed ibid., 863. Stokes states that Du Simitière was a Swiss-born artist who became a naturalized citizen by an act passed in New York on May 20, 1769. In The New York Gazette and the Weekly Mercury of August 21, 1769, is the following announcement: "Mr. Du Simitière, Miniature, Painter, Intending shortly to leave this city, and it being uncertain whether he will return again, if any Gentlemen or Ladies should incline to employ him, he is to be found at his Lodgings, in the House of Mrs. Ferrara, in Maiden Lane." Stokes notes that he probably went to Philadelphia shortly thereafter. He died there in October 1784, and was buried in St. Peter's Churchyard.

[167] In March 1781, the Articles of Confederation, which formed a new confederation of states with strong state rights, went into effect. See below, footnote 72, for the meeting-places of Congress prior to 1785. The renovation of the building was mentioned in the correspondence of George Thatcher; see Letters of Delegates to Congress, 1774-1789 (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1998), 392-3, 399, 406.

[168] Duane (who married into the Livingston family in 1759) was appointed Mayor in 1784; he held the office for almost six years.

New Jersey, had resolved to meet in New York City on January 11, 1785.[169] The Council immediately picked up the challenge and offered the use of "such Parts of the City Hall or other Public Buildings" belonging to the Corporation "as they should deem necessary and best suited for their accommodation."[170] Congress was pleased to accept the lion's share of the building, with the exception of the Mayor's Court and jury rooms.[171]

Before major renovations officially began, provisional arrangements in the building were made for the Congress. The interior of the building is minutely described in the journal of Reverend Manassah Cutler, who, in his entry from July 9, 1787,[172] gives a snapshot of the "Congress Chamber" before the later renovation.[173] Cutler's description suggests the opulence and grandeur of the room, and provides us with details of specific architectural and interior design elements that would be used again when the building was renovated, specifically a "curious canopy," placed over an impressive chair, which in turn was raised like a throne on a dais.[174] Yet in spite of the sumptuousness of these interim arrangements at City Hall, once the Common Council had a formal understanding that the federal government would settle in New York City, they eagerly undertook additional work on the building.[175]

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[169] Journal of Congress X, 18-23.
[170] MCC, VIII: 216.
[171] Journal of Congress X, 26; quoted in Stokes, Iconography, III: 538.
[172] Life, Journals and Correspondence of Rev. Manasseh Cutler, LL.D (Cincinnati, Ohio: Robert Clarke & Co., 1888; reprinted Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1987); 237-8.
[173] Ibid., 237-8. "Congress Chamber is an apartment in the second story of the City Hall. This Hall is a magnificent pile of buildings in Wall Street, at the head of Broad Street, near the center of the city.…Congress Chamber is up the eastern stairs; it is nearly square. On the southern side, the floor is raised several feet, which is ascended by steps and enclosed by banisters. In the center is a large chair, raised still higher, lined with red damask silk; and over it a curious canopy. Fringed with silk, and two large, flowing, damask curtains descending from the sides of the canopy to the floor, partly furled with silken cords. This is the seat of the President of Congress, and the appearance at the opposite side of the Chamber is superb."
[174] As will be seen, these elements were integrated as well into the design of the third City Hall.
[175] This renovation required the Continental Congress to move to a private home until work was complete. A letter from James Duane to the Honorable Delegates in Congress for the State of New York, September

The Common Council's Minutes note that on September 17th a committee consisting of Alderman William Gilbert and Assistant Aldermen Marinus Willet and George Janeway was formed "to consult with the Delegates of this State in Congress and such other gentlemen as they may think proper" and report what repairs were required. "Such other gentlemen" somehow came to include Major Pierre-Charles L'Enfant, for two weeks later, the Committee reported, "they had procured a plan (executed by Major L'Enfant) of the Additions Alterations and Repairs," and on September 30, 1788, the Common Council accepted L'Enfant's plans for alterations to the second City Hall.[176]

While it has not been determined exactly how L'Enfant received this prestigious commission to renovate City Hall, L'Enfant's prior commissions reveal his close connections with George Washington, with the influential Federalist party, and with at least one of New York City's leading political families, the Livingstons.[177] Furthermore, as a Frenchman, he carried none of the taint of the recently departed British and all the glamour of the new nation's political allies.[178]

29, 1788, notes the New Yorkers' interest in accommodating Congress: "It is perceived with extreme regret that…[the work] will render it very inconvenient if not impracticable for Congress to continue their deliberations where they now are. On this head, after having consulted that Honorable body the Corporation would wish your advice. The manner of introducing this subject to the Honorable Congress we submit to you persuaded that it will be done with the utmost delicacy and so as to manifest our high respect, our Embarrassment, and our sincere desire to accommodate them by every exertion in our power." Quoted in John D. R. Platt, The Continental Congress in the New York City Hall, 1785-1788, Background and Evaluation Study (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, 1969), 29-30. See also George Thatcher, letter to Nathan Dane, October 2, 1788, in Letters of Delegates to Congress, 406. Thatcher notes that "the workmen made such a continual noise that it was impossible to hear one another speek (sic)."

[176] The renovation of Federal Hall by L'Enfant is discussed in Louis Torres, "Federal Hall Revisited," The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 29, no. 4 (December 1970), 327-338 and Kenneth R. Bowling, Peter Charles L'Enfant: Vision, Honor and Male Friendship in the Early American Republic (Washington, DC: George Washington University Libraries, 2002), 14-20.

[177] He was also friendly enough with Alexander Hamilton to seek his help in obtaining additional compensation for his work on Federal Hall. See Harold C. Syrett, ed., The Papers of Alexander Hamilton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961-1979), vol. XXV, 402, 208-10, 415-6.

[178] Talbot Hamlin, Greek Revival Architecture in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1944),5-7.

L'Enfant had served in the Continental Army since 1775.[179] Having demonstrated his artistic ability during those years, in 1782 he was commissioned by General Washington to design a temporary pavilion in Philadelphia for the celebration of the birth of Louis XVI's first son, the Dauphin. In recognition of his services to the American nation, on May 2, 1783, L'Enfant was given the rank of Major in the Corps of Engineers.

The following year, L'Enfant established his architectural practice in New York City. Although little is known about his commissions from 1784 to 1788, he did design the Federalist procession and banquet,[180] held on July 23, 1788 in New York City to promote ratification of the Constitution by the State. He also undertook the renovation of St. Paul's Chapel that included the installation of a monument to General Richard Montgomery.[181] This project brought him into contact with the family of Montgomery's

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[179] For biographical information, see 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 Company, 1950, reprint New York: Da Capo Press, 1970).L'Enfant, who came from an artistic family, had studied fine arts at the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture, Paris, and in 1777, as a lieutenant in the French Army, volunteered his services to the new American republic in its struggle with Great Britain. Like John Trumbull, L'Enfant had first come to Washington's attention during the War of Independence. From 1775 to 1781, L'Enfant saw action at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, Charleston, South Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia. After his commander General Philippe-Charles-John Baptist Tronson Du Coudray drowned in September, 1777 trying to cross the Schuykill River at the Battle of the Brandywine, L'Enfant was attached to Inspector General Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben. Serving as illustrator and mapmaker, and having demonstrated his artistic ability during those years, in 1782 he was commissioned by General Washington to design a temporary pavilion in Philadelphia for the celebration of the birth of Louis XVI's first son, the Dauphin. In recognition of his services to the American nation, on May 2, 1783, L'Enfant was given the rank of Major in the Corps of Engineers.

[180] Although New York State had not yet ratified the Constitution, "city Federalists mounted a 'Grand Federal Procession' to celebrate [it]…Towering over every other display was the 'Federal Ship Hamilton'." Burrows and Wallace, Gotham, 293. Caemmerer, L'Enfant, 97, notes that L'Enfant's primary contribution to the event was a dome, under which the President, members of Congress, and other guests enjoyed an immense banquet. A comprehensive description of the procession may be found in Whitfield J. Bell, Jr., "The Federal Processions of 1788," The New-York Historical Society Quarterly XLVI, no. 1 (January 1962), 4-39, esp. 32-34.

[181] See Sally Webster, "The Origins of the American Memorial Tradition" (paper presented at the Annual Conference of the College Art Association, Seattle Washington, February 18-21, 2004), which discusses the connections among these families and their role in developing the first memorial in the U.S. The Daily Advertiser, 22 November 1787, noted: "The Monument erected to the memory of General Montgomery…has received the following ornamental addition designed by Major L'Enfant, the gentleman

wife, Janet Livingston, eldest sister of both the Chancellor Robert R. Livingston and Edward Livingston, future mayor.[182]

Upon approval of L'Enfant's plans by the Common Council, he and four other commissioners–Robert Watts, Alexander Macomb,[183] James Nicholson,[184] and William Maxwell--were nominated to "purchase the Materials and superintend the said Business"[185] of the transformation of City Hall into Federal Hall. The Common Council at the outset borrowed £1,000 on the city's credit from the Bank of New York[186] "to be applied towards the Repairs & additions making to the City Hall for the Accommodation

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to whom we are indebted for superintending its original erection. 'Hymen extinguishing his torch, mourns over his tomb.' From behind the pyramid rises a Sun with 13 rays, which enlightens the quarter of a terrestial (sic) globe, emblematic of America. Above the whose is the American eagle flying from E to W carrying in his talons a starry curtain, in which the glove appears to have been wrapped." Quoted in Caemmerer, L'Enfant, 100-101.

[182] Montgomery had been married to Janet Livingston, the eldest sister of Robert R. Livingston, Chancellor of the State of New York, and Edward Livingston, Mayor and Attorney-General. See Evan Cornog, Birth of Empire, 24, for a discussion of the "first families" of New York, the Clintons, the Livingstons, and Schuylers.

[183] Alexander Macomb (1748-1832) was born in Belfast, Ireland. Upon immigrating to America, he settled in Detroit and became an associate with John Jacob Astor in the fur trade. He married Catherine Navarre, daughter of a former French official at Detroit, in 1773. After the Revolutionary War, they moved to New York City where his business interests extended to shipping and land speculation, including tracts in North Carolina, Kentucky, Georgia, and a three and a half million acre tract along the St. Lawrence River in northern New York State. Macomb served as one of the five commissioners appointed to supervise the conversion of New York's city hall into Federal Hall in 1789. His wife was a prominent figure in the emerging "republican court" at the seat of government. In February 1790, shortly after her death, Macomb rented their mansion at 39-41 Broadway to President Washington. The next year he remarried and moved to Washington, D.C., where he lived the remainder of his life. See Documentary History of the First Federal Congress, VIII: 199.

[184] James Nicholson (1737-1804), born in Chestertown, Maryland, was one of four brothers who held positions of command in the Continental Navy. Because of prior service in the British navy, and in the Maryland navy in the first year of the Revolutionary War, Nicholson was named senior captain among the twenty-four commissioned by Congress in October 1776. He subsequently commanded the frigates *Virginia* and *Trumbull*. After the war the "commodore" lived at 91 Williams Street in New York City. He was assistant alderman of the East Ward under Alderman Laurance in 1788-89, during which time he served as one of the commissioners to oversee the conversion of New York's city hall to Federal Hall. Ibid., VII: 438.

[185] MCC, I: 404.

[186] The Bank of New York was formed in 1784, opening for business in June. Alexander Hamilton wrote the constitution of the Bank and was the prime mover behind its organization.

of Congress."[187] Despite the Council's support, the committee in charge ran short of money on several occasions, returning time and again for additional funds.[188]

The importance of this project to Federalist New Yorkers is evidenced by a letter written at the end of 1788, by Alexander Hamilton to Recorder and future Mayor Richard Varick, pleading for more funds for the renovation:

> Commodore Nicholson tells me this evening that they are nearly at a stand for want of funds. I commit the guardianship of my poor bantling to you. Pray don't let it suffer. Another thousand by the corporation will relieve all our difficulties.[189]

As leader of the Federalist party, Hamilton's request for his "poor bantling" illustrates the political importance of the project, and the Federalists' commitment to a grand building concomitant with their visions of a new American empire. Although Hamilton had not traveled to London and Paris, he saw the logic in having his adopted hometown New York, fast on its way to becoming the economic capital of the new nation, become like its European counterparts the political capital also. He had even argued for New York

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[187] MCC, I, p. 420.

[188] A letter of March 24, 1789, from the Alex. Macomb, P.C. L'Enfant and James Nicholson to "The Mayor, Aldermen & Commonalty of the City of New York in Common Council convened" notes that "their funds are again exhausted and the Building unfinished" and requests "the further sum of two thousand pounds in order to enable them to proceed." Alex Macomb, et al, to the Mayor, Aldermen & Commonalty, New York, March 24, 1789; Papers of the Common Council, Municipal Archives. Cost was a concern because Congress's relocation to New York, in a domino-like effect, required work in the Exchange "for the accommodation of the Courts of Justice & Meeting of the corporation of this City," the departments of city government that were relocated in order to provide sufficient space for Federal Hall's new tenants. MCC, I: 398-9. Additional expenditures were required as well to construct a residence for the President on the site of the old fort on Bowling Green. In a perhaps less than coincidental occurrence, John McComb, Jr., the architect of the third City Hall, was paid £4/3/- to design the façade of the President's residence, or Government House. George Washington never lived there, as the structure was not completed until after the federal government had removed to Philadelphia. It was used as the official residence for New York State Governors until 1797, when the state legislature moved to Albany. Agnes Addison Gilchrist, "John McComb, Sr. and Jr., in New York, 1784-1799, The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 31, no. 1 (March 1972), esp. 14, and idem, "Notes for a Catalogue of the John McComb (1763-1853) Collection of Architectural Drawings in the New-York Historical Society," The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 28, no. 3 (October 1969), 201-210; see also Smith, The Year of Washington's Inauguration, 22-23

[189] Syrett, Hamilton Papers, V: 240; the letter is dated Wednesday Evening, December 31, 1788, 10 o'clock.

continuing as the nation's capital in a series of anonymous letters printed in The Daily Advertiser, where he wrote "the residence of Congress among us has been a considerable source of wealth to the state."[190]

Hamilton's plea to Varick resulted in the release of needed monies. Work continued so quickly that by March 4, 1789, both houses of the Congress met in what the New York Packet called "this superb building, the elegance of which, strikes every spectator with pleasure and surprize (sic), as it far exceeds their most sanguine expectations."[191] With the First Federal Congress finally assembled,[192] the Common Council voted a total of £9,600 more on its credit[193] "towards the Repairs and additions" and work was completed. Eventually, two lotteries were held by the City to defray the debt incurred;[194] the total cost of the renovation having mounted to $65,000.[195]

For the Federalists, who were striving to create a central national identity, the new Federal Hall was "truly august," with a dignified façade showing it would be "set apart for national purposes."[196] The Common Council showed its appreciation for the project

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[190] Quoted in Ron Chernow, Alexander Hamilton (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), 274.
[191] New York Packet, 6 March 1789, 2.
[192] On May 9, 1789, the Senate passed the following resolution: "Ordered that Mr. Few, Mr. Maclay and Mr. Strong be a Committee to view the apartments in the City Hall." Three days later, the House followed suit and the committee met with L'Enfant the following week. See Linda Grant De Pauw, ed., Documentary History of the First Federal Congress of the United States of America, March 4, 1789-March 3, 1791, vols. I and IX (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University, 1972).
[193] On five more occasions following the January 1789 meeting regarding indemnification.
[194] Evan W. Cornog, "To Give a Character to Our City: New York's City Hall," New York History 69, no. 4 (October 1988), 391. See New York Packet, 22 June 1790, which printed a 6 March 1790 broadside announcing a lottery (with 8346 prizes ranging from £3000 to £4) to pay for altering City Hall for Congressional use. The Common Council determined the terms of the lottery. This advertisement appeared regularly for many months in the Packet. It even appeared on the same date when the President's approval of the Residency Bill was announced in the New York Packet. Lotteries for "worthy causes" were not an unusual approach to raise funds and occasionally appear in period newspapers.
[195] In today's currency, an estimated cost of $1,350,000. See www.eh.net which offers currency conversion charts (Oxford, Ohio: Economic History Association, Miami University; accessed 5 March 2004.)
[196] Frederick Muhlenberg letter to Benjamin Rush, March 5, 1789, quoted in Paul A. W. Wallace, The Muhlenbergs of Pennsylvania (1950; reprint, New York, 1970), p. 177; cited in C. M. Harris, "Washington's Gamble, L'Enfant's Dream: Politics, Design, and the Founding of the National Capital," The William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Ser., vol. 56, no. 3 (July 1999), 538n24.

by awarding L'Enfant the Freedom of the City[197] with the comment: "the said Hall from his talents and Exertions hath become a signal Ornament of this City and a Monument of the Munificence of the Citizens." [198] The press concurred, and called the building "convenient and elegant." Detailed news of the inauguration and Federal Hall were published throughout the states, [199] first in The Massachusetts Magazine in June 1789, which accompanied its exhaustive article with an engraving of the front façade by S. Hill (Figure 13).[200]

In Federal Hall, L'Enfant had produced a new iconography for a new nation, using symbols such as the sun, an allusion to the Enlightenment and rational thought that shone down on the new nation; the thirteen stars representing the thirteen new states; and a new capital for the columns, with "U.S. in a cipher."[201] Although relatively modest transformations, contemporary critics nonetheless discerned these changes to traditional architectural ornament and orders. The anonymous critic who describes Federal Hall in The Massachusetts Magazine calls attention to the elegance of the building, a term which,

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[197] The Freedom of the City was a document that gave the recipient certain rights reserved to "Freemen" such as electoral rights, as well as privileges in trade and commerce.

[198] MCC, I: 494-5. As part of their recognition of L'Enfant's services, the Council resolved to deed ten acres of public land to him. However, he refused the offer of ten acres as insufficient to the services rendered. This incident initiated a dispute regarding payment between L'Enfant and the Council that was never resolved.

[199] The Massachusetts Magazine or Monthly Museum of Knowledge and Rational Entertainment, June 1789; Columbian Magazine, August 1789; and the New York Magazine or Literary Repository, March 1790 (where portions were added). See also Torres, "Federal Hall," 330. Charles Willson Peale, who visited New York in 1791, notes in his Diary entry for June 4th that he visited the Congress Hall: "I do not think this building equal to what I had heard said of it—the room where the House of deligates used to sit has 2 Galeryes…the room is lofty but not elegant….the Inner Hall which is lighted by a cupulam…making a skylight is hansome." (sic) The Collected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. A Guide and Index to the Microfiche Edition, for the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, ed. Lillian B. Miller (Millwood, NY: Kraus Microform, 1980), IIB.12: 004807.

[199] See Bushman, Refinement, 100-169.

[200] Torres, "Federal Hall," 330.

[201] Massachusetts Magazine, June 1789.

though now vague, was an eighteenth-century catchphrasefor good taste and design.[202] And the writer was clearly familiar with the classical orders, as is confirmed by his descriptions of the traditional orders, and his recognition of L'Enfant's departures from architectural tradition. A mildly chauvinistic tone insinuates itself when he describes the quality of execution and the beauty of the materials for the mantels, "equal to any of its kind in Europe."

This written description of the new Federal Hall was published throughout the nation in a number of different newspapers. The construction of Congress's new meeting place was an important matter to all of the states, as the future location of the federal government was still a matter of vigorous debate. But the reprinting of this lengthy description had additional significance. Historian David Waldstreicher has argued that newspaper accounts were a key tool in the development of nationalistic spirit. [203]

Local events reported in the press became a means of stimulating readers in other locales to emulate those about whom they were reading. The lengthy descriptions of those events were intended to inspire a new sense of national identity, distinct from the local interests and concerns that had been the catalyst for most Americans' separation from the mother country.[204] Like the descriptions of fetes, parades, processions, and other events that regularly appeared in the papers, the extensive description of Federal Hall in newspaper accounts gave all Americans the opportunity to participate, if only second-

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[202] See Bushman, op. cit, pp. 100-169.
[203] David Waldstreicher, In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes, The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820 (Chapel Hill and London: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture and University of North Carolina Press, 1997), see also idem, "Rites of Rebellion, Rites of Assent: Print Culture, and the Origins of American Nationalism," The Journal of American History 82, no. 1 (June 1995), 37-61.
[204] See David Waldstreicher, "Rites of Rebellion," for a discussion of the relationship between newpaper accounts and the establishment of a national identiry.

hand, in the splendor of their newly-formed nation, creating and feeding a sense of pride in and allegiance to the country.

The renovations to Federal Hall demonstrated that the revolutionary generation was aware of the need to establish a "grand style" that would place the new United States on an equal footing with European countries. The "grand manner" of portraiture posed a new problem for the new government—how could they visually represent republican heroes without creating new monarchs? In a world where power was "not a resource for the achievement of collective ends," but instead "an instrument of domination of the many by the few,"[205] the trappings of power, in this case a state-sanctioned portrait, could be interpreted as evidence of monarchical ambition rather than as the glorification of the nation through its hero.[206] Art could visually elevate the sitter above the viewer, and thus undermine the democratic principles of the new republic.[207]

This anxiety about public portraits certainly explains the many mishaps—lack of payments, inability to find "appropriate" artists, inexplicable delays—that haunted a fair percent of the earliest portrait commissions. In New York, it would take at least a generation before the ambiguity around the monarchical aspects of portraiture could be

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[205] Barry Schwartz, "The Character of Washington: A Study in Republican Culture," American Quarterly 38, no. 2 (Summer 1986), 204.

[206] Gustavas Eisen, Portraits of Washington, vol. 3, (NY: Robert Hamilton & Associates, 1932), 354, discusses the *Washington at the Battle of Princeton* portrait by Charles Willson Peale, commissioned by the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania in January 1779. On February 11, 1779, the Pennsylvania Packet stated that "The portrait is to be placed in the Council Chamber." This commission was completed, but after its installation in the Philadelphia State House, the portrait of Washington was vandalized on September 9, 1782, along with a "curious engraving of the patriotic General Montgomery, done in France in the most elegant manner." This interesting instance of iconoclasm suggests that portraiture, even on a comparatively modest scale, and even of one of the most beloved figures of the War of Independence, was not yet fully accepted. Instead, portraiture could raise questions about the development of a personal cult around General Washington, about monarchical ambitions, and even about Washington's own character. See Schwartz, "The Character of Washington," 202-222, for a discussion of Washington as an exemplar of the Whig prototypical hero. Schwartz addresses the importance of disinterestedness versus ambition, and the concerns of the early builders of the Republic.

[207] Arthur Marks, "The Statues of King George III," 67-68.

put to rest. However, the key word regarding this attitude is ambiguity. As L'Enfant's renovations and Trumbull's first portrait commissions show, there were New Yorkers who believed that the beautification of space was an assertion of America's dignity, an appropriate part of the political discourse of the period.

They interpreted the meaning of portraiture in a similar way as the "iconoclasts." The full-length portrait of Washington placed him on an "equal footing" visually with the monarch who had previously occupied the same space, thus establishing him as a visual equivalent to King George III. However, for the supporters of portraiture, Washington's image did not hold the threat of a return to monarchy. They believed that he was a leader who would not usurp power, but could stand for the ideals of liberty and democracy for which he and they had fought.[208] Portraiture was thus a means of asserting the new nation's power through the symbol of its leader.

The tension between these two points of view may be discerned even in the stories of the portraits that were commissioned by Congress, and hung in Federal Hall before Congress departed.[209] Earlier, while in session in Philadelphia, Congress had ordered from Charles Willson Peale a full-length portrait of George Washington,[210] but

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[208] See Schwartz, "The Character of Washington," 204.

[209] Portraits of the King and Queen of France are mentioned in Luigi Castiglioni's Viaggio: Travels in the United States of North America, 1785-87, trans. and ed. Antonio Pace (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1983), 95. For more on the French monarchs' portraits, see Todd Lawrence Larkin, "Marie-Antoinette and Her Portraits: the Politics of Queenly Self-Imaging in Late Eighteenth-Century France" (Unpublished dissertation, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2000), 143, and Charles Warren, "What has become of the portraits of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette?" Proceedings of the Masschusetts Historical Society LIX (October, 1925-June, 1926),55.n16. The monarchs' portraits are also noted in the March 1788 edition of The American Magazine, 221, cited in Platt, Continental Congress in City Hall, 6-7. This description adds Columbus and Washington to the list. The latter portrait was probably one of the many Trenton types that Charles Willson Peale produced from 1779-1782; the Marquis de Chastellux, in his description of the Philadelphia State House, noted such a painting. Doris Devine Fanelli, Independence National Historical Park, 17-18.

[210] Identified by Eisen, Portraits of Washington, 359-60, as the Carmichael-Blair "Spanish" Canvas, which he posits was taken to Spain by the first American Ambassador. Eisen argues that for this commission Peale made two or more bust studies of small size (what he has termed the Valley Forge Type), probably

after placing their order with Peale, Congress adjourned in 1779 without paying the artist for his work.[211] Congress's default on this commission may be attributed to some ambivalence on its part towards official portraiture. Still involved in the War of Independence against a tyrannical monarch, Congress may have been reluctant to create a permanent public commemoration of an American hero, even a hero whose likeness was "dear to every American, and destined to grace the walls of every Council chamber in the world."[212]

Perhaps Congress believed that such a portrait would be the flattery of courtiers,[213] rather than the glorification of the revolution through its hero. In a similarly convoluted story, Congress had commissioned a portrait of the French Minister, Conrad Alexandre Gérard de Rayneval as a calculating display of pro-French fervor.[214] Although the auditor general's office authorized payment for the portrait, the painting was never delivered to Congress, and remained on view in Charles Willson Peale's gallery until the sale of the collection in 1854.[215] And finally, the portraits of the king and queen of

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during the early weeks of 1778, and that these two studies (although not originally so intended), served as models for Peale's full-length commemorative portraits painted after the battles of Trenton and Princeton.

[211] Ibid., p. 360. When Peale found himself with no buyer for his portrait, he thought of selling it abroad, and gave it to William Carmichael, with instructions to take it to Spain to dispose of it 'at a good price' but in case of failure to donate it to the King of Spain. Peale apparently corresponded with Carmichael about the matter, the first letter being dated October 1, 1779, and the last September 23, 1786.

[212] "General Description of the City of New York," The American Magazine, March 1788, 221; quoted in Platt, Continental Congress in City Hall, pp 6-7.

[213] Certainly Congress's other portrait commissions might have strengthened such a perspective. On June 15, 1779, Congress sent a letter to the French king congratulating the monarchs on the birth of the Dauphiness, Marie-Therese, and requesting that the king "oblige us with portraits of yourself and royal consort, that, by being placed in our Council chamber, the representatives of these States may daily have before their eyes, the first royal friends and patrons of their cause." This letter, quoted in Warren, "What has become,"55, was part of a design to obtain funds from the French, and Congress's aim in requesting the portraits was shameless flattery.

[214] Congressional Minutes, 3 September 1779, quoted in Miller, Papers of Peale, I: 331n1—145n161; see also Warren, "What has become,"59.

[215] Miller, Papers of Peale, I: 190n165. Miller notes the significance of this expenditure on "a work of art designed to encourage loyalty to the alliance." She hypothesizes that the diplomat's picture was not hung because of concerns that "the image of the French diplomat…would have lessened the impact of the rugged man of action [General Washington] in the soldier's uniform." Ibid, 146.

France,[216] requested by Congress as a token of friendship from the monarch early in the war, were not installed at Congress's meeting place upon their receipt in 1784. As Congress had already left Philadelphia for Annapolis by way of Princeton, the two state portraits were stored at the home of the Chevalier Anne de La Luzerne, the French ambassador to the United States. Despite requests by the Ambassador to have them installed in Congress's chambers, they apparently remained in Luzerne's home until Congress arrived in New York City, well after the close of the conflict. [217]

The history of these commissions and gifts argues that eighteenth-century portraits had potent political and social meanings. Moreover, the tension between those who advocated for portrait commissions, and those who objected to the monarchical overtones of such commissions, lingered well after the war. And as long as portraits were viewed as surrogates for a monarch, public portrait commissions could be suspect. The first portrait commission undertaken by the Common Council demonstrated this. In 1790, the Council, like Congress earlier, struggled with the question of what portraiture would be viewed as appropriate for the new republic.[218] It would be over a decade until

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[216] Larkin, "Marie-Antoinette," suggests that the portrait of Louis XVI was probably by Antoine François Callet, while the portrait of Marie-Antoinette was in all likelihood by her favorite artist Marie Louise Élisabeth Vigée-LeBrun. Both portraits were destroyed when the Capitol was burned during the War of 1812.

[217] The French portraits of the King and Queen, given as a gift to the federal government, were taken with Congress first to Philadelphia and then to Washington, D.C., where they remained until their destruction by the British in 1812. William Maclay, Pennsylvanian Senator, mentions the portraits as being in Philadelphia in 1791. See Documentary History of the First Federal Congress of the United States of America, Volume IX, The Diary of William MaClay and Other Notes on Senate Debates, eds. Kenneth R. Bowling and Helen E. Veit (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1988), 394.

[218] Brandon Brame Fortune, "Charles Willson Peale's Portrait Gallery: Persuasion and the Plain Style," Word & Image 6, no. 4 (October-December 1990), 308-324, discusses the portrait of Hamilton by Trumbull, commissioned by the New York Chamber of Commerce in 1792 (now in the collection of Credit Suisse First Boston), as an example of the "plain style" favored by Peale. She notes that Hamilton, in response to the request that the portrait "exhibit such part of your political life as may be most agreeable to your self," stated that "The simple representation of their fellow citizen and friend will best accord with my feelings." Also quoted in Harry MacNeill Bland and Virginia W. Northcott, "The Life Portraits of Alexander Hamilton," The William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Series, vol. 12, no. 2 (April 1955), 190-1; see also Syrett, Hamilton Papers, X: 482, which reprints this letter from Gulian Verplanck, Roger Alden,

that question could be resolved and a municipal portrait collection, representative of the new government, would be established on a firm foundation.

Brockholst Livingston, J. Waddington, Carlile Pollock, New York, December 29, 1791. This portrait was displayed in City Hall. The New York Daily Advertiser on July 4, 1792, noted: "The portrait of Mr. Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, painted for the Citizens of New York by Mr. Trumbull, has been received and for the present placed in the City Hall. It must afford much pleasure to the Gentlemen who promoted this undertaking to know that this elegant specimen of Mr. Trumbull's abilities is reckoned one of the finest productions of his pencil."

THE NEW YORK CITY HALL PORTRAIT COLLECTION, 1790-1830
CHAPTER TWO: POLITICAL CHANGE FROM 1790 TO 1804

Introduction

It took substantive economic and political changes in New York City to create the conditions necessary for establishing a portrait tradition that would represent the democratic structure of society. For more than a decade, the Common Council refrained from commissioning another portrait. After the two portraits of President Washington and Governor Clinton were commissioned, the next addition to the City Hall portrait collection did not occur until 1804, when Trumbull, who had voyaged to England with John Jay in 1794, returned from his travels abroad.

Although the years from 1790 to 1804 were an inactive period for portrait acquisitions by the Common Council, this intervening break saw the formation of an organization devoted to the fine arts, the emergence of a new governmental bureaucracy, a developing generation of professional politicians, and, eventually, a Common Council that was willing to pay for public portraiture. How did the conditions for the formation of a municipal portrait collection emerge in New York City? And what ideological changes were necessary for the Common Council to make the financial and political commitment to this endeavor?

A key element in the commissioning of this new group of portraits was the leadership of Mayor DeWitt Clinton, whose interest in and support for cultural endeavors was critical. Although little documentation exists regarding the early years of the portrait collection, what remains indicates that Clinton played a pivotal role in the development of a municipal portrait collection after he was appointed Mayor in 1803. One of the first generation of professional politicians, Clinton articulated his vision for New York as a

new Athens on several occasions, most notably in his October 23, 1816 speech, delivered at City Hall, celebrating the opening of the revitalized American Academy of the Fine Arts.[1]

This chapter will first explore some of the political reasons why Clinton, a consummate politician, was an ardent supporter of the arts. Apart from his personal taste, Clinton's commissioning of numerous self-portraits suggests a keen concern about his own self-image. Clinton used these self-portraits as tokens of political bonds, exchanging portraits with political allies.

This use of portraiture by Clinton was part of a not uncommon tradition of portrait exchange between friends. However, the commissioning of public portraiture in New York was an innovative action by Clinton, and was connected to the growth of accountability in local government. Once public opinion became a political force, public portraiture could be used as a new and effective means of shaping public opinion.

The shaping of public opinion in this literate society took place primarily through newsprint. Extensive newspaper accounts about celebrations from 1790 through the early nineteenth century will be discussed as a developing "discourse of celebration," first employed to enhance a sense of national pride, and later to strengthen political affiliations. This "discourse of celebration" is of interest as one of the most public venues for portraiture, and the use of portraits during these events as surrogates for venerated individuals will be addressed.

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[1] See also his *1814 Memorial to the Legislature of New York* on behalf of the New-York Historical Society, where he argues for "that magnanimity of soul which cultivates the *arts and sciences* amidst the horrors of war." My emphasis; quoted in William Campbell, The Life and Writings of DeWitt Clinton (New York: Baker and Scribner, 1849), xxxiii.

The development of an increasingly sophisticated American art scene paralleled those governmental changes that permitted the creation of a municipal portrait collection. As portraits appeared in parades, processions, and celebrations of the period, increased access to visual images enhanced the viewing public's visual erudition. This budding visual sophistication among the public was nurtured by the social and political elite of the city and promoted as well as by connections between culture and politics.

In addition, the relationship between Federal Hall (the second City Hall) and the portrait collection will be explored in this chapter in light of the political uses of portraiture. The City Hall portrait collection was commissioned to be part of the interior spaces of the most significant public building in New York City, which served as the center of both federal and municipal political power. These portraits were thus associated with the building's social meaning, and along with the structure, represented the coincidence of national interests and local concerns. In order to determine if portraits were specifically commissioned for particular spaces, and what meaning those installations might have, any evidence regarding where the portraits were installed will be addressed, as will possible reasons as to why specific portraits were placed in particular spaces.

The Interim Period, 1790-1804

There were dramatic changes in New York from 1783 to 1804. The war had left the City in ruins. Streets had been torn up, two fires had gutted a quarter of the buildings in the city, and the wharves, slips and piers that were the infrastructure for the city's trade economy had been grossly neglected.[2] While the selection of the city as the first national

[2] Hendrik Arnold Hartog, "The Properties of the Corporation: New York City and Its Law, 1730-1870" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Brandeis University, 1981), Chapter 7, p.2.

capital gave an added incentive to construction, it would seem that the most significant reason for the construction boom was the rise in population. Although in 1783, New York City's population was half the size it had been before the war, only three years later the city had regained its pre-war numbers. Even after the departure of the federal government the population grew: from 1790 to 1810, the population tripled, rising to almost 100,000. While growth in Boston and Philadelphia was on par with that of the nation overall, New York City's growth rate was about double that national average.[3]

Work on the City's infrastructure had begun almost immediately upon the evacuation of the British. New buildings were constructed, streets were paved, piers and wharves were built, and the city experienced an unprecedented economic growth.[4] Improvements included the rehabilitation of the new Federal Hall, the demolition of old Fort George so that Broadway could continue directly south, and the replacement of the bulkhead from Battery Place to Whitehall Street. The shocking devastation that had destroyed existing building stock, had also removed physical impediments to planning and construction.

Despite the fact that the structure of the Council remained ostensibly the same, with a Mayor, Recorder, and Aldermen representing Wards, there was a vital difference in government before and after the revolution. Municipal government now faced a substantial debt inherited from its pre-war predecessors, and an empty treasury due to rents unpaid by the leaseholders of corporation property. Hoping to accomplish its extensive but essential building program, the members of the Common Council sought

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[3] Ibid., 15-16.

[4] Oscar T. Barck, New York City during the War for Independence (Port Washington, NY: Ira J. Friedman, Inc., 1966), 229; Sidney Pomerantz, New York, An American City, 1783-1803. A Study of Urban Life (Port Washington, NY: Ira J. Friedman, 1965), 158.

approval from the state legislature for raising monies through taxation.[5] The grim prospects of the post-war era were thus a powerful incentive to the corporation's development as a public entity.[6]

It has been suggested that changes in New York City government reflected the battle between Federalist and Republican ideologies, with the progressive politics of state government eventually overcoming the regressive attitudes of local politicians. In fact, the Federalist Common Council understood from the beginning of the post-war period that a new form of government would have to be developed.[7] The Council expressed and acted upon an interest in deriving its legitimacy from the state,[8] even as it fiercely resisted attempts by state government to undermine its authority.[9] With the departure of the British, came the inevitable realization by all New Yorkers, Federalists and anti-Federalists alike, that royal rule was now irrelevant.[10]

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[5] Hartog, "Properties of the Corporation," Chapter 7, pp. 17-23.
[6] Ibid., 17
[7] Ibid., 28, 5-8.
[8] This interest was manifested by constant appeals to the State Assembly for its approval of draft legislation proposed by the Council. See Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1784-1831, passim, and Hartog, "Properties of the Corporation, Chapter 9, p. 1.
[9] For example, in 1807, a draft bill was sent to the State legislature regarding the mapping of the City, imposing a grid upon the irregular and chaotic layout of Manhattan. Rather than leaving the construction and care of the streets to private individuals, as in earlier years, the Common Council now petitioned the state for authority to regulate. Although the Montgomerie Charter had given the Common Council the right to regulate "for the good rule and government of the body corporate," and had granted the corporation all the "waste and common land" which included most of the island north of Canal Street, the Council petitioned to confirm its powers to control the streets through the positive action of mapping. By seeking confirmation of its authority in the popular sovereignty of the State legislature, the Council used that authority to lay claim to public control of the streets and establish the plan that was the basis for the development of New York City, Hartog, "Properties of the Corporation," Chapter 11, pp. 3, 7, 21.
[10] It was only in 1822, that the courts drew the distinction between the responsibilities of the city vis-à-vis the public. The City was formally declared "an agent of the [State] legislature," and its property-holding capacity was limited to "the same liabilities…as natural persons." This distinction was made in the Brick Presbyterian case regarding the corporation's rights to enforce certain laws affecting land owned by churches and religious institutions. Ibid., Chapter 1, p. 13.

Colonial governmental authority had come to the Corporation "in a property-like form;" as a conveyance from the crown,[11] a gift of power from the sovereign to the corporation.[12] The revolution and subsequent constitution had enshrined the concept of governmental authority being derived from "the people." Rather than serving its own corporate interests, and thus, indirectly, the interests of the city as a whole, government had to be viewed as a public, representative agency.

Government changed in other ways. Before the revolution, the Council offered leases, licenses, and grants to private individuals who would in return assume various responsibilities defined by the Council.[13] However, the desolation of war had created needs in New York that had to be addressed immediately and could not wait for private initiative. In order to undertake the requisite new improvements and address those needs, the Common Council had to take direct action.[14] Such action was taken through the creation of a new bureaucracy.

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[11] Ibid., Chapter 2, pp. 8-9.

[12] Ibid., Chapter 1, p. 17. Local government was thus based on property, rather than from some derivative power of an elected provincial legislature. Hartog presents the grants of waterlots in New York City by the corporation as an example of how governmental authority was implemented through property rights. He argues that by using restrictive covenants attached to these grants, the corporation was able to achieve its goals of waterfront development "in an eighteenth century political culture in which all direct forms of public actions were constitutionally suspect." Ibid., Chapter 6, p. 3.

[13]For example, the Council passed numerous ordinances to pave and clean the streets of the city. However, the result of these laws was not the hiring of street repairers or cleaners by the city. Instead, homeowners were "constrained and directed by law" to care for the streets that fronted their own properties. In fact, even in instances where the streets fronting the Corporation's own property were in disrepair, laws passed by the Council required that private individuals neighboring their property maintain the property for the Corporation. "This was a government acting by delegation….Public action became possible only to the extent that a government could enlist the support and interest of a constituency." Ibid., Chapter 6, pp. 5-8.

[14] As regulation of the city grew in complexity, standing committees were created. These committees, generally composed of an alderman and two assistants, focused on such topics as the auditing of accounts, street lamps, the regulation of streets and roads, and repairs to and construction of public buildings. Each year, additional committees were chosen: in 1798 only four standing committees were designated, by 1804 that number doubled to eight. Committees thus bore the responsibility for supervision and administration of projects in the early post-Revolutionary period; a progression which ended in 1830, when the charter of that year established regular executive departments. Barck, New York City during War, 50-51; see also MCC, passim.

This bureaucracy was accompanied by the rise of new professional politicians. Although appointed and elected positions of municipal government had in the past been lucrative sources of revenue, before 1783 these posts were not viewed as the primary source of income for their occupants.[15] In fact, it was not until 1813 that a regular salary was voted to the Mayor.[16]

Moreover, political appointments had in the past offered substantial opportunities for unseemly financial benefits—for example, the non-competitive purchases by Council members of city property, or conversely, the corporation's non-competitive procurement of services and goods from Council members.[17] The lack of a clear legal distinction between the public and private spheres had contributed to a commingling of private interests and public good. Now, the professional politician would have to start to tease out distinctions between his own private concerns and public sentiment.

The developing role of public opinion, one of the impetuses behind the changes in government, was an outgrowth of the increasing access to suffrage. In 1790, because of property restrictions, only 1,800 out of 6,700 white males, or 28 percent, were qualified to vote for Common Council members. Although New Yorkers could not directly elect their Mayor until 1834,[18] popular election of mayors and the extension of voting rights in municipal elections were fought for since 1784, first by the Sons of Liberty, the Mechanics Committee, and other radical groups, and then by Republicans. [19]

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[15] A relic of this perspective still exists today, as New York City Council members are considered to hold part-time political positions, a determination that enables them to hold other jobs and run businesses.
[16] Pomerantz, An American City, 40.
[17] That is, instead of requiring that the best price be sought for either a purchase or a sale, the Corporation instead gave what we would view as preferential treatment to its members, apparently in the belief that they would do business using fair market values as their guide.
[18] The City Charter was amended in 1833 to allow the election of Mayor; Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898 (NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), 573.
[19] Ibid., 269.

The result of the gradual expansion of suffrage was that public opinion would become one of the motivating forces behind political decisions.[20] City government was thus "professionalized," in part because of the demand for immediate and direct action, in part because of the recognition that government would have to respond to the people. The creation of a bureaucracy that was empowered to perform tasks at the direction of the Council meant new accountability—a government that was now answerable to the public. Similarly, the development of the professional politician, whose power depended on the will of the people, was a new, post-revolutionary creation.

The Common Council's transformation from the colonial model of government where power emanated from a central monarchical authority, to a new, democratic model where power was based on popular elections was attended by the emergence of a "public sphere." It was this new public sphere that offered the necessary framework or conceptual "space" within which the next series of portrait commissions would occur. It was not until after 1800 that a sense of the widening role of government encouraged the construction of a New City Hall and, most importantly, the development of a portrait collection under the aegis of City government.

Portraiture during the Interim Period

While changes in the role, scope and structure of government moved forward, parallel developments took place in the fine arts. Newspaper accounts from before the revolution through to the early nineteenth century suggest that portraits were already an integral part of the "discourse of celebration" that arose during the revolution. Public celebrations and festivities were organized and used as a tool against colonial rule,

[20] See Charles H. Levermore, "The Rise of Metropolitan Journalism," The American Historical Review 6, no. 3 (April 1901), 446-465, for a discussion of the New York City press in relation to political parties in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

creating traditions and rituals that would bind the nation together in their struggle, while visualizing sentiments and ideologies that might, in other forms, have been unacceptable.[21]

Portraits were integrated into these events. They became, for example, a regular part of the "illuminations" of the period, during which the houses of the more affluent were lit with candles and lamps to celebrate such occasions as the 4th of July, Washington's Birthday, the Evacuation of the British, and other significant events.[22] Illuminations in response to unforeseen events were sometimes spontaneous,[23] but when illuminations were planned in advance, they usually included decorations such as the "transparent paintings," painted on materials thin enough to permit light to shine through. Transparent paintings were extremely popular, and were described in great detail in the newspaper accounts of illuminations.[24]

One example of the integration of portraits into celebrations was Charles Willson Peale's exhibition of transparencies in 1781, prepared to recognize General Washington's arrival in Philadelphia.[25] And in 1789, the illuminations in New York City, held to

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[21] David Waldstreicher, In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes, The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820 (Chapel Hill and London: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture and University of North Carolina Press, 1997), see also idem, "Rites of Rebellion, Rites of Assent: Print Culture, and the Origins of American Nationalism," The Journal of American History 82, no. 1 (June 1995), 37-61.

[22] See Richard Daniel Altick, The Shows of London (Cambridge, MA and London: Belknap Press, 1978), 94-95, for a discussion of illuminations and transparent paintings in London.

[23] James Stertens, Letter to Wynant Van Zandt, 11 July 1815, New York, describing spontaneous illuminations that evening and inviting Van Zandt to a an "Eleumination" on Monday evening. The illuminations celebrated the end of the War of 1812. Wynant Van Zandt Papers, New York Public Library.

[24] See also Rita Susswein Gottesman, The Arts and Crafts in New York, 1800-1804. Advertisements and News Items from New York City Newspapers (New York: New-York Historical Society, 1965),43-45, for a few examples of these descriptions.

[25] Freeman's Journal, December 12, 1781, quoted in Charles Warren,"What has become of the portraits of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette?" Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society LIX (October 1925), 60. During his visit to New York in 1817, Charles Willson Peale noted the illuminations in celebration of President Monroe's visit: Preparations has been making 2 or 3 days past to illuminate the City Hall this evening. The theater was illuminated last evening, and a transparent portrait exhibited in the center of the front with a lattin motto—Principles not men….I walked into the Park to see the illumination of the City Hall, which was beautifully lighted not only with candles in different forms displayed in the

commemorate the inauguration, also included a large transparent painting at the foot of Broadway, which featured

> a portrait of Washington, under a figure of Fortitude, and the Senate and House of Representatives were exhibited, one on the right, the other on the left, under the forms of Justice and Wisdom….Federal Hall presented in every window a sheet of light. The front of the Theatre, in John Street, was almost covered with transparencies, one of which represented Fame, descending like an angel from Heaven, and crowning Washington with the emblems of immortality.[26]

The 1788 Federal processions celebrating the ratification of the Constitution also relied upon similar images to convey their message of national unity.[27] And in New York, the banner of the chandlers showed a portrait of Washington, with the words "May he be the first President of the United States."[28]

These publicly staged events were initially employed to enhance a sense of national pride, but after the revolution, the production of these events was subsequently seized upon as an effective tool for strengthening political affiliations. The events, as well as the newspapers that reported them, which had provided an arena for the development of nationalistic spirit, subsequently became the grounds of pitched political

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windows, but by lamps, spiral on the pillars of turret or steeple and festoon to the top---the highest it was difficult to light on account of the wind….There was two transparent pictures of large size on the front of the upper stories. The uppermost the arms of N. York with an eagle as crest. The lower and larger picture a female figure setting on basement with the word independence or constition I cannot remember which—on left side commerce, at her feet the cornicopia and genus pouring out the contents—above this Mercury in airy flight." (sic) Diary in The Collected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. A Guide and Index to the Microfiche Edition, for the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, ed. Lillian B. Miller (Millwood, NY: Kraus Microform, 1980), 76-77.

[26] Rufus Griswold Wilmot, The Republican Court, or American Society in the days of Washington (NY: Appleton & Co., 1867), 145-6.

[27] Waldstreicher, In the Midst, esp. Chapter 2: "The Constitution of Federal Feeling." He argues that the Federal Processions were a temporary resolution of a "crisis of representation;" how to represent the newly-formed public called "the nation."

[28] Whitfield J. Bell, Jr., "The Federal Processions of 1788," The New-York Historical Society Quarterly XLVI, no. 1 (January 1962), p. 35.

battles between Federalists and their opponents.[29] Portraits in this public venue came to have new and different meanings added to them, as representatives of particular political positions.

Some of this symbolic debate centered on the construction of what has been termed a "presidential culture" around Washington.[30] Washington's presidency utilized many of the traditional symbols and rituals of the British court. These patrician rituals and aristocratic trappings concerned some citizens who worried that the cult of Washington, used to shore up the fragile federal government, would lead to a reestablishment of the monarchy.

The symbolism of portraits was perhaps most clearly articulated in the battle over coinage. In his 1792 "Report on the Establishment of a Mint," Alexander Hamilton had surmised that "the devices of the Coins are far from being matters of indifference…they may be made the vehicles of useful impression."[31] His proposal that Washington's head, his first initial and last name be printed on these new coins raised a storm of protest that the nation would not imitate "the flattery and almost idolatrous practice of Monarchies, with respect to the honor paid to their Kings, by impressing their images and names on their coins."[32] The end result of this discussion was that the nation's early coinage was

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[29] Waldstreicher, In the Midst, 177-201. He quotes one Jeffersonian orator (Consider Sterry, *An Address to the Republican Citizens, Delivered at Norwich, (Con.) on the 4th July 1806*): "Election—thanksgiving—fast day, and federal 4th of July sermons, are considered as so many engines, made subservient to electioneering purposes."

[30] See Simon P. Newman, Parades and the Politics of the Street; Festive Culture in the Early American Republic (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 50-52. During an uprising over the Stamp Act in 1765, Lieutenant Governor Cadwalader Colden's coach, a symbol of monarchical authority, was publicly burned on Bowling Green. "Arriving in Style," New-York Historical Society Exhibition (November 23, 2004-February 20, 2005), on-line essay accessed November 30, 2004 available from http://www.nyhistory.org/arriving/index.html, Internet.

[31] Newman, Parades, 55.

[32] John Page of Virginia led the argument against using Washington's face on coinage. See The Debates and Proceedings in the Congress of the United States; with an Appendix, Containing Important State

dominated by images of Liberty, an allegorical figure with republican, rather than monarchical, connotations. But the pitched battle in Congress over images on coins reveals a general conviction that images could have a political influence on ordinary viewers.[33]

Upon completion of the President's second term and the transfer of the presidency to Adams, concerns regarding Washington's monarchical ambitions abated. However, the figure of Washington still retained a meaning of moderation and balance to New York City Federalists, and he was a character around which they continued to rally even after his death. During a July 4th celebration in New York City in 1803, the interior of the Theater was decorated with a portrait of Washington, and the New-York Evening Post reported that a transparency would be displayed showing "An Eagle…seen suspending a Crown of Laurel over the Head of Gen. Washington, with this motto, Immortality to Washington."[34] This was followed by an ode sung by the actors and a rope dance.

The most overt example of the political meaning of Washington was the formation of the Washington Benevolent Society in 1808 by the New York Federalists. Created as a counterweight to the successful Republican Tammany Society, the Washington Benevolent Society rallied the party, enabling the Federalists to temporarily wrest back their control of the Common Council, the state legislature and the Council of Appointment. Their success was celebrated by a parade down Broadway on July 4th of the following year. [35]

Papers and Public Documents, and All the Laws of a Public Nature ; with a Copious Index (Washington, 1849), III: 483, 485; quoted in Newman, Parades, 55-57.

[33] Newman makes a similar point regarding coinage, ibid., 57.

[34] New-York Evening Post, 2 July 1803; the plot of *The Glory of Columbia* focuses on the preservation of West Point by the honesty of three soldiers, who resisted the temptation of Major Andre and arrested him. One of the three soldiers, John Paulding, was the father of Mayor William Paulding.

[35] Burrows and Wallace, Gotham, 415

In 1811, on Washington 's Birthday, a similar procession took place through the streets of New York, ending at the Circus on Anthony Street, where exercises including music, a recital of Washington's Farewell Address, and an Oration took place. The procession was fully detailed in the press, which noted that the members of the Washington Benevolent Society in the procession were accompanied by

> A full length likeness of WASHINGTON, on a stage surrounded by a handsome drapery, and surmounted with a gilt Eagle holding in his beak a scroll with the words 'THE FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY."[36]

At the same celebration, a full-length portrait of Alexander Hamilton, handsomely draped as well, was used in the procession and ceremonies.

Though no record exists, it is possible that the portraits commissioned by the Common Council were also used in these types of public displays. After all, a portrait commissioned by the New York Chamber of Commerce, which had hung in City Hall, was used in such a way. The Chamber of Commerce had commissioned a full-length portrait of Hamilton "to express the sense they entertain of the important services" he had rendered the country. The portrait was completed by July 3, 1792, when it was exhibited in City Hall (Figure 14).[37]

Over a decade later, this portrait of Hamilton makesan appearance in a newspaper account of a celebration of the Anniversary of the St. Andrews Society, held at the Tontine Coffee House and reported on in the New-York Evening Post of December 1,

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[36] New-York Evening Post, 23 February 1811.

[37] "The portrait of Mr. Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, painted for the Citizens of New York by Mr. Trumbull, has been received and for the present placed in the City Hall. It must afford much pleasure to the Gentlemen who promoted this undertaking to know that this elegant specimen of Mr. Trumbull's abilities is reckoned one of the finest productions of his pencil." New York Daily Advertiser, 4 July 1792; also quoted in Harry MacNeill Bland and Virginia W. Northcott, "The Life Portraits of Alexander Hamilton," The William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Series, vol. 12, no. 2 (April 1955), 191.

1804.[38] The detailed news account listed the funds dispensed for charity over the year, noted the names of the Society's officers, and then observed that the attendees retired for dinner "prepared in the best style by Mr. Hyde [the proprietor of the Coffee House]." One of the honored guests at the dinner was then-Mayor DeWitt Clinton. Among the many toasts proffered that evening and reported upon in the newspaper was the following by members of the Society: "Our silent Monitor (*pointing to a full length portrait of Gen. Hamilton*)…May we ever emulate his virtues." The full-length portrait of Hamilton thus stood in for the recently deceased Federalist martyr.[39]

As portraits appeared in parades, processions, and celebrations of the period, the increased number of visual images does suggest a growing visual sophistication on the part of the public.[40] From 1790 through the early nineteenth century, economic growth did lead to increased access to portraits and other images by a greater number of people. On the most basic level, any citizen, no matter what their social or economic status, could view portraits at the parades, processions, and illuminations, which, though not open to all to participate in,[41] were public spectacles. By 1804, for a small fee,[42] one could visit

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[38] The St. Andrews Society was one of the many fraternal organizations that emerged in the 1780s, such as the Sons of St. George and St. Patrick, and the Masons. According to David Waldstreicher, In the Midst, 70: "These voluntary groups and ethnic associations held their annual meetings on the old saints' days but positioned themselves as American sons of foreign fathers—and proved it by making thirteen toasts in the style of the Fourth of July."

[39] At some point the portrait was installed in the Chamber's quarters in the Merchant's Coffee House, located on the southeast corner of Wall and Water Street. Upon the Chamber's relocation across the street to the Tontine Coffee House, the portrait was then removed to the building on the northwest corner of Wall and Water Street. On April 15, 1817, the portrait of Hamilton was lent to the American Academy of Fine Arts, where it was exhibited for many years. See George Wilson, Portrait Gallery of the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York (New York: Press of the Chamber of Commerce, 1890), iii-iv.

[40] See Valentijn Byvanck, "Representative Heads: Politics and Portraiture in Antebellum America" (Unpublished dissertation, New York University, 1998), which focuses on municipal and public galleries and their impact on the viewing public.

[41] Parades and processions were usually composed of members of particular fraternal or military organizations and artisan or trade groups.

[42] A comprehensive description of the unveiling of the bronze monument by M. De la Croix, may be found in the New-York Evening Post, 2 July 1803, the cost to visit was 4 shillings.

Vauxhall Gardens, and view the equestrian statue of Washington. And, for a mere 25 cents, one could have a portrait done by John Sandford, who, using the *Physiognotrace,* could easily provide you with four silhouettes.[43]

These public events and new public spaces provided educational venues for Americans to learn how to view art in general and portraits in particular. Yet in some ways the American viewing public remained aesthetic innocents. The ways in which portraits were used in celebrations focused primarily on who was being depicted, rather than how. Portraits were consistently employed as surrogates for venerated individuals. And it was a rare newspaper account that referred to the aesthetic quality of an image, apart from its verisimilitude. The appearance of portraits in a variety of contexts did familiarize the public with portraiture, and thus made it the idea of portraiture less elitist and more accessible. But perhaps because most Americans did not view portraits as "art objects", but as part of an accessible "celebratory discourse," the aesthetic quality of portraits as paintings was sometimes poorly defined.[44]

The emphasis on the social and political meaning of the image meant that, beyond the compliment paid to the sitter, portraits were viewed as educational tools that would shape future generations. Some writers drew an analogy between the Romans, who paraded with images of their ancestors, and American art, suggesting a heightened sensitivity to the power of the portrait and its role as a surrogate.[45] For example, in 1790, perhaps one of the clearest statements of the power of the image appeared in the

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[43] New-York Evening Post, 13 December 1804; under the title *Newest Fashions*, John Sandford advertised prints, looking glasses, ornamental gilding on Glass, as well as the Physiognotrace, "Mr. Hawkins Patent Profile Machine."

[44] Byvanck, "Representative Heads," 61, makes the point that, in the early eighteenth century, art criticism of a patently political nature "opened up the art discourse to transparently ideological messages."

[45] "THE TABLET.—No. CXXXIII," in Gazette of the United States, 21 July 1790, 531.

following editorial in the Gazette of the United States, on the same page as the announcement that the Common Council had commissioned Trumbull to paint the President's portrait.

> Perhaps no circumstance stimulated the Romans more vigorously to such virtues as they practiced, than the fame of their illustrious ancestors. This was preserved in the image of their predecessors which were hung in the most conspicuous places to catch the eye, and impress the most eager desire to imitation….Busts and Statues make perhaps stronger impressions than historical records….I should suppose the force of example is more strongly alluring when we behold the image, than when we examine the history of ancient worthies.[46]

Given the emphasis on the edifying role of portraits, and portrait galleries, the selection of sitters for a municipal collection would be of particular concern. The City Hall portraits, commissioned by the Common Council, revealed whom the Council believed should be memorialized—not a simple decision. The City Hall portrait collection would present a series of "predecessors," the selection of whom would "catch the eye and impress the most eager desire to imitation." These portraits would instruct the public as to who was a hero worthy of veneration.

Moreover, the portrait commission would reflect upon the honor of the patrons. These portraits would be commissioned based on the judgment of the Common Council; and should their judgment prove wrong, it might "disgrace the whole gallery."[47] In this way, politicians were associated with the individual depicted and the acts of the individual. These associations were further reinforced when the politicians' own portraits were commissioned, and placed within City Hall next to, for instance, the heroes of the

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[46] And more than twenty-five years later, on October 23, 1816, former Mayor and future Governor DeWitt Clinton made much the same point in his address to the American Academy of Fine Arts. See above, Chapter 1, for a discussion of the address, which is printed in full in Thomas S. Cummings, Historic Annals of the National Academy of Design (Philadelphia: George W. Childs, 1865), 8-17.

[47] Ibid., 13.

revolution or the War of 1812. The reflected glory of an adjacent portrait could add meaning to its neighbor. This concatenation of meaning required viewers to more closely analyze a portrait, which might yield up even greater significance in juxtaposition with another. [48]

Portraits in the Second City Hall

Limited documentation exists as to the exact placement of portraits in Federal Hall after Congress departed. We find the first mention of the City Hall "Picture Room" in the New-York Evening Post, which on May 22, 1804, carried the following notice: "The Mayor's office is removed to the 'Picture Room' in the City Hotel." "City Hotel" was a misprint for City Hall; a later mention of a meeting of the New-York Historical Society on November 20, 1804, notes that the meeting will be held in the "Picture Room of the City Hall" in Wall Street. [49]

This reference to a "Picture Room" or municipal gallery for the public, in what was the most prestigious building in New York City, indicates that by 1804, municipal government had a general acceptance and appreciation of the role of art. By setting aside a space for viewing pictures, the Common Council acknowledged the new role that art would have in providing their constituents with a collective identity. Portraiture would provide "a mirror of ambition" for the new republic:

> One final reason that men commissioned portraits may have been an urge to self-definition….to see themselves…through the eyes of another; they were objectifying their confidence and self-assertion.[50]

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[48] The association between politicians and heroes through portrait commissions, and through more public celebrations that were reported on in the press, will be discussed in greater detail below in Chapter 4.

[49] See I.N. Phelps Stokes, Iconography of Manhattan Island (New York: Robert H. Dodd, 1915-1928), V: 1423, 1428. See also Robert Hendre Kelby, The New York Historical Society, 1804-1904 (New York: Published for the Society, 1905), 1-2.

[50] Neil Harris, "Keynote Remarks," in American Painting to 1776: A Reappraisal. Seventeenth Annual Winterthur Conference, 1971, ed. Ian M.G. Quimby (Winterthur, DE and Charlottesville, VA: The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum and The University Press of Virginia, 1971), 12.

Unfortunately, no drawings or detailed descriptions remain of the City Hall Picture Room, the first municipally sponsored gallery in New York City. Although the building was demolished in 1812, the extant descriptions of Federal Hall found in The Massachusetts Magazine and other newspapers of the period[51] have inspired at least two attempts to reconstruct the floor plans, and ascertain the size and location of the various chambers for Federal Hall,[52] most recently by Louis Torres. Torres proposes that the first two portrait commissions by the Common Council were hung in the "Picture Room," which he argues was the Lobby (Figure 15) . Torres further discounts the one contemporary account that refers to the room and, according to Torres, "incorrectly located it adjoining the Senate Chamber."[53]

The contemporary account that Torres refers to is the poem *PICTURE OF NEW-YORK—AUGUST 1790*[54] that appeared in the Gazette of the United States in September of the same year, a portion of which mentions Trumbull's portraits:

> See Senators desert their seats,
> And walking forth as if for air,
> Strait to the anti-room repair,
> View TRUMBULL's forms sublimely blaze,
> And *feel* the paint—with wondering gaze.
> Justly admire the glowing work,

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[51] Louis Torres, "Federal Hall Revisited," The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 29, no. 4 (December 1970), relies on this description as well as a similar, though briefer account of the renovation that appeared in The New-York Journal, 26 March 1789; Torres identifies the Journal article as the first published account of the renovation.

[52] William Hindley, an English architect working in the 1930s, proposed a reconstruction that is much smaller than the later reconstruction of Louis Torres. See William Hindley Drawings, Federal Hall Historic Site, National Park Service. However, Torres, "Federal Hall," bases his argument for the size of the building on the Ludlam Map of 1813, and makes a convincing case for a larger building as shown in the later map. See also Louis Torres, "Historical Base Map Federal Hall National Memorial," (Unpublished manuscript, Statue of Liberty National Monument, October 1958), which provides additional evidence for the larger structure as the work of L'Enfant.

[53] Torres, "Federal Hall," 336.

[54] Gazette of the United States, 22 September 1790, 602. The Gazette offered a record of Congressional activities, as well as the usual advertisements, blurbs, extracts, and satires that made up the press of the period.

A lasting honor to New-York;
An honor to our corporation,
A future honor to our nation.

In a footnote, the poet states that Trumbull painted his portraits in Federal Hall, in the "anti-room."[55] That room, as a letter from John Adams to Richard Varick indicates, was where the portraits of the French monarchs had been hung when Congress came to New York.[56]

However, the poem is silent on where Trumbull's portraits were installed after they were painted. Furthermore, since the Mayor's office was relocated to the "Picture Room" in May 1804,[57], it seems unlikely that, as Torres suggests, the Lobby was in fact the "Picture Room," especially if, as Torres also proposes, the Lobby was accessed by one of the main staircases in the building.[58] While the public nature of this space would provide an appropriate viewing area for portraits, it would also mean that the Mayor's Office was relocated to a room that was within the main circulation pattern of the building, and would thus not have had any privacy.

As Torres himself points out, this contemporary account also mentions an antechamber or "anti-room" adjacent to the Senate chamber. Following his speculative plans, this antechamber could have been set apart from the internal circulation patterns of

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[55] Apparently Trumbull did not have sufficient space to paint such a large portrait, and was given room by the Common Council. Antonio di Poggi had written to Trumbull on June 2, 1790, and addressed the letter "John Trumbull Esq to the care of Rd Alden Esqr Secretary of Congress New York America;" later correspondence from Poggi is addressed to 31 Maiden Lane. See John Trumbull Papers, New-York Historical Society. A similar arrangement was made for him in the Philadelphia Statehouse, see John Trumbull Letter to Harriet Wadsworth, Philadelphia, October 30, 1791, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University.

[56] John Adams, letter to Richard Varick, New York, July 22, 1790; copy in the Theodore Sizer Papers, Archives of American Art. The letter gave Congress's consent to Trumbull's use of the chamber while the body was still in session.

[57] See Stokes, Iconography, V: 1423, 1428.

[58] According to the Massachusetts Magazine account, this staircase was the main public entrance to the second floor; the private entrance was opposite, on the east side of the building.

the building. This room would seem to be a more likely choice for the Mayor's Office (a space that would require more privacy), and thus for the "Picture Room."[59]

Another consideration regarding the location of the "Picture Room" was its light. If this room were the Lobby, again according to Torres' plan it would have received light only from the west. This lighting scheme does not seem to accord with Trumbull's belief, articulated in his letter to mentor Benjamin West, that his portrait of Washington was to hang in "the most elegant Room in America" and in a "very perfect light."[60] Light from the west would not be adequate to illuminate the portraits fully, nor would the lobby, which was finished with Tuscan pilasters, be as elegant a space as the more ornately decorated legislative chambers.

Based on Trumbull's comments, he probably believed that this portrait would hang in the Representatives Chamber, the largest chamber in the building to receive northern light. This chamber also had clerestory windows on its southern façade, providing an even light that the artist would have appreciated. Trumbull remained concerned about the lighting conditions for his paintings throughout his life, and noted in a January 28, 1818 letter to architect Charles Bulfinch:

> I have never seen paintings so advantageously placed in respect to Light & Space, as I think mine would be in the proposed circular room, illuminated from above…. The boasted Gallery of the Louvre is execrable for paintings: windows on each side opposite to each other; and the pictures hanging not only between but opposite to them.--The Governor's Room here is subject in part to the same objection, the pictures being hung generally opposite to the windows and in two instances between them. [61]

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[59] See Torres, "Federal Hall,"336, for a conjectural plan of the second floor.

[60] Quoted in Brandon Brame Fortune "Portraits of Virtue and Genius: Pantheons of Worthies and Public Portraiture in the Early American Republic, 1780-1820." (Ph. D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1987), 64; and in Autobiography of Colonel John Trumbull, Patriot-Artist, 1756-1843, ed. Theodore Sizer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), 326. The original letter is in the John Trumbull Papers, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University.

[61] John Trumbull, letter to Charles Bulfinch, January 28, 1818, John Trumbull Papers, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University.

Additional evidence for the location of the Washington portrait is found in an article dated July 21, 1790, in The Daily Advertiser. The writer reports that the President had agreed to sit for the Common Council's commission and describes the projected arrangement:

> The Picture will be placed, we are informed, in that part of the Representatives' Chamber, behind the Speaker and will be elevated as to be out of danger from being handled and sufficiently conspicuous from every part of the room.[62]

Thus, while the "Picture Room" may have served as a gallery space in City Hall, based on Trumbull's comments, The Daily Advertiser, and the Gazette of the United States, it seems that Trumbull's portrait of Washington was eventually hung in the Representatives' Chamber.[63]

Further details regarding the location of portraits in the second City Hall are scanty. The Minutes of the Common Council confirms that by 1791 the two portraits by Trumbull of Washington and Clinton were in City Hall, for in July 1st of that year the Common Council resolved:

> Ordered that Aldn Mccormick & Messrs Van Dyk & Pintard be a Committee to take order for obtaining proper Frames for the Portraits in the City Hall of the President of the United States and the Governor of this State [64]

Whether they had been installed without frames, or with temporary frames, is not known. On that same date, the Mayor issued his Warrant to pay "Mr John Trumbull the Sum of £186:13:4 for taking the Portrait of his Excellcy the Governor." Almost a year later, in

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[62] The Daily Advertiser, 21 July 1790.
[63] The placement of the portrait in the Representatives' Chamber suggests that the Common Council planned to use that room for their future meetings.
[64] MCC, I: 652.

April, 1792, the Council paid Thomas Barrow for the "Frames of the Portraits of the President & Governor… £135:2:1."[65]

A May 28, 1794 entry from the diary of Henry Wansey[66] verifies that the Trumbull portraits were still in City Hall on that date, but unfortunately, Wansey does not provide a detailed description of their location:

> I went with Mr. Lewis to the federal hall,…there I was shewn a handsome library, with a large collection of books; some good paintings also [by] Trumbull (an American artist, student under West) of General Washington, Governor Clinton, and Mr. Hamilton, the secretary of the treasury.[67]

The next entry regarding the placement of the portraits appears in the Common Council's Minutes of April 22, 1799, when Joseph Newton received $58.10 for "removing & putting up the Portraits in the City Hall."[68] Details regarding where they were removed to and put up in were regrettably not noted.

However, the location of the two portraits of Washington and Clinton in 1804 is suggested by an entry in the Minutes of the Common Council dated December 3, 1804, directing an Inspector to procure a carpet for the Common Council Chamber, and ordering

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[65] Ibid., 710.

[66] Henry Wansey, An Excursion to the United States of North America, in the summer of 1794. Embellished with the profile of General Washington, and an aqua-tinta view of the Statehouse at Philadelphia (Salisbury, England, 1796), 66.

[67] In his Letters written during a tour through the northern and eastern states of America (Charleston, South-Carolina: Printed by Harrison and Bowen, 1794), 22, John Drayton makes very similar comments regarding Federal Hall and the portraiture: "Federal-Hall, is built upon Wall-street and fronts Broad-street, in the same manner as the government house does Broad-way. This, is an elegant and grand building, well adapted for a senatorial presence. Here, I saw portraits of the president, of the secretary of the treasury, and of the present governor of this state; executed by colonel Trumbull as large as life: and as far as I could judge good likenesses. The background of the president's portrait, represents a part of New-York, and the British fleet sailing up the narrows. Here are also a museum, and library. The library contains about five thousand volumes." The portrait of Hamilton to which Drayton refers is the Chamber of Commerce portrait, commissioned in 1792, and lent to City Hall for display.

[68] MCC, II: 537.

> …that a stove be provided for the Common Council Chamber, and also that the Inspector procure proper Curtains to preserve the paintings of General Washington and Governor Clinton from Injury. [69]

Although the location of the portraits is not directly specified, they are referred to along with other "furnishings" in the Common Council Chamber, within an entry that addresses a general "freshening-up" of the room. This suggests that the portraits were viewed as part of the trappings of that particular chamber.

The final entry in the Minutes regarding the location of the portraits in the second City Hall occurs on June 1, 1807:

> Resolved that the Portraits of the several Mayors of this city and other portraits belonging to the Corporation be removed and placed in the Common Council Room under the care and direction of the Clerk [John Pintard] of this Board.[70]

The collection is not mentioned again in the Minutes until after the Council had moved to the third City Hall in 1812.

Trumbull Abroad

With the removal of Congress from New York, Trumbull had departed as well, leaving New York on February 1, 1791. He traveled along the coast, collecting portraits for his history paintings, and headed south to Charleston, where he remained until April, painting about twenty portraits. From there he proceeded north, traveling to the new federal city to see the construction and visit with L'Enfant. Trumbull arrived home to Connecticut by June.[71]

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[69] Ibid., III: 650, 652.
[70] MCC, IV: 446-7.
[71] Irma B. Jaffe, John Trumbull: Patriot-Artist of the American Revolution (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1975), 162-4; Trumbull, Reminiscences, 166.

Shortly thereafter, he returned to New York to complete the Governor George Clinton portrait for New York City.[72] By 1792, having completed his New York commission, Trumbull was in Philadelphia, where he painted another grand, full length portrait of General Washington commissioned by the city of Charleston (Figure 16).[73] The following year, Trumbull traveled to Boston, but grew discouraged at the dwindling subscriptions for his etchings and the state of politics in America.

Having initially returned from Europe a friend of Jefferson and thus of the French,[74] his disgust with the excesses of the French Revolution and the atheism of their adherents began to temper his views. Trumbull believed that the "artful intrigues" of the French and "blunders" of the British had begun to split the nation into fierce partisans.[75] These feelings of despair were aggravated by disappointment over an affair of the heart,[76] and Trumbull leapt at the chance to travel to England with Chief Justice John Jay as part of a commission to negotiate a treaty regarding trade and the impressments of American sailors by the British.

Jay, who was born 1745 in New York City into a socially prominent and wealthy merchant family,[77] graduated from King's College (later Columbia College) in 1766, and two years later, was admitted to the bar. That same year, Jay established a legal practice

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[72] MCC, I: 652.

[73] Anna Wells Rutledge, "Paintings in the Council Chamber of Charleston's City Hall," in Portrait Painting in America, The Nineteenth Century, ed. Ellen Miles (NY: Main Street/Universe Books, 1977), 24. The original portrait painted by Trumbull is now in the collection of the Yale University Art Gallery; Charleston owns a second portrait, painted after the first was rejected.

[74] See for example his letter to James Watson, London, April 23, 1801, in which Trumbull writes: "I used to be sometimes called a Jacobin—I hope there is no Jacobinism in being willing to be ruled by the majority." John Trumbull Papers, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University.

[75] Sizer, Autobiography, 168.

[76] Following his return to America, Trumbull courted Harriet Wadsworth, daughter of Jeremiah Wadsworth and thirteen years his junior. She had another suitor and was reluctant to make a decision, however, in 1792 she sickened and died, plunging the artist into a depression. Jaffe, John Trumbull, 148-166.

[77] John's father Peter was a vestryman of Trinity Church, and his mother, Mary Van Cortlandt, came from one of the most wealthy and powerful *patroon* families in New York.

with Robert R. Livingston, Jr. (scion of the "Lower Manor" branch of the Livingston family and future Chancellor) who Jay had met in college, and in 1771 Jay opened his own law office.

Jay's connection with the Livingston family was strengthened when, in April of 1774, he married Sarah Livingston (1756-1802), the daughter of New Jersey Governor William Livingston, and cousin of Robert R. Livingston, thus gaining important connections to this politically powerful family. In May, Jay became directly involved in New York politics when conservatives, hoping to temper extreme reactions to the worsening relations with Great Britain, nominated Jay as part of a "committee of 50" to arrange the election of delegates to a Continental Congress. A moderate, Jay became New York's delegate to the First Continental Congress in 1774.

He was elected president of the Second Continental Congress, and in 1779 appointed Minster Plenipotentiary to Spain. Following the Revolution, in 1782, Jay joined Franklin in Paris to negotiate for peace with Great Britain. He then returned to the United States in July 1784 to discover that he had, in his absence, been selected Secretary for Foreign Affairs, a post he held for eight years. From 1787 to 1788, Jay, an ardent advocate of federalism, co-authored the Federalist Papers with Alexander Hamilton and James Madison and fought for ratification in the New York State assembly side-by side with his old friend Chancellor Livingston. In 1789, Jay was appointed the first Chief Justice of the U.S.[78]

In all likelihood, Trumbull's appointment was due to Jay's longstanding connections with the artist's family. Jay's correspondence shows that he had been in

[78] Livingston had anticipated that, like his friend Jay, he would be recognized for his role in the war of Independence by a federal appointment. When such an appointment was not forthcoming, he blamed Jay and the Federalists, and turned to the Republican Party.

contact with Governor Trumbull and his son Jonathan since 1776.[79] And Trumbull's brother Jonathan conveyed Jay's offer of the post to the artist[80]--in his note to Jay accepting the position,[81] Trumbull wrote that he had "rec'd a letter from my brother" regarding Jay's offer.

In order to receive this political plum, Trumbull had beaten another contender: Samuel Bayard, one of the clerks of the Supreme Court. Although Bayard had served under Jay as a clerk for three years, and had been recommended for the post of secretary by Alexander Hamilton, Jay highly valued Trumbull's social connections, particularly his relationship with West and attendant access to the aristocracy. On April 20, 1794, Jay wrote his wife Sally that he hoped

> our friend Mr Trumbull will warrant to go as Sec'y… Mr. S. Bayard was recommended to me. I think well of him—but .Mr. Trumbull's long residence & connections in London will enable him to be useful.[82]

Upon learning that Trumbull was being considered for the post, Bayard had written Hamilton thanking him for his support and pressing him for further assistance, but, notwithstanding Bayard's interest in the post and Hamilton's recommendations, Trumbull was selected. Bayard's letter to Hamilton[83] suggests Trumbull's eagerness to depart,

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[79] The first mention of Governor Jonathan Trumbull (Trumbull's father) in Jay's correspondence is a letter from Alexander McDougall to John Jay, dated December 14, 1775; the first extant correspondence between Jay and Governor Trumbull is a letter dated July 27, 1776, when Jay asks the Governor for cannon to defend the Hudson. Jay's papers also include numerous letters between him and Jonathan Trumbull, Jr., as well as later correspondence between him and the artist, primarily regarding diplomatic and political issues. See The Papers of John Jay (NY: Columbia University, archive on-line), I.D. nos. 6920, 2822; accessed March 7, 2005, at http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/eresources/archives/jay; Internet.

[80] Sizer, Autobiography, 179n2.

[81] Papers of John Jay, 7200.

[82] Ibid., 8054.

[83] Apparently Bayard had been asked to deliver a letter to Trumbull regarding the possible appointment, and had discussed the matter with him. Samuel Bayard to Alexander Hamilton, April 22, 1794, Papers of John Jay, 10628. Bayard (1667-1840), who in 1796 was sent abroad as an agent of the U.S. to prosecute claims before the admiralty courts in London, was later appointed judge of Westchester County by Governor Jay; he was also one of the founders of the New-York Historical Society. Alexander Leitch, A Princeton Companion (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978).

noting that the artist had already been on his way to book passage on the same vessel on which Jay was to sail, and that "he [Trumbull] says that his business abroad is in a very critical situation & requires his immediate attention." Trumbull, no doubt, referred to his prints, which still had not been completed.

Trumbull sailed with Jay on May 12, 1794, and worked with him at a salary of £25 per month. [84] The negotiations of what came to be known as the Jay Treaty were concluded on November 19, 1794.[85] The terms of the accord benefited the U.S. in several respects. It returned the Great Lakes posts to U.S. control and opened the British West Indies to U.S. ships with restrictions. It also provided for a neutral commission to determine possession of disputed territories on the Canadian border; the amount U.S. debtors owed the British, and the amounts Britain owed the U.S. for its earlier blockades of trade.

However, the treaty did not restrict British interference with neutral ships, and forbade U.S. retaliation against interference. Realistically, given the lack of a U.S. navy, there was little the government could do to retaliate. But despite the fact that the Jay Treaty preserved the peace and provided for some of the benefits sought by the U.S., it was the most publicly protested treaty in U.S. history. Negotiated barely more than a decade after the Evacuation of the British from New York, anti-British sentiment still ran high throughout the nation and the lapses regarding shipping made it political dynamite. Its terms were kept confidential for months.

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[84] Sizer, Autobiography, 179n2.
[85] Howard L. McBain, DeWitt Clinton and the Origin of the Spoils System In New York (NY: AMS Press, Inc., 1967), 124.

Upon completion of the negotiations, Jay returned to the U.S. in late May, where he had been elected Governor of New York *in absentia*.[86] The terms of the treaty, which had reached the U.S. in March, were not leaked until July 1st, the day after the new Governor's inauguration. Tensions in New York City grew and a public meeting was called at City Hall for July 18th. More than five thousand people convened at the corner of Wall and Broad Streets, when Hamilton, standing before an angry crowd with Mayor Varick,[87] tried to speak in the Governor's defense. Although only a few months earlier Hamilton had been the toast of the town, he was hit in the head when the demonstrators started to hurl stones. Yet despite the furor, and initial widespread opposition,[88] Congress ratified the Jay Treaty, recognizing that superior British naval power left them few options.

Meanwhile, Trumbull remained abroad for the next few years, investing in tobacco, purchasing paintings in a new venture as an art dealer, traveling to check on the progress of his engravings in Stuttgart, and speculating in brandy and rum sales.[89] Returning to London in August 1796, Trumbull received word that, through the agency of his old friend from New York, Rufus King, he had been appointed to a commission created to execute the seventh article of the approved Jay Treaty.[90] His mission was to

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[86] When George Clinton declined to stand for a seventh gubernatorial term, Jay had been elected over the Republican's candidate Robert Yates; his lieutenant governor was Stephen Van Rensselaer, Hamilton's brother-in-law.

[87] Hamilton had resigned from his post as Secretary of the Treasury and returned to New York in mid-February 1795 to resume a lucrative law practice. See Ron Chernow, Alexander Hamilton (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), 483.

[88] Supposedly, on July 4th Jay was burned in effigy in so many American cities that he said he could have walked the length of the country by the light of his own flaming figure. Ibid., p. 487.

[89] Jaffe, John Trumbull, 172-6; Sizer, Autobiography, 174-188.

[90] Instructions, Department of State, 9 June 1796; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59, National Archives and Records Service, GSA, Washington, to John Trumbull Esqr from Timothy Pickering: "The President desiring to avail the United States of your services, has with the advice and consent of the Senate, appointed you one of their agents for the purposes expressed in the act for you the relief and protection of American seamen….You will be allowed for your services and for your

adjudicate the relief and recovery of American seamen abducted by Great Britain. Although he had planned to return to America in a few weeks, Trumbull agreed to serve as fifth commissioner on this board, and dedicated himself to this task.[91]

Although Europe and England afforded Trumbull new opportunities to continue his artistic studies, during his first years abroad, Trumbull focused instead on diplomacy and business. In 1797, Trumbull wrote to the Marquis de LaFayette that he had given up painting,[92] and revealed his ambivalence about painting in a letter to his friend Daniel Wadsworth that same year:

> I thank you for your kind remembrance & for the manner in which you speak of my Return;--deferred it certainly must be for some time by the Business, which all my friends must allow to be a good reason for remaining abroad; since it is not now a pursuit merely ornamental that detains me, but the opportunity of being of some use in the World .[93]

Trumbull's contrast between "a pursuit merely ornamental," that is, painting, and "the opportunity of being of some use" reveals the doubts he experienced about his chosen profession. In order to maintain his reputation and status as a gentleman, Trumbull would have to see his work as worthy of the respect of his peers. Even as late as June,

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personal and travelling expenses, a compensation at the rate of two thousand five hundred dollars a year." Copy, John Trumbull Papers, Yale University, Sterling Memorial Library.

[91] In 1797, during a three-month adjournment of the commission, Trumbull became embroiled in the XYZ Affair. See Carl Ludwig Lokke, "The Trumbull Episode: A Prelude to the 'XYZ' Affair," The New England Quarterly 7, no. 1 (March 1934), 100-114; Jaffe, John Trumbull, 179-182; Sizer, Autobiography, 219-233. Indirect suggestions were made to American representatives that bribes were a prerequisite to negotiations with France. The individuals involved in these financial discussions were designated X, Y, and Z in the U.S. mission's dispatches to the United States. When the XYZ affair aroused the ire of Americans against the French; the Federalists seized the initiative. They moved to strengthen the nation's and New York's fortifications, and passed the infamous Alien and Sedition Acts, which resulted in an eventual backlash against the Federalists.

[92] "…I saw accomplished the engraving and publishing of two expensive plates. But convinced at length, that I was sacrificing uselessly, the most precious part of my life, I have for several years given all my attention to other subjects…" John Trumbull, Letter to Marquis de LaFayette, 15 November 1797, John Trumbull Papers, New-York Historical Society.

[93] John Trumbull, Letter to Daniel Wadsworth, London, 19 April 1797; John Trumbull Papers, Yale University, Sterling Memorial Library.

1800, Trumbull acknowledged to architect Charles Bulfinch, "I am so out of the habit of drawing, that I send you no sketches."[94]

But despite the break in artistic activity, and doubts about the worth of his pursuit, in 1800, Trumbull resumed painting.[95] He may have been spurred on by his impending marriage to Sarah Hope Harvey, to whom he was wed in October 1800, or by the temporary suspension of the commission's business.[96] Trumbull had assumed new responsibilities with his marriage,[97] and at the relatively advanced age of 45[98] may have realized the commission would wrap up its business in a few years, requiring him to make some provision for the future. After an absence of seven years from his studies, his return to painting was difficult. Nevertheless, by 1802 Trumbull participated in the opening exhibition of the new "British School," an artists' organization founded with the patronage of the Prince of Wales.[99]

By the summer of 1803, encouraged by developments in New York City,[100] Trumbull was making plans to return to America, and wrote David Humphreys[101] that:

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[94] Bulfinch, who was one of the early subscribers to Trumbull's engraving project, had written for his advice regarding the cost of a monument to Washington. John Trumbull, Letter to Charles Bulfinch, 12 June 1800, John Trumbull Papers, New-York Historical Society.

[95] John Trumbull, Letter to Jonathan Trumbull, 16 August 1800, quoted in Helen A. Cooper, editor, John Trumbull: The Hand and Spirit of a Painter (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1982),12.

[96] Little is known about Harvey's past. William Dunlap, that inveterate gossip, reports several stories: that she was the illegitimate daughter of Lord Thurlow; that she was Col. Williams' wife with whom Trumbull had grown too intimate, and that in order to avoid scandal, the husband had asked Trumbull to take her off his hands, and that she was the daughter of William Hope of Perthshire. See Diary of William Dunlap (New York and London: Benjamin Blom, 1930; reissued 1969), 738-39, 800-801, 811, 828. Sizer, Autobiography, 350-365, reports that a note in Trumbull's hand confirms that she was the daughter of Hope of Perthshire.

[97] Jaffe, John Trumbull, 191. After his marriage, Trumbull assumed responsibility for the education of his illegitimate son, John Trumbull Ray. See Sizer, Autobiography, 332-350.

[98] Although Trumbull lived till 1841, the average life expectancy in 1800 was much less than today; sixty was considered an advanced age. See Maris A. Vinovkis, "The 1789 Life Table of Edward Wigglesworth," Journal of Economic History 31, no. 3 (September 1971), 570-90. Moreover, Trumbull's older brother Joseph (1737-1778) had died from an illness at the age of 41.

[99] Jaffe, John Trumbull, 198.

[100] Ibid., 207.

> You paint our Country as I expect to find it—rich, in some respects luxurious—but the luxury of sense,[102] not of Intellect or Taste. I am happy however to hear of such symptoms in N York—the more, as I expect to embark for that place early in the Spring & intend to try my fortune in the character of a portrait painter—no other Branch of the profession can be cultivated in America with success….[103]

The American Academy of the Arts

As Trumbull noted in his letter to Humphries, in the opening years of the nineteenth century, New York City saw noteworthy occurrences in the arts. At a meeting in 1802, a group of influential citizens, including Mayor Edward Livingston, came together to form the New York Academy of Fine Arts.[104] (The name of the organization was changed to the American Academy of the Arts in 1804, and then to the American Academy of the Fine Arts in 1817.) The aim of the Academy was to provide a place to train young artists and educate the public.

John Murray, one of the directors of the Academy, had written to Trumbull in February 1803:

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[101] Trumbull addresses his letter to Colonel Humphries. The correct spelling was Humphreys. He was an aid-de-camp to George Washington during the Revolutionary War, and one of Washington's escorts to the Inauguration in 1789.

[102] Sense meaning sensation, or physical feeling.

[103] John Trumbull, Letter to Col. Humphries, 20 July 1803, John Trumbull Papers, New-York Historical Society. See also the undated draft of a response to criticism regarding the Declaration of Independence in the Capitol, in which Trumbull recalls: "Returning to American in June 1804, the Artist found a new Scene of change; the Demon of discord had sunk the character of Americans in the contemptible distinctions of French or British partisans:--It was useless in this absence of all national feeling, to persevere in his work of the Revolution—and two other courses lay before him:--the pursuit of his profession as a Portrait painter, by which he might hope to obtain a Subsistence:--or in following the general example, to swim with the current and take his chance (then not a bad one) for his share of the good things which were liberally distributed to all true believers in the political creed of the day & specially to Converts. He chose to retain his principles, and to rely for subsistence on the more humble branch of his profession." John Trumbull Papers, Yale University, Sterling Memorial Library.

[104] See Carrie Rebora Barratt, "The American Academy of the Fine Arts, New York, 1802-1842" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, City University of New York, 1990), for the most comprehensive treatment of the Academy. The following discussion draws on this work.

> We are about establishing a society of arts in this city, & I have sent for castings from the antiques at Paris &c &c I will soon write you fully upon this subject—I am sure it will interest you as an American[105]

The organization had sent the young artist, John Vanderlyn,[106] to Europe that spring to purchase a collection of plaster casts from antique statues, along with any paintings he might be able to acquire.[107] Mayor Livingston himself personally negotiated the terms of the agreement with the artist, who was given $500 for personal expenses and $2,000 for purchases. A few months later Murray noted in a letter to Trumbull:

> Our society of Arts I think will do us credit—the Statues are arrived but not yet exhibited—one of the great advantages that will result from this institution besides the general improvement of taste, will be the creation of an academy which may bring the genius of this country to perfection….the great mass of our gentry however want a little of the Leaven of Taste.[108]

As Murray's letters suggest, he and his fellow directors hoped that the founding of the academy, which would bring works of art before the public, would bring about a "leaven of taste" in the viewing public. Murray, like other New Yorkers at the turn of the century, believed that the formation of an art academy would provide an education for the viewer as well as the artist. It would "bring the genius of this country to perfection," while at the same time offering the unrefined viewing public the necessary experience

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[105] Letter from John Murray to J Trumble (sic), New York, 8 February 1803; John Trumbull Papers, Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford. Humphreys had written Trumbull as well with similar news.

[106] Vanderlyn's career and its relation to the City Hall portrait collection will be discussed in a later chapter.

[107] See William Dunlap, History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States (George P. Scott & Co., 1834; Reprinted New York: Dover Publications, 1969), II: 33. Vanderlyn had probably met Trumbull through Washington Allston, with whom both artists were friendly. Jaffe, John Trumbull, 207.

[108] Letter from John Murray to John Trumbull, New York, 24 May 1803; John Trumbull Papers, Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford. Trumbull's correspondence with Murray indicates more than a shared interest in the arts; while in London, Trumbull wrote Murray asking his assistance in placing Trumbull's illegitimate son, Ray, on a suitable farm in New York so that he could be trained in the agricultural arts. See John Trumbull Papers, Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford.

and polish. Provided with that "Leaven of Taste" the viewing public could rise to the heights required to appreciate the arts appropriately.[109]

The creation of this new organization by what was, in effect, the city's social elite, was no doubt part of the general sense of *noblesse oblige* of these New Yorkers,[110] whose moral sense of responsibility for the less fortunate was a driving force for the establishment of the many philanthropic organizations formed during this period.[111] But, the academy was also a bid for social prestige.[112] That prestige was paramount in the minds of this admittedly altruistic group is revealed by the founders' eagerness to invite international *glitterati* to join the academy. More energy was expended on enhancing the roster of honorary members than providing an actual course of training for students.

In part, this focus on prestige and social connections resulted from a lack of awareness about the planning and programming required to train artists. After all, the primary model for this early American academy was the Royal Academy in London, where most American artists traveling abroad had trained. This exclusive social institution, which depended largely on royal patronage for its survival, did not provide the systematic education comparable to the Continental institutions.[113] But by establishing a comparable institution, New Yorkers believed that they could stake a claim to artistic preeminence.

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[109] See Neil Harris, The Artist in American Society: The Formative Years 1790-1860 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966), 91 2.
[110] Burrows and Wallace, Gotham, 380-1.
[111] See for example, the comments of John Pintard regarding the revitalization of the Academy in 1816: "To afford innocent amusement to growing opulence is among the duties incumbent on all those who regard the morals of Society…Gross dissipation always prevails where refinement is not cultivated…we must aim at giving a proper direction to young minds." Letters from John Pintard, I: 25.
[112] Ibid., 93.
[113] Harris, The Artist, 91-4.

The nurturance of a viewing public was even more critical to artists, who understood that an educated viewer was a potential customer, willing to pay the entrance fees to view works of art, as well as to possibly purchase or commission them. Creating a more sophisticated viewer required a place where someone could learn how to view art. Not surprisingly, artists such as Trumbull were primarily responsible for the growth in galleries and exhibition spaces in the early nineteenth century.

The use of explanatory catalogues that accompanied exhibitions was an additional tool in the didactic program of the gallery. A prime example is the catalogue for Trumbull's 1804 exhibition in the Old Park Theatre in New York, organized by the artist upon his return to the U.S.[114] The eight-page catalogue, written by the artist himself,[115] listed the painters and titles of the works displayed, and also included critical tidbits to focus the viewer's attention on specific formal aspects of the paintings. The colors of Titian, the classical purity and compositional skill of Poussin, and the expressive aspects of Raphael are detailed in Trumbull's catalogue.

While the exhibition, by placing a collection of works of art within one space, directed the public what to look at, the catalogue directed the public how to look at it. The catalogue amplified the educational function of the exhibit in the early nineteenth-century. Galleries were public spaces used for the "visual education" of the middle classes, places where someone who had fifty cents to spend-could go not only to see art, but also to learn how to see art.

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[114] Catalogue of Colonel Trumbull's Paintings, Now Exhibiting at the Theatre, New-York (New-York: Printed by Sage & Clough, 1804). The exhibition took place in the Park Theatre. See William Dunlap, History, I: 370. Thomas E.V. Smith notes that the John Street Theatre was replaced by the Old Park Theatre, which opened on January 29, 1798. See The City of New York in the Year of Washington's Inauguration (Riverside, CT: Chatham Press), 1972, 166-188.

[115] See below, Appendix 1.

Trumbull's exhibit opened December 12, 1804, and was advertised in the New-York Evening Post. On December 4, 1804, the newspaper carried the following notice:

> The exhibition of Col. Trumbull's COLLECTION OF PAINTINGS, will be opened on Wednesday next, at the Theatre. In this collection, which consists principally of Original Paintings of eminent Ancient Masters, the lovers of the fine arts and the public will have an opportunity of admiring the magic powers of the pencil, in real specimens of the works of RAPHAEL, GUIDO, N. POUSSIN, TENIERS, BERGHEM, and others.
>
> The fame of these illustrious men, and the honor which their genius has conferred on the countries in which they lived, are universally known; yet as few of their wonderful productions have before reached this side of the Atlantic, the present exhibition cannot fail to gratify the eye of taste and discernment.
>
> A few modern works will also be found in this collection, particularly the Original Paintings of the *Sortie of Gibraltar*, the *Battle of Bunker's Hill*, and the *Attack of Quebec*, which have been honored with general approbation in Europe, and of which the two last, representing very important events in American History, will, it is presumed, be therefore particularly interesting to the national and patriotic feelings of this country.
>
> The Exhibition will be open every day (Sunday's excepted) from 10 o'clock to 3….Admittance 50 cents.

This 1804 exhibition notice[116] specifically mentions "the fame of these illustrious men," the artists represented, as well as the "honor which their genius has conferred on the countries in which they lived." The advertisement speaks to the relationship between fame, honor, and culture in early nineteenth-century New York, arguing for the patriotic role of art. In this construct, cultural achievements could not only confer personal fame, they could also bestow honor on a nation. This attitude was a far cry from the politicized reception of Washington's portrait less than fifteen years ago, but was to be mirrored in the actions and writings of one of the most important political figures in the early nineteenth century, DeWitt Clinton.

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[116] Probably written by Trumbull himself. Handwritten drafts of notices regarding his project to engrave the Declaration of Independence and other works are among his papers. See John Trumbull Papers, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University.

DeWitt Clinton

DeWitt Clinton,[117] born in 1769, was a consummate politician who had trained at the knee of his uncle, General and New York State Governor George Clinton. His early education was completed at the Kingston Academy, where he honed his oratorical skills in debates with the sons of prominent New York families—Livingstons, Roosevelts, LeRoys and Ten Broecks. Graduating first in his class from Columbia (formerly King's) College in 1786,[118] Clinton entered the law office of Samuel Jones[119] to read for the bar, and while there tasted his first political defeat over ratification of the Constitution in 1788.[120]

Clinton, who was over six feet tall and handsome enough to earn the sometimes mockingly used title "Magnus Apollo," passed the bar in 1790. His uncle, the leader of the Republican Party, then appointed him as his private secretary,[121] a substantive position for a political neophyte. Clinton occupied this position for five years, until his uncle, faced with the prospect of running against the then-popular John Jay for the gubernatorial seat, declined to once again enter the contest. However, young DeWitt used his time wisely, joining the numerous social and political organizations that littered

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[117] For a brief overview of Clinton's life, see William W. Campbell, "Sketch of the Clinton Family," in The Life and Writings of DeWitt Clinton (New York: Baker and Scribner, 1849), xxv-xxxix.

[118] Clinton's class was the first to graduate from Columbia (formerly King's College), which reopened in 1784. As the top student in the class, he received his Bachelor of Arts and delivered a Latin oration at the ceremony on the topic *De utilitate et necessitate studiorum artium liberalium* (On the need and usefulness of the study of the liberal arts), a foreshadowing of his future interests. Congress and both Houses of the State Legislature attended the ceremony. Evan Cornog,The Birth of Empire: DeWitt Clinton and the American Experience, 1769-1828 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998),17; Dorothie Bobbé, DeWitt Clinton (Port Washington, NY: Ira J. Friedman, Inc., 1962), 35.

[119] Jones had served as Recorder under Mayor Varick, and was one of the leading lights of the legal profession, responsible (with Varick) for the codification of the New York state law.

[120] DeWitt's uncle, Governor Clinton, was a staunch states rights advocate who resented any attempt to further undermine his authority or to eat into the substantial revenues generated by New York City's port trade. In support of his uncle's views, Clinton penned a series of letters from "A Countryman," published in the New York Journal and Weekly Register. Cornog, Birth of Empire, 19.

[121] His brother Alexandre, who had served as his uncle's secretary, died tragically in a boating accident, thus paving the way for DeWitt to apprentice with the Governor.

New York's landscape, including the New York Society of St. Tammany, the Freemasons,[122] the Black Friars, and the Humane Society of the City of New York.

Clinton also joined many of the cultural organizations in the city, and his longstanding dedication to and support of the American Academy of the Arts and the New-York Historical Society enhanced his personal relationships with prominent Federalists, such as Rufus King, who were also interested in the arts.[123] Yet despite his warm relationships with prominent Federalists, when, in the spring of 1795, Clinton ran for a seat in the state assembly, he was defeated by the opposition that swept in on the popular John Jay's coattails.[124]

However, over the following twelve months, the Republicans worked furiously on the local level to identify municipal issues that would strengthen their appeal to the increasing number of small property owners eligible to vote.[125] In 1797, Clinton achieved his first elective political position, and in January 1798 took his seat in the state assembly,[126] where he served until 1802. It was during this transitional period that Clinton consolidated his power within the Republican Party, and became the *de facto* leader, using his position as a member of the Council of Appointment to strengthen his position and that of the party organization by a system of political preferment.[127]

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[122] In 1793, Clinton became the warden of the Holland Lodge; he was to subsequently become the national leader of the Freemasons. Cornog, Birth of Empire, 28, 33, 179-182.

[123] Kenneth R. Nodyne, "The Role of DeWitt Clinton and Municipal Government in the development of Cultural Organizations in New York City, 1803 to 1817" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1969) is the basic reference for this topic. The following discussion depends on his work.

[124] McBain, Clinton and the Spoils System, 46.

[125] Cornog, Birth of Empire, 31.

[126] He was elected along with Aaron Burr and eleven others from New York City. Craig Hanyan and Mary Hanyan, DeWitt Clinton and the Rise of People's Men (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 6.

[127] McBain, Clinton and the Spoils System, 98. McBain, 53-55, 77-96, notes that Governor Jay pursued a policy of preferment for federalists, though he did not institute a "general system of removals." He further suggests that DeWitt Clinton came to dominate New York politics in his role as one of four members of the Council of Appointment. In 1801, during the last five months of Jay's term, Clinton faced off with

During the 1800 presidential elections, New York, neither solidly Federalist (like the New England states to the north) nor solidly Republican (like the states south and west), was a "swing state": its electoral votes were necessary to win the Presidency. New York politics were still national politics. Due to a family illness, Clinton had little involvement in this crucial turning point for the party. Though a member of the state legislature, the political heir of the Governor and leader of the Republican Party in New York State, Clinton took a back seat to his political rival Aaron Burr, who was widely credited for the Republican victory in New York.[128]

Yet Clinton quickly returned from this brief lull, eagerly attacking the ambitious, but ineffectual Vice President. Although Burr's 1804 duel with Alexander Hamilton was the final nail in his political coffin,[129] his waning influence in New York was also hastened by the work of Clinton's faction after 1800. Clinton's assault on Burr resulted

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Governor Jay over whether the Governor possessed the sole right of nomination within the Council; a disagreement that led to a deadlock between the parties and suspension of appointments until the end of Jay's term. Upon the first meeting of the Council after the republican victory, Clinton set out a clear policy of removing all federalists from the statewide offices, and dividing county offices proportionally between the republicans and federalists. Accounts of this policy were published in the Albany Gazette, 13 August 1801, and the Albany Register, 18 August 1801 (quoted ibid., 103-4). McBain's analysis of appointments (112-15) indicates that Clinton's policy was implemented.

[128] Burr, who was also known as a patron of the arts, and was responsible for John Vanderlyn's travel to Europe and professional training as an artist, was a brilliant political tactician, and largely responsible for the 1800 Republican victory in New York. However his political ascendancy was rapidly undone by ambition, for when the close election results of 1800 resulted in a tie between him and Jefferson and threw the electoral outcome into the House of Representatives, Burr declined to cede precedence to Jefferson. His reluctance to withdraw from the Presidential contest threw the electoral process into confusion and eventually undermined his influence in New York and nationally. Burr's ambition alienated Republicans by raising the specter of a Federalist victory if the deadlock could not be resolved, and alienated Federalists who believed that Burr was a man totally without moral compass, a complete "Catiline." Cornog, Birth of Empire, 36-40. See also "Climenole," The Port Folio, 3 March 1804, 66-7, where Burr is compared with Catiline; Edward Livingston is also parodied in this review for the misappropriation of funds "as a district attorney, or as Mayor of a rich corporation."

[129] Before the duel, Burr was defeated in the New York State gubernatorial race of 1803, which he entered with the hopes of revitalizing his languishing political career. Running against Republican Morgan Lewis (George Clinton had declined to run) on the Federalist line, Burr believed that he owed his defeat to Hamilton's lobbying against him.

in part from a long-standing political rivalry between these two strong Republican figures,[130] with the conflict eventually resulting in bloodshed.

His 1802 duel with John Swartout, one of Burr's minions,[131] underscores the intensely personal nature of politics in the early years of the republic.[132] During this transitional period, personal loyalties and family relations were just beginning to be overshadowed by the development of a "spoils system"[133] and the acceptance of a two-party structure as a legitimate form. Clinton was thus a peculiarly modern, early nineteenth-century politician, who lived by both the code of duello and the emerging system of patronage and party loyalties.

But this conflict may have been further fueled by Clinton's own aspirations for higher office. Despite his lack of involvement in the 1800 election, we might postulate that even as early as 1800, Clinton had his eye on the presidency. After all, only twelve

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[130] Burr had supported Robert Yates for Governor in 1789, against George Clinton, and had his own ambitions for the position of governor in New York State. Cornog, Birth of Empire, 39-40. McBain, Clinton and the Spoils System, 137, observes that Burr's adherents had benefited to some degree in the appointments made by Governor Clinton and the Council., and postulates that the only basis for DeWitt Clinton's actions against Burr was his fear of a dangerous rival, ibid., 129-31. He also comments that no member of the Clinton family was appointed to office; the numerous office-holders of that clan were all elected. Ibid.,138.

[131] Joanne B. Freeman, "Dueling as Politics: Reinterpreting the Burr-Hamilton Duel," The William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Series, vol. 53, no. 2 (April 1996), 294-297, notes that this duel was only one among at least sixteen affairs of honor that took place in New York City between 1795 and 1807. She suggests that there may have been even more duels, as strictly enforced laws against dueling in New York forced participants to such subterfuges as conducting their duels out of state.

[132] As Joanne Freeman observes in Affairs of Honor, National Politics in the New Republic (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 184-5, the actual duel was simply one step in a choreographed dance that included challenges and counter-challenges, intricate negotiations, newspaper articles, broadsides, and extensive correspondence. Although supposedly private affairs of honor, these conflicts were for public consumption, part of the political theater of the period, and often reported in the public press. For example, the New-York Evening Post reported Clinton's derogatory comment about his opponent Swartout, after shooting him twice during their duel: "I don't want to hurt him [Swartout], but I wish I had the principal [Burr] here—I will meet him when he pleases." This affair was also noted in a political cartoon of 1802, "A Genuine View of the Parties in an Affair of Honor After the Fifth Shot, at Hobuken, 31st July, 1802" which lampooned Clinton for alleged cowardice under fire.

[133] McBain, Clinton and the Spoils System, passim. McBain concludes that the foundations for the "spoils system" were laid by the earlier actions of the federalists, who while not instituting a wholesale removal of their opponents, did establish a policy of exclusion. He argues that in 1801, with the first change of parties from federalist to republican, Clinton carried out a policy that, while "more radical than anything which preceded it, yet it fell far short of a total dismissal of the federalists in office." Ibid., 158.

years later, Clinton would reveal his ambitions, unsuccessfully running against James Madison. With his counterpart Burr serving as Vice President (a heartbeat away from the goal), such an objective would not have seemed out of place.[134]

This high aspiration was matched by Clinton's vision for New York, culminating in his single-minded pursuit and creation of the Erie Canal. Even in 1790, Clinton had lamented that, with the Residence Act and eventual abandonment by the state legislature, New York City would not be the center of "sovereign power."[135] And Clinton was nothing if not interested in power. In 1802, he was elected U.S. Senator by the New York State legislature,[136] and provided with an entrée to Washington society—a letter of introduction to President Jefferson from his uncle.[137] Yet, he chose to relinquish his post at the nation's new capital in Washington, D.C., and return to New York City as Mayor the following year, appointed by his uncle, George Clinton, who had been re-elected Governor.

While it seems astounding today that Clinton would have relinquished a U.S. Senate seat for the mayoralty, he had at least four solid political reasons.[138] First, because of its closed-door sessions, the Senate's proceedings did not appear in the press, and its members were therefore less known to the public. Thus, Clinton would not lose exposure on the national stage by his return to New York, and might have better opportunities to

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[134]Clinton's presidential ambition would also explain his rivalry with Burr, for in order to achieve his goal, Burr would have to be eliminated as a potential rival for the post.

[135] DeWitt Clinton, letter to Dr. Clinton, July 20, 1790, in John W. Francis, Old New York, Reminiscences; New York: Extended to thirteen volumes by the addition of drawings, engravings, and autographs (New York: collection of the New-York Historical Society, 1895), XI: 1458.

[136] The New York U.S. Senator was at this time appointed by the State legislature and not elected by popular vote.

[137] McBain, Clinton and the Spoils System, 146, quotes a letter of introduction on behalf of DeWitt Clinton, upon his appointment as U.S. Senator, from George Clinton to Thomas Jefferson, dated February 9, 1802, as evidence of a lack of collusion between Jefferson and DeWitt Clinton regarding Burr prior to this date.

[138] Ibid., 54.

enhance his reputation. Second, the substantial $10,000 in mayoral income from licensing fees would be helpful in pursuing his political goals. Third, it would be easier for Clinton to retain control over New York State politics, a lucrative power base for him, while serving as mayor of New York City. Fourth, residence in New York would enable him to more effectively combat the growing power of his rival, Burr. The fifth reason, thought not political, was equally compelling. Residence in Washington, D.C., a cultural backwater and a still developing town, was unappealing to a man of Clinton's refinement, especially when weighed against the sophistication of New York.[139]

As Clinton took office in 1803,[140] the franchise in New York City was widened to include male resident taxpayers paying rents of $25 or more per year.[141] In November of 1804, Republicans won seven of the nine wards, with only the southernmost First and Second Wards remaining Federalist. Unlike his predecessor, Clinton would not be presiding over an antagonistic and Federalist Common Council, but would have the Council's support as he threw himself into the political, intellectual, and social life of the city.

In order to better manage the increasing duties of the Council, Clinton oversaw the regularization of the formerly *ad hoc* committee system. In less than two years, a system of twelve standing committees (including committees for building the New City Hall, the market, street lights, and roads) was established. Only eight years later, by the

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[139] Ibid., 49-50.

[140] The New York State legislature, elected by a more politically and economically diverse group, re-drew the boundaries of the wards in 1803, creating two more wards that included the northern edge of the city and a Greater number of Republican votes. .

[141] This change put restrictions in municipal elections on par with those in state elections. The new law also eliminated the right to multiple votes, no matter how many wards in which one might own property, and instituted the secret ballot in lieu of the voice vote. The voice vote, which required voters to vote publicly, prevented miscounts but had led to intimidation among those voters who were financially dependent on others.

time the New City Hall was constructed and occupied in December 1813, there were twenty standing committees whose members received their appointments for the year.

However, the standing Committee on Arts and Sciences, which would eventually handle all resolutions, requests, and proposals regarding the fine arts and particularly portrait commissions, was not formed until 1816, after Clinton had left the mayoralty.[142] Nevertheless, it would be misleading to assume that the lack of a standing committee on a particular subject meant a disinterest in the subject on the part of the Common Council or Clinton. Careful review of the Minutes of the Council indicates that the formation of a standing committee for a particular issue normally occurred only when after months or sometimes years, the Common Council identified an issue as an ongoing and recurrent concern.

And commissioning portraits became an ongoing and recurrent concern under the leadership of Dewitt Clinton. Clinton was no stranger to the commissioning of portraits, having patronized virtually every artist available to him. His Diary records his numerous visits to artists' studios for sitting, including Sharples, Williams, Trumbull, Jarvis, Vanderlyn, and others.[143] As his friend and chronicler Dr. David Hosack observed:

> The clay and the canvass of the most eminent artists of our country, have frequently been employed to convey the image of his person [Clinton's] for the gratification of his numerous friends, and the different public institutions which he has created, and whose interests he has promoted by his public services and his private benefactions[144]

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[142] Its first recorded action was on August 6, 1816: "A Memorial was presented from John Vanderlyn praying the Corporation to grant him a lease of sixty feet Square of the grounds of the old Alms House fronting on Broad Way for a term of years for the purpose of erecting thereon a Panorama, which was read & referred to the Committee on Arts & Sciences." MCC, VIII, 596-597.

[143] DeWitt Clinton, Diary, DeWitt Clinton Papers, New-York Historical Society (especially 1 July 1802-18 August 1820).

[144] Ellen Miles, "'Memorials of Great & Good Men who were my Friends'; Portraits in the Life of Oliver Wolcott, Jr," Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society 107, no. 1 (1997), 105-159. David Hosack, Memoir of DeWitt Clinton (New York: J. Seymour, 1829; reprint by University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1967), 121. See also, Resolution presented by General Morton at a Meeting of the New York

It was during Clinton's mayoralty that on November 29, 1804, the Common Council resolved to commission portraits of the late General Alexander Hamilton and the "Chief Magistrates of this City since the Revolution," to be painted by John Trumbull.[145] With this first commission, Mayor Clinton exponentially expanded the City Hall portrait collection in one fell swoop. And by commissioning half-length portraits of all the New York City Mayors since the revolution—Duane, Varick, Livingston, and himself—Clinton adroitly placed himself within a significant series of images.

His official portrait as Mayor was to hang with a new sequence of portraits that would commemorate some of the most revered Revolutionary heroes of New York, including the recently martyred Alexander Hamilton. As part of this portrait gallery, Clinton would be visually linked to his predecessors. And as the most recent within a series of distinguished personages, his portrait would benefit from their reflected glory.

However, the City Hall portrait commissions were just one of the ways in which Clinton participated in the development of intellectual and artistic life in New York City. Others have examined in detail his contribution to cultural organizations, particularly the American Academy of the Arts[146] and the New-York Historical Society.[147] Although Clinton was not one of the original directors of the American Academy, he drew up its by-laws in 1802,[148] assisted the Academy with obtaining storage and office space in

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Literary and Philosophical Society, October 10th 1816, DeWitt Clinton Papers. Columbia University, Butler Library, "that Mr Clinton be requested to sit for his Portrait to be placed in the Hall of this Institution, and that a committee be appointed to wait upon him and request his compliance with this resolution."

[145] Ibid., Volume III, p. 636. These commissions will be addressed in detail in the following chapter.

[146] Barratt, "American Academy," passim.

[147] Nodyne, "Clinton and Cultural Organizations," passim.

[148] Minutes of the American Academy of the Fine Arts, December 28, 1802; MS secretary's book, January 6, 1802; quoted in ibid., 20.

government buildings, shepherded the Academy's Act of Incorporation through the state legislature in 1808,[149] and became a director in 1809.

This involvement with the Academy strengthened Clinton's political alliance with the Livingston family, particularly the Chancellor and his brother Edward, who were the heart and soul of this worthy project. That Clinton, upon the Chancellor's death in 1813, was selected to deliver a commemorative discourse demonstrates the bonds forged through this common project. And that he was elected President at the same meeting demonstrates the trust placed in him to guide this organization until January 18, 1817, when it came under the firm hand of John Trumbull.

While Clinton had a significant part to play in the establishment of the New-York Historic Society, it is generally acknowledged that John Pintard (who served as Clerk of the Common Council in 1807 under Marinus Willet)[150] was primarily responsible for the formation of the Society. It is thus interesting to note that less than three weeks after his appointment as Clerk, on June 1, 1807, the Common Council passed the following resolution:

> Resolved that the Portraits of the several Mayors of this city and other portraits belonging to the Corporation be removed and placed in the Common Council Room under the care and direction of the Clerk [John Pintard] of this Board.[151]

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[149] This act named Robert R. Livingston as president, John Trumbull, vice president, and DeWitt Clinton, Dr. David Hosack, William Cutting and Charles Wilkes as directors. Ibid., 24.

[150] Pintard, who was alderman in the 1790s, was the first Clerk of the Common Council to be appointed by the Council. He was appointed on May 11, 1808. Previous clerks had also served as the Clerk of the City and County of New York and were appointed by the State.

[151] MCC, IV: 417.

Although Pintard resigned his political posts in 1809,[152] he continued to look to the municipal government, that is, to his friend Clinton,[153] for assistance in promoting the New-York Historical Society.

Clinton was undoubtedly primarily responsible for the incorporation of the New-York Historical Society on February 10, 1809: the incorporation required approval by the State Legislature, and Clinton's influential role in the legislative body assured passage of any bill that he supported. In September of the same year, the Academy voted to permit the Society to occupy one of the rooms in the Government House allocated for its use. And on October 19, 1809, Pintard was able to obtain six mahogany tables from the "dark room" of City Hall for use by the Society.[154] Even more substantial assistance came in 1816, when the Common Council granted a joint committee of cultural societies the Old Almshouse behind the recently completed City Hall. This gift, which was valued at $200,000, housed the American Academy of Fine Arts, the New-York Historical Society, the Literary and Philosophical Society, and the Lyceum of Natural History.[155]

New York City's cultural organizations benefited substantially through Clinton's involvement. They benefited materially by acquiring free meeting space, lighting, furniture, and even food for their events.[156] And they benefited by acquiring greater

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[152] See Letters from Pintard , I: xviii. Pintard was elected secretary of the Mutual Insurance Company, which became his primary source of income until he retired in 1829.

[153] Ibid., passim. Pintard refers frequently to his friendship with and warm feelings towards Clinton in these personal letters.

[154] "The Superintendant (sic) of Repairs made the following report, that agreeably to the order of the Common Council of September 25, 1809 he has examined the old furniture which was in the dark room of the City Hall and found eleven old circular mahogany tables—six of the best are removed to the Government House by John Pintard Esqr for the use of the Historical Society until wanted by the Corporation." Ibid., V: 697.

[155] Nodyne, "Clinton and Cultural Organizations,"12. John Pintard first suggested the creation of the "New York Institution," that would house multiple organizations under one roof (of an existing public building), in a letter to Clinton in 1812.

[156] Ibid., passim.

social status and political clout, by having as their advocate one of the most influential figures of the era. However, Clinton benefited as well from this association. The cultural organizations of the period provided a "back-channel" of communication between Clinton and the Federalists, his erstwhile political opponents. And while Clinton's involvement burnished the image of these organizations, they in turn gave a bright luster to "Magnus Apollo," confirming his claims as an intellectual, scientist, and aesthete—in short, a gentleman.

A review of Clinton's letters, consistently terse and uninformative when addressing political issues, shows that he was well aware of the social currency of educated discourses on arts and sciences. Despite his devotion to the practice of politics, his most verbose writings revolve around the arts and sciences, and his correspondence shows that he eagerly shared his efforts on these subjects (after carefully polishing them) with the important political figures of the period.[157] Clinton certainly took to heart the advice of Robert Fulton,[158] delivered in a letter dated January 7, 1812:[159]

> To arrive at your *object,* one indespencible (sic) piece of sound policy is to protect and promote science, and many talents, nothing creates more of *fame and public respect*, and then men of talent will hover round you and promote your interest…(my emphasis)

While Fulton does not spell out what object he refers to, on May 28, 1812, the New York State Republican Convention nominated Clinton as its candidate for President.[160] Fame and public respect would be essential components of a campaign for national office.

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[157] See DeWitt Clinton Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University, passim.
[158] Robert Fulton (1765-1815) was an artist turned inventor, known for designing and building the steamboat *Clermont* in partnership with Chancellor Robert R. Livingston.
[159] Letter from Robert Fulton, Washington, 7 January 1812, DeWitt Clinton Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University.
[160] Clinton was well aware that, in order to have a chance at the Presidency, he would need the support of Federalists as well as Republicans to defeat Madison. However, with Congress's declaration of War

While Americans no longer expect, nor seemingly desire, intellectualism from their politicians, the connection between culture and politics was not lost on Clinton's contemporaries. In 1815, Dr. David Hosack, Clinton's colleague and friend, made this association explicit. In a letter to Dr. Benjamin Barton, the Philadelphia botanist, he stated that the *Introductory Discourse*,[161] delivered in 1804 but not published until 1815,[162] revealed Clinton "in a character you have never before contemplated him—you will see him our next Governor or I will be much deceived and as much disappointed."[163]

This intimate link between politics and culture was most conspicuous in Clinton's *Discourse Delivered Before the American Academy of the Arts*, delivered on October 23, 1816.[164] This event was even held in the New City Hall, on the occasion of the Academy's first exhibit in the New York Institution. Too lengthy to quote in full, Clinton's *Discours*e argues for the fine arts as worthy of the "public beneficence" of "a patriotic Government," noting that the arts contribute to the well-being of mankind, demand great mental labor, and draw a clear line "between barbarism and refinement."[165]

Clinton comments that, despite the depredations of the recent war,[166] the fine arts continued to be cultivated. He viewed this cultivation as essential to the economic health of the city and found an historic precedent in the importance of the fine arts in Athens, a

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against Great Britain on June 20, 1812, Clinton's reach for the Presidency was ultimately defeated. See Bobbé, Clinton, 184-187.

[161] DeWitt Clinton, An Introductory Discourse, delivered before The Literary and Philosophical Society of New-York, on the Fourth of May, 1814 (New York: David Longworth, Shakspeare-Gallery, 1815; Reprint Edition, NY: Arno Press, 1978).

[162] The delay in publication was probably due to Clinton's addition of over 100 pages in footnotes to the original, 38-page text.

[163] Quoted in Nodyne, "Clinton and Cultural Organizations," 83. Nodyne draws the connection between the political and cultural, and suggests that Clinton used his *Introductory Discourse* (Discourse Delivered Before the Philosophical Society), delivered in 1814 and printed in 1815, to promote himself as a scholar and thus as a man worthy of his political aspirations.

[164] Printed in full in Cummings, National Academy of Design, 8-17.

[165] Ibid., 9.

[166] Clinton refers to the War of 1812, which will be discussed in a subsequent chapter more fully.

"little spot" that "has attracted the attention, and has commanded the admiration of mankind for more than three thousand years."[167] For Clinton, New York was poised to become the Athens of America. Rich in talent, full of beautiful landscapes and appropriate events worth of delineation,[168] America had the requisite potential to rival past glories.

Clinton mentions City Hall and the portrait collection only briefly in this *Discourse*, as examples of the efforts that must continue to be made to encourage the production of beautiful, and American, public works.

> The portrait collection of this city, by comprising many of the principal heroes of the country, is entitled to great praise in its tendency to stimulate to noble deeds, and to encourage the Fine Arts, by displaying to advantage the compositions of our best painters; and its merits would be greatly enhanced if it were extended so as to embrace illustrious men who have done honor to the Arts and Sciences, or who have distinguished themselves in other respects as men of extraordinary talents or virtues. The utmost care ought to be adopted in the selection, as one unworthy preference may disgrace the whole gallery…[169]

The didactic importance of the collection is of paramount importance, as the portrait collection will "stimulate to noble deeds" the viewing public. Moreover, Clinton, whose half-length official mayoral portrait was part of the collection when the discourse was delivered, notes that it must be exclusive, and contain only those worthy enough to be part of this pantheon of heroes.[170]

Still, the aesthetic significance of the collection is given some weight as well. But in Clinton's argument the value of art is derived from a unity between form and content; aesthetic appreciation apart from the content of the painting, and even the "content" of

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[167] Cummings, National Academy of Design, 9.
[168] Ibid., 12-13.
[169] Ibid.,13.
[170] Fortune, "Portraits of Virtue" has explored the appearance of the concept of creating a gallery of "worthies" in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

the painter, is an impossibility: "A great artist ought to be emphatically a good man, illustrating in his works the beauties of art, and in his life the beauties of virtue."[171]

Of interest in Clinton's discourse is how he notes his own involvement in these efforts, particularly when he remarks that, although "Many of our public buildings have a somber and heavy appearance," "great improvements" are now evident in public edifices.

> This revolution in our taste may be traced from the time when, with a spirit truly wise and munificent, the foundations of the edifice in which we are now assembled were laid—a building which, for magnificence of design and elegance of execution, transcends every public edifice in America.

His own place in this aesthetic history is suggested in the very next sentence: "Let it be strongly impressed on our minds that the most beautiful and sublime works of Athens were erected during the administration of one great man."

Clinton is, of course, referring to Pericles. The *Discourse* suggests that, like Pericles, Clinton has and will continue to preside over a golden age, the natural outcome of what is an essential relationship between democracy and art: "The magnificence of a free people ought always to be seen in their halls of justice, in their edifices of learning, and in their temples of religion."[172]

As part of a post-war generation that witnessed the deaths of Revolutionary heroes, Clinton would be aware of the fame of the founders[173] of what, in his and his contemporaries' thoughts, was to be an American empire. However, in this *Discourse* he notes that, in the ancients' "scale of excellence," "founders of States, law-givers, and

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[171] Cummings, National Academy of Design, 14.
[172] Ibid., 13.
[173] See Douglas Adair, "Fame and the Founding Fathers," Fame and the Founding Fathers: Essays (New York : Norton for the Institute of Early American History and Culture at Williamsburg, 1974), for his ground-breaking essay on the role of fame as a spur to action in late eighteenth-century America.

heroes, were graduated below the authors, and inventors of beneficial arts and institutions."[174]

While Clinton makes this observation as a compliment to Chancellor Robert R. Livingston, and classes him "Among the great men of the Revolution, and in the faithful pages of history….with George Clinton, John Jay,…and other venerable and conscript fathers of the state" [175]one must suspect that this compliment was intended for himself as well. After all, like others of his generation, he came late to the game. He would find his fame in the preservation of the memories of "founders of States, law-givers, and heroes."[176]

Summary

Dramatic changes in government structure—from a rigidly hierarchical system where political power emanated from one central authority, to one that where that power would eventually depend on "the will of the people"—would have a dramatic effect on the development of a new municipal portrait collection. It was not until after 1800, with a new generation of professional politicians, and a new governmental bureaucracy, that the Common Council was willing to experiment again and attempt an innovative new way of visually representing municipal government. This attempt depended upon Mayor DeWitt Clinton's interest in asserting the preeminence of New York City through cultural supremacy. Clinton understood that culture could enhance his own personal reputation and political standing. Moreover, Clinton's support of cultural organizations created and

[174] Cummings, National Academy of Design, 14.
[175] Ibid., 17.
[176] Clinton's concerns regarding fame and reputation will be further discussed in a subsequent chapter on the War of 1812.

maintained lines of communication for him with political enemies, and facilitated his consolidation of political power.

THE NEW YORK CITY HALL PORTRAIT COLLECTION, 1790-1830
CHAPTER THREE: THE LATER TRUMBULL COMMISSIONS, 1804 TO 1816

Introduction

This chapter will focus on Trumbull's later New York City municipal commissions and relationship with the political establishment. The most striking political conundrum is why a Republican Mayor and Republican-dominated Common Council continued to employ Trumbull, a staunch conservative, as their artist for the next ten portrait commissions. Trumbull's close relationships with prominent political figures, the influence of his family, and his stature among other artists in New York City as the first college-educated and European-trained artist in New York City were discussed as factors leading to his first New York City commissions in 1790. His political connections, including his relationship with Mayor DeWitt Clinton, will also be addressed.

When Trumbull returned to New York in 1804, he recognized an opportunity for himself as not simply an artist, but as a gentleman and connoisseur of the arts. With his expertise and erudition, he could become part of the elite group of New Yorkers who, though amateurs of the arts, were determined to use the arts to stake their city's claim for preeminence. This revitalized interest in cultural activity was evidenced by the formation of the Academy of Fine Arts (of which Trumbull had been apprised while in London), by the commencement of the construction of a New City Hall, and, upon Trumbull's return, by the largest public art commission in the U.S.—the Common Council's commissions for ten portraits.

Both the construction of the third City Hall and the commissioning of municipal portraits after 1800 express a drastic break from the past. The construction project, like

the new portrait commissions, was the product of a new generation. Almost twenty years after the Evacuation of the British, this generation self-consciously created an architectural symbol of the power of the city, while developing a new portraiture of heroic and distinguished images related to New York City's recent history.

Trumbull's Return to New York and the Next Portrait Commissions

During Trumbull's years abroad, the Common Council had refrained from commissioning any further portraits. It was not until July 13, 1801 that the Common Council again determined to commission a portrait for City Hall. They resolved that:

> John Jay Esquire be requested to permit his Portrait to be taken and placed in the City Hall at a public Testimonial of the great personal Respect and high Regard this Board entertain of his distinguished Patriotism and eminent public Services. Resolved that Mr Mayor be requested to communicate to Mr Jay the aforegoing Resolution[1]

However, despite this decision, the portrait of John Jay, then outgoing Governor of New York, was not executed until 1804, when Trumbull returned. And in 1804, the Council not only awarded the portrait commission of Jay to John Trumbull, but also commissioned five more portraits.

The act of commissioning this portrait seems to have had several motives. The first may have been to counterbalance the portrait of George Clinton, a Republican, with that of a renowned Federalist governor, who was completing his term. The commission was also an opportunity to note the achievements of a New Yorker on the national stage. Jay had served in a variety of capacities in the federal government before his election as Governor. And by the time Jay left public office, the initial furor over his treaty had died down. The excesses of the French revolution had moderated the extreme Francophiles of

[1] Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1784-1831, III: 10.

the 1790s, and by 1800, many New Yorkers were convinced that Jay's moderate approach to the British had ensured the stability and financial security of the city.

By August 3rd, the Common Council received Jay's positive reply to their request:

> A Letter from Govr Jay in answer to that written to him by Mr Mayor requesting him to permit his Portrait to be taken & placed in the City Hall was read & the Aldn of the 1st 2nd & 3rd Wards were appointed a Committee to take order for providing & agreeing with a competent Artist to perform the Work.

Notwithstanding this quick response, for almost three years after their original resolution, the Common Council struggled with the completion of this commission.

On February 6, 1802, Alderman John B. Coles wrote to Jay[2] regarding the portrait, reminding him that the Council had passed their resolution commissioning the portrait, and that Jay had agreed to sit for it. He then advised him that they had contacted Gilbert Stuart in Philadelphia,[3] with the request that he complete the commission, but that he "has delayed coming here as he had promised to do." Coles offered a solution:

> …a Mr Vanderlin (sic) born at Esopus, who has been in France for a number of years, having returned to this State with a high reputation as a painter & having seen some of his performances in this line, I have engaged him & he is now ready to commence this painting. I have therefore now to request the favor of you to come here for the above purpose as early as you can make it convenient.

John Vanderlyn had become Aaron Burr's protégé in 1795, when the politician offered to support him in order "to cultivate his genius to [the] highest point of

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[2] John B. Coles, Letter to John Jay, 6 February 1802, The Papers of John Jay (NY: Columbia University, archive on-line), ID # 13018; accessed March 7, 2005, at http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/eresources/archives/jay; Internet. Coles was a Federalist Alderman.

[3] The Council would have known Gilbert Stuart's work, as he had arrived in New York in 1793, where he set up shop at William and Stone Streets. During his year in New York, Stuart painted notables such as John Jay, Aaron Burr, Chancellor Robert R. Livingston, Egbert Benson, Horatio Gates, and Stephen Van Rensselaer. Carrie Rebora Barratt and Ellen G. Miles, Gilbert Stuart (New York and New Haven: Metropolitan Museum of Art and Yale University Press, 2004), 101-104.

Perfection."[4] Vanderlyn, born in 1775, did not come from an aristocratic family, and was employed at Thomas Barrow's art supply shop. He met Gilbert Stuart at the shop, and Stuart, divining his interest and talent, invited him to copy his portrait of Aaron Burr, an event that led to Vanderlyn's meeting Burr in 1795.

Taking Vanderlyn under his wing, Burr initially sent him to study with Gilbert Stuart in Philadelphia. After Stuart had advised the young painter that he had taught him as much as he could,[5] Burr invited Vanderlyn to reside with him at his Richmond Hill estate, where he was introduced into society and began to garner commissions. Like other Republicans such as Jefferson, Burr had strong political ties with the French and encouraged the young artist to travel to Paris, rather than London. In 1796, having supplied him with funds for his passage and expenses, as well as letters of introduction, Burr sent Vanderlyn abroad. Vanderlyn studied in Paris until 1801,[6] and upon his return to America was eminently qualified to undertake a portrait commission. [7]

Nevertheless, although apparently John Vanderlyn had received the approval of the Common Council, Jay did not sit for him. Jay had been taken ill and was unable to return to New York City from his homestead in Bedford. His illness was noted in a letter from his son, Peter Augustus Jay, who wrote his father on March 8, 1802, that he had expected to see him in town. Peter enclosed a letter from Alderman Robert Lenox, which

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[4] Quoted in Salvatore Mondello, "John Vanderlyn," New York Historical Society Quarterly 52 (April 1968), 162. See also Louise Averill, "John Vanderlyn, American Painter," (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1971), 196; the entire letter from Vanderlyn to his brother Nicholas is transcribed: "I have not yet heard whether Jay is recovered from his illness, I am inclined to think he is averse to having it done by me more especially on account of the ill will he bears towards my Patron, for I do not think him above those littlenesses, however be it what it may, I am totally indifferent to make his portrait…"

[5] Averill, "Vanderlyn, American Painter," 164.

[6] Vanderlyn was the first European-trained American artist who did not study in London.

[7] See John Vanderlyn to his brother Dr. P. Vanderlyn, Paris, July 13, 1798; where Vanderlyn notes his preference for history painting, but acknowledges that portraiture will be "the most lucrative" branch of painting in America. Henry Darrow Collection, Senate House Museum. In the same letter, Vanderlyn notes that he had met "Mr. Trumbull in the gallery…and made myself known to him."

he assumed was related to the subject of the portrait, and noted: "Vanderlyn…is to paint it…He is said to be one of the best portrait painters in the world—far superior to Stuart."[8]

Despite this accolade to Vanderlyn from Peter, two weeks passed, apparently without word from Jay. Vanderlyn, who had heard of his illness, wrote to Burr at the end of March, 1802, advising him that he had been unable to complete the commission, as Jay had taken ill and could not sit for him.[9] Around the same time, Vanderlyn wrote to his brother Nicholas, presuming that Jay might not wish to sit for him: "more especially on account of the ill will he bears towards my Patron." [10] Vanderlyn undoubtedly referred to the political animosity between Burr and Jay over the latter's conciliatory treaty with Britain. Vanderlyn thus viewed Jay's illness as a deliberate ploy to avoid awarding him the commission.

While this may have been an instance of political revenge on Jay's part, it is just as likely that Vanderlyn was simply overly suspicious. Jay had written Alderman Lenox on April 3, 1802, expressing his regret that his health still did not permit him to travel to New York, and acknowledging that the delay "may countenance conjectures not consistent with the honest satisfaction I entertain of the Honor intended me by the Corporation."[11] Jay was rightly concerned, for in an April 8, 1802 letter to Burr, two months after he had apparently been awarded the commission, Vanderlyn himself stated that Alderman Lenox had visited him, shown him the letter from Jay, and was still interested in having him execute the commission. In order to accommodate the artist,

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[8] Peter Augustus Jay, Letter to John Jay, 8 March 1802; The Papers of John Jay, 6101.
[9] John Vanderlyn, Letter to Aaron Burr, 25 March 1802, Averill, "Vanderlyn, American Painter,"197; see also his letter of 8 April 1802 to Burr, indicating that Lenox was still discussing the commission with him.
[10] John Vanderlyn Letter to his brother Nicholas Vanderlyn, 28 March 1802, Henry Darrow Collection, Senate House Museum.
[11] John Jay Papers, 09024.

Lenox even suggested that Vanderlyn could complete the portrait upon his return from a projected trip to Charleston. However, Vanderlyn wrote to Burr that he believed the worst about Jay's intentions, and the commission was never begun.[12]

Vanderlyn was not the only artist seeking this prestigious commission. In July, 1803, the artist Caleb Boyle[13] wrote the Common Council petitioning for the work "to paint…a likeness [of Jay] equal to the original done by Stewart [sic]," and offering to provide "as a picture equal to the painting of General Hamilton now in the Coffee house[14]...provided your Honorable body will agree to take it at a Moderate price if I succeed."[15] The Council made no response and in March 1804 Boyle again petitioned them, resulting in a resolution that they would purchase the portrait "provided it shall prove a good likeness and the Common Council shall be satisfied with the painting."

Boyle proceeded with the painting, and upon completion of the work, he wrote to the Council requesting that they purchase it (Figure 17): "The subscriber having spent much time and labour on this picture, he hopes that should your Honorable body not wholly approve, they will not wholly reject." The artist noted that the painting might

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[12] John Vanderlyn letter to Aaron Burr, 8 April 1802, Hoes Collection, Senate House Museum. See William Townsend Oedel, "John Vanderlyn: French Neoclassicism and the Search for an American Art," (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Delaware, August, 1981), 154 165; Oedel argues that Jay deliberately sabotaged Vanderlyn's commission; however, the letters in Averill suggest that Vanderlyn may have misread the situation, especially as Jay's own son mentions his father's illness in his March 1802 letter.

[13] Boyle originally worked as a coach painter and a coach and chair-maker. He subsequently turned to portrait painting, and lived in Maryland in 1807 and from 1810-14; and in Washington, D.C. in 1808-9, where he occupied the former studio of artist Gilbert Stuart. He also visited Washington in 1811, and painted in Frederick, Maryland in 1814. J. Hall Pleasants, Two Hundred and Fifty Years of Painting in Maryland (Baltimore: Baltimore Museum of Art, 1945). Boyle may have copied the portrait from an engraving of a Stuart portrait, rather than an original portrait. Both Asher B. Durand and Cornelius Tiebout engraved portraits of Jay after Stuart. See Barratt and Miles, Stuart, 121-122, for a discussion of Stuart's portraits of Jay and Trumbull's completion of one or more of them.

[14] Trumbull's 1792 portrait of Hamilton, commissioned by the Chamber of Commerce and installed in the Tontine Coffee House where the Chamber had its offices.

[15] Papers of the Common Council, Municipal Archives, Box 139, Folder 2420; MCC, III: 339, 476, 480, 632.

appear to some disadvantage as it was in a poor light, and stood unframed near others that were "elegantly framed."[16] But the Council did not reply, and Boyle again petitioned them to purchase the portrait,

> To paint such a picture was all I had the vanity to aim at—knowing that [Vanderlyn?] was gone to Europe and believing it not possible to procure one from Stewart I was encouraged… Under these impressions I was induced to neglect other business and bestow a large portion of time and labour on that portrait.[17]

Aware that Vanderlyn had departed for Europe,[18] and that, as Stuart was unavailable, Boyle had believed that the field was clear for him.[19]

But the Council still hesitated to act, and finally, on November 20, 1804, resolved "that the portrait of the late Governor Jay made by Mr. Boyle is not such as meets the ideas of the Board, and therefore that they will not purchase it." They issued a warrant of $50 to Boyle "for his trouble."[20] A close inspection of Boyle's painting, particularly in comparison with Trumbull's later portrait, hints at why it did not meet the Board's "ideas." Though Boyle's full-length portrait of Jay is approximately the same size as Trumbull's painting, all resemblance ends there.

Boyle based the head of Jay on Gilbert Stuart's portrait, [21] but departed dramatically from the original by creating a fictional setting for the sitter, replete with allegorical symbols and meaning. Unlike Trumbull's later portrait, where the open sky

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[16] Papers of the Common Council, Box 26, Folder 724.
[17] Ibid., Box 22, Folder 635.
[18] Vanderlyn arrived in Paris in May 1803, not returning to the U.S. until 1815.
[19] Barratt and Miles, Stuart, 102, note that there were few portraitists to compete with Stuart when he arrived in New York in 1793. See also George C. Groce, Jr., "New York Painting Before 1800," New York History, Quarterly Journal of the New York State Historical Association (January 1938), esp. 54-57 for a listing of artists practicing in New York up to 1800; and Rita Susswein Gottesman, The Arts and Crafts in New York, 1800-1804. Advertisements and News Items from New York City Newspapers (New York: New-York Historical Society, 1965), for newspaper advertisements of portraitists during the period in question.
[20] MCC, III: 632.
[21] This half-length portrait is now in National Gallery of Art, 1794, and shows the Chief Justice seated in his robes.

provides a sense of expansion, Boyle's *Jay* stands trapped within a shallow proscenium-like space, flanked by a chair and desk, with a classical column and swag of drapery behind him. The busyness of the composition, which includes elements such as a sculptural figure of Victory at the upper left, and papers marked with 1782 (the date when the preliminary articles of peace for the Treaty of Paris were signed),[22] overwhelm the standing figure of Jay with trivial details. Moreover, in Boyle's depiction, Jay seems short and stumpy, particularly when contrasted with the elegant lines of Trumbull's portrait. While Boyle may have conceived of his portrait as part of the "Grand Manner" tradition of works like Stuart's Landsdowne portrait of Washington, his work fell short of the mark for sophisticated New Yorkers. [23]

Boyle may have been at a further disadvantage due to his background as a carriage painter. From his letters and the Council's Minutes, it seems that Boyle was viewed as a tradesman providing a product on approval, not as an artist. His negotiations with the Council members stand in sharp distinction from Trumbull's later business with the Council. No hint of entreaty enters the few extant letters in Trumbull's correspondence, nor were any resolutions passed requiring approval of an outside agency before Trumbull's work would be accepted.

Trumbull's family connections may also have played a role in his obtaining this commission, despite his absence from New York. Even during the artist's trip abroad, his family, like others from Connecticut, continued to have close social and economic

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[22] John Jay Ide, "A Discovery in Early American Portraiture: Portraits of John Jay and Thomas Jefferson by Caleb Boyle," Antiques 25 (1934), 100.

[23] New Yorkers would have known the Landsdowne portrait through a replica painted for William K. Constable, and through a half-length portrait derived from the Landsdowne and presented as a gift to Alexander Hamilton by Constable. See Barratt and Miles, Stuart, 178-185 for a discussion of these paintings. Thanks to Professor S. Webster for pointing out this similarity.

relationships in New York City. For example, in 1801, Trumbull's two teenaged nieces, Maria and Harriet Trumbull, in order to gain a little "polish," spent the winter in New York with Lady Kitty Duer. Their letters record their daily visits and sometimes almost familial relationships with the Murrays, Varicks, Bensons, Woolseys and other notable New Yorkers. [24]

Setting sail for America on April 25, 1804, Trumbull arrived in New York on June 27th. It seems likely that the Council would have been aware of Trumbull's intentions to return home shortly, given his regular correspondence with Murray, King, Troup and others. His return had no doubt been anticipated for almost a year as, in July 1803, he had advised Colonel Humphreys that he intended to make New York his home and to try his luck as a portrait painter. [25] The very day that Trumbull arrived, Peter Augustus Jay met him and his wife in the street, and wrote his father John Jay in Bedford, "Colonel Trumbull & his wife…have some thoughts of visiting you on their way to Connecticut."[26]

No correspondence indicates whether Trumbull made this visit, but the letter reveals the still close relationship between Jay and Trumbull. Although Trumbull had remained abroad when Jay returned to New York, he had regularly corresponded with Jay,

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[24] Harriet Trumbull and Maria Trumbull, A Season in New York, 1801; Letters of Harriet and Maria Trumbull, ed. and intro. Helen M. Morgan (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1969).

[25] John Trumbull, Letter to Col. [David] Humphries (sic), 20 July 1803, John Trumbull Papers, New-York Historical Society. See also the undated draft of a response to criticism regarding the Declaration of Independence in the Capitol, in which Trumbull recalls: "Returning to American in June 1804, the Artist found a new Scene of change; the Demon of discord had sunk the character of Americans in the contemptible distinctions of French or British partisans:--It was useless in this absence of all national feeling, to persevere in his work of the Revolution—and two other courses lay before him:--the pursuit of his profession as a Portrait painter, by which he might hope to obtain a Subsistence:--or in following the general example, to swim with the current and take his chance (then not a bad one) for his share of the good things which were liberally distributed to all true believers in the political creed of the day & specially to Converts. He chose to retain his principles, and to rely for subsistence on the more humble branch of his profession." John Trumbull Papers, Yale University, Sterling Memorial Library.

[26] Papers of John Jay, 6120.

continuing to apprise him and other New Yorkers of the political situation in Europe.[27] We do know that Trumbull remained in New York long enough to attend a July 4th dinner of the Society of the Cincinnati, of which he had been a member since 1786.[28] Trumbull remarks in his Autobiography that he saw both Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr at the dinner, a week before their meeting at Weehawken.[29] Burr seemed, "contrary to his wont," quietly morose, while Hamilton was the life of the party, even singing an old military song.[30]

Three days later, Trumbull attended a "Family Dinner in the country" at the Grange, the country home of Alexander Hamilton that had recently been completed by John McComb, architect. Among the guests were William Short[31] and William S. and Abigail Smith.[32] Hamilton's son, John Church Hamilton, described the dinner as follows:

> when they were alone, Hamilton turned to [John] Trumbull, and looking at him with deep meaning, said: You are going to Boston. You will see the principal men there. Tell them from ME, at MY request, for God's sake, to cease these conversations and threatenings about a separation of the Union. It must hang together as long as it can be made to.[33]

The dinner invitation and heartfelt conversation demonstrate the close relationship of trust that Trumbull had established with Hamilton, head of the Federalist party. This

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[27] See Papers of John Jay, 6120, and John Trumbull Papers, Letterbooks, New-York Historical Society.
[28] John Trumbull, The Autobiography of Col. John Trumbull, ed. Theodore Sizer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), 237; John Trumbull, Autobiography, Reminiscences and Letters of John Trumbull (New York & London: Wiley and Putnam, 1841, 244.
[29] Sizer, Autobiography, 237-8.
[30] See, "What was Hamilton's Favorite Song?" in The William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Series, vol. 12, no. 2 (April 1955), 298-307; the author suggests the song was "How Stands the Glass Around?"
[31] William Short (1759-1849) had served as private secretary to Jefferson till 1789, was later minister to Holland. Theodore Sizer, Works of Colonel John Trumbull, Artist of the American Revolution (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967), 155; Ron Chernow, Alexander Hamilton (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), 432 for correspondence between Short and Hamilton regarding the horrors of the French revolution.
[32] The dinner was on Saturday, July 7th. Harold C. Syrett, editor, The Papers of Alexander Hamilton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961-1979) XXXVI: 292, for a note to William Short from Hamilton inviting him to the same dinner.
[33] Ibid., 301n2. This story is also recounted in The Life and Correspondence of Rufus King, ed. Charles R. King (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1896), III: 359-60.

relationship, as well as his close connections with Jay seems to have benefited Trumbull, for on July 10th--three days after dining with Hamilton and barely two weeks after his arrival--Trumbull was commissioned by the Common Council to execute the portrait of John Jay (Figure 18).[34] Aldermen Van Zandt, Morton and Assistant Alderman Morris

> were appointed a Committee to wait on John Jay Esquire late Governor of this State, and Colonel Trumbull, to obtain the consent of the former to have his portrait taken, and engaged the latter to execute it. Colonel Trumbull was likewise permitted to retouch the portraits of General Washington, and Governor Clinton in the City hall…All which is respectfully submitted, (signed) Selah Strong [35]

The respectful language of this commission, appointing a committee "to wait on…Colonel Trumbull," contrasts sharply with the Council's treatment of Boyle, and calls attention to the esteem that the Council held for Trumbull. Certainly, Trumbull was a logical choice for the commission, for he had painted a bust portrait of Jay on their trip to London in 1794 or 1795, and had even completed one of Stuart's unfinished portraits of Jay in 1785.[36]

Despite this welcoming resolution awarding him a prestigious and lucrative commission, Trumbull initially intended to settle in Boston, and traveled north with his wife, stopping off in Connecticut to visit family and friends. But, on arriving in Boston, he learned that Gilbert Stuart had recently been invited to reside there by Jonathan Mason,

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[34] Syrett, Hamilton Papers, 567. Hamilton and Burr met the very next day, July 11th, at Weehawken, where Hamilton received the mortal wound from which he would die on July 12, 1804.

[35] No other written documentation regarding the retouching of these two portraits has come to light, although recent examination by a conservator suggests that they were retouched in the early nineteenth century. (Conversation with Ken Moser, Chief Conservator, Brooklyn Museum of Art, 2003.) The smaller Washington portrait, which Trumbull had completed for Martha Washington, required retouching due to the excessive use of a drying agent in his darker colors, which caused cracking. This small portrait was sent back to Trumbull for repairs, which he completed in 1829. See Edgar P. Richardson, "A Penetrating Characterization of Washington by John Trumbull," Winterthur Portfolio III (1967), 19.

[36] Trumbull kept the portrait of Jay that he had completed, and Asher Durand later engraved it. Sizer, Works of Trumbull, 45, Miles and Barratt, Stuart, 120-123.

the U.S. Senator from Massachusetts. Doubting that there would be adequate patronage for two portraitists,[37] Trumbull returned to New York, arriving October 10th.[38]

Trumbull and his wife at first moved into 74 Broadway, and then rented a large house at 128 Broadway (and Pine Street) from Richard Varick, a staunch Federalist, who had served as Mayor from 1789 to 1801.[39] Varick had known the Trumbull family since the war, even looking after Jonathan Trumbull's daughter (the artist's niece) during her visit to New York in 1784.[40]

Trumbull's integration into the social life of the city is suggested by a listing of "Invitations Accepted" in his handwriting, covering the period from December 1804 to February 1805.[41] The list of prominent names included Archibald Gracie, John Murray, Peter Jay Munro,[42] Richard Varick, Cadwallader Colden, and Rufus King. Like his mentor West, Trumbull had successfully established himself as part of the privileged elite, and commissions for portraits began to pour in.

With his extensive network of political connections, Trumbull found himself busy with commissions from private families, and was able to point to his flattering success as a portrait painter. As Trumbull explained to his brother, upon his return he "had the satisfaction to find customers waiting for me, & have been so busy [with portraits] as not

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[37] Trumbull states that "Boston was then a small town;" Sizer, Works of Trumbull, 239n10, points out that in 1810 Boston's population was barely one-third the size of New York's.
[38] See John Trumbull Papers, Personal and Family Papers, 1804-1806, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University.
[39] Irma B. Jaffe, John Trumbull: Patriot-Artist of the American Revolution (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1975), 205. Sizer, Autobiography, 239, has the addresses as 108 Broadway, and then 74 Broad Street. William Dunlap, History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States (George P. Scott & Co., 1834; Reprinted New York: Dover Publications, 1969), I: 371.
[40] John George Rommel, Jr., "Richard Varick: New York Aristocrat," (Unpublished PhD. Dissertation, Columbia University, 1966), 17, 87. Varick was also a subscriber to Trumbull's engravings; see Trumbull, Reminiscences, Appendix, Names of Subscribers, 343; and List of Subscribers for Declaration of Independence, undated, John Trumbull Papers, Connecticut Historical Society.
[41] John Trumbull Papers, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University.
[42] John Jay's nephew.

to have seen many friends or learnt any news."[43] His numerous private commissions included portraits for such city officials as Robert Lenox,[44] John B. Coles[45] and Robert Benson,[46] as well as prominent New Yorkers like John R. Murray, Nathaniel Prime,[47] Moses Rogers, [48] Louis Simond, [49] Stephen Van Rensselaer, and Francis Bayard Winthrop.[50]

Mayor Clinton, like other prominent New Yorkers, also privately commissioned a portrait of himself and his wife from Trumbull.[51] An entry in Trumbull's account book for 1806 reads: "July 2nd. To Cash recd of DeWitt Clinton for two portraits of himself & wife}300."[52] What Clinton thought of this portrait is unknown,[53] although he did admire Trumbull's portrait of his uncle, a painting with which he would have been very familiar. In a letter to Joseph Delaplaine of Philadelphia, who was seeking images for his Repository, he wrote

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[43] John Trumbull, Letter to Brother [Jonathan Trumbull, Jr.?], 15 November 1805; John Trumbull Papers, Connecticut Historical Society.
[44] Alderman and president of the Chamber of Commerce.
[45] Alderman and merchant.
[46] Robert Benson (1732-1823) was a lawyer and Clerk of the City and County of New York, his half-length portrait by Trumbull was painted in 1804. Trumbull and Trumbull, A Season in New York, 92n2.
[47] Prime (1768-1840), who became in 1817 the first president of the New York Stock Exchange, was the chief partner in the private banking house Prime, Ward & King.
[48] Rogers (1750-1825) lived at 272 Pearl Street, and was the senior partner in the shipping firm Rogers & Woolsey Co., active in the Society for the Manumission of Slaves, a director of the Mutual Insurance Co., and a director of the U.S. Bank. See Trumbull and Trumbull, A Season in New York, 119n3; also Walter Barrett, The Old Merchants of New York City, chapter 32 [book on-line] (1863, accessed March 2, 2005), http://www.bklyn-genealogy-info.com/Business/Merchant/index.html; Internet.
[49] Simond, who lived at 65 Greenwich Street, ran a mercantile house that depended for most of its business on West Indian trade. Ibid., chapter 9.
[50] See Sizer, Works of Trumbull, 18-88, for a checklist of identified portraits. An undated handwritten list by Trumbull [incorrectly dated c. 1817; probably 1806-7] of his work done, work to be completed, and work doubtful, may be found in the John Trumbull Papers, New York Public Library. This list includes portraits of Wolcott, Simond, Clinton, as well as the sale of the Washington portrait that was purchased by Yale College in 1806. On the same page, he notes "Mr. Trumbull will do himself the Honor to dine with Mr. King on Friday next."
[51] In his checklist, Sizer, Works of Trumbull, lists a portrait of Mrs. DeWitt (Catherine Jones) Clinton, 1806, but notes that it is unlocated. However, if the portrait was commissioned in 1806, it would have been of Clinton's first wife, Maria Franklin, who died in 1818. Clinton married Catherine Jones in 1819.
[52] John Trumbull Papers, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University.
[53] This portrait is listed as unlocated by Sizer, Works of Trumbull, 26.

> Col Trumbull took an excellent likeness of the late Vice-President in 1791…Trumbull's is vastly superior in drapery & richness of coloring—It is I think the best of his performances.[54]

In addition to sitting for his portrait, Clinton and Trumbull exchanged social visits, each of which was meticulously noted in Clinton's Diary.[55]

Though busy with portrait commissions, immediately upon his arrival in New York, Trumbull organized an exhibition in December 1804 of "old masters" and his own works in the Park Theatre.[56] While receipts for the exhibit were modest, William Dunlap notes that this was "the first public exhibition of original pictures by the old masters of Europe which had been made in America, and in many respects it has not been exceeded since."[57] Such a display could only enhance Trumbull's reputation as a connoisseur of art. And his status was further enhanced by his personal connection with Benjamin West. Trumbull had returned to New York bearing a letter of greeting from Benjamin West to the American Academy, and thus appeared as the spokesperson for this prestigious master.[58] Not surprisingly, Trumbull was subsequently elected to membership in the American Academy of Arts on July 5th, 1805, as soon as a seat on the board became vacant.[59]

Upon Trumbull's return from Boston in October, the Common Council again contacted John Jay, writing him on October 30th, 1804, and reminding him of his

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[54] DeWitt Clinton, letter to Joseph Delaplaine, April 20, 1813, DeWitt Clinton Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University.
[55] DeWitt Clinton, Diary, New-York Historical Society, Reel 1: 1802-1820.
[56] See above, Chapter 1.
[57] Dunlap, History, I: 370-71. Given Dunlap's unrelenting hatred for Trumbull, this was high praise indeed.
[58] Jaffe, John Trumbull, 208.
[59] Chancellor Livingston had by then resumed the Presidency of the Academy, and Trumbull's old friend Rufus King was vice-president. Jaffe, John Trumbull, 207; see also Carrie Rebora Barratt, "The American Academy of the Fine Arts, New York, 1802-1842" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, City University of New York, 1990), passim.

commitment to sit for his portrait. They also reaffirmed their selection of Trumbull for the commission:

> Our City not producing an Artist of sufficient eminence, the Committee have hitherto been prevented from acting upon that Resolution. The arrival of Col. Trumbull in this City now affords an opportunity of gratifying the wishes of the Corporation and on behalf of the Committee I now have the honor to request that you would do me the favor of permitting Colonel Trumbull to take your portrait, which is intended as a Companion for those of General Washington and Governor Clinton now in our Council Chamber. Colonel Trumbull has taken his residence with me for the winter and if you accede to our wishes you will please to signify to me or to him, about what time it will be convenient to you to sit for that purpose. In behalf of the Committee, I am Sir, With great respect, Your H[umbl]e servt, Jacob Morton[60]

Morton's letter shows that, in 1804, Trumbull was viewed as "an artist of sufficient eminence" to gratify the Council's wishes. In fact, at this point Trumbull had no real competition in New York, and Dunlap states that Trumbull "stood alone in the northern and eastern division of the United States,"[61] noting that Jarvis and Sully were still unknown and that Stuart was in Washington.

Based on Trumbull's comments,[62] it appears that he did not immediately start the portrait of Jay, but commenced work after the end of November, when the Common Council, led by Mayor Clinton, made the unprecedented decision to expand the portrait collection exponentially:

> Resolved that a Committee be appointed to wait on Colonel Trumbull and employ him in behalf of this Board and at their expence to paint a full length likeness of the late General Hamilton and a half length of the Chief

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[60] Jacob Morton, Letter to John Jay, New York, 30 October 1804, Papers of John Jay, 13019. Jacob Morton (1762-1836) was an Alderman of the Common Council when he wrote Jay and one of three committee members charged with obtaining a portrait of Jay. A graduate of Princeton, Morton was admitted to the bar in 1782; was one of the original incorporators of the Free School Society in 1805, was an officer in the New York State Militia, and Clerk of the Common Council for more than 20 years.

[61] Stuart was in Washington and then in 1805 moved to Boston. Dunlap, History, I: 371; Barratt and Miles, Stuart, 287.

[62] Sizer, Autobiography, 239-40.

> Magistrates of this City since the Revolution. Alderman Van Zandt, Morton and Mr Morris were appointed the said Committee[63]

With this decree, the Common Council increased the collection from two to eight portraits in one fell swoop,[64] and established the City Hall portrait collection. This groundbreaking resolution, issued on November 29th, was part of a flurry of activity in the arts that seems to have been triggered by Trumbull's arrival in New York. Only ten days earlier, on November 19th, Rufus King had introduced a resolution in the Council requesting the provision of a room for the Academy in the New City Hall. And on the same date that the portraits were commissioned, November 29th, the building committee issued a favorable report in response to King's request, resolving that a part of the upper floor of the building be assigned to the Academy.[65]

The commemoration of Hamilton was especially timely. In September 1804, the New-York Herald reported that a print of General Hamilton was now available for purchase. The writer commented, "It is to be regretted that General Hamilton never sat to Stewart. [sic] Had we a picture of his done in the best manner…it would be invaluable."[66] That same month, American Citizen announced that the cast of Hamilton taken by Ceracchi, which would be reproduced for sale by sculptor John Dixey, was on view at the sculptor's studio.[67] And in early November, the Mercantile Advertiser publicized a

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[63] MCC, III: 636.
[64] The only portraits in the collection were President Washington and Governor Clinton; the portrait of Jay had not yet been acquired.
[65] Kenneth Robert Nodyne, "The role of DeWitt Clinton and the Municipal Government in the Development of Cultural Organizations in New York City, 1803-1817" (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1969), 22.
[66] Gottesman, Arts and Crafts in New York, 65.
[67] Ibid., 87. This notice appeared on different dates in Republican Watch-Tower, Mercantile Advertiser, New-York Evening Post, Albany Register, and New-York Herald.

waxwork display of the Hamilton-Burr Duel was opened to the public at Snow's Hotel on Broadway.[68]

Hamilton's popularity had soared since his death at the hands of Aaron Burr,[69] which had firmly established him as a national martyr. And Clinton would certainly have been aware of Hamilton's popularity, having received letters of condolence on his death from Philadelphia and Southwark.[70] Although Hamilton had never held local or state political office,[71] he was considered a son of New York City; and the Common Council not only paid for Hamilton's funeral expenses, but declared a public holiday so that "all classes of inhabitants" could "pay all the respect due to his past life and future memory."[72]

By commissioning a portrait of Hamilton, Mayor Clinton could create a connection between himself and this political martyr by publicly acknowledging his importance.[73] And adding four half-length portraits of the Mayors of New York to the commission created a visual connection between the Clinton and Hamilton. As part of a series of Mayors, Clinton would appear as one in a line of revolutionary heroes. And as part of a broader collection, his portrait could take on the reflected glory of adjacent national figures like Hamilton and Washington.

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[68] Ibid., 92. This notice also appeared in the New-York Gazette and General Advertiser.
[69] Poems were even written to his memory; see Port folio, 2 February 1805, 31-2.
[70] DeWitt Clinton, Letter to Thomas Willing, August 4, 1804; DeWitt Clinton Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University.
[71] He did serve as Secretary of the Treasury in New York City, during the period when New York was the capital.
[72] Syrett, Hamilton Papers, XXVI: 318.
[73] It seems that Clinton may have identified with Hamilton, who was a New Yorker who had obtained national prominence. The two were certainly linked in the minds of others, for example Rufus King, writing to Christopher Gore, reported a rumor that "when D.W.C. was a young man, Col. H[amilton] said he would become a great & influential public character!" Charles R. King, ed., The Life and Correspondence of Rufus King (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1896),VI: 351; and Dr. David Hosack, Memoir of DeWitt Clinton (New York: J. Seymour, 1829;reprint by University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1967), 122, 125, refers to Clinton's "great predecessor" Hamilton and emphasizes out the similarity of behaviors and actions of the two men.

That these portraits were conceived as series seems evident from the uniform formats for the full- and half-lengths: half-length portraits[74] were for Mayors, and full-length portraits for Governors and national figures, such as Hamilton. This uniformity of scale was strengthened by Trumbull's application of an "iconography" of municipal portraiture, using the accoutrements of bureaucracy—tables, chairs, books, and papers—to frame and enhance the stature of his sitters, and, for the most part depicting his sitters in the somber black suits and white linens of prosperous middle-class gentlemen. The elements of Trumbull's portraits of municipal and state politicians set the standards for City Hall portraiture for the next two hundred years.

The Portraits

The speed with which Trumbull's first six public commissions were completed is suggested by a January 7, 1805 entry in the Minutes regarding the ordering of frames from John Lemaire.[75] LeMaire had learned of the portrait commissions, and addressed his January 7th petition to Mayor DeWitt Clinton:

> Being informed that Mr Trumbut (sic) was Painting Several Pictures by Order of your Honble Body—I take the Liberty to acquaint you that for severals (sic) years past I was favored and employed by the Honble Corporation for the Carving & Gilding—I beg your Hons to grant me your suffrage and giving me the preference of the framing &c the above Pictures[76]

On February 4th, the Mayor issued a warrant to pay Trumbull $500 in advance for the paintings.[77] John LeMaire was paid for his frames on April 15th.[78] Additional payments

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[74] Trumbull's half-length portraits are usually 31 by 25 inches; the full-length portraits range from 88 to 95 inches long and are about 60 inches wide.
[75] MCC, III: 662.
[76] John LeMaire, Petition to the Common Council, 7 January 1805, Papers of the Common Council of the City of New York, Municipal Archives.
[77] MCC, III: 680.
[78] Ibid., 732.

were made to Trumbull in two installments, the first of $700 on April 29, 1805.[79] On January 4, 1806, Trumbull wrote Alderman Van Zandt

> Mr. Trumbull presents his respects to Alderman Van Zandt & has the honor to inform him that he has finished portraits of Mr. Duane & Mr. E. Livingston which compleats (sic) the Commission with which he was charged on the part of the Corporation. Mr. T will be much obliged in receiving an order on the City Treasurer for the amount of Two Hundred Dollars at as early a day as may be convenient.

This final payment of $200 was issued on January 6, 1806. [80]

The order in which Trumbull painted the portraits of Jay, Hamilton, Duane, Varick, Clinton and Livingston is unknown, and only the note from Trumbull regarding the completion of the Duane and Livingston portraits indicates definitively that he concluded his work with these two copy portraits, finishing the four portraits from life in 1805. However, since Trumbull received $500 for full-length portraits, and $100 for busts,[81] we might speculate that the first payment, on February 4th, was for one of the full-length portraits (probably the long awaited portrait of Jay), while the second payment of $700 in April represented completion of full-length of Hamilton and the two smaller portraits of Clinton and Varick. The last two portraits would have been paid for in January 1806, and may have taken longer to finish due to the need by Trumbull to located portraits on which to base these works.

Trumbull's portrait of Jay departs dramatically from his earlier Common Council commissions. Unlike the historical portraits of President Washington and General George Clinton, in which the men are shown outdoors with historic scenes in the background, the portrait of Jay displays the traditional elements of the European "grand

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[79] Ibid., 736.
[80] Ibid., IV: 122. John Trumbull, Draft Letter to Alderman Van Zandt, January 4, 1806, Theodore Sizer Papers, no. 245, Archives of American Art.
[81] City Hall Portrait Files, Art Commission of the City of New York; Jaffe, John Trumbull, 211.

manner." The full-length portrait shows Jay dressed in a severe black suit relieved only by bright white linen at his wrists and neck. Jay leans his right elbow against the back of a chair, richly upholstered in red brocade. A marble column directly behind him is emblematic of strength and rectitude. He holds a book in his left hand, as though caught reading by the artist and wishing not to lose his place. Papers and books are scattered on the table next to him, while more books stand stacked against the table leg, visible beneath the green cloth. Jay looks calmly off into the distance.

Trumbull has painted a psychological rather than historical portrait, one that emphasizes Jay's personal strength. The subdued color of the portrait belies its careful composition. A rich red curtain with tassel above and behind Jay's head draws the eye upward from the red chair towards the sitter's face. The green cloth of the table balances the reds of the portrait, with Jay's black suit serving to demarcate the two areas and emphasizing the figure's stillness. The threatening sky with turbulent clouds behind Jay's figure underscores his interior calm, suggesting his strength in the face of adversity.

The second full-length portrait in this series was probably the best known: the posthumous full-length portrait of Alexander Hamilton (Figure 19).[82] Hamilton, who was the leader of the Federalist party, had a brilliant reputation for his financial and political acumen. Although an illegitimate and mainly self-taught orphan from Nevis, West Indies, his abilities had catapulted him to a position of power. Serving as aide-de-camp to Washington,[83] he later commanded three battalions and fought valiantly at Yorktown. Despite the twin adversities of poverty and birth, Hamilton married into one

[82] See Ron Chernow, Alexander Hamilton (New York: Penguin, 2004) for the most recent treatment of Hamilton's life; also Richard Brookhiser's Alexander Hamilton, American (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999).
[83] He remained a close friend of Washington until the President's death in 1799.

of New York's finest families, the Schuylers, and in 1782 formally became a citizen of New York State, residing in New York until his death in 1804. One of the co-authors of The Federalist Papers, a member of the Constitutional Convention, founder of The Bank of New York and the U.S. Coast Guard, Hamilton also served as the first Secretary of the U.S. Treasury in President Washington's administration.

Basing this second portrait on Giuseppe Ceracchi's bust of Hamilton (Figure 20),[84] Trumbull subsequently painted at least nine replicas in bust form, at $100 per head.[85] Theodore Sizer notes that Hamilton's death "was a financial godsend to the artist, who…was kept in comfortable employment for some years in turning out replicas of his 2 portraits."[86]

Unlike his 1792 portrait, which portrays Hamilton in a relaxed attitude, Trumbull's portrait for the City depicts Hamilton in a fiery pose. Known as a gifted and tireless orator, who would speak for hours at a time, Hamilton's right hand is stretched out in a declamatory gesture, as though caught while making a rhetorical point.[87] With

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[84] Sizer, Autobiography, 239-40. The bust, which was owned by Hamilton's family, as well as Trumbull's portraits, are also discussed in Harry MacNeill Bland and Virginia W. Northcott's "The Life Portraits of Alexander Hamilton," The William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Series, vol. 12, no. 2 (April 1955), 187-98, and in Ellen G. Miles, "'Memorials of Great & Good Men who were my Friends'; Portraits in the Life of Oliver Wolcott, Jr." Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society 107, no. 1 (1997), 105-159. See John Drayton, Letters written during a tour through the northern and eastern states of America (Charleston, South-Carolina: Printed by Harrison and Bowen, 1794), 24, for a discussion of Ceracchi's monument "for perpetuating the memory of American liberty. It is made upon a scale proportional to one hundred feet in length, and as many feet in height: and for grandeur and emblematical device, is supposed would surpass anything of the kind, whether ancient or modern."

[85] John Trumbull Papers, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University. See also Bland and Northcott, "Hamilton Life Portraits," 191-2.

[86] Sizer, Autobiography, 237n4

[87] See John Stephens Crawford, "The Classical Orator in Nineteenth Century American Sculpture," The American Art Journal (November 1974), 56-72. Although Crawford focuses on mid- to late-nineteenth century sculpture, the connections that he draws between oratory and sculpture, as well as their common roots in the classical tradition, are suggestive. Crawford points out that American oratorical etiquette derived primarily from Quintilian's "Institutio Oratoria," which addressed not just speech itself but also gesture.

his left arm akimbo, and his feet in a slightly open position,[88] Hamilton appears as though he is about to salute a fencing opponent. Luxurious reddish-brown drapery billows behind Hamilton, framing his figure and providing a counterpoint to the austere architecture of the setting, while massive tomes, sheafs of papers, and a silver inkwell recall his prodigious written output.

The first Mayor in the series of four smaller portraits was James Duane (1723-1797), who served from 1784 to 1789. Duane[89] was trained as a lawyer and admitted to the bar in 1754. His marriage in 1759 to the daughter of Colonel Robert Livingston, of Livingston Manor, provided him with the advantageous political connections of the Livingston family, as did his position as attorney for Trinity Church. But despite these connections with conservative New York elements, Duane became a member of most of the committees in New York that aimed to oppose the encroachments of the British upon citizen's rights, serving as one of New York's representatives to Congress, helping to draft the Articles of Confederation, and participating as a state senator from 1782 to 1785 and 1788 to 1790.

After the war, Duane returned to New York City and was appointed Mayor at the request of the Common Council. He presided over the Mayor's Court, where all the eminent lawyers and political powers of the period practiced—Alexander Hamilton, Aaron Burr, Robert Troup, Morgan Lewis, Brockholst and Edward Livingston. In September 1789, upon appointment to a federal judgeship by President Washington, he

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[88] Wayne Craven, "Colonial American Portraiture: Iconography and Methodology." in The Portrait in Eighteenth-Century America, ed. Ellen Miles (Newark, Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 1993), 102-115; esp. his discussion of courtesy manuals and the decorum of portraiture.

[89] Biographical information on Duane is drawn from E.B. O'Callaghan's "Sketch of the Life of James Duane," The Documentary History of the State of New-York (Albany: Charles Van Benthuysen, 1851), IV: 1063-1084.

resigned his post as Mayor, and spent five years on the bench, resigning in 1794 due to ill health.

Duane's posthumous portrait by Trumbull (Figure 21) is a copy of a portrait by Robert Edge Pine (Figure 22), completed around 1784 and now in the collection of the New-York Historical Society.[90] Like Pine's portrait, in Trumbull's portrait Duane looks to his right. He is shown as an old-fashioned gentleman, his hair curled and powdered, his somber black suit highlighted with fresh white linen. However, in his copy, Trumbull has simplified the mass of red drapery that awkwardly dips down behind Duane's head in Pine's portrait. The drapery, loosely rendered, now appears behind Duane's left shoulder, relieving the somber black and white of his attire without distracting us from his face.[91] Trumbull's portrait is also more finely finished and realistic than Pine's, giving a sense of space and volume.

The second sitter in this series was Richard Varick (1753-1831),[92] a personal friend of Trumbull (Figure 23). Varick served in the War of Independence in various capacities, secretary to Major-General Philip Schuyler;[93] Deputy Muster Master General,

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[90] See Sizer, Works of Trumbull, 29. Other portraits of Duane include a miniature by John Ramage, circa 1780-90, in the collection of the Museum of the City of New York; an oil portrait in the collection of the New York Historical Association, Albany, by an unidentified artist, and a circa 1785 portrait, also by Pine, in the collection of James Duane of Ireland, reproduced in Lillian B. Miller, The Dye is Now Cast: The Road to American Independence, 1774-1776 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, National Portrait Gallery, 1975), 21. According to O'Callaghan, Documentary History, 1084, this portrait was a copy of a painting by Charles Willson Peale, completed around 1784.

[91] This portrait by Trumbull has been copied twice. The first copy was made in 1811, when Alfred S. Pell, Duane's son-in-law, petitioned the Common council for permission to have a copy made, and solicited "that the same may be loaned to Mr William & Joseph Weaver for that purpose under such restrictions as your Honorable body may choose to impose." See Alfred S. Pell, Letter to DeWitt Clinton and the Corporation of the City of New York, 1 April 1811; Papers of the Common Council of the City of New York, Municipal Archives, Box 42, Folder 1081. The second copy was made in September 1929, when the Art Commission of the City of New York gave permission to James Francis Brown to copy the portrait for Columbia University; permission was conditioned upon the copy being a different size than the original. See James Duane, City Hall Portrait Collection Files, Art Commission, City Hall.

[92] For Varick's biography see Rommel, "Varick,"passim., which provides the most complete treatment of the Mayor's life and career.

[93] Alexander Hamilton's father-in-law.

responsible for recruitment; and Benedict Arnold's secretary. After Arnold's treason, Varick was exonerated of any wrongdoing, and eventually joined Washington's staff as his secretary, responsible for organizing all of the General's wartime records.

Following the war, Varick returned to the legal practice for which he had originally trained. From 1783 to 1789, he served as Recorder for the City of New York under Mayor Duane; during the same period he worked with Samuel Jones, Sr., (who subsequently served as Recorder during Varick's mayoralty) on the codification of New York colonial and state statutes.

Although a Federalist, Varick was appointed Mayor in 1789 by the Republican administration of George Clinton. For the first six years of his term he walked a narrow tightrope between the interests of the Common Council and maintaining a neutral stance towards his Republican master. It is likely that he alienated Clintonian interests during the governorship of John Jay from 1795 to 1801: his outspoken alliance with Alexander Hamilton in support of the Jay Treaty, [94]as well as his prudent though impolitic release of British seamen from jail in the "Thetis" incident,[95] gave George Clinton sufficient reasons to sweep him from office upon Clinton's return as Governor in 1801. Varick's later years were taken up with the establishment of the Merchant's Bank and the founding of Jersey City. His philanthropy extended to a variety of organizations, including the

[94] In the mass meeting in front of the New York City Hall on July 18, 1795, Varick appeared with Alexander Hamilton in a vain attempt to convince an irate crowd that the Jay Treaty was in the best interests of the U.S. Rommel, "Varick," 124.

[95] The Federalists, aware of the U.S.'s naval and military weaknesses, were reluctant to risk a formal declaration of war with Britain, despite the protestations of the pro-French (and anti-British) Republicans. Varick's decision, although firmly based in law, enabled the Republicans to raise the issue of impressments of American seamen as a further incitement to anti-British sentiment and an election year weapon against the Federalists.

Society of the Cincinnati, Columbia College, the American Bible Society, the American Sunday School Union, and the American Tract Society. He died in 1831.[96]

Trumbull paints Varick as a restrained gentleman in black, gazing directly at the viewer. He wears a white tie, simply knotted, in the style of the period,[97] and his hands are just visible in the portrait lower right portion of the painting. Varick seems to hold something in his right hand, while his left hand folds squarely over his right wrist, as though for support. A column stands immediately behind him, with a brightly colored sky, suggestive of a sunset, visible in the right background.[98]

The next Mayor in this series was Edward Livingston, younger brother of the Chancellor Robert R. Livingston (Figure 24). Born in 1764, Livingston never served in the war, but in 1779 entered the junior class of Princeton[99]and graduated two years later. From there he was placed in John Lansing's law office in Albany, where he came into contact with the preeminent legal minds of the period—Alexander Hamilton, Aaron Burr, and James Kent. After the evacuation of the British, Livingston went to New York City to complete his legal studies, where he was admitted to the bar in 1785.[100]

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[96] Rommel, "Varick," states that one of the pallbearers for Varick was John Trumbull, as noted in the August 1, 1831 New-York Evening Post obituary of Mayor Varick.

[97] See, for example, Trumbull's 1802 self-portrait, where his tie, though more flamboyantly arranged, is of the same type.

[98] According to Sizer, Works of Trumbull, 78, another half-length portrait by Trumbull is in a private collection (The Misses Maria and Amy Reid Know, Chappaqua, N.Y., in 1949); it should be noted that on July 10, 1928, the Art Commission, at the request of A.S. Frissell and Dr. Lewis F. Frissell, gave Clayton Braun permission to copy the *Varick* portrait. He made a copy that was smaller than the original, and omitted the hands. See Richard Varick, City Hall Portrait Collection Files, Art Commission, City Hall.

[99] Princeton was at that time known as Nassau Hall. The following account of Livingston's life is based on William B. Hatcher's, Edward Livingston, Jeffersonian Republican and Jacksonian Democrat (Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1940) and Charles Havens Hunt's Life of Edward Livingston (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1864).

[100] The legal profession was at that time still an elite enterprise, the city bar numbering less than forty members, among them Alexander Hamilton, Egbert Benson, Robert Troup, Morgan Lewis, William and Brockholst Livingston, James Kent and Aaron Burr.

Livingston's political mentor was his eldest brother and Chancellor of the State Robert R. Livingston, who had forged a valuable political alliance for himself and his family with Governor George Clinton.[101] After several unsuccessful runs for state legislature, in 1795, Edward Livingston was elected as a Republican to the U.S. House of Representatives, serving until 1801.[102] That year, with the election of Thomas Jefferson as President, the Livingstons truly reaped the fruits of their alliance with George Clinton and the Republicans.[103] The Chancellor finally received the federal post he had coveted, and was sent by Jefferson to France as minister plenipotentiary. Meanwhile, Edward Livingston was first appointed New York State district attorney, and a few short months later, Mayor of New York City.

Despite this initial political success, Livingston was not yet an adequately proficient politician to handle the duties and complexities of the two positions,[104] and eventually faced serious problems at the District Attorney's office. In June 1803,

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[101] The Chancellor's political turning point from Federalist to Republican apparently occurred in 1789, after he had administered the oath of office to President Washington. Based on his friendship with the President, Livingston anticipated a prestigious federal appointment, and when it was not forthcoming, applied directly in writing to Washington, advising him that the position of either Secretary of the Treasury or Chief Justice would be acceptable. The President's quick response thanked him for his friendship but gently disabused him of his aspirations. Livingston Papers, Museum of the City of New York, cited in Clare Brandt's "Robert R. Livingston, Jr., The Reluctant Revolutionary," Symposium sponsored by the Friends of Clermont, Bard College/Hudson Valley Studies Program, and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, & Historic Preservation, Taconic Region, June 6-7, 1986 (on-line journal accessed February 3, 2005), available from http://www.ulster.net/~hrmm/steamboats/livingston/phillip.html, Internet.

[102] Livingston took an active and adversarial role in Congress, introducing a resolution demanding that the President release the details of the negotiation leading to Jay's Treaty, and rejecting Congress's conciliatory response to the President's annual address. He served with Andrew Jackson in this Congressional session, and voted with him on this issue. Andrew Jackson was the first and sole representative in Congress from Tennessee, and was elected in autumn of 1796.

[103] George Dangerfield, Chancellor Robert R. Livingston of New York, 1746-1813 (NY: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1960), p. 310. See also Howard L. McBain, DeWitt Clinton and the Origin of the Spoils System In New York (NY: AMS Press, Inc., 1967), 128-9, who lists the other family members who benefited from the Republican victory, including John Armstrong, Schuyler Livingston, Smith Thompson, Gilbert Livingston, Robert Henry Livingston, and Maturin Livingston.

[104] Livingston's subsequent career in Louisiana and his rise to national prominence under the administration of Jackson suggests that it may have been simply inattention to detail by an unseasoned young man, rather than lack of political acumen, that cost him his posts in 1803. Hatcher, Edward Livingston, 77.

Treasury Department inspectors checked Livingston's accounts and found a discrepancy, which he explained years later as due to "the confidence I placed in an agent, who received and appropriated a very large proportion of the sum." [105] Although exonerated of any wrongdoing, Livingston assumed responsibility for the loss and his entire personal fortune was wiped out. He had enjoyed a handsome income during the past few years, but kept little cash in reserve. And although he had substantial real estate holdings, part of the property was encumbered with mortgages, which prevented him from selling it quickly.

This embarrassment was complicated by the appearance of yellow fever in New York City on July 20th, lasting until the end of October.[106] Because of Livingston's unrelenting schedule, and possibly exacerbated by his financial cares, he fell prey to the disease and was unable to manage his finances. Upon his recovery, he surrendered all his property to cover his debts, and made arrangements to leave for New Orleans[107]with only $100 in gold and a letter of credit for $1000 in his pocket.

Livingston left town in December 1803, well before Trumbull returned to New York. The painting is thus a copy portrait.[108] Livingston is shown in three-quarter view

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[105] Edward Livingston, *An Answer to Mr. Jefferson's justification of his conduct in the case of the New Orleans batture,* Philadelphia: W. Fry, .1813 (pamphlet), quoted in Hunt, Life of Livingston, 103.

[106] Normally, all who could afford to leave the city did so, as the disease was extremely contagious and usually fatal. Instead, Livingston accompanied physicians on their daily rounds to the sick, examining their condition and administering alms from his own sorely tried funds.

[107] His brother the Chancellor had been instrumental in the purchase of Louisiana from the French, although the credit fell to Madison who was sent to France shortly before negotiations were completed. Madison was thus accorded the lion's share of the credit for the purchase. See Dangerfield, Chancellor Livingston, 376-394.

[108] Harold E. Dickson, John Wesley Jarvis, American Painter, 1780-1840 (NY: New-York Historical Society, 1949), 357, lists a portrait of Livingston that may have served as the basis for Trumbull's copy as "Inscribed on back: 'Painted by J.W. Jarvis'," the portrait was reprinted in Anita Delafield, "Living with Antiques: Montgomery Place, the home of Major and Mrs. John White Delafield," Antiques (February 1967), 237. See also Mrs. Thomas Nelson Carter Bruns, Louisiana Portraits (New Orleans, LA: Colonial Dames of America, 1975), 164 for a later portrait of Livingston attributed to Vanderlyn; and Andrew Cosentino, The Paintings of Charles Bird King (1785-1862) (Washington, D.C.: National Collection of

to the left, looking directly at the viewer from under heavily lidded eyes. His face and white cravat stand out dramatically from the surrounding dark background and somber suit. Two curling locks of hair fall down upon his brow and suggest his foppish reputation as "Beau Ned."[109]

The final mayoral portrait in this series was that of the then sitting Mayor, DeWitt Clinton (1769-1828). Clinton is depicted in three quarters view to the right (Figure 25). He faces front against a light brown drapery that partly conceals a column on the right. His hands are shown tenderly clasping a book, and his wispy tendrils of his dark curling hair fall about his forehead. Clinton posed for Trumbull in 1805,[110] probably sitting for his portraits in the fall of that year, as noted in his typically laconic fashion. It seems that Clinton approved of this official portrait by Trumbull, for Trumbull painted a copy the following year, which in 1881 was sold to the New York State Chamber of Commerce (Figure 26). The Chamber of Commerce copy differs slightly in the position of the hands holding the book,[111] and in the position of the column, which is not as severely cropped on the right as in the original. Other minor differences include the disposition of the drapery, and the face of the sitter, Trumbull depicting Clinton in the City Hall portrait as

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Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1977), 443, fig. 142, for an undated portrait of Livingston by Bird that more closely resembles Trumbull's painting. However, judging from Livingston's older appearance in these paintings (evidenced by his receding hairline in all of the paintings), the three portraits by Jarvis, Vanderlyn and Bird appear to have been painted after Trumbull's painting.

[109] Hunt, Life of Livingston, 42.

[110] The portrait is usually dated 1806, based on the date of the final payment to Trumbull. However, Clinton's most frequent visits to Trumbull were in 1805, suggesting that he sat for him in that year.

[111] While the two portraits are very similar, in the City Hall portrait, the fingers of the left hand are straight and the thumb of the right hand is not visible. For information on the acquisition history of the Chamber of Commerce portrait, dated 1807, see Catalogue of Portraits in the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York (NY: Chamber of Commerce, 1924), 25, 76; and DeWitt Clinton, City Hall Portrait Files, Art Commission, City Hall. Leney made an engraving after the portrait in 1813, published by Joseph Delaplaine of Philadelphia. DeWitt Clinton corresponded with Delaplaine, writing him regarding his uncle's portrait and his own portrait in the City Hall collection on April 20, 1813. See DeWitt Clinton Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University: "In pursuance of your request I have also to inform you that my likeness has been taken by Col Trumbull and is now in the City Hall."

a young, rosy-cheeked man, while in the Chamber of Commerce portrait his face appears slightly thinner.[112]

After completing this commission in January 1806, Trumbull's next four portrait commissions for the Common Council were painted from May 1807 to April 1808.[113] Although Clinton did not oversee these four commissions,[114] his earlier actions had set the stage for the Council's behavior. Unlike the previous groundbreaking commission of 1804, these four portraits were commissioned individually, and were painted to commemorate governmental changes at the beginning or end of political terms. The second series of portraits by Trumbull demonstrates Council's general acceptance of a new tradition of portraiture in City Hall. Once the precedent had been set by Clinton's pioneering actions, it became a given that the executives of the state and the city would be painted and become part of the visual history of the city.

The first resolution of the year commissioning a portrait was May 11, 1807, when the Common Council

> Resolved that his Honour the Mayor be desired to request the favour of His Excellency Governor [Morgan] Lewis to permit Col. Trumbull to take his portrait for the use of the Corporation of this City.[115]

Morgan Lewis (1754-1844) had been elected Governor on the Republican ticket in 1804, when George Clinton had declined to run for the seat; and served as Governor until 1807. Handpicked by DeWitt Clinton, the new governor was a lawyer, with military experience

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[112] The portrait is now in the collection of the U.S. State Department. See *New York Chamber of Commerce Institutional & Portrait Collection Fact Sheet*, 2003.

[113] In April 1808, Trumbull requested the balance of payment, indicating that he had completed the portraits.

[114] In March 1807, Clinton had been swept from office and replaced by Marinus Willet as Mayor, though he continued in office as state senator until 1811. He returned to the Mayoralty the following year. Clinton was appointed Mayor during three periods: from October 29, 1803 to March 16, 1807 (when he was replaced by Marinus Willet); from February 22, 1808 to March 4, 1810 (when he was replaced by Jacob Radcliff); and from February 5, 1811 to March 6, 1815 (when he left the Mayoralty permanently).

[115] MCC, IV: 417.

as quartermaster and chief of staff to General Horatio Gates in the War of Independence. Lewis had also been state attorney general in 1791 to 1792, and was then appointed to the New York State Supreme Court, where he became chief justice in 1801. Most importantly for DeWitt Clinton, Lewis was a Livingston by marriage, having wed a daughter of Chancellor Robert R. Livingston--his candidacy thus satisfied the powerful Livingston clan.[116]

Trumbull had known Lewis during the War of Independence;[117] both men had served under General Horatio Gates.[118] This military background is recalled in the City Hall portrait (Figure 27). Unlike Trumbull's earlier full length portraits of Jay and Hamilton, Lewis is depicted in military uniform: a blue jacket with epaulets and buff facing, a red silk sash that hangs from his left hip, buff pants, and black leather boots.[119] He stands erect, feet together, alertly looking out.

Lewis's ungloved left hand is placed on his sword pommel, while his gloved right hand held down at his side holds the other glove loosely. A badge of the Society of the Cincinnati is displayed prominently on his breast, and a rich, gold embroidered cloak lies luxuriously on the chair behind him. Lewis is placed within an architectural setting, a column behind him, and an open sky with a landscape beyond. However, unlike Jay and Hamilton, Lewis looks directly out at the viewer with a slight, though welcoming smile.

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[116] Evan Cornog, The Birth of Empire: DeWitt Clinton and the American Experience, 1769-1828 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 25, 51, 78-9, 82-4, 102, 106, 127.

[117] Sizer, Works of Trumbull, 50, figs. 184, 185, notes that Trumbull had painted Lewis in 1790 for his historic painting *The Surrender of Gen. Burgoyne at Saratoga, New York, 17 October 1777*. Lewis appears as number 9 in the key.

[118] Trumbull received his title Colonel—of which he was extremely proud--during his service under General Gates. Sizer, Autobiography, 25.

[119] Russell F. Weigley, History of the United States Army (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1967), 51-57 for information on uniforms. David Reel of USMA Museum at West Point (conversation, 13 January 2005) notes that early American uniforms worn by officers were less regulated, and depended upon individual taste.

Only a few weeks after this commission was approved, on June 1, 1807, the Common Council again voted, requesting that

> the Mayor [Marinus Willet] be requested to sit to Col. Trumbull for his portrait, for the use of the Corporation. To this request His Honour politely assented. [120]

Marinus Willet (1740-1844), an early advocate of American independence, was a successful cabinetmaker.[121] A radical Republican, Willet had served under General Richard Montgomery, and became a Brigadier-General of New York Militia. Willet saw action in the Battles of Long Island and White Plains, and in 1777, he was presented with a sword for bravery by order of Congress. He joined General Washington's army in New Jersey the following year, subsequently retiring from service.[122]

Trumbull's austere half-length portrait (Figure 28) shows Willet in three-quarters view to the left. With no hint of his distinguished military career, Willet wears a black suit with a white stock, his lean, angular face turned towards the viewer. Unlike the more elaborate portraits of Clinton, Varick and Duane, Willet appears against a plain brown background, lacking any attributes to define his past or present role. Whether this austere approach reflected his political viewpoint is unknown.

The following month, the Council voted to commemorate the incoming Governor, on July 6, 1807 resolving that

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[120] MCC, IV: 446-7.

[121] Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898 (NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), 201. As a tradesman and mechanic, rather than a professional, Willet would have been viewed by some as working or lower-middle class. Still, despite his radical attitudes about equal rights to suffrage, in 1791, Willet, like many other well-connected residents of New York City, eagerly participated in land speculation when 5.5 million acres of Iroquois land was auctioned, obtaining thousands of acres. Ibid., 335.

[122] Henry Collins Brown, editor, Valentine's Manual of Old New York (NY: Gracie Mansion, 1925), 60-1.

> his Honour the Mayor be requested to desire His Excellency Governor Daniel D. Tompkins, to permit Colonel Trumbull to take his portrait for the use of this Corporation.[123]

Daniel Tompkins (1774-1825) was born in Westchester County, his rural roots giving him the life-long nickname "Farmer's Boy." However, he came from a politically prominent family and attended Columbia College. Admitted to the bar in 1797, he worked for Jefferson's election in 1800, served as a delegate to the New York State constitutional convention of 1801, was elected to the state legislature the following year, and in 1804 was appointed a New York Supreme Court judge. The same year he was elected to the House of Representatives, but declined to serve, preferring, like Clinton, New York to Washington, D.C. As a candidate of the Clintonian faction of the Republican party, Tompkins was supported by Irish immigrants, whose votes had been embraced by Clinton. On July 1, 1807, running in opposition to Lewis (who had turned against Clinton) he was elected Governor.

The commission thus came only five days after Tompkins was elected, before he assumed office. Only a week later, Tompkins eagerly replied to the compliment of the commission, and:

> The Mayor informed the Board that he had received a Letter from His Excellency Governor Tompkins, expressing his sentiments of the honour conferred on him by their resolution of the 6th inst. And that he would sit for his Portrait whenever it would be convenient to Col. Trumbull.[124]

Like Jay and Hamilton, Tompkins is dressed in black (Figure 29), and he stands in three-quarters view to the left, with his right foot advanced and knee slightly bent; however, his face is turned towards the viewer and his mild blue eyes look straight out. Trumbull uses a mahogany chair and table to define the setting, linking this portrait visually to the two

[123] MCC, IV: 490.
[124] Ibid., 491-2.

earlier paintings. Unlike Hamilton, Tompkins does not gesture grandly, but simply holds a scroll of paper upon the table loosely in his right hand. An inkwell, papers and books suggest the study and writing that are part of his legal profession.

The final painting in this second series of portraits is a half-length of Governor Peter Stuyvesant (Figure 30). Trumbull's portrait of Governor Peter Stuyvesant (1592-1672) is a copy of a portrait attributed to Hendrick Couturier (Figure 31), now in the collection of the New-York Historical Society, dated circa 1660. The Couturier portrait presents the Director-General in an oval format, but apart from the change to a square format, the Trumbull copy is close to the original.[125] In both portraits, Stuyvesant is in three-quarters view, and wears a black skull cap, stiff white collar, with a colorful sash drawn across his right shoulder. His armor is just visible beneath the sash.

No order or resolution by the Council was recorded for this painting, and the reasons for the commission remain unknown. We can speculate that, given the tensions between Great Britain and the U.S. during this period, the portrait commission was a way of emphasizing the Dutch roots of New York City's history. As the earliest Governor in the new series, the Stuyvesant portrait would provide an appropriate and decidedly non-British ancestral image of colonial rule.

Partial payment for the portraits was made on January 18, 1808, when a warrant for payment of $600 to Trumbull was authorized by the Common Council, "on account, for the portraits executing by him, for the Corporation."[126] By February 22, 1808, Governor Tompkins had reappointed DeWitt Clinton Mayor. Shortly thereafter, Trumbull contacted Clinton:

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[125] What appear to be changes in the tonality of the flesh and fabric may be due to the Trumbull portrait needing to be cleaned.
[126] MCC, IV: 712, 725.

> in the year 1808, having painted a portrait of Govr Tomkins, for the Corporation of the City of New York, I requested Mr DeWitt Clinton, then Mayor of the City to call at my house, & see if the work met his approbation[127]

The portraits were finished by April of that year, and Trumbull sent a note to Mayor Clinton, dated Monday, 25 April 1808:

> Mr. Trumbull presents his respects to the Mayor of the City of New York, & has the honor to acquaint him for the information of the Corporation, that He has finished & placed in the room formerly the Library in the City Hall,[128] the pictures which He was directed to paint of Gov. Lewis & Gov. Tomkins (sic), (whole lengths at $500 each) and Gov. Stuyvesant, & the late Mayor [Willett], (heads at $100 each)—amounted to $1,200,--of which sum He rec'd on a/c in Jany. Last $600---It will very much oblige Mr. Trumbull if the Corporation will cause the Ballance (sic) $600 to be paid to him at this time[129]

By May 6, 1808, the four portraits were framed by LeMaire, who charged $225 for two large gilt frames "for the picture of Gover. Lewis and Tomkins" and "two small D[itt]o for the picture of Col. Willet and the old Gove. Stuyvesant."[130]

Curiously enough, almost ten years later, an entry in the Common Council's Minutes, dated March 3, 1817, suggests that John Wesley Jarvis also made a copy of the Stuyvesant portrait for the City.

> Alderman Fish stated that….Mr Jarvis had with the Permission of the Stuyvesant Family made a copy of the Portrait of Stuyvesant former Governor of New York under the Dutch Administration, which Copy he had made under an expectation that the Corporation would be desirous of possessing the same—Whereupon Resolved that the Comptroller Report a Warrant in favour of Mr Jarvis for One hundred Dollars the price

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[127] Letter to the Governor of Connecticut, September 21, 1812, John Trumbull Letterbooks, New-York Historical Society.

[128] The unframed portraits were apparently placed in this upper room for storage. See Kenneth Bowling, ed., Documentary History of the First Federal Congress, 1789-1791 (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University, 1972), VIII: 653-4. The 3,000-volume collection of the New York Society Library was housed in a third floor southeast corner room in Federal Hall from June 1789 until 1795.

[129] John Trumbull Papers, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University.

[130] Warrant dated May 6, 1808, to John LeMaire, from the Corporation of New York, $225, signed John Pintard, Clerk; Papers of the Common Council of the City of New York, Municipal Archives.

> Demanded by him for the Copy and that the Portrait be placed among the Portraits belonging to the Corporation.[131]

Jarvis was paid $100 a week later.[132] However, there is no record of two Stuyvesant portraits in the City Hall collection, and the Jarvis copy remains unlocated.

From June 27, 1804, the date of his return to America, to spring of 1808, Trumbull painted ten portraits for the City, an unprecedented series of public commissions for a municipal collection. These portraits created a lineage of political leaders, reaching back to Governor Stuyvesant as the first New Yorker to resist British domination. Trumbull's departure from New York for England on December 14, 1808, ended this series;[133] but these ten portraits established the formats that would be used through the next two centuries of acquisitions: half-length portraits[134] sized 31 by 25 inches for Mayors and full-length portraits for Governors and nationally important New Yorkers, such as Hamilton and Jay.

Trumbull also established an "iconography" of municipal portraiture. He used the furnishings and accoutrements of bureaucracy—tables, chairs, books, and papers—to frame and enhance the stature of his sitters. And in keeping with this consistent approach--with the exception of the portraits of Stuyvesant and his old comrade-at-arms Morgan Lewis--Trumbull depicted his sitters in the somber black suits and white linens of prosperous middle-class gentlemen. The elements of Trumbull's portraits of

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[131] MCC, IX: 36.

[132] Ibid., 52. See also Dickson, Jarvis, 381, who lists this portrait in his checklist; Dickson refers to I.N. Phelps Stokes, Iconography of Manhattan Island (New York: Robert H. Dodd, 1915-1928), V: 1590, as the source for his listing.

[133] Trumbull left a year after the Embargo Act went into effect; by April 1808, the effects were already being felt in New York. The artist anticipated the financial crisis would affect his livelihood and left in hopes of maintaining his fortune; Sizer, Autobiography, 240-1. Helen A. Cooper, ed., John Trumbull: The Hand and Spirit of a Painter (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1982), 13, notes that Trumbull also traveled abroad for medical treatment, fearing loss of his eyesight due to an inflammation.

[134] Trumbull's half-length portraits are usually 31 by 25 inches; the full-length portraits range from 88 to 95 inches long and are about 60 inches wide.

municipal and state politicians set the standards for City Hall portraiture for the next two hundred years.

DeWitt Clinton and John Trumbull

Scant documentation exists regarding the relationship between Clinton and Trumbull. What is clear is that, without either of these remarkable men, the City Hall portrait collection may not have existed. Clinton provided the political resolve to spend public monies on portraiture, while Trumbull created opulent works of art that would assert New York City's stature as the capital of learning and the arts.

When Trumbull returned to New York, he did have his own personal and political network of a still powerful Federalist minority. And unlike many of the other artists that Clinton patronized, Trumbull was a gentleman; college-educated, well traveled, and the son of a Governor from a family at least as good if not better than Clinton's own. Nevertheless, without Clinton's approval, Trumbull would not have received his first six municipal commissions upon his return to the U.S. After 1804, the Republicans controlled the Common Council and Trumbull's Federalist friends would have been unable to compel the Council to take what was unprecedented action.[135]

In his personal life, Clinton was one of the most persistent patrons of the early nineteenth century. He commissioned numerous portraits of himself. From 1805 on, his Diary briefly records visits to and sittings with Trumbull, Sharples, Williams, Ames, Guy, Jarvis, Vanderlyn, Cooper, Ingham, Dunlap, Morse (Figure 32), and others.[136] Like

[135] In November 1804, Republicans won seven of the nine wards, with only the southernmost First and Second Wards remaining Federalist.
[136] DeWitt Clinton, Diary, DeWitt Clinton Papers, New-York Historical Society, passim.

others of his generation,[137] Clinton used some of these portraits as tokens of political bonds, exchanging them with friends and allies. For example, in 1816, he exchanged portraits by John Wesley Jarvis with his friend General Jacob Brown[138] and with City Comptroller Thomas R. Mercein (Figure 33).[139]

His portraits were also public memorials, for, like fellow benefactors, his service to organizations was commemorated through these tokens. For example, the New York Literary and Philosophical Society resolved on October 10, 1816,

> that Mr Clinton be requested to sit for his Portrait to be placed in the Hall of this Institution, and that a committee be appointed to wait upon him and request his compliance with this resolution.[140]

As Ellen Miles observes in her study of Oliver Wolcott and portraiture, in the early nineteenth century, portraits were valued "as expressions of public and private allegiances."[141] Miles' analysis provides one of the most detailed studies of how portraiture was used by a contemporary of Clinton and Trumbull. Wolcott (1760-1833),

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[137] Clinton was appointed Mayor during three periods: from October 29, 1803 to March 16, 1807 (when he was replaced by Marinus Willet); from February 22, 1808 to March 4, 1810 (when he was replaced by Jacob Radcliff); and from February 5, 1811 to March 6, 1815. He was sworn in as governor on July 1, 1817; served two terms until January 1, 1823; and was then returned to office January 1, 1825. He died in office on February 11, 1828.

[138] As will be discussed in the following chapter, Brown also sat for the Corporation as part of their series of portraits commemorating the War of 1812.

[139] Joseph Delaplaine, in a 2 March 1818 letter to Ezra Ames, notes that Jarvis had painted a portrait of Clinton for him, but that Delaplaine could not afford to purchase it. Simon Gratz Collection, Archives of American Art.

[140] Miles, "Wolcott," 105-159. Resolution presented by General Morton at a Meeting of the New York Literary and Philosophical Society, October 10th 1816, DeWitt Clinton Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University. See also Hosack, Memoir of Clinton, 121.

[141] Miles, "Wolcott," 109. An earlier example of this was Jefferson's possession of the triumvirate of the portraits of John Locke, Sir Francis Bacon, and Sir Isaac Newton. These three portraits demonstrated his affiliation with and dedication to the philosophy of the enlightenment. See Susan R. Stein, The Worlds of Thomas Jefferson at Monticello (New York: Harry Abrams, 1993), 46.

a Federalist who served as governor of Connecticut,[142] commissioned a dozen or so portraits of himself, exchanging them with family and political associates.

While it is clear that Clinton's association with artists was primarily as a patron, his feelings towards Trumbull remain unclear. Clinton's Diary, which consists mainly of notations regarding the weather, temperature, and lists of Clinton's visits and visitors, provides a record of numerous visits between the two,[143] leading Theodore Sizer to hazard that Clinton was Trumbull's friend.[144] Yet, the minuteness of detail is just as much a tribute to Clinton's adherence to gentlemanly codes of conduct—if a gentleman received a visit, good manners required prompt reciprocation.[145]

It seems likely that Clinton believed that patronizing Trumbull would, like his patronage of the various social, intellectual, and philanthropic organizations in the City, serve his own goals: to enhance his own personal reputation, create and maintain lines of communication with political enemies, and consolidate political power.[146] Patronage of Trumbull may simply have been another means of strengthening relations with the Federalists.

Still, Clinton was a visionary as well as a pragmatist, and his ambitions included the preeminence of the city as well as his own success. After all, by returning to the

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[142] Wolcott was a friend of John Trumbull. In 1804, when Trumbull decided to return to New York, he contacted Wolcott to ask for his assistance in locating a house. Oliver Wolcott Jr. Papers, Connecticut Historical Society, quoted in Miles, "Wolcott," 124.

[143] That at least some of these were social visits is indicated by the notation "Colonel Trumbull and wife" that appears on several occasions.

[144] Sizer, Autobiography, 360.

[145] See Joanne B. Freeman, Affairs of Honor, National Politics in the New Republic (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), for information on politics and protocol.

[146] See also Barratt, "American Academy," 23-28, who makes the point that "The Livingstons and Burr, as well as other Academy members, must have believed that the fine arts would advance their careers and increase their social prestige."

Mayoralty, he had thrown in his lot with the rise and fall of New York.[147] Clinton's dream of New York as a new Athens would only be realized by the production of quality works of art and the construction of fine architecture. By commissioning Trumbull to paint the City Hall portraits, Clinton saw a means of asserting New York's preeminence in the arts. In 1804, no other artist in America, save perhaps Stuart, had Trumbull's skill, and certainly no other artist had his prestigious familial and political connections. And like Clinton, Trumbull, who was an integral part of New York City society, also saw himself as a national leader in his field.

While Clinton's thoughts about Trumbull remain opaque, some assessment of Trumbull's feelings toward Clinton may be gleaned from his correspondence after 1809. During Trumbull's productive years in New York from 1804 to 1808, it would seem that they had an amicable association, with Trumbull even asking Clinton to visit his studio in 1808 to approve the portrait of Governor Tompkins that had just been finished—an occurrence that underscores Clinton's oversight of the City Hall portrait commissions.

However, it was at this visit that a subject came up that would upset their connection. Apparently during this visit, Clinton advised Trumbull about problems his wife, Sarah, might face as an English national, in inheriting their property in upstate New York. [148] The day before Trumbull sailed to England, he called upon Clinton, but did not find him at home.[149] Worried about Sarah's financial future, Trumbull left a letter for Clinton, asking him for his assistance with the naturalization.[150]

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[147] His concern for the welfare of New York, even above his personal political well being, is evidenced by his breaks with Jefferson's administration over issues of trade and security.
[148] John Trumbull, Letter to the Govr of the State of Connecticut, London, 21 September 1812, John Trumbull Letterbook, New-York Historical Society; Jaffe, John Trumbull, 222-224.
[149] Clinton's Diary for December 14, 1808, lists "Col. Trumbull" among his callers that day. DeWitt Clinton, Diary, New-York Historical Society.
[150] The letter is in the DeWitt Clinton Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University.

When a year passed and Clinton failed to come to his aid, Trumbull asked his Federalist friend, Colonel Robert Troup, for assistance. In the winter 1810 session of the state legislature, Jonas Platt,[151] one of the western district senators, and at that time the Federalist Party's nominee for governor, put forward Trumbull's petition. However, Clinton rose in session to speak passionately against foreign ownership in general and English landlords in particular. Because of the extreme prejudice against the English, a vote was taken and Platt was the only one who voted aye.[152]

Trumbull was beside himself with anger upon hearing of Clinton's treachery. Not only had he been betrayed; his wife's economic future still remained uncertain. Seeking another route to resolve his problem, he consulted with Rufus King and learned that his only recourse was the legislative path.[153] Without an act naturalizing Sarah, she would have no opportunity to inherit his property. Clearly, there was little Trumbull could do with Clinton still in power.

Nevertheless, an opportunity for Trumbull to strike back at Clinton arose in 1812, during DeWitt Clinton's run for the presidency against Madison. Clinton believed that he was a viable Presidential candidate for several reasons. His family connections were an advantage: his uncle (New York State Governor and Vice President) and his father (a Revolutionary War general) had both distinguished themselves politically and militarily. And, Clinton resided in New York, by 1810 the most populous state, and strategically located between north and south. Though on May 18, 1812, Madison was endorsed by

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[151] Platt (1769-1834) was a lawyer and judge, who had trained in Colonel Richard Varick's office, and was appointed clerk of Herkimer County. In 1809 he was elected state senator. See *Judge Platt* in "Miscellany and Intelligence," American Jurist and Law Magazine (April 1834), 488.

[152] Ibid., 488. Ironically, during the same winter session, Judge Platt was one of Clinton's supporters for the creation of a Canal Commission.

[153] John Trumbull, Letter to Rufus King, London, 14 June 1811, John Trumbull Papers, Letterbook, New-York Historical Society; Sarah Trumbull, Letter to Rufus King, Rufus King Papers, Box 12, Folder 6, New-York Historical Society.

the Republican caucus in Washington, only eleven days later ninety out of ninety-five Republicans in the New York State legislature approved Clinton's nomination.

Still, despite his strong showing in New York, Clinton was well aware that, in order to have a chance at the Presidency and defeat Madison, he would need the support of Federalists as well as Republicans.[154] Having heard in the spring of 1812 about Clinton's ambitions for the Presidency,[155] Trumbull decided to do what he could to stop him. As the son and brother of Connecticut governors,[156] it may have seemed natural to Trumbull to write on September 12, 1812, to the then-sitting Connecticut Governor about Clinton's vile and untrustworthy behavior:

> I feel it my duty to do what is in my power, to prevent the election to that high office, of a man who in my opinion is likely to employ the power and patronage which it confers to the vilest purposes.[157]

Though Trumbull knew that this was a personal and relatively unimportant matter to others, he argued that Clinton's behavior demonstrated a lack of character unbecoming to one "entrusted with the interests and honour of a nation." He believed that such an argument would sway those who, like himself, lived by a gentleman's code of honor.

In his Letterbook, Trumbull does not address the Connecticut Governor by name,[158] though Federalist Roger Griswold had been elected Connecticut Governor in 1811 and served until his death on October 25, 1812. Due to his untimely demise,

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[154] See Dorothie Bobbé, DeWitt Clinton (Port Washington, NY: Ira J. Friedman, Inc., 1962), 181-5; Cornog, Birth of Empire, 91-103.

[155] Letter from Robert Troup to John Trumbull, March 9, 1812, John Trumbull Papers, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University.

[156] Trumbull's father Jonathan Trumbull, was Governor of the State of Connecticut from 1769 to 1784; his older brother, Jonathan Trumbull, Jr., (1740-1809) was Governor from 1797 until his death in 1809.

[157] John Trumbull, Letter to the Connecticut Governor, John Trumbull Papers, Letterbook, New-York Historical Society. Trumbull did not address the letter by name; it may have been sent to Roger Griswold or his successor John Cotton Smith. The letter has not yet been located in their papers. As noted in the Letterbook, a copy of the letter was entrusted to Charles King on September 13, 1812.

[158] Jaffe, John Trumbull, 305 (chapter 13, note 1), lists this letter as addressed to Jonathan Trumbull; however, by 1812, Trumbull's brother had been deceased for three years.

Trumbull's letter may have been received by Griswold or forwarded to his successor John Cotton Smith. The letter has not yet been located in either's papers.[159]

At a secret meeting of Federalists on September 15-17, 1812, the hotly debated topic of discussion was whether the Federalists would support Clinton against Madison. Trumbull's friend, Rufus King, recorded in his dairy[160] that Clinton would probably have a better chance then their Federalist candidates of getting elected; however, King (a good friend of Trumbull and well aware of Clinton's treachery)[161] was unwilling to trust Clinton and spoke out against him. After a hard-fought battle, Clinton was ultimately unable to garner sufficient support, and lost the election to Madison, 128 to 89.[162]

After 1812, Trumbull did not receive another municipal commission from Clinton. His final portrait of Jacob Radcliff (1764-1844), the Federalist who was first appointed as Mayor on March 5, 1810, though painted in 1816, was the result of a resolution by the Common Council passed on December 1, 1810, while Trumbull was still in England.

> On motion resolved, that his Honour the Mayor [Jacob Radcliff] be requested to sit for his portrait to be painted for the use of the Common Council.[163]

Why Radcliff, who served a one-year term from 1810 to 1811, delayed having the portrait finished is unknown, though it seems that Radcliff had decided to wait for Trumbull to paint him. After all, Trumbull's correspondence with King and others indicated that he and Sarah intended to return to America as soon as possible. And

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[159] As noted in the Letterbook, a copy of the letter was entrusted to Charles King on 13 September 1812. In addition, a thorough search of DeWitt Clinton's correspondence, that might show that Clinton knew of Trumbull's letter, has yet to be completed. Still, Clinton was notoriously cagey about putting anything in writing regarding political matters, and may have refrained from making more than a mental note about Trumbull's machinations against him.
[160] Cornog, Birth of Empire, 99.
[161] John Trumbull, Letter to Rufus King, London, June 14, 1811, John Trumbull Papers, Letterbook, New-York Historical Society.
[162] Cornog, Birth of Empire, 100.
[163] MCC, VI: 404.

Radcliff may have wished to have the same painter who had completed all of the previous mayoral portraits undertake his official portrait. Whatever the cause, Radcliff's delay was not due to a lack of other artists from which to choose. Upon Clinton's return to the Mayoralty in 1811, during the next four years under his leadership the Common Council commissioned portraits from John Wesley Jarvis, Thomas Sully, and Samuel L. Waldo.[164]

Once war was declared in June of 1812, Trumbull was trapped in England, and was unable to return to New York until September 1815.[165] By the time he arrived, the Council of Appointment had once again ousted Clinton from the mayoralty,[166] and on March 6, 1815, Federalist Jacob Radcliff was appointed Mayor for a second term, a post he held until 1818. Trumbull's portrait of Radcliff (Figure 34) was painted during Radcliff's second term, and shows him in three-quarters view to the right, facing front. Like the other mayoral portraits, Radcliff wears a dark black coat with white stock and jabot; and looks directly at the viewer. Red drapery provides the background for his head and shoulders.

Upon Trumbull's return to New York, his first order of business was to have a naturalization bill passed for Sarah in the New York State Legislature. A week after the winter session of the state legislature opened, on February 7, 1816, Peter Radcliff [167] filed a petition in the state senate for "an act *for the relief of Sarah Trumbull, the wife of John*

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[164] These portraits are discussed in Chapter 4.
[165] Sizer, Autobiography, 255. He apparently arrived in early September--a letter from Trumbull to Jabez Huntington, dated New York, 9 September 1815, is in the John Trumbull Papers, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University.
[166] For the first time since 1797, Clinton held no public office, except for the unsalaried position as New York State Canal Commissioner.
[167] Peter W. Radcliff was a state senator and brother to Jacob Radcliff, who served twice as New York City mayor.

Trumbull."[168] The bill was immediately read and approved the next day, no doubt providing Trumbull with a greater sense of security about the future.[169] The following month, Peter Radcliff sent a copy of the bill down to Trumbull via his brother, Mayor Radcliffe.[170] That same spring, Trumbull completed the portrait of the Mayor; on May 13, 1816, a warrant for payment was issued in the amount of $100.[171]

Despite his avowed abhorrence of Clinton, and although the Radcliff commission was Trumbull's last portrait for the Common Council, Trumbull continued to work with Clinton on their shared interest in the development of the arts in New York. In March 1815, Clinton had published his Introductory Discourse Delivered Before the Literary and Philosophical Society of New York and by Trumbull's return in September, Clinton was viewed as the leading spokesman on this issue. This oration, originally delivered on May 4, 1814 to celebrate the organization's incorporation, was an overview of the state of culture in New York and argued for the preeminence of the city as a cultural leader. The Discourse was widely read and highly praised, and Clinton, now viewed as a true intellectual, was made an honorary member of several scholarly associations.[172]

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[168] Journal of the Senate of the State of New-York, at their Thirty-Ninth Session, Begun and Held at the City of Albany, the Thirtieth Day of January, 1816 (Albany, NY: J. Buel, 1816), 16

[169] JohnTrumbull, Letter to Peter W. Radcliff, March 15, 1816; John Trumbull Papers, Connecticut Historical Society: "We [Sarah and I] estimate your unsolicited exertion in this business, according to the pain which we felt from the former transaction, and to the satisfaction which we feel in the very honorable manner in which that act of injustice has now been rectified—and although to an honorable mind, the sense of having performed a duty may be an ample reward—yet as so few good men perform unsolicited acts of kindness to others, you must permit Mrs T & myself always hold ourselves deeply indebted to you for your exertion in this occasion."

[170] Normally, such a bill would have been held over, referred to committee, and then read three times before a vote. Passage could take anywhere from a few days to months. Journal of the New York State Senate, 17; Peter W. Radcliff, Letter to John Trumbull, Albany, March 9, 1816, John Trumbull Papers, Connecticut Historical Society.

[171] MCC, VIII: 511.

[172] Nodyne," Clinton and Cultural Organizations," 77-83.

Upon his return, Trumbull reanimated his association with the Academy, of which Clinton was now the President.[173] Despite their previous history, Trumbull and Clinton shared a vision of New York's preeminence in the arts that was stronger than their political differences. Trumbull assumed an active role in organizing an inaugural exhibition for the American Academy of Fine Arts, to be held in the refurbished New York Institution. This building was the old Almshouse on Chambers Street, located behind the New City Hall, and had been given by the City[174] to the Academy, the New-York Historical Society, and other organizations for their use. In order to generate interest, a gala opening was planned for October 24, 1816, and invitations were sent to the Common Council, the clergy, and to the Academy's principal creditors.

As part of the festivities surrounding the opening, on October 23, 1816, DeWitt Clinton presented his *Discourse Delivered Before the American Academy of Arts* in City Hall.[175] Clinton's speech commemorated Chancellor Robert R. Livingston as the founder of the Academy, and emphasized the important role of the organization in the development of the fine arts in the U.S. Clinton also sounded a favorite theme of Trumbull's, the need for government support of the fine arts.[176] His oration was well

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[173] Clinton had assumed the presidency on March 13, 1813, when a special meeting of the Academy was called upon Chancellor Robert R. Livingston's death. John R. Murray, who had written to Trumbull in 1803 about the Academy, was vice president.

[174] John Pintard had approached Clinton in August 1812; on February 1815 Clinton himself made the case to the Common Council; he pursued this project even after his removal from the Mayoralty and in June 1815 the Council voted to permit the Academy and fellow petitioners to use the old Almshouse. Nodyne, "Clinton and Cultural Organizations," 99-125.

[175] The speech was presented in what was then the largest room in the building, the Court of Sessions; this room is now known as the Public Hearing Chamber.

[176] See for example, Trumbull's Letters Proposing a Plan for the Permanent Encouragement of the Fine Arts, by the National Government, addressed to the President of the United States, 1826, in which Trumbull proposed that the government commission paintings commemorating important events; expenses would be covered by the sale of prints of the paintings. John Trumbull Papers, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University.

received[177] and provided an additional "boost" to the exhibit, which featured works by Benjamin West as well as twenty of Trumbull's paintings. While Clinton made a splash with this speech, Trumbull was the star of the exhibit, his paintings presenting a diversity of genres not seen in the works of his fellow artists John Vanderlyn, John Wesley Jarvis and William Dunlap.[178]

In 1816, Clinton successfully ran for Governor of New York State, a position that he assumed on July 1, 1817, and held to 1823, and 1825 until his death in 1828. Given his new responsibilities, it is not surprising that in January 1817, less than a year and a half after Trumbull's return to New York, Clinton resigned from the presidency of the Academy and proposed that Trumbull succeed him. Trumbull was elected January 18, 1817, [179] and served as President of the Academy for the next nineteen years, even as he shifted his focus to the national stage and began to pursue his next series of government commissions—the Rotunda of the Capitol building in Washington.

The Third City Hall

Both the construction of the third City Hall and the commissioning of municipal portraits after 1800 expressed a radical break with the past, and took place at virtually the same point in time. On March 24, 1800, the Common Council created a committee to consider the construction of a New City Hall. The following year, on July 13, 1801, the Council broke its moratorium on portrait commissions and resolved to commission a portrait of the outgoing Governor John Jay.

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[177] The Columbian, 24 October 1816, gave an extensive account of Clinton's speech; The New-York Evening Post, 28 October 1816, printed only a paragraph from The Columbian's notice.
[178] Jaffe, John Trumbull, 266.
[179] The occasion is described and the speech printed in full in Thomas S. Cummings, Historic Annals of the National Academy of Design (Philadelphia: George W. Childs, 1865), pp. 8-17; see also Jaffe, John Trumbull, 264-70.

Some historians have attributed the decision to build a New City Hall to the need for more space to accommodate an expanding city government, suggesting, "the growth in city government could no longer bear the inadequacy of its facilities."[180] However, with the decampment of the state legislature to Albany in 1797, additional room for city offices in the Government House became available.[181] The Minutes and Papers of the Common Council demonstrate that the need for space did not enter into the Council's decision. In fact, these records show that, even *before* the flight of the state legislature to Albany, space was not a consideration in the discussion of a new building.[182]

Starting in 1790, with the departure of Congress, the Common Council was petitioned by numerous public associations for the right to use the rooms of City Hall for meetings. The Law Society, the Uranian Society, the Harmonical Society, the Medical Society, and the Tammany Society among others were granted their requests. A variety of groups used even the Common Council Chamber itself for regularly scheduled meetings.[183]

Since practical considerations of space and governmental expansion were not paramount, it appears that the Council's decision to build a New City Hall was due to symbolic considerations. These aspirations would be clearly expressed when, on February 20, 1802, almost two years after their initial discussion, the Council advertised a

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[180] See for example, Stokes, Iconography, III: 538, and Louis Torres, "Federal Hall Revisited," The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 29, no. 4 (December 1970), 338. Louis Torres offers an added reason for removal. He contends that the building's location constantly disrupted the flow of traffic around one of the most congested and commercial spaces in the city. See also Municipal Archives, Papers of the Common Council, Microfilm Roll 32, Folder 874, for an 1808 map showing the west wing of City Hall and the 1789 additions behind it. This map is reproduced in Torres, p. 333. However, it should be noted that the current Federal Hall still disrupts the north-south flow of traffic.

[181] Evan W. Cornog, "To Give a Character to Our City: New York's City Hall," New York History 69, no. 4 (October 1988), 393.

[182] In fact, a school was located in City Hall until March 16, 1785 when it was ejected: "It being suggested that the Schools in the city Hall greatly disturb Congress in their deliberations—Ordered that Mr. Riggs & Mr. Grahams remove their School immediately from the City Hall." See MCC, I, entry for 16 March 1785.

[183] See MCC, I: 605, 606, 610, 709, 724-5, 777; II: 3, 10-11, 13, 38, 89-90, 379, 397, 531, 582, 687.

competition[184] for a new Court House and City Hall in the New-York Daily Advertiser, with a prize of $350[185] offered for the best elevations, and plans.[186] Accompanying this announcement was the following editorial:

> A liberal premium is offered by the Corporation, in this day's Advertiser, for a plan and elevation of a New City Hall. The projector will undoubtedly regard as well the embellishment of the City, as the purposes of accommodating the Courts, Common Council and Public Offices. Buildings designed for posterity ought to be on a scale commensurate with their object. The increasing population and consequent extent of a city, destined from its geographical position, to become the greatest commercial emporium of the Atlantic States, demand expanded views and liberal conceptions of future exigencies. Antient (sic) Republics were particularly attentive to the splendor of their public edifices, as monuments of national pride and dignity. We hope therefore that the contemplated improvement may be such, as will do credit to the taste and spirit of our corporation and citizens.[187]

The editorial includes a hint of the optimism and reliance on providence that characterized so much of the art criticism of the period. New York's fate was to become a great commercial power; therefore it was incumbent upon the city to build to meet their destiny.[188] Moreover, the editor notes that public edifices may become "monuments of national pride and dignity." The choice of words suggests the ambition of New Yorkers to assert their superiority on a national stage.

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[184] New York Daily Advertiser, 20 February 1802, and the American Citizen and General Advertiser, quoted in Stokes, Iconography, I: 483-4.
[185] As of 2002, a value of $5,800.
[186] New York Daily Advertiser, 20 February 1802. The Federalists on the Council were the signatories to the competition advertisement--John B. Coles, Robert Lenox, Selah Strong, James Roosevelt, Philip Brasher, John Nitchie, John P. Ritter and Philip Ten Eyck.
[187] Ibid.
[188] See Neil Harris, The Artist in American Society: The Formative Years, 1790-1860 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966), especially Chapter 2, for a discussion of the philosophical underpinnings of this often unjustified optimism about American culture, particularly regarding the visual arts.

Nine months later, at their October 4, 1802 meeting, twenty-six schemes were reviewed[189] and the Council selected the winning designs for the New City Hall (Figure 35). The winners were Joseph-François Mangin and John McComb, Jr., [190]two architects active in New York during this period, whose only collaboration was on this one project.[191] Mangin remains a somewhat mysterious figure, though new evidence has come to light indicating that he served as Engineer-in-chief to the general staff offices of the French army in Santo Domingo,[192] and then arrived in New York around 1794.[193] On May 9, 1796 he was "sworn a Free Man" of the City,[194] and the following week on May 16th was appointed a city surveyor. Mangin prepared a map of the city with Casimir T. Goerck that was issued in 1803, [195] was the designer of the Park Theatre (the leading theater in New York for the next fifty years), and was active in the efforts to fortify New York's harbors during the naval war with France.

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[189] The names of four of the twenty-six competitors survive: Dr. Smith (referred to in a "Communication" in the Daily Advertiser of October 25, 1802), Archibald Robertson, the miniature painter (Dunlap,History, I: 403: "He was among those who presented designs for the city hall of New York."), Benjamin Henry Latrobe, and Ezra Weeks. For illustrations and a brief discussion of the designs of the latter two, see Damie Stillman," New York City Hall: Competition and Execution," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 23, no. 3 (October 1964), 129-42.

[190] MCC, III: 133-4. Stillman, "City Hall: Competition," 135-6.

[191] The following analysis of the relationship between Mangin and McComb relies on Cornog, "City Hall," 394-400; see also Stokes, Iconography, I: 463-467.

[192] The first clues to Mangin's origins came from a letter from Benjamin Latrobe to his brother Christian, dated November 4, 1804, and quoted in Talbot Hamlin, Benjamin Henry Latrobe (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), 188. Joseph Francois Mangin to Alexander Hamilton, New York, 11 January 1799, Alexander Hamilton Papers, Library of Congress; Joseph Francois Mangin to the Adjutant General, 27 January 1808, RG 107, Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General, 1805-1921 (microfilm M566, roll 3,), National Archives. (Materials referred to in Mary Beth Betts, "The Governor's Room, City Hall, New York" (unpublished manuscript), 50.)

[193] It should be recalled that the English invaded Haiti in 1793 during the Napoleonic Wars, which resulted in an influx of French émigrés to the U.S.

[194] MCC, II: 236, 238.

[195] Mangin first approached the Common Council with a proposal to make a Plan of the City before July 11, 1796 (Ibid., 258). However, it was not until 1797, after receipt of two separate proposals from Mangin and Goerck that the Council moved forward with commissioning a general survey. MCC, II: 407, 410, 411, 433, 443, 482-3; Casimir Th. Goerck to Richard Varick, New York, March 20, 1797;[Joseph Francois] Mangin to Common Council, New York, April 11, 1797; and Draft Articles of Agreement between Casimir Th. Goerck and Joseph Francois Mangin, 11 December 1797, Papers of the Common Council, Municipal Archives.

John McComb, Jr., born in New York in 1763, came from a family of builders.[196] His father had been responsible for the Brick Church and New York Hospital, and after the war, McComb worked as his father's assistant. His first major works were the Cape Henry Lighthouse (1791) and the Montauk Lighthouse (1795). The building of lighthouses, which would ensure safe shipping and thus protect the economy and flow of commerce, was of particular interest to Alexander Hamilton,[197] and no doubt McComb came to his attention at this time. Lighthouses were the responsibility of the Treasury Department, and the President himself signed the orders for their construction.[198]

However, it was likely that McComb's construction of private residences for affluent Federalists such as Rufus King and John B. Coles significantly influenced the competition. [199] In fact, during the competition period, McComb was finishing work on Alexander Hamilton's new country house in upper Manhattan, the Grange.[200] Damie Stillman[201] suggests that politics was the driving force behind Mangin's collaboration with McComb. McComb, a native New Yorker with solid Federalist connections, could

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[196] Talbot Hamlin, Greek Revival Architecture in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1944), 120-125.

[197] In 1790, Hamilton had presented a report on lighthouses to the President; in other correspondence with Washington regarding lighthouses Hamilton discussed in detail the bids that he had received from McComb and other architects on these projects.

[198] See Dorothy Twohig, ed., The Papers of George Washington, Presidential Series (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987); XI: 164, 467; especially the letter from Tobias Lear (Washington's secretary) to Alexander Hamilton, dated December 6, 1792, regarding John McComb's construction of lighthouses. Lear notes Washington's approval of a contract agreement to pay McComb $650 for building the wall and a platform at the Cape Henry lighthouse.

[199] Cornog, "City Hall," 397, 405; Agnes Addison Gilchrist, "John McComb, Sr. and Jr., in New York, 1784-1799, The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 31, no. 1 (March 1972), 15. See also Samuel Damie Stillman, "Artistry and Skill in the Architecture of John McComb, Jr." (Master's thesis, University of Delaware, 1956).

[200] While no documentation has come to light regarding Hamilton's involvement in this new project, he had played an active role in the previous construction at Federal Hall. Now in New York, having returned to the City following his service as Secretary of the Treasury under Washington, it seems implausible that he would have not had some interest in the selection of an architect for this major project for both aesthetic and political reasons. The Grange, named after the Hamilton family's ancestral home in Scotland, was completed in 1802. Although the building still exists today, it was relocated from its original site to its current location on between West 141st Street and West 142nd Street on Convent Avenue, Manhattan.

[201] Stillman, "City Hall: Competition,"135-36.

supply the political wherewithal to sway the still predominantly Federalist Common Council. And Mangin, a skillful, French-trained architect, provided the exquisite elevations that captivated the Council members.[202]

Indeed, political affiliations may have spoiled the chances for the most prominent architect in the competition – Benjamin H. Latrobe. An English emigrant, Latrobe's first work in the U.S. was the Bank of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, completed in 1798 and considered an architectural triumph. And during the period between the announcement of the competition and the decision by the Council, Latrobe's completion of the Philadelphia waterworks in January 1801, an engineering wonder, secured his national reputation.[203]

Despite his renown, the New York Federalists may have viewed Latrobe with distrust. His two major projects were constructed in Philadelphia, New York's long-standing competitor. And Latrobe had been encouraged to enter the competition and was supported by his good friend Aaron Burr,[204] whose political machinations inspired suspicion among Federalists and Republicans alike. Burr had confidently assured Latrobe that the commission would be his, perhaps believing that with his stepson John B. Prevost,[205] the city Recorder, on the selection committee, he could control the choice.

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[202] Hamilton also knew Mangin. See Syrett, Hamilton Papers, XXI: 517-8: Memorandum from Joseph F. Mangin to the Military Committee of New York City (Aaron Burr, Alexander Hamilton and Ebenezer Stevens), New York, 18 June 1798. On June 18, 1798, Ebenezer Stevens appointed Mangin to draw up plans for fortifying the New York harbor, and on September 11, 1798, Stevens placed Mangin in charge of the fortification of Fort Jay on Governors Island.

[203] Hamlin, Latrobe, 146-167.

[204] Ibid., 186-88; and 222-223, where Hamlin quotes Latrobe's 1807 "Memorandum" submitted to Albert Gallatin regarding his friendship with Burr, in which he notes "his interest procured me all the votes of the corporation, save one, as his persuasion had at first induced me to become a competitor for the design & decoration of that building."

[205] Prevost was involved with the City Hall construction project from the ground up. On August 5, 1802, the MCC, III: 99, record that a warrant was issued "to JB Prevost Esquire for cash paid by him for surveying the Lot of ground on which it is intended to build a City hall…$10." At this time, both Mangin

Moreover, Burr was friendly with Mayor Livingston, and may have anticipated his support for Latrobe as well.[206]

However, the white-hot rivalry between Burr and Hamilton was rapidly heading for the denouement of 1804,[207] and it is difficult to believe that any opportunity to assert political primacy would have been overlooked by either man. While Burr assured his applicant Latrobe of "all of the votes of the corporation, save one,"[208] eight months after announcing the competition, the Common Council selected Mangin and McComb, almost certainly the Federalists' choice. The complex relationships between Latrobe and Burr, and Hamilton and McComb underscore how the commissioning of public projects in New York City depended on personal contacts, and how established systems of patronage could affect one's success.

Three months later, McComb was appointed the "particular agent" of the building committee, empowered to act for them in obtaining building samples and procuring cost estimates. A week later, a new Building Committee was appointed consisting of one member from each of the seven Wards or districts of the City. By appointing a citywide committee, the Council established that the City Hall project would have an impact of the entire City, and that it merited the commitment of all New Yorkers.[209]

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and McComb were surveyors, and both are mentioned in separate entries on the same date. However, there is no record indicating who was actually responsible for the survey of the property.

[206] See Hatcher, Edward Livingston, 58: "Burr was his [Edward Livingston's] intimate personal and political friend."

[207] See Joseph Ellis,"The Duel," in Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation (NY: Vintage Books, 2000), 20-47. See also Thomas J. Fleming's Duel: Alexander Hamilton, Aaron Burr, and the Future of America, New York: Basic Books, 2000.

[208] Hamlin, Latrobe, 87-89, 128-9, 186-7; ibid., 130, Hamlin notes "Federalist attacks…endangered his (Latrobe's) prospects for many years to come." Cornog, "City Hall," 397.

[209] For a description of the boundaries of the Wards, see Thomas E.V. Smith, The City of New York in the Year of Washington's Inauguration (New York: Anson D.F. Randolph & Co., 1889), 54-55.

On May 27, 1803, the New City Hall was dedicated.[210] Celebrations included a procession led by Mayor Edward Livingston from the old building at Wall Street to the new site,[211] where the cornerstone with an inscription of 29 names [212] was laid with great ceremony. However, Mangin was not included in the ceremony and his name did not appear on the inscription, lapses that did not go unnoticed. Two days later, the Daily Advertiser reported: "A spectator of the Ceremonial of laying the foundation stone of the New City Hall, expresses surprise and mortification at the absence of Mr. Mangin."[213]

The debate over the role of Mangin versus McComb in the design and construction of City Hall has continued unabated for the past two centuries.[214] It seems clear to most scholars today that Mangin was, if not the sole author of the competition drawings, the primary force behind the winning designs.[215] Nevertheless, McComb's

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[210] A notice in the 26 May 1803 Daily Advertiser announced the next day's program

[211] Daily Advertiser, 27 May 1803. Articles on the celebration appeared in the Morning Chronicle and American Citizen of 28 May 1803, and the New York Evening Post, Commercial Advertiser, and Daily Advertiser of 27 May 1803. Only the American Citizen, New York Evening Post, and Morning Chronicle document the full inscription, noting that the inscription continued on the "other side" or "upper side" of the stone. A resolution adopted April 18, 1803, that includes the inscription (without the date) may be found in the MCC, III: 268.

[212] The stone listed the Mayor, the recorder, the seven aldermen and seven assistant aldermen, and on the opposite side, the seven building committee members, McComb, the head carpenter, two masons, and two stone cutters. Stillman, "City Hall: Competition," 136, notes that the cornerstone is now located in a basement corridor in City Hall. However, these stones are the capstones referred to in the 1916 The Twenty-first Annual Report of the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society, 1916.

[213] The following week a more detailed denouncement appeared in the Evening Post, quoted in Cornog, "City Hall," 403 and Stokes, Iconography, I: 464.

[214] Twenty-First Annual Report of the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society, 1916, 182-4; Stokes, Iconography, I: 467, Gilchrist, "John McComb, Sr. and Jr.," 11-12, as well as idem.,"Catalogue," which touches upon the acquisition of the McComb holdings by the New-York Historical Society. See also Edward S. Wilde, "The New York City Hall," Century Monthly Magazine 28 (April 1884), 865-872, and idem, "John McComb, Architect," The American Architect and Building News 44, no. 1703 (12 August 1908), 49-53; ibid., no. 1704 (19 August 1908), 57-63.

[215] The competition drawings of the building have a distinctly French flavor, presented in the conventional "graded wash" style not used by McComb in his other projects, and with many details seldom or rarely seen in McComb's previous and subsequent work. Stokes, Iconography, I: 467. See also Hamlin, Greek Revival, 123-124 and Stillman, "City Hall: Competition," 137-8, for the contributions of both architects to the project. See also Clay Lancaster's "New York City Hall Stair Rotunda," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 29, no. 1 (March 1970), 33-39, in which Lancaster argues for English precedents for many of the key elements of City Hall.

role as builder and architect of record for much of the interior of City Hall is irrefutable.[216] As I.N. Phelps Stokes notes:

> It is undoubtedly, equally true…that McComb collaborated in their [the City Hall drawings] preparation, perhaps contributing as much as Mangin to the plans; and that as 'architect of record," in actual charge during the entire period of construction, he developed the working drawings, made the details, and met acceptably every demand upon his artistic as well as upon his practical ability.[217]

There are several reasons why McComb and Mangin may have parted ways, [218] but regardless of the explanation, McComb was appointed architect of the project by the Common Council, and was ultimately responsible for bringing the project to fruition.

As work progressed on the building foundation, and after much debate, at their October 24, 1803 meeting, the Common Council formally decided to use marble for the front and side facades. The Building Committee reported:

> When it is considered that the City of New York from its inviting situation and increasing opulence stands unrivalled, when we reflect that as a commercial City we claim a superior standing, our imports and exports exceeding any other in the United States. We certainly ought in this pleasing state of things, to possess at least one public edifice which shall vie with the *many now erected at Philadelphia* (my emphasis), and elsewhere. It should be remembered that this Building is intended to endure for ages, that it is to be narrowly inspected not only by the scrutinizing eyes of our own Citizens, but of every scientific stranger, and in an architectural point of view it in fact is to give a character to our City, the additional expence (sic) of marble will be fully counterbalanced when we recollect that from the Elegance and situation of this Building the public property on the Broadway and Collect will much increase in value, and that the same influence will be extended to property far beyond these limits and in the course of a very few Years it is destined to be in the

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[216] Stokes, Iconography, I: 467. His copy of Sir William Chambers' Treatise on the Decorative Part of Civil Architecture (also in the collection of the New-York Historical Society) contains a list of page numbers within that volume referring to elements that McComb found useful for City Hall. See Stillman, "City Hall: Competition," 138.

[217] Stokes, Iconography, I: 467. See also Hamlin, Greek Revival, 120-125 for a discussion of McComb's importance to the Greek Revival tradition in New York.

[218] The team are consistently referred to in both the contemporary press and the Minutes of the Common Council as "Mangin and McComb," indicating that Mangin was viewed as the senior partner of the team. Stokes, Iconography, I: 466.

> center of the wealth and population of this City, a building so constructed will do honour to its founders and be commensurate with our flourishing situation.
>
> Wynant Van Zandt Jr. [219]

Within their report, the Building Committee presented several arguments for the more expensive material. The practical reason for this extensive capital investment was that "the public property on the Broadway and Collect will much increase in value;" such an improvement as a New City Hall would thus enhance projected property values and support the economic growth of the city. The Council's pragmatic approach was highlighted by the cost-cutting use of brownstone for the north façade, possibly because they believed that the Almshouse, standing just north of the building site, would block most of this view.

However, the report contained other, less business-like language. After asserting the commercial primacy of New York City the Council argued "this Building is intended to endure for ages…and in an architectural point of view it in fact is to give a character to our City." In other words, the new gleaming white marble City Hall would provide a distinguishing feature or attribute to the City. And, in the secondary meanings of the word, City Hall would lend moral excellence and firmness, reference and reputation to this commercial capital.[220] It would "do honour to its founders."

As Alderman Van Zandt stated, in order to maintain "superior standing," it behooved New York to begin to define itself before the "scrutinizing eyes" of not only New Yorkers but also the world at large. This new building would symbolically

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[219] MCC, III: 379-80. Alderman Van Zandt was the Chair of the Building Committee. Van Zandt was born August 11, 1767 and died November 1, 1831. He was a merchant, a director of the Bank of New York, a Governor of New York Hospital, and founder of Zion Episcopal church at Little Neck, Long Island. In 1818, his net worth was $114, 552. Wynant Van Zandt Papers, New York Public Library.

[220] Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2004 (accessed 3 February 2004), on-line book, availablefrom http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary?book=Dictionary&va=character , Internet.

represent New York's commercial competitiveness. Moreover, New York would have to not only establish its own standing, but to do so in relation to other cities, particularly its rival Philadelphia. The choice of white marble would give City Hall an opulent and elegant character, answering the Council's aspirations to have "at least one public edifice" that would equal Philadelphia's. To "be commensurate" with the city's flourishing situation, a magnificent structure was required.[221]

Instead of the anticipated five to six years for completion,[222] the construction of City Hall took over a decade. The passing of the Embargo Act by Congress in December of 1807 compounded construction problems. The Act, which placed a total embargo on vessels leaving American ports, dealt a severe blow to the financial well being of New York City, dependent on international trade and shipping. John Lambert,[223] who traveled through New York before the Embargo, and the following spring after it had gone into effect, noted the dramatic change:

> When I arrived at New York in November [1807], the port was filled with shipping, and the wharfs were crowded…. Everything was in motion; all was life, bustle, and activity….on my return to New York the following April…Not a box, bale, cask, barrel, or package was to be seen upon the wharfs…. The streets near the water-side were almost deserted, the *grass had begun to grow* upon the wharfs.[224]

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[221] MCC, III: 381-2. At the same meeting, a Committee appointed to prepare a suitable address to Edward Livingstonupon his resignation from the Mayoralty offered a laudatory report, warmly commending the Mayor and noting his learning, discernment, vigilance, and zeal as a Magistrate. The Council made special mention of his "disinterested devotion to the public welfare, during the scenes of affliction and dismay," and "the alacrity with which you [Livingston] sacrificed your personal safety and comfort to that of the suffering poor" [during the yellow fever epidemic]. See ibid., III: 383 for Livingston's written response.

[222] McComb notes in his 11 April 1808 Report to the Building Committee that "Our Lime Houses, Fences and Work Shops were put up with a view to last only five or six years."

[223] John Lambert, Travels through Canada and the United States of North America in the years 1806, 1807, & 1808, 2 volumes (London: C. Cradock & W. Joy, 1814).

[224] Ibid., I: 62-65. Despite Lambert's comments regarding the Embargo, he found the construction of the New City Hall an indication of New York's commercial primacy in the United States: "A Court-house on a larger scale [than the old City Hall], and more worthy of the improved state of the city, is now building at the end of the Park, between the Broadway and Chatham-street, in a style of magnificence unequalled in many of the larger cities of Europe. The exterior consists wholly of fine marble, ornamented in a very neat and elegant style of architecture; and the whole is to be surmounted by a beautiful dome, which, when

By January 1808, in response to the financial crisis, the Common Council cut expenditures on City Hall. Spring brought little economic relief. McComb urged increased financing for his project, contending that without sufficient masons to install stones, continued exposure of cut stone to the elements would result in a substantial loss of materials. He noted as well that added delays in construction would require rebuilding attendant workshops, lime houses, and fencing, thus increasing costs further. These practical considerations may have persuaded the Council to dig deeper into their pockets, for by year's end they had spent $40,162, exceeding their original allocations.

In December 1808, the Building Committee reported that the total expenditure to date was $247,163, noting, "It will be prudent and economical to have the Edifice put completely under cover in the course of the ensuing season."[225] However, the copper roof was not installed until 1811. When the copper for the roof finally arrived from England in November 1810,[226] inclement weather prevented immediate installation, and a temporary covering was left on until the following spring.

Though interior finish work remained, once roofed, the Common Council began to use the New City Hall.[227] On July 4 , 1811, a dinner was held in the new building for

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finished, will form a noble ornament to that part of the town, in which are also situated the Theatre, Mechanic Hall, and some of the best private houses in New York." Ibid., I: 58.

[225] MCC, V: 359-60; quoted in Cornog, "City Hall," 420. As of 1809 the amount was noted as $273, 916. See Amount of Money paid on account of the New City Hall, Papers of the Common Council, Municipal Archives, Box 34, December 1809.

[226] The copper cost £2,425/13/9, but "the season being so far advanced, the com. proposed leaving the building this winter with 'a good shingle covering,' and 'lay the Copper in the spring.'" Stokes, Iconography, V: 1514. A slate roof that seems to have been hastily installed is still visible in the third floor west attic of City Hall. This is probably a portion of the temporary roof erected in 1810.

[227] From 1803 to 1809, $273,916 had been spent; by the end of 1812 the total expenditure was $498,634 (around six to seven million dollars in 2002 currency). Cornog, "City Hall," p. 421. See also the New York Gazette and General Advertiser, 24 May 1810: "It is said that the New City Hall will cost upwards of half a million…" Stokes, Iconography, V: 1520.

the Common Council.[228] And the first meeting of the Common Council in the new building was held on August 12th at 4 p.m.: "the old furniture to be used until the council chamber should be completed."[229]. In September, the Building Committee was directed to assign rooms to the various governmental bodies, and on October 14th McComb reported that 126 workmen were employed in finishing the building. The roof was complete, the windows nearly all glazed and ready for installation, and the building secured from winter weather.[230] On May 5th, 1812 the Common Council officially proclaimed the new building to be City Hall:

> Resolved and it is hereby declared that the Building fronting the Park, lately erected for that purpose by the Corporation shall be the City Hall of the City of New York and that this Resolution shall be deemed to take effect from the 4t Inst."[231]

No formal celebration of the opening took place.[232] Instead, a small notice appeared in the May 1, 1812 New-York Gazette: Mayor's Office. Is removed to the South-west corner Room, on the first floor in the NEW CITY HALL.[233] Cornog suggests that the lack of festivities may have been due to news of impending war with Great Britain (formally declared on June 18, 1812). On the other hand, the fact that George Clinton, Vice President of the U.S. and first Governor of New York State died on April 20, 1812, just ten days before the official move to the new building, may have had an even greater dampening effect on the spirits of the Common Council.

After all, Clinton's nephew and protégé DeWitt Clinton, was Mayor at that time. He presided over the Common Council when, on April 24, 1812, they adopted a

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[228] Ibid., 1529. The dinner cost of $375, or in 2002 terms, approximately $5,200.
[229] The meeting was held in the room that would later serve as the Mayor's Public Office. Ibid., 1529.
[230] Ibid., 1529, 1535.
[231] MCC, VII: 131.
[232] Cornog, "City Hall," 421-22.
[233] New-York Gazette, 1 May 1812, 2.

resolution expressing their sorrow, and appointed a committee "to devise and report a Plan for such public demonstration of regret and sorrow as in their opinion this late national bereavement requires."[234] Although City Hall was not formally dedicated, a week after the move to the new building, a considerable public ceremony dedicated to the memory of George Clinton was held on May 19, 1812.[235]

Although no formal dedication took place, the New City Hall was and is recognized as an architectural triumph (Figure 36). In his 1816 *Discourse Delivered Before the American Academy of Arts,* DeWitt Clinton observed

> great improvements may be seen in our private as well as our public edifices. This revolution in our taste may be traced from the time when, with a spirit truly wise and munificent, the foundations of the edifice in which we are now assembled [City Hall] were laid—a building which, for magnificence of design and elegance of execution, transcends every public edifice in America.[236]

More than 35,000 cubic feet of marble were brought from West Stockbridge, Massachusetts, resulting in a magnificent structure that was a distinguished architectural symbol for City government. Along with St. Paul's Chapel and Trinity Church, when constructed City Hall was one of the three tallest buildings in the city.[237] The main entrance to City Hall is through the columned portico on the south façade, topped by an attic story. Under the portico, five arched glass doors open onto the lobby, an area defined by arches carried by square rusticated piers and flanked with doorways topped with carved wooden pediments. Moving through the lobby, and past the primary east-

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[234] MCC, VII: 121.
[235] Ibid., 149.
[236] Cummings, National Academy of Design, 13.
[237] One omission in the construction of the building was the placement of the City Arms over the Attic Story. Apparently it had been contemplated, but "for want of an artist" was not completed. After a suitable artist was located, the topic was referred to the Committee of Arts and Sciences. Once they determined the arms would cost $8,556; the Committee recommended the work not be undertaken at present. MCC, IX: 297, 280, 292.

west corridor running the length of the building, one can see City Hall's most distinctive architectural feature – the rotunda ornamented with a double stairway (Figure 37).[238]

The rotunda space rises through the full height of the building and is topped by a coffered dome with glass oculus (Figure 38). This area retains many of its original features, such as the marble paving of the first and second floors, the ten composite marble columns that encircle the second floor gallery, and the apparently unsupported stairs that sweep along the sides of the rotunda.[239] Delicately ornamental wrought iron railings edge the stairs and gallery of the restored rotunda.[240]

Some of the most important spaces in the building include the Committee of the Whole room, where the Common Council met; the Public Hearing Chamber, originally the largest room in City Hall before John Duncan designed the 1898 City Council Chamber; and the Governor's Room, now a suite of three chambers housing approximately one-third of the portrait collection. Like the rotunda, many of City Hall's public and office spaces have undergone numerous restorations; however, due to recent renovations, most of the office spaces have recovered their original proportions. While only two of the original mantelpieces remain, a great deal of the plasterwork and

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[238] The first floor lobby and the rotunda space were designated an Interior Landmark of City Hall by the New York City on 27 January 1976; Report LP-0916, Landmarks Preservation Commission.

[239] McComb's drawings suggest that the stairs are supported by a combination of keystone and cantilever construction, with the second floor landing of the stairs serving as the keystone of the arch. Each stair is cantilevered out from the rotunda walls, providing a remarkably stable structure that has required no repairs (apart from the addition of new treads) for more than two hundred years.

[240] Grosvenor Atterbury and John Almy Tompkins restored the rotunda in 1912, carefully basing their renovation on McComb's original construction drawings for City Hall Art Commission Exhibition Files 579A-AS and collateral; see also Art Commission Photograph Collection, City Hall Collateral. The most recent renovation of the dome in 1996 (Art Commission Exhibition Files, 34 Collateral), consisted of removing severely peeling paint, and restoring and cleaning the plasterwork, oculus, and marble columns. The most substantial change was the creation of a new paint scheme to enhance the sculptural qualities of the plasterwork while respecting Atterbury's monochromatic Colonial Revival aesthetic.

architectural ornament in the building is original. Those elements that were replicated were usually based on McComb's original drawings.[241]

Summary

This discussion of Trumbull's artistic and political career focused on his New York City municipal commissions and his relationship with the political establishment and social elite. Trumbull's close relationships with prominent political figures, the influence of his family, and his stature among other artists in New York City were discussed as factors leading to his New York City commissions. His political connections, including his relationship with Mayor DeWitt Clinton, were also addressed.

Clinton's role in the development of a municipal portrait collection was also discussed. A general revitalization of interest in cultural activity was evidenced by the formation of the Academy of Fine Arts (of which Trumbull had been apprised while in London), by the commencement of the construction of a New City Hall, and, upon Trumbull's return, by the largest public art commission in the U.S.—the Common Council's commissions for ten portraits.

Both the construction of the third City Hall and the explosion in the commissioning of municipal portraits both took place at the same time. Almost twenty years after the Evacuation of the British, New Yorkers self-consciously created an architectural symbol of the power of the city, while developing a new portraiture of heroic and distinguished images related to New York City's recent history. However,

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[241] Charles C. May's three-part article, "The New York City Hall," Architectural Record 39 (April 1916), 299-319; (May 1916), 475-90; (June 1916), 513-35, provides an overview of the architectural history of the building in Part I, as well as one of the more detailed discussions of the early twentieth century renovation work of Grosvenor Atterbury and others in City Hall in sections II and III. For detailed information on recent renovations in City Hall, see Art Commission Exhibition Files 34, 89, 4142 and 6531. Stokes, who served as President of the Art Commission from 1930 to 1938, provides a list of work on City Hall completed under the auspices of the Commission from 1902 to 1915; Stokes, Iconography, III: 588.

while the architectural and artistic projects were linked in time and motivation an interesting aesthetic divergence may be noted between the two.

The architectural style of the New City Hall (a public structure that at least in theory represented every citizen) was ornate and graceful, drawing upon French and English architectural styles, and producing a building that, even today, astonishes the viewer with its elegance and refinement. Conversely, moving away from earlier aristocratic models, Trumbull created a series of restrained portraits of men who, although powerful political leaders, were for the most part attired in the somber black suits and white linens of the comfortable middle-class. Although unusually large in size, and thus clearly expensive to commission, these portraits were comparatively plain, lacking specific and distinctive elements. Instead, Trumbull produced prototypical portraits of municipal and state politicians that established standards for City Hall portraiture for the next two hundred years.[242]

[242] See above, page80n218 for a discussion of the possible political meaning of a restrained or "plain" style.

THE NEW YORK CITY HALL PORTRAIT COLLECTION, 1790-1830
CHAPTER FOUR: THE WAR OF 1812 AND MUNICIPAL PORTRAITURE IN NEW YORK CITY

Introduction

The next wave of portrait commissions undertaken by the Common Council of New York City was commemorative portraits of living military and naval heroes. These portraits of valorous men, serving in the War of 1812, were commissioned and paid for within a brief period, sometimes within months of each other. This chapter will address the War of 1812, its impact on New York City and on the portrait collection.

Although New York City was never invaded, and thus never directly affected by the war, the British occupation thirty years earlier left New Yorkers with a heightened sense of vulnerability and concern about invasion. While Federalists argued for increased military and naval power, Republicans, concerned about a strong, armed, central government, had consistently resisted funding these endeavors, thus leaving the nation ill-prepared at the start of the War.

At the same time, New Yorkers had differing opinions about the war itself, and whether war was the best course of action. In addition to their concern about the advisability of undertaking military action against the powerful British empire, was the recollection of the debacle of the 1807 Embargo Act. Only five years earlier, New Yorkers had seen grass growing on their wharves and piers as shipments were halted, and had experienced an unprecedented economic depression as a result of the trade embargo. Unlike the southern states that did not depend on trade for their economic well being New Yorkers knew firsthand the impact that war had upon commerce and the economy.

Given the uneasy feelings about the War of 1812, the acquisition of a new series of portraits commemorating the War by New York suggests several motives. Civic pride

may have been one reason for the new acquisitions. After all, the New City Hall had been completed literally weeks before the declaration of war, providing new space for the display of portraits.

The ongoing commissioning of portraits also coincided with an increased awareness of the importance of what might be termed "aesthetic pre-eminence." The idea that the cultural health of a city was an indicator of its economic, political, and social health was not a new concept. However, as will be discussed, the expression of this idea by the political powers of the period exposes a new dimension: the connection of aesthetic pre-eminence to political power. These commissions will thus be discussed in relation to Mayor DeWitt Clinton's political ambitions—his presidential bid and his attempt to recoup his political stature after defeat.[1]

War of 1812: The Political and Economic Background

The War of 1812 has been termed by one historian "our most obscure war."[2] Its few memorable moments have been boiled down to the Battle of New Orleans, the writing of "The Star-Spangled Banner," and the burning of Washington, D.C. Unlike the War of Independence, the Civil War, or the subsequent World Wars of the following century, the War of 1812, as well as the reasons for the war, remains little known. The decision to go to war was the result of a confluence of factors: maritime issues, western ambitions, political origins, and ideology have all been cited as rationales for what came to be known as "Mr. Madison's War."

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[1] Clinton was appointed Mayor during three periods: from October 29, 1803 to March 16, 1807 (when he was replaced by Marinus Willet); from February 22, 1808 to March 4, 1810 (when he was replaced by Jacob Radcliff); and from February 5, 1811 to March 6, 1815. He was sworn in as governor on July 1, 1817; served two terms until January 1, 1823; and was then returned to office January 1, 1825. He died in office on February 11, 1828.

[2] Donald R. Hickey, The War of 1812, A Forgotten Conflict (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 1. The following discussion of the war is based largely on Hickey's interpretation.

Unlike better-known wars, the War of 1812 also had unclear consequences. Rather than achieving clear and specific goals, the U.S. was unable to compel Britain to make concessions. Still, given the superiority of the enemy the U.S. faced, the country was lucky to get away with maintaining the *status quo*. Moreover, consistent bungling and lack of planning spoiled the management of the war. Basic supplies were unavailable, or difficult to obtain due to profiteering. And government funding remained consistently inadequate.

The War of 1812 had its roots in the Republican policies of the early 1800s. The 1790s had seen the implementation of a policy of preparedness based on George Washington's maxim that the preservation of peace depended on preparation for war.[3] The political cornerstone of Federalist foreign policy was the Jay Treaty of 1794. Though censured by Republicans who believed it conceded too much to the British, the Treaty managed to preserve U.S. neutrality and ensure peace with Britain, while regulating trade and thus permitting the economy to skyrocket.[4]

However, the pro-British cast of the Jay Treaty angered the French, and their Republican advocates, who viewed an accord with the British as disloyalty to the allies of the War of Independence. In response to the treaty, the French harassed American merchant vessels and waged an unofficial naval war against the U.S.—what was called the Quasi-War of 1798-1801. In 1800, this undeclared war was brought to an end by a formal agreement between the U.S. and France.

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[3] From 1789 to 1801, the peacetime army was increased from 840 to 5,400; while the navy, which had been abandoned after the war, was rebuilt. Fortification of coastal towns and cities was also begun, with an allocation of $1,000,000 for construction.

[4] Exports from the U.S. grew from $33,000,000 in 1794, to almost triple that amount, $94,000,000, in 1801—an unprecedented period of prosperity for the entire nation.

By 1807, the U.S. faced increased pressure from both France and England, each of which sought to destroy the other through trade regulation. The passage of the Embargo Act by Congress in late 1807 was intended to restrict exports from the U.S. to Britain, bringing Britain to its knees through economic sanctions. The only nation that suffered from these restrictions, however, was the U.S., which was driven into a deep depression. The Embargo Act was repealed in March 1809, but to save face, Republicans substituted a non-intercourse act that retained the appearance of commercial warfare while having little impact on trade.

Meanwhile, in early 1811, the eruption of a new Indian war on the western frontier fanned the flames of anti-British sentiment. The economic and political alliances between the British and the Indian nations were well known, and many Americans believed that the British had incited the uprisings. With a frontier about to erupt in flames, Republicans began to press for war.

However, like New England Federalists, New Yorkers assumed an anti-war stance that reflected their concern for the economy and their concern about America's military vulnerability. Despite the political power and prestige of many Federalists, they were a minority, and Congress formally declared war on Great Britain in June 1812.[5] The vote for war was split strictly along state lines and economic interests. The economies of the southern and western states would remain largely unaffected by the trade restrictions and taxes that were part of the declaration of war, and so they supported it. But these measures unfairly burdened the north, which protested to no avail.

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[5] The vote was 79 to 49 in the House and 19 to 13 in the Senate; 81 percent of the Republicans in both houses of Congress supported the war, while all Federalists voted against it. New York Congressman Harmanus Bleecker questioned the fairness of a measure that would "impose so much of the burden of the war upon the people of the Northern and Eastern States, the majority of whom are known to be opposed to it" Hickey, op. cit., pp. 46, 48-51.

War of 1812 and New York City

As the preeminent economic capital of the U.S., New York had a unique perspective on war. From 1791 to 1807, New York's exports had multiplied tenfold from $2,519,651 to $26,357,963, the result of maritime trade.[6] With a superb harbor and an ideal location for foreign trade, especially with the West Indies, New York became the primary center for the import and export trade of the U.S.[7] The city's financial dependence on foreign trade meant that the 1807 Embargo Act had dealt a severe blow to New York's financial livelihood. Unlike states with agrarian economies that in wartime could find local outlets for their goods, New Yorkers were sharply aware of a war's potential impact on their economy.

In New York, anti-war feeling continued to run high up through the spring of 1812, and three days before the final declaration of war, the New York Evening Post published a protest against war,[8] signed by fifty-six of the city's principal merchants. DeWitt Clinton, the New York City Mayor, became the leader of the national movement against the Madison administration and their war policies. Though unable to impede the march to war, Clinton considered the Federalists as viable allies in his next political battle--the Presidency. When war was declared on June 18, 1812, Clinton had already positioned himself as a moderate, willing to defend the nation from attack but reluctant to launch a war that would spell financial disaster for the country.[9]

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[6]Evan W. Cornog, "To Give a Character to Our City: New York's City Hall," New York History 69, no. 4 (October 1988), 417

[7] Sidney I. Pomerantz, New York, An American City 1783-1803. A Study of Urban Life (Port Washington, NY: Ira J. Friedman, Inc., 1965), 158.

[8] New-York Evening Post, Monday, 15 June 1812.

[9] Pomerantz, New York, 423-5.

As a wartime President, Madison should have been able to garner support from all quarters, Republicans and Federalists alike, but the luckless land campaign of 1812 had been an unmitigated failure, producing, in the words of a contemporary, "an unbroken series of disaster, defeat, disgrace, and ruin and death."[10] Madison faced a tight race against Clinton, and although he eventually won, Clinton's presidential campaign was relatively successful.[11] Although the Republicans retained control of the Presidency, and maintained a majority in Congress, their numbers dwindled in both the Senate and the House. And they lost their majority in the New York legislature. This cleared the way for a Federalist Council of Appointment.

Having lost on the national front, some New Yorkers lobbied to return Federalist Jacob Radcliff to the mayoralty. However, the numerous Federalists who had thrown their support behind Clinton believed it would be dishonorable to remove him from the mayoralty. Clinton's Federalist friends won out, and because of their support he served as Mayor through the war until 1815, when his own Republican party swept him from power.

As Mayor, Clinton focused his energies on protecting the city from the British. He had already begun these efforts during the Embargo. In 1808, Clinton had obtained an appropriation of $100,000 from the state legislature for fortifications.[12] Three years

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[10] Green Mountain Farmer (Bennington, Vermont), 13 January 1813; quoted in Hickey, War of 1812, 90.
[11] Especially when one compares the results of the 1808 and 1812 Presidential elections: in 1808, Madison defeated Federalist Charles C. Pinckney by 122 to 47 electoral votes; four years later he won only 128 to Clinton's 89 votes, a substantially narrower margin
[12] David Hosack, Memoir of DeWitt Clinton (New York: J. Seymour, 1829;reprint by University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1967), 50.

later, anticipating a declaration of war in the spring of 1811, New York City began to construct four forts for protection against naval attack.[13]

After war was formally declared, Clinton redoubled his efforts to ensure the City's security. The memory of the British occupation thirty years earlier was still vivid for some New Yorkers, who feared naval incursions and invasion from Canada. As part of their wartime efforts, Manhattan shipbuilders traveled to Lakes Erie and Ontario, where they constructed the brigs and gunboats that would be used to defend the Niagara frontier. In New York City, shipbuilders equipped privateers; from 1812 to 1813, when New York was fully blockaded by the British, about 125 privateers operated out of New York.[14]

Like the embargo crisis of 1807-9, the British blockade of 1812-13 brought New York's economy to its knees. Hundreds of vessels stood empty along the waterfront, and shops and stores were closed. Unemployment was rampant, and, because of war profiteering, the prices of food and fuel climbed precipitously. After Napoleon abdicated in April 1814, New Yorkers realized that the British would be able to bring additional resources, previously committed to their war with the French, to bear against the U.S. By August 1814, an invasion through Lake Champlain seemed imminent.

When news arrived of the burning of Washington at the end of August, New Yorkers were on tenterhooks. However, two weeks later, when the British were repelled in Baltimore, the feeling of crisis abated. And in September, the victory of Captain Thomas Macdonough in the Battle of Lake Champlain eliminated the threat from the

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[13] Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898 (NY: Oxford University Press, 1999),423.
[14] Burrows and Wallace, Gotham, 425-6.

north.[15] On February 11, 1815, news of a peace settlement with the British reached New York City; Congress ratified the treaty only four days later. New York exploded with glee and plans for a final celebration:

> This Evening between 8 & 9 oclock the Joyfull sound of Peace was pronounced by the tocsin in our streets… to my greater surprise found the British Sloop of War *Lavorator* had arrived with… a Treaty of Peace, … many Houses Elumanated …. I hopes to have the pleasure of your Compy & Mrs Van Zandts to our Elumenation on Monday Evening. [16]

Portraits and Celebrations

New York City's symbolic response to the War of 1812 (the celebrations, dinners, illuminations, and the commissioning of portraits) stands in stark contrast to the City's political and economic interests. Despite the strongly voiced and very public anti-war sentiments of prominent political New Yorkers, only a few months after war was declared, the City began a round of incessant commemorative and festive activities to celebrate the victories and heroes of the war. And the commemoration of victories began in 1812, long before New York was directly threatened by invasion.

A review of the celebrations organized by the Common Council reveals a formulaic approach—a carefully followed recipe for celebration. The first element was the awarding of the Freedom of the City. The "Freedom of the City" was an ancient and jealously guarded privilege, usually recorded in an official certificate that originally carried with it the authorization to maintain a trade within the city limits.[17] While

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[15] Ibid., 426-8.

[16] James Stertens, Letter to Wynant Van Zandt, 11 February 1815, New York, describing spontaneous illuminations that evening and inviting Van Zandt to an "Eleumination" on Monday evening. Wynant Van Zandt Papers, New York Public Library.

[17] Later "Freedoms of the City" did not specify any rights, but gave a blanket license "to hold and enjoy all the Rights." For example, the text of the John Jay certificate from 1784 reads: "… the honorable John Jay Esquire is highly distinguished having in our own Convention—in our first Seat of Justice—as a Member and as President of the United States in Congress assembled—and as a minister Plenipotentiary both in Spain and France—executed the important Trusts committed to him with Wisdom Firmness and Integrity:

freemen customarily obtained their "freedom" through birth, it could also be obtained following the completion of a seven-year apprenticeship.

During the colonial period the "Freedom of the City" was on occasion granted by the Common Council to "natural-born" subjects of the King or to immigrants who had been naturalized.[18] This custom of granting the "Freedom" as a boon or benefit continued after the Revolutionary War.[19] Granting the Freedom of the City was a means of recognizing outstanding services to the City, usually of a military nature, although L'Enfant was granted the Freedom for his work on Federal Hall, and Alexander Hamilton was given it for his service as Secretary of the Treasury.[20]

By 1784, New York had developed a particularly luxurious means of presenting the Freedom –placing the certificate in a gold snuffbox (Figure 39). The taking of snuff was originally an aristocratic fashion, and snuffboxes made of precious materials were traditional gifts of the European courts. While elaborately decorated and bejeweled snuffboxes were the custom in Europe, gold was itself a rare commodity in the U.S. It has been estimated that there were only about twenty gold snuffboxes made in America,

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and thus by a Series of eminent Services obtained the national Confidence and Esteem and universal Applause: Now therefore know ye that We …. by these Presents Do receive and admit him to be a Freeman of this his native City to hold and enjoy all the Rights Privileges Advantages and Immunities to the Freedom of the said City incidents or appertaining as a publick Testimony of the respectful Sentiments We entertain towards him and as a Pledge of our Affection, and of our sincere Wishes for his Happiness and Prosperity …. Jas Duane By order of the Common Council Robt Benson, clk." Important American Furniture, Silver, Prints, Folk Art and Decorative Arts, Thursday, 18, and Friday, 19 January 2001 (NY: Christie's, January 2001), 264. For information on Irish freedom boxes, see Ida Delamer, "Irish Freedom Boxes," Proceedings of the Silver Society 3 (Spring 1983), 19.

[18] Oscar T. Barck, New York City during the War for Independence (Port Washington, NY: Ira J. Friedman, Inc., 1966), 13 .

[19] Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1784-1831, I: 151.

[20] Ibid., I: 494-5; II: 132; see also Richard Varick, Letter to Alexander Hamilton, 30 April 1795, enclosing a "Certificate…admitting You to the Freedom of this City;" in The Papers of Alexander Hamilton, ed. Harold C. Syrett (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961-1987), XVIII: 336-7.

almost all by New York City craftsmen.[21] Despite the expense and rarity of gold, the men who received their Freedoms during the War of 1812 were given them in a gold snuffbox. The presentation of the Freedom in a gold box became a standard part of New York's salute to the heroes of 1812.[22]

Illuminations were also part of the celebrations organized around the heroes of the War of 1812.[23] In addition to relying on more affluent New Yorkers to light their houses with candles and lamps[24] to celebrate the nation's victories, the Council ordered the New City Hall illuminated (Figure 40). Such efforts, which might include "transparent paintings," painted on materials thin enough to permit light to shine through, were not inexpensive.[25] One such illumination of City Hall in honor of Commodore Perry's victory cost $190.[26] Given the extreme financial difficulties faced during the war, New

[21] Of the five gold boxes created by Samuel Johnson in the 1784 commission, only two survive: the one presented to Steuben, which is in collection of Yale University Art Gallery; and the second which was presented to John Jay(the other three were for George Washington, George Clinton, and the Marquis de Lafayette). These later boxes are engraved with the Seal of the City designed in 1784: a globe surmounted by an eagle tops the City Seal, which was impressed with emblems representing the original industries of the city, the two flour barrels and two beavers divided by the sails of a windmill. In addition to the two Johnson boxes, there is one by Charles Le Roux presented to Alexander Hamilton in 1735 (now at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania), another by Otto Paul Paul de Parisien which was presented to British Lieutenant General Thomas Gage in 1773; one by Jacob Hurd, circa 1735 (now at Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) and another by Myer Mayers, circa 1750. Important American Furniture, 264-8. It is unclear from the Council Minutes if Samuel Johnson was the goldsmith for all five boxes. A warrant was paid to him on November 11, 1784; two subsequent warrants are made out to William W. Gilbert, an Alderman. It is possible that Gilbert advanced the funds for the three additional boxes and was then reimbursed. See Warrants No. 216 and 220, December 8, 1784 and January 18, 1785. The total amount paid for the five boxes was approximately £160.

[22] MCC, VII: 333, 391, 578; VIII: 59, 62, 88

[23] The occasional interdiction of illuminations suggests that they were a standard practice. In one instance, the Common Council suggested that Citizens "refrain from illuminating their Houses…a practice dangerous in occasioning Fires uselessly expensive to the poor and calculated to produce disorder." Ibid., VI: 334.

[24] See Richard Daniel Altick, The Shows of London (Cambridge, MA and London: Belknap Press, 1978), 94-5, for a discussion of illuminations and transparent paintings in London.

[25] See also Rita Susswein Gottesman, The Arts and Crafts in New York, 1800-1804. Advertisements and News Items from New York City Newspapers (New York: New-York Historical Society, 1965), 43-45, for earlier examples of these descriptions.

[26] MCC, VII: 603.

York's expenditures on these types of celebrations demonstrates a remarkable fiscal commitment to the symbolic expression of the city's support for the nation's new heroes.

Public celebrations of the heroes of 1812 also included public banquets.[27] Since the revolution, the Common Council had held public dinners to celebrate patriotic occasions—the 4th of July, the Evacuation of the British, and Washington's Birthday. Although such dinners were not open to the general public, they were typically reported upon in the press. The full list of attendees, the "program of speakers," and a complete account of the after dinner toasts would be part of the newspaper story. Such accounts provided a window into the New York City political and social scene: who was associating with whom and the political tenor of the toasts was the "subtext" of these reports.

Like these earlier occasions, the patriotic celebrations around the War of 1812 were also consistently reported in the daily papers of the period. The accounts included news of naval victories, usually reprinted numerous times, and often including items taken from other newspapers in other states. News of victories was frequently accompanied by carefully timed advertisements for patriotic spectacles such as the Naval Panorama at Scudder's Museum, the illuminations at the American Museum, or the staging of "brilliant Naval Victories" at the Park Theatre.

Also accompanying this news, or close on its heels, was a notice entitled "In Common Council"[28] that regularly appeared in the New-York Evening Post. This column duly recorded the resolutions of the Council, publicizing how the City honored its

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[27] The dinners for Bainbridge, Chauncey, Macdonough, Perry, Hull and Brown are listed in the DeWitt Clinton Diary, DeWitt Clinton Papers, New-York Historical Society.

[28] For "In Common Council," see New-York Evening Post, 16 September 1812, 17 December 1812, 5 October 1813, 30 September 1814, and 23 November 1814; for advertisements, see New-York Evening Post, passim., including 11 October 1813 and 28 September 1814.

nation's military and naval heroes. Council resolutions ordering public entertainments and portrait commissions were printed in full.[29] Even letters between Mayor Clinton and one of the honorees, Jacob Brown, were reprinted in the Post, providing a very public notice of Clinton's involvement with these commemorative acts.[30]

Notably, during this period the Mayor and the Common Council commissioned nine portraits to commemorate the victories[31] of a war that lasted a total of two years and eight months. The first portrait commission was in September 1812; the last on November 6, 1815—if averaged out, a portrait was commissioned every three and one-half months. This acquisition rate should be contrasted with the Common Council's previous commissions. From 1790 to 1804, only two portraits were acquired—an average of one every seven years, while from 1804 to 1812, ten portraits were acquired—an average of one every ten months.

In addition to this increased rate of acquisition, we must account for the size of the War of 1812 portraits. With the exception of the bust portrait of Jonathan Williams commissioned during this period, all were full-length. Ranging from $400 to $500 in cost, full-length portraits were substantially more expensive than portrait busts, which could average $100. Added to the cost of the portraits were additionalframing costs.

For example, on January 10, 1814, a warrant was issued for a payment of $102 to Thomas Sully for the bust portrait of Colonel Williams. The following month, J.D. Vecchio was paid $35 for a frame. Later that year, on September 12th, a warrant was

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[29] Ibid., 17 December 1812, where the reporting includes notice of a Public Naval Dinner at the Tontine Coffee House, to be followed by a Naval Ball.
[30] Ibid., 21 November 1814.
[31] Although the Common Council's commission of a portrait of Andrew Jackson was in part due to his role in the War of 1812, the February 1819 commission is so much later that it falls outside the scope of this discussion.

issued to pay Sully $500 for his full-length portrait of Stephen Decatur. A frame by Vecchio with "ornaments" came to $170.[32] The investment in full-length portraits represented a substantial financial obligation by the Mayor and Common Council.

Nor were such commissions typical of all municipalities. The Baltimore Mayor and Common Council commissioned the only comparable collection of portraits of the heroes of 1812. Politically, Baltimore's commissions made sense, since the War of 1812 found its most fervent advocates in the citizens of Baltimore, whose violent riots against Federalists, and anyone suspected of British sympathies, reached their climax in the summer of 1812.[33] These brutal demonstrations earned Baltimore the epithet the "Paris of America,"[34] not for the city's culture, but for its "Jacobin" excesses.

Painted by Rembrandt Peale in 1819, the six portraits commissioned by Baltimore were half-lengths.[35] With the exception of a half-length of Andrew Jackson, Baltimore's portraits depicted local politicians and military heroes involved with the defense of Baltimore and the Chesapeake Bay. Three aspects distinguish the Baltimore portraits from the New York City Hall collection: the relatively late date of the portraits, painted four years after the conclusion of the war; the particular focus of the portraits on local heroes; and their substantially smaller size, which meant a much smaller expenditure on the part of municipal government.

DeWitt Clinton and the War of 1812 Portraits

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[32] MCC, VII: 665, 684; VIII: 52, 84-5.

[33] The Baltimore Riots, aimed at suppressing the Federalist and dissident press in Baltimore, no doubt had a similar effect on Federalists that the Alien and Sedition Acts had on Republicans; that is, to strengthen their convictions against their political opponents.

[34] The Newport Mercury, 8 August 1812, quoted in Hickey, War of 1812, 68.

[35] These include portraits of Samuel Smith, George Armistead, John Stricker, Joshua Barney and Edward Johnson, now in the collection of the Maryland Historical Society.

During the summer and fall of 1812, Mayor Clinton was involved in a close battle for the presidency. But despite the national campaign, and Clinton's moderate anti-war stance, the Mayor found time to be directly involved with the commissioning of the War of 1812 portraits. Clinton's Diary and correspondence throughout this period reflect his participation in the celebrations, dinners, and the portrait commissions. For example, on December 17, 1812, Clinton informed the Council that Commodore Stephen Decatur was expected to arrive in the port of New York City, and then "presented the following Resolutions for their consideration:"

> Resolved that the freedom of the City in a gold Box be presented to Commodore Decatur and that his Portrait be procured and set up in the Gallery of portraits belonging to the City…And [that]…a Committee to make suitable arrangements…for a public Dinner …That Brigdr Genl Morton be requested to cause a national salute to be fired by a Detachment from his Brigade. That the Vessels in the Harbour hoist their colors Mast high and that the Bells in the City be rung for one hour on the occasion.[36]

Clinton's participation in these events seems to have arisen from, at least in part, an interest in establishing his military credentials. After the formal declaration of war, Clinton sought an army commission[37] based on his militia service.[38] Although the Council of Appointment granted him a commission at the rank of major general, he was denied an active command.[39] Unable to serve in the military, Clinton sought other ways of demonstrating his patriotic fervor and establishing his military qualifications.

This seems to have been the rationale for Clinton application for admission to the New York Chapter of the Society of the Cincinnati in the fall of 1813. Because his

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[36] MCC, VII: 333-34.
[37] Hosack, Memoir of Clinton, 52
[38] He had joined the militia in 1794, later rising to the rank of Major. Dorothie Bobbé, DeWitt Clinton (Port Washington, NY: Ira J. Friedman, Inc., 1962), 61.
[39] Evan Cornog, The Birth of Empire: DeWitt Clinton and the American Experience, 1769-1828 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 102.

brother Alexander had died without issue, Clinton noted that he might "agreeably to the rules of the Institution be considered his representative."[40] As his brother Alexander had died decades ago,[41] the decision to join the Society may be ascribed to the political advantages for Clinton at this moment in time. Membership in the Society would establish his connection to the revolutionary generation, since membership was available only to those who had served in the revolutionary war, or were directly descended from those who had served. And membership in the Society, traditionally a Federalist stronghold, would strengthen his relationship with Federalists. [42]

Joining the militia and the Society of the Cincinnati, staging events, and commissioning portraits were effective though symbolic ways for Clinton to demonstrate his patriotism, his willingness to serve, and his support for the war. On December 8, 1813, Clinton and the Common Council dined with Commodore Bainbridge at Washington Hall, where they presented the Freedom of the City to him.[43] Clinton's awareness of the meaning behind these honors is articulated in his address during the presentation of the Freedom of the City:

> In rendering this tribute to merit we feel peculiar pleasure. While our local attachments are gratified with the distinguished conduct of a man whom we consider as a citizen of this place, our national feelings are elevated by that heroism & magnanimity.[44]

Clinton thus alludes to Bainbridge's local roots in his comments; but also evokes the "national feelings" that are the reason for this tribute.

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[40] DeWitt Clinton Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University.
[41] Alexandre Clinton died in a boating accident in 1787, while crossing in a ferryboat from Paulus Hook (Jersey City) to New York City.
[42] "Daily Mr. Clinton came in contact socially and culturally with those to whom he was politically anathema." Bobbé, Clinton, 197.
[43] DeWitt Clinton, Diary entry, 8 December 1813, DeWitt Clinton Papers, New-York Historical Society.
[44] Although Commodore William Bainbridge (1774-1833) was born in Princeton, N.J., he was the son of Dr. Absalom Bainbridge, a prominent New York physician. DeWitt Clinton Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University.

Clinton's comments suggest that the celebrations and tributes to the heroes of 1812 were a means of establishing a link between New York City and national events. A similar outlook was expressed in Clinton's *Introductory Discourse Delivered Before the Literary and Philosophical Society of New York* originally delivered on May 4, 1814 and published in March of the following year. This oration was an overview of the state of culture in New York and argued for the preeminence of the city as a cultural leader.[45]

Clinton reiterated this viewpoint before the last War of 1812 portrait was completed, when he expressed his vision of New York City as a new Athens in his *Discourse Delivered Before the American Academy of the Arts*, delivered on October 23, 1816.[46] In this *Discourse,* Clinton refers in particular to the City Hall portrait collection, which "by comprising many of the *principal heroes of the country* (my emphasis), is entitled to great praise in its tendency to stimulate to noble deeds."[47] The City Hall portrait collection does not consist of local heroes, but "heroes of the country;" Clinton's perspective was national, not local.

The Portrait Commissions

According to William Dunlap, the artist, playwright, and historian of early American art, the New York City Common Council had intended that Gilbert Stuart, then the foremost portraitist in the country, undertake the War of 1812 commissions. With the declaration of war, New York lacked a wide selection of trained and talented portrait

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[45] Kenneth R. Nodyne, "The Role of DeWitt Clinton and Municipal Government in the development of Cultural Organizations in New York City, 1803 to 1817" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1969), 77-83.
[46] Printed in full in Thomas S. Cummings, Historic Annals of the National Academy of Design (Philadelphia: George W. Childs, 1865), 8-17. See above Chapter 1 for a discussion of Clinton's speech.
[47] Ibid.,13.

painters. Trumbull was stranded in England, Vanderlyn remained abroad in Paris,[48] and Waldo was still a relative newcomer.[49] Stuart, who had established his reputation with his numerous portraits of Washington, seemed the appropriate successor.

Dunlap relates that New York City initially requested Stuart,[50] based in Boston at the time,[51] to paint both Hull and Bainbridge. Supposedly a clash of temperament between the painter and Bainbridge caused Stuart, sometimes a prickly character, to abandon the project.[52] Dunlap's comments have caused some to speculate that Jarvis visited Boston to take over the commission and even to conjecture that Jarvis painted his full-length portraits of Bainbridge and Hull using Stuart's canvases![53] However, apart from Dunlap's story, no documentation exists to indicate that the Council ever selected Stuart for the War of 1812 commissions.

John Wesley Jarvis, the painter of most of the portraits in this series, emigrated to the U.S. in 1785, settling first in Philadelphia and apprenticing to Edward Savage.[54] By

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[48] Vanderlyn's connection with Burr was unlikely to endear him to Clinton, who had fought some of his bitterest political battles against Burr's faction.

[49] He arrived in New York in 1809.

[50] "The voices of all in America who understood or loved the fine arts, would have called upon Gilbert Stuart to have fulfilled the views of the city of New-York, by perpetuating the resemblances, in form and character, of the defenders of the country; and he had already commenced the full-length of the first who began the career of victory, the conqueror of the Guerrière [Hull]; but from some misunderstanding with the officer, or with the corporation of New-York, or from some caprice of the eccentric painter, the work was discontinued." William Dunlap, History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States (George P. Scott & Co., 1834; reprint New York: Dover Publications, 1969), II, 131-2.

[51] Stuart had moved to Boston in 1805 at the invitation of Senator Jonathan Mason; he remained there until his death in 1828. The story is recounted in Dunlap's entry for June 23rd 1833; William Dunlap, Diary of William Dunlap (New York and London: Benjamin Blom, 1930; reissued 1969), 702. In his History, I: 273, Dunlap notes that Stuart had begun the full-length of Hull and was to start the Bainbridge shortly.

[52] The only portrait of Bainbridge by Stuart is a half-length portrait in a private collection, Boston. Commodore William Bainbridge File, Archives, U.S. Naval Academy Museum, Annapolis. By December of 1813, this portrait of Bainbridge was reproduced in an engraving by David Edwin printed in the Port Folio; Harold E. Dickson, John Wesley Jarvis, American Painter, 1780-1840 (NY: New-York Historical Society, 1949), 157

[53] Dickson, Jarvis, 173-7. While the discovery of a Stuart portrait in the City Hall collection would be dramatic, it is unclear how Jarvis might have managed to be paid for Stuart's work without so much as a peep from Stuart, and how the secret was never disclosed.

[54] The following biographical information comes from Dickson, Jarvis, passim.

the spring of 1802, Jarvis had already set up his own engraving business in New York, at 28 Frankfort Street, entering into a partnership with Joseph Wood the following year, and soon started to paint portraits. In 1809, advertisements appeared in the New-York Evening Post and Long Island Star listing the location of John W. Jarvis, Portrait Painter, at 1 Wall Street (Manhattan). After a period traveling south, Jarvis took up full-time residence again in New York, by January 1814 residing just opposite the New City Hall.[55]

According to Dickson, Mayor Clinton may have been introduced to Jarvis sometime in 1814, noting that on January 27, 1814, Jarvis had called on the Mayor.[56] Dickson suggests that Clinton, like other art-lovers, may have visited Jarvis's "picture-room" at 1 Murray Street, made popular by the addition of the scandalous painting of *Danaë* by Wertmüller.[57] Jarvis had acquired the painting after Wertmüller's death, and its risqué subject matter attracted gentlemen interested in art and the female form.[58]

Clinton might also have met Jarvis before 1814 through John Pintard, who had served as Alderman and later Clerk for the Common Council, and who was the founder of the New-York Historical Society. In 1809, Jarvis accompanied Pintard to Thomas Paine's lodgings in Grove Street in order to obtain a plaster cast of Paine's head for the New-York Historical Society. Jarvis was a logical choice for this task, as Paine had lodged with the painter from 1806-1807.[59] Jarvis's acquaintance with Pintard may have

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[55] His living and painting quarters were at 1 Murray Street. The painting room was on the ground floor, and living quarters were above. Ibid., 160.
[56] Ibid., 161.
[57] In 1815, Jarvis moved to 1 Warren Street (one block north of Murray Street, but still opposite City Hall on Broadway), in 1816, he was at 7 Lispenard Street (just south of Canal Street), and in 1817, he moved next door to 8 Lispenard Street, where he remained until 1820. See ibid., 337-340 for a full listing of Jarvis's addresses.
[58] Ibid., 166
[59] Ibid., 104.

been the reason for Jarvis's election to the membership of the New-York Historical Society: he was proposed for membership on August 17, 1813, and on October 12th he was voted in.

However, Clinton seems to have been acquainted with the painter before 1814. On October 8, 1813, two months before Jarvis first appears in Clinton's diary entry, Jarvis wrote to Mayor Clinton. In this previously unpublished letter, the painter requested that he be considered for one or more portrait commissions:

> The Common Council I find have agreed to do honour to Com Perry by having his portrait painted for the City. I therefore ~~offer~~ present myself as a candidate for the honour if other arraingments have not allready been made and I should be held in sufficient estimation as an artist to be intrusted with the undertaking. The circumstances that induce me to offer myself thus promptly are, first I wish to see it done let who will do it; secondly it is not probably he will be here very soon; and an accident may happen, and possibly do happen full an often to warriors as other men, it may be though necessary to send to him before the season becomes too far advanced. If I should be honoured by the preference I propose to go immediately not only to take his likeness but such characteristicks of the shores of the Lake, the Lake itself vessels &c as would be necessary accompanyments of a whole length picture of this kind which I think affords an excellent subject for a picture. I have a great desire to go there to take the leading features of the borders of our Country before the leaves fall from the trees also the portraits of Chauncy and Elliot and one or two others you may oblige me if you will let me have an answer as soon as more important concerns will permit. Let us not wait untill those we would honour are insensible to the Glories we would confer on them. One trophy erected to the living will inspire more ardour and display more generosity than a dozen monuments devoted to the dead. The glory of a funeral procession which conducts the victim of his valour to the tomb, is diminished in its grandeur by the gloom of the ceremony. Why should public gratitude allways appear in mourning. Why should the hero allways have to contemplate in gloomy prospect the tardy tribute of national sensibility poured upon his coffin and the long delayed laurel waving on his tomb. Your obedient Servant, John W Jarvis[60]

[60] DeWitt Clinton Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University

Jarvis's first meeting with Mayor Clinton is recorded briefly in Clinton's Diary a month before Dickson's date of January 1814: an entry of December 25, 1813 simply reads "Jarvis the Painter."[61]

Jarvis's direct approach to Clinton was plainly successful, as he was awarded six out of the nine portraits commissioned in commemoration of the war. Perhaps Jarvis's politics endeared him to Clinton, who was no doubt still smarting from his defeat in the Presidential election. On April 25, 1814, a cartoon by Jarvis appeared in the New-York Evening Post. Dr. Alexander Anderson, who engraved the cartoon, attested that Jarvis had made the original drawing, which shows "Little Jemmy" Madison in the grips of a gigantic turtle, a symbol of the embargo (Figure 41).[62]

Jarvis first appears in the Minutes of the Common Council on December 26, 1814, after he had obtained the commission for the Bainbridge portrait. On that date, a warrant was ordered for payment to: "J. Jarvis Portrait Comr Bainbridge on acct….[$]250.00,"[63] indicating that work on the portrait had either begun or was soon to begin. Barely two weeks later, in a diary entry dated January 16, 1815, Clinton writes: "Capt Hull & Commodore Perry went with them to Jarvis's."[64] Hull's portrait was completed by November 6, 1815, when Jarvis was paid $400; while Perry's portrait was completed before February 26, 1816, when Jarvis was paid $600 for it.

The dates suggest that Jarvis officially received the commissions for these two paintings in 1815, when Clinton brought the naval heroes to meet Jarvis. Certainly, by

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[61] DeWitt Clinton, Diary, DeWitt Clinton Papers, New-York Historical Society.
[62] It is possible he wrote the accompanying verses as well. The Terrapin, which grasps the President in his paws, declaims: "I'll lug Jemmy to the grave, Then trade and commerce shall be free, and sailors have their liberty," sentiments that may have sounded an echoing chord in Clinton's heart. Dickson, Jarvis, 162-3, plate 20; the cartoon and complete accompanying verses are reproduced in Benson J. Lossing's Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812 (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1868), 787.
[63] MCC, VIII: 115.
[64] DeWitt Clinton, Diary, DeWitt Clinton Papers, New-York Historical Society.

personally bringing two of the sitters to the artist himself, Clinton took a hands-on approach to the municipal portrait commissions.[65] After this visit, more than a year passed until Jarvis again appeared in Clinton's diary entry on January 20, 1816; at that point, DeWitt Clinton had decided to sit to Jarvis.[66]

The Portraits and the Sitters

The full-length portrait of Commodore William Bainbridge (1774-1833) was the first painting that Jarvis completed (Figure 42). Bainbridge had entered the merchant marines at the age of fifteen, was made Lieutenant Commandant in 1798, and promoted to Captain in 1800. Serving during the Barbary wars, Bainbridge was imprisoned for twenty months when the U.S.S. Philadelphia went aground off Tripoli. Upon his release he returned to the navy; when war was declared in 1812 he was commanding the Charleston Navy Yard.

Bainbridge's naval success occurred off the coast of Brazil. Having taken command of the *U.S.S. Constitution*, he met the British frigate H.M.S. *Java* on December 29, 1812. Superior American firepower and marksmanship triumphed; the gunners destroyed most of the rigging of the enemy and killed and wounded many crewmembers. After transferring the British to his ship, Bainbridge had the *Java* destroyed. Severely wounded in battle, Bainbridge received a gold medal from Congress in recognition of his bravery. After the war, he commanded the Philadelphia Navy Yard, where he served until his death.[67]

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[65] A similar notation appears on February 8, 1816: "Called on Genl Brown & went with him to Col Trumbull's & Mr Jarvis's."

[66] Entries for 1816 are January 20, February 8, 9, June 4, October 17, 18, 19, 28, November 1, 20; for 1817 they are January 3, 9, April 23, June 24; for 1819, they are February 23 and June 1st.

[67] Marguerite McAneny, "Monograph on the Life of Commodore Bainbridge, for the Bicentennial Celebration of the Birthday of Commodore William Bainbridge, May 5, 1974, Bainbridge House,

The news of Bainbridge's victory reached New York on February 18, 1813; two weeks later, on March 1st, the Common Council resolved:

> In testimony of the high sence (sic) entertained by the Common Council of the gallantry & skill of Commodore Wm Bainbridge and his officers and Crew on board the United States Frigate Constitution in the late capture and destruction of His Britannic Majesty's Frigate, the Java, whereby new laurels have been acquired by our gallant navy; and a new instance afforded of the practical utility of that kind of defence for the protection and encouragement of the important commercial interests of our Country: therefore Resolved that the freedom of the City in a gold Box be presented to Commodore Bainbridge, and that his portrait be obtained and set up in the Gallery of portraits belonging to this City[68]

Bainbridge is shown on the deck of a ship in full naval regalia. Grasping his unsheathed sword with his right hand, he faces the viewer squarely, left hand on his hip. Bainbridge's left foot is placed on a case of cannonballs before him, his weight shifted onto his right leg, his chin slightly lifted he gazes out, beyond the viewer. Behind Bainbridge, on his right is the back of a cannon, showing the fuse and the mounting. To his left and directly behind he is surrounded with robustly billowing smoke.

Correspondence between the Corporation and Bainbridge indicates that he did not visit New York until December 1813, nine months after the Council had passed their resolution. On the 8th of December, DeWitt Clinton, whose undated draft of an "Address to Commodore Bainbridge on presenting him the freedom of the City in December 1813" can be found among his papers, presented the certificate personally to Bainbridge. [69] It is

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Princeton, N.J.," unpublished manuscript (photocopy), William Bainbridge File, United States Naval Academy Museum, Annapolis.

[68] MCC, VII: 391.

[69] DeWitt Clinton Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University; see also diary entries for December 7, 8, 1813, DeWitt Clinton, Diary, DeWitt Clinton Papers, New-York Historical Society.

possible that Bainbridge sat for the portrait while in New York during the month of December.[70] However, Jarvis's painting was not completed until a year later.

The portrait was completed before December 22, 1814, when DeWitt Clinton noted that he "went to see Jarvis's Bainbridge & Wertmuller's Danae."[71] The first of two payments was issued four days later, on December 26, 1814; the second on January 9, 1815. [72] Although the portrait must have been substantially completed by then, the warrant reads to "J. Jarvis Portrait Comr Bainbridge on acct…. 250.00;" the second reads to "J W Jarvis for Comr Bainbridge Picture in full…. 250.00."[73]

An undated and unsigned bust study by Jarvis, in the collection of the United States Naval Academy Museum, was probably completed when Bainbridge was in New York in 1814 (Figure 43). Clearly the study for the City Hall portrait, the position of the head, twisted slightly to the left, the focus of the eyes, and the background treatment with a lighter area directly behind the head all indicate that Jarvis used this bust as the basis for his full-length painting. Several scholars have also remarked upon the similarity of this study to Gilbert Stuart's portrait of Bainbridge.[74] Dickson suggests that Jarvis may have seen Stuart's *Bainbridge* and *Hull* during a visit to Boston in the fall of 1814. However, it is just as likely that Jarvis saw David Edwin's engraving after Stuart,[75]

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[70] An undated and unsigned bust study for this portrait is in the collection of the United States Naval Academy Museum. Dickson, Jarvis, 174-177, suggests that Jarvis's *Bainbridge* owes a great deal to Gilbert Stuart, and that Jarvis saw Stuart's *Bainbridge* and *Hull* during a visit to Boston in the fall of 1814.
[71] DeWitt Clinton, Diary, DeWitt Clinton Papers, New-York Historical Society, quoted in Dickson, Jarvis, 174.
[72] This chain of events also suggests the strong control exercised by Clinton over the portrait commissions during his tenure as Mayor.
[73] MCC, VIII: 115, 123-4.
[74] Now in the *USS Constitution* Museum, Boston; Theodore Bolton and George C. Croce, Jr., "John Wesley Jarvis, An Account of his Life and the First Catalogue of his Work," The Art Quarterly I, no. 4 (Autumn 1938), 305, note that "the subject's head is, curl-for-curl, suspiciously like that of Stuart's."
[75] "Portrait List," photocopy, William Bainbridge File, United States Naval Academy Museum.

prepared and published by December 1813 (Figure 44). This popular image of the hero would have been a logical starting point for his portrait.

Although the Bainbridge portrait was the first that Jarvis completed, the Council had already issued several resolutions commissioning other portraits, the first of which was a portrait of Captain Isaac Hull (Figure 45). Hull (1773-1843) was born in Derby, Connecticut into a seafaring family. Throughout the mid-1790s he commanded several merchant vessels, and in 1798 was commissioned a Lieutenant in the new United States Navy. Hull served on board the frigate *Constitution* in the Quasi-War with France, and then traveled to the Mediterranean in 1802 during the conflict with the Barbary, receiving promotion to the rank of Master Commandant in 1804 and Captain in 1806. In 1809 and 1810, Hull was successively given command of the frigates, *Chesapeake*, *President* and *Constitution*. Following his renowned victory over the British in 1812, Hull took over leadership of the Portsmouth Navy Yard at Kittery, Maine, and then commanded the Boston Navy Yard.

The occasion for the portrait commission of Hull was the defeat and capture of the British frigate *Guerriere* by the *U.S. S. Constitution*, under Hull's command. Although Madison and his administration had predicted an easy victory in Canada, the army had failed miserably on all three fronts, losing ground to the British in the Northwest, making no progress in the campaign along the St. Lawrence River, and surrendering at Detroit, Frenchtown, and Queenston. Hull's brilliant victory must be placed against this gloomy background.

After taking on supplies, the *Constitution* sailed from Boston and on August 19th encountered the British 49-gun frigate. Firing on them relentlessly, Hull's guns tore the

ship to pieces, leaving no choice but surrender. The ship was so severely damaged that the Americans made no attempt to salvage it, but removed her crew, set it ablaze, and sunk it.[76] New Yorkers enthusiastically greeted Hull's triumph at sea[77]. Not only was his victory a relief from the incessant disasters of the army's campaigns, naval victories supported the Federalists contention that a strong navy was fundamental to the successful defense of trade. Less than three weeks after the victory, on September 7th, the Common Council unanimously passed the following resolution:

> The Common Council of the City of New York considering a Naval establishment all important to the protection of our commerce and to the defence (sic) of our Country, and viewing the recent capture of the British Frigate *Guerriere*, by the American Frigate Constitution, as not only illustrating the advantages of a Navy but as reflecting the highest honor on the entrepidity (sic) and skill of Captn Hull his Officers and crew, Esteem it their duty as the Municipal Government of this great Commercial City to express their sentiments on this occasion and to present the thanks of the Citizens of New York to the gallant officers and Seamen who achieved (sic) this brilliant victory. And they further Resolve that the freedom of the City be presented to Captain Hull, in a Gold Box with an appropriate inscription, And that His Honor the Mayor be requested to forward the same with a coppy (sic) of this Resolution[78]

The choice of language in the resolution is particularly striking, as it prioritizes the protection of commerce and then the defense of the nation. Moreover, the Council preferred to emphasize that they judged it their duty as "the Municipal Government of

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[76] Hickey, War of 1812, 80 90, 94.

[77] They were not alone. Diplomat Jonathan Rusell commemorated Hull's victory in verse. See Lawrence S. Kaplan, "Jonathan Russell and the Capture of the Guerrière," The William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd. Series, vol. 24, no. 2 (April 1967), 284-7. Hull's popularity was also acknowledged by Connecticut. While Trumbull was not commissioned to create portrait of Hull, he was asked by Oliver Wolcott to furnish the best specimens of "an elegant sword and pairs of Pistols," as the Connecticut State Assembly planned to make "honorary tokens [to commemorate] the virtues…of Commodore Isaac Hull." Oliver Wolcott Letter to Col. John Trumbull, 25 November 1817, Printed Books and Manuscripts including Americana and Recently Discovered Manuscripts by Ernest Hemingway (NY: Christie's, May 19, 2000 auction, Lot 150), on line catalog accessed 26 March 2004, ArtFact, http://www.artfact.com/catalog/viewLot, Internet. The sword and pistols are now in the collection of the Department of the Navy. Commodores Thomas Truxton and Stephen Decatur and the Navy of Their Time, (Washington, D.C.: Truxton-Decatur Naval Museum, Spring-Summer 1950), 37-9.

[78] MCC, VII: 247-8.

this great Commercial City" to recognize Hull's intrepid behavior. Commerce was the driving force behind Council's expression of appreciation.

The Freedom of the City was presented to Captain Hull on December 28, 1812, at which point Mayor Clinton again reiterated the Common Council's concern:

> Deeds of valor and achievements of glory are, at all times, cherished by patriotism and rewarded by true policy; but when we consider that our recent victories on the ocean …have been the principal means of establishing our navy on a respectable and permanent basis, it must be universally admitted that the actors in these scenes of heroism are pre-eminently entitled to the gratitude of our country. *That Commerce is essential to our prosperity, that it cannot flourish without protection, and that it cannot be protected without a navy* are truths too evident to be denied and two (sic) important not to be appreciated by the intelligence and public spirit of America.[79]

The copy of the freedom of the City presented to Hull was an ornately calligraphied certificate, signed by the Mayor, and placed in a gold box with an enamel painting of his ship.[80] However, the Council omitted to commission a portrait until a week later, when on September 14th they resolved:

> that as an additional tribute of respect from this Corporation to Captain Hull he be requested to honor them with a sitting for his portrait to be deposited in the picture Gallery of the City Hall and transmitted to posterity as a memorial of the high sence (sic) entertained by this Corporation of the brilliant victory[81]

Jarvis shows Hull in uniform, his legs apart, standing at the helm onboard his ship, actively in command. His open left hand rests next to a spyglass atop a large brass compass, while his right hand touches the pommel of his sword. The Captain's hat lies on the deck next to Hull, forgotten in the heat of the moment. Like the portrait of

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[79] My emphasis; ibid., 340-341.
[80] The Freedom of the City of New York, and the cover of the gold box in which it was presented to Hull may be seen in the catalogue Isaac Hull: A Forgotten American Hero (Annapolis: U.S.S. Constitution Museum), 1983, 26-27.
[81] MCC, VII: pp. 253-4.

Bainbridge, Jarvis surrounds Hull's figure with the smoke of battle, obscuring the background, and serving to frame his figure.

The next portrait commission followed hard on the heels of the first. Mayor DeWitt Clinton, meeting with the Common Council on December 17, 1812, informed the members that he had received an official account of the capture of the British frigate Macedonian by the U.S. frigate United States. He anticipated the arrival of Commodore Stephen Decatur momentarily with his prize, and presented the following resolutions that were unanimously approved:

> In testimony of the high sense which the Common Council entertain of the gallantry, skill and patriotism of the Captain, Officers, and Crew of the Frigate United States in the capture of the British Frigate Macedonian, an event which has added new laurels to the triumphs of American heroism, and which is all important to the great commercial Interests of the Union in its practical illustration of the utility and its enforcement of the necessity of a Navy. Resolved that the freedom of the City in a gold Box[82] be presented to Commodore Decatur and that his Portrait be procured and set up in the Gallery of portraits belonging to the City.[83]

Commodore Decatur (1779-1820) was one of the most celebrated naval leaders of the U.S..[84] A hero of the Barbary War with Tripoli, Decatur was born in Sinepuxent (now Berlin), Maryland. His father had commanded privateers during the War of Independence, and served as a captain in the Quasi-War with France. Decatur entered the navy as a midshipman in 1798, was promoted to lieutenant one year later. Due to his daring actions in Tripoli, he became Captain at the age of twenty-five.

Following the declaration of war in 1812, Decatur joined a squadron led by Commodore Rodgers from New York, and took part in the capture of seven British ships.

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[82] This box is now in the collection of the United States Naval Academy Museum.
[83] MCC, VII: 333-334.
[84] His early life and personal relationships are discussed in W.M.P. Dunne's "Pistols and Honor: The James Barron-Stephen Decatur Conflict, 1798-1807," The American Neptune 50, no. 5 (Fall 1990), 245-259.

His exploits in this battle resulted in Congress voting him a gold medal, and several cities honored him with banquets, swords and silver.[85] After the war, Decatur resided in Washington, D.C., where he was killed in a duel with Captain James Barron in 1820.[86]

The Corporation invited Thomas Sully to paint Decatur's portrait. Born in England into a theatrical family (both parents were actors), Sully emigrated with his family to the U.S., traveling south after the death of his mother. By 1801, Sully (1783-1872) had begun his career as a professional portrait painter.[87] His lifetime production of more than 2,600 paintings, most of which were portraits, is staggering. Prior to his City Hall commissions, Sully had visited New York in May 1806, and set up a studio in a corner of the coffee room of the Park Theatre.[88] Sully studied briefly under Trumbull, working as his studio assistant until December 1807, when the Embargo drove him to seek a change of venue. In 1809 he traveled to England and studied with West, returning in 1810 and establishing himself in Philadelphia.

Upon the invitation of the Corporation of the City of New York, Sully visited the city and painted the Decatur portrait there, again using the Park Theatre Coffee Room as a studio:

> At 7 o'clock [July 8, 1814] took a hackney coach with Col. Jonn Williams [of West Point] and departed for New York; being requested by the City Council to paint a whole length of Decatur for their Hall. Arrived

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[85] For information on Decatur's presentation silver see A Silver Tribute to Valor (Washington, D.C.: Decatur House, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1981); "The Museum's Newest Acquisitions," Philadelphia Maritime Museum Annual Report (1979-80), 8, and Joan Sayers Brown, "Silver and gold owned by Stephen Decatur Jr.," Antiques Magazine (February 1983), 399-405. Brown, p. 404, notes that the gold box presented by New York was manufactured in France in 1798. It then would have been engraved in New York.

[86] Commodore Stephen Decatur file, United States Naval Academy Museum, Annapolis, 1-6.

[87] Monroe Fabian, Mr. Sully, Portrait Painter, The Works of Thomas Sully (1783-1871) (Washington, D.C.: National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983).

[88] Dunlap, Diary, 695. This was the same Theatre where Trumbull had exhibited his paintings in 1805.

> Saturday, 9th, to dinner. Mr. Price kindly lent me the Coffee room of the Theatre for a painting room.[89]

According to Sully's Register, he began work on the portrait three days later, on July 12th, completing the painting in September.[90] When painting him, Sully noted, "he was a very impatient sitter, although a most gentlemanly man… he had very much of a French face, with a long nose."[91] Sully's portrait of Decatur (Figure 46) shows him standing alert, with his left foot slightly advanced and at a right angle from his other leg, his right side towards the viewer, and his face turned slightly towards the front. His right hand is supported on the hilt of his sheathed sword,[92] the point of the scabbard on the ground, and his left rests near a portfolio on the pedestal of a fluted column. In front of him are seen Castle Williams[93] and New York Bay, with a ship in the distance.

However, Sully's contemporaries did not judge the portrait a success. Dunlap notes that: "Mr. Sully's *Decatur* is not the happiest effort of his genius or pencil."[94] John Pintard echoed his criticism in a letter dated May 18, 1818 to his daughter Eliza:,

> Yesterday afternoon we went to the academy…By courtesy the Corporation & principle members were invited to a private view…Mr Sully of Phila …is an artist of distinguished merit, but he has failed…in a very inferior likeness of Comm Decatur taken for our Corporation.[95]

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[89] Thomas Sully Diary, quoted in Dickson, Jarvis, 172.
[90] Edward Biddle and Mantle Fielding, The Life and Works of Thomas Sully (Lancaster, PA: Philadelphia, 1921), 137. See also Register of Paintings executed by Thomas Sully between 1801-1871, Transcript, p. 27, Thomas Sully Papers, Archives of American Art.
[91] Biddle and Fielding, Life of Sully, p. 25.
[92] This may be Decatur's presentation sword, given to him by the City of Philadelphia on 14 February 1813, made by Philip Hartman, Philadelphia; now in the collection of the United States Naval Academy Museum.
[93] The inclusion of Castle Williams connects this portrait to the only other painting by Sully in the City Hall collection, that of Colonel Jonathan Williams (see below).
[94] Dunlap, History , II: 131.
[95] John Pintard, Letters from John Pintard to his Daughter, Eliza Noel Pintard Davidson, 1816-1833 (New York: New-York Historical Society, 1940), I: 121-2. Pintard did not think much of Sully's work. In the same letter, he notes that both Sully and Waldo were at work on portraits of Dr. Boudinot: "That of Sully is totally unlike, tho' an admirable painting. He is drawn in a Methodist John Wesley Wig, with unkept locks wh[ich] masks his noble front…Waldo at my instigation draws him as nature made him & the portrait will be a noble faithful resemblance." Ibid., 122.

In 1816, two years before the exhibit of which Pintard wrote, Sully had already heard of the general disapproval of his portrait. Back in Philadelphia, he wrote the Common Council requesting that they return the portrait to him "and engaging that he will return to the Common Council free from all expense another portrait which he trusts will be more satisfactory to them." [96] The Council agreed to Sully's request on October 7, 1816; however, no record exists of what changes were made to the portrait, though it seems likely that these changes would have been completed before Pintard's comments two years later.

In addition to the full-length portrait for the City Hall collection, Sully completed four additional paintings of Decatur, including a half-length portrait painted the same year for Stephen Price, the manager of the Park Theatre, where Sully had set up shop.[97] However, even Price seems to have been dissatisfied with Sully's *Decatur*. In 1815, when New York City planned another tribute to Decatur, manager Stephen Price employed Jarvis to decorate the exterior of the theater. On the evening of the planned event, he advertised as part of his presentation a naval transparency "emblematical of his [Decatur's] successes during his glorious cruise" and "painted by Mr. Jarvis"[98] that would be suspended from the cornice of the theater. It is likely that Price commissioned

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[96] "A Letter was received from Dr Hosack enclosing a Letter from Mr Thomas Sully of Philadelphia, in which he stated that having heard objections had been made by several persons to the Portrait of Comn Decatur painted by him for the Corporation and being desirous that a more perfect one may be made, requests that the present Portrait may be returned to him, and engaging that he will return to the Common council free from all expense another portrait which he trusts will be more satisfactory to them." MCC, VIII, 644 (entry for 7 October 1816).

[97] Biddle and Fielding, Life of Sully, 137; state that the Historical Society of Pennsylvania has Sully's original register of paintings, which lists five portraits of Decatur by Sully. These include one painted for Mr. S. Price, begun August 20, 1814, finished September 1814, bust; a small whole length, a study for the City Hall portrait; and a sepia portrait painted for a medal awarded him by Congress. Sully was paid $500 for the portrait on 12 September 1814; MCC, VIII: p. 52.

[98] New-York Evening Post, 14 November 1815.

a second half-length portrait of Decatur at the same time, this time by Jarvis (Figure 47).[99]

A comparison of Sully's *Decatur* with Jarvis's series of portraits reveals striking differences that may lie at the heart of the lukewarm reception by New Yorkers. In Sully's portrait, Decatur turns his body away from viewer, toward the harbor spread before him. With his body in profile, his face is in three-quarter view, and the hero looks out into the distance beyond us. His posture is erect and the placement of his feet is deliberate. John Neal, the early American art critic, noted that:

> I should prefer Mr. Sully, I think, to any other artist that I have known, if I wanted the portrait of a youthful, passionate, enthusiast…Mr. Sully [has] the poetry only of romance, in his pictures.[100]

Unlike Jarvis's more frontal postures, Sully's City Hall portrait is closer in concept to Trumbull's full-length portraits, with a sense of aloofness conveyed by the sitter's posture. As we will see, Jarvis consistently presents his sitters accessibly, head on, and in one instance even splayed across the canvas. Jarvis's men are "hail fellow well met" heroes, not reserved and proud gentlemen.

Perhaps the best known of Jarvis's naval portraits is the full-length of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry (1785-1819). Born in South Kingstown, Rhode Island, Perry was the child of Christopher R. Perry, who had served in the Revolution and in the navy during the Quasi War with France. Perry entered the Navy as a midshipman in 1799, and had brief tours of duty aboard the *Constitution* and *Constellation* before promotion to acting lieutenant during the Barbary War. Shortly after the declaration of

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[99] This portrait is now in the collection of the United States Naval Academy Museum, Stephen Decatur File, John Wesley Jarvis portrait, undated.

[100] Harold E. Dickson, ed., Observations on American Art, Selections from the Writing of John Neal (1793-1876) (State College, PA: Pennsylvania State College, 1943), 5.

war in June 1812, Perry was promoted to commander. The following year he was ordered to Erie, Pennsylvania, where in August he led his ten vessels into Lake Erie to confront the British force.

On September 10th the opposing forces sighted each other, and prepared for action.[101] Commanding the *Lawrence*, Perry moved in towards the British; however, his second in command on the twenty-gun *Niagara* held back from the battle. After two hours of fighting, Perry's crew had suffered 80 percent casualties. Refusing to surrender, he jumped into a small boat and rowed to the *Niagara*, escaping death despite the raging cannon fire around him. Taking command of the *Niagara*, Perry returned to the fray, eventually destroying the larger British vessels and bringing the enemy to their knees. Perry's coolness under fire had tipped the balance of power in favor of the U.S. by protecting the Northwest Territories. Many consider his victory the most important naval triumph on the Great Lakes.[102]

On October 4, 1813, the Common Council passed the following resolution:

> The Common Council have received with feelings of no ordinary Interest intelligence of the recent achievement of Commodore Perry on Lake Erie. An achievement which while it confirms the Character for valor hitherto sustained by our brave Tars, evinces the nautical skill of our naval Commanders. It would ill comport with the high sense which this brilliant deed has afforded to the Common Council of the City of New York were they to pass it over in silence. In testimony thereof of the high sense which the Common Council entertain of the valor and Skill displayed by Comdr Perry in his late discomfiture and Capture of the whole of the British Fleet on the Waters of Lake Erie. That the Freedom of the City be presented to Commodore Perry in a Gold Box and that he be requested to sit for his Portrait to be placed in the Gallery of Portraits of the Common Council…Resolved that His Honor the Mayor be requested to transmit a Copy of this Resolution to Commodore Perry.[103]

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[101] Hickey, War of 1812, 132-34.
[102] Ibid., 134. See also Oliver Hazard Perry File, United States Naval Academy Museum.
[103] MCC, VII: 577-8.

On October 10, less than a week later, Mayor Clinton forwarded the resolutions of the Council to Perry with his compliments.[104] Two weeks after the resolution was approved, the Council voted to celebrate Perry's victory with an illumination of City Hall on the following Saturday evening, from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. Having received the resolution from the Mayor, Perry wrote to Clinton that:

> The distinguished honor conferred on me by the Common council of the City of Newyork, (sic) in their approbation of my conduct on the 10th Sept. calls forth the warmest sentiments of gratitude. To perform to the best of my ability the duty I owe my country shall ever be my highest ambition—The request to sit for my portrait "to be placed in the gallery of portraits of the Common Council" is too high an honor not to be readily complied with. I beg Sir, that you will accept my thanks for the very flattering manner which you have communicated to me the resolution of the Common Council of the City of Newyork.[105]

Jarvis did not complete the portrait of Perry until February 26, 1816, [106] two-and-a-half years later.[107] He may have taken more time with it due to the complexity of the composition (Figure 48). In contrast with the more static portraits of Hull and Bainbridge, Jarvis illustrates the moment when Perry has just left the *Lawrence*, his decimated ship for the Niagara, barely visible in the right background. Though Perry still faces us squarely, his body is now all diagonals and motion.

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[104] DeWitt Clinton Letter to Commodore Perry, 10, October 1813, DeWitt Clinton Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University: "It is with peculiar pleasure that I transmit to you the enclosed Resolutions of the Common Council of this city expressive of their high sense of the glorious triumph of the American Squadron under your command—an event without parallel in the annals of our Country—which gives you distinguished rank among the celebrated men that reflect lustre upon the American Name and which have dispensed the blessing of security and tranquillity to a most important and extensive portion of the United States."

[105] Oliver Hazard Perry, Letter to DeWitt Clinton, Newport, 29 November 1813, Photostat, Oliver Hazard Perry File, City Hall Portrait Files, Art Commission of the City of New York.

[106] A warrant for "JW Jarvis Portrait Comr Perry by order Committee….600.00" was issued on 26 February 1816; MCC, VII: 442.

[107] In the Minutes of 3 April 1815, there is a warrant for a frame for the Perry. Warrants dated 28 August 1815 and 25 March 1816 also exist for the frame for the Perry portrait. It would appear that the final warrant, one month after Jarvis received his payment for the painting, was the one that was paid.

Surrounded by three sailors without coats, Jarvis places Perry in a dynamic pose based on the *Borghese Warrior*, a cast of which was in the American Academy at the time.[108] Perry's open coat reveals a pistol thrust into his belt, and the diagonal of his sword reinforces the thrust of the right leg. His left foot, with bent knee, rests on a seat in the boat, while his right foot is on another; his right hand is a clenched fist, the only sign of strong emotion that Perry displays. His left hand points towards the Niagara in the right background. Despite the swirl of activity around him, Perry's expression remains cool and collected.

Behind Perry on the left is a sailor in a striped jersey, who with arms spread open, kneels in astonishment at Perry's valor.[109] In the foreground, though with his back to us so that his face does not distract from the central figure, another sailor guides the boat with an oar. The third sailor on Perry's left, with a red vest, pushes with a pike against the burning hulk of a ship visible in the immediate background, creating a counterbalancing diagonal to Perry's white clothed body.

Behind Perry is a banner with the words "Don't give up the ship." Captain James Lawrence had spoken those works on June 1, 1813, as he lay dying during battle with the British in the Chesapeake. Perry's ship, the *Lawrence*, was named for the dead Captain, whose funeral in New York City had been attended by more than 50,000 mourners.[110]

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[108] The original of the Borghese Warrior, by Agasias, is in the Louvre, Paris. The warrior is shown protecting himself from attack with his shield (not extant), which was probably bronze and at one time attached to the arm guard. Dickson, Jarvis, 189-90, makes this observation, and notes that a photocopy of a drawing by Jarvis of the cast may be found in the New-York Historical Society.

[109] According to Edmund Blunt, this figure, which urges Perry to get down and not expose himself to enemy fire, "is a correct likeness from Mr. Jarvis the painter." Edmund Blunt, Blunt's Stranger's Guide to the City of New-York (New York: J.Seymour, print., 1817), Dickson, Jarvis, 189, interpreted this comment as meaning that the sailor was actually a self-portrait of the artist.

[110] Hickey, War of 1812, 155-6.

Jarvis thus underscores the connection between the heroism of Perry and the martyred Captain Lawrence, whose words had become a watchword for the navy.[111]

Less than a month after the resolution recognizing Commodore Perry and commissioning his portrait, on November 1, 1813, the Common Council again determined to make yet another addition to the City Hall portrait collection. Although not a military or naval victor, Colonel Jonathan Williams' contribution to the defense of New York City was considered remarkable by the Council (Figure 49).

> The Common Council in consideration of the high sense they entertain of the important services rendered to this City by Coln Jonathan Williams in preparing and executing Plans of defence for this Port and as an evidence of the distinguished esteem that they entertain for his character and professional talents. Resolve that he be requested to sit for his likeness to be preserved in the Gallery of portraits belonging to the City and that the Clerk of the Common Council be authorized to see this Resolution carried into effect[112]

A week later, Colonel Williams enthusiastically communicated his willingness to sit, noting:

> I have had the honor of receiving an Extract from the Minutes of the Common Council…by which it appears they have not only favoured me with the most flattering approbation of the works of defence…but have also requested me to sit for my likeness to be preserved in the Gallery of portraits in this City. The usual Expressions of thanks for marks of distinction…would fall far short of a description of my feelings on this occasion; …I can only say, that my gratitude will have no other bounds than my existence.[113]

Williams (1750-1815) was born in Boston, a nephew of Benjamin Franklin.[114] In 1776, Williams traveled to Paris to join his uncle; he was immediately employed in

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[111] "Don't give up the ship" replaced "Free Trade and Sailors' Rights" as war's rallying cry. Ibid., 156.
[112] MCC, VII: 597.
[113] Ibid., 600.
[114] He was the son of the wealthy merchant Jonathan Williams and Benjamin Franklin's sister, Anne. See Thomas Sully Portraits for the United States Military Academy at West Point (Bayley Art Museum, University of Virginia, February 10-May 26, 1991), unpaginated.

shipping arms and supplies for the Revolutionary War. After the war he developed a successful career as a merchant until he was appointed by President Jefferson as inspector of fortifications at West Point in 1801. From 1807-1812 Williams designed and constructed Castle Williams on Governor's Island, one of the chief defenses of New York harbor.

Williams introduced a new casement system for guns in this three-story structure. Rather than placing the cannon on top of the structure, as in earlier forts, Williams had a hundred heavy guns in three tiers deployed out of windows. This system provided additional firepower, as well as protecting the cannon from enemy fire. With Williams' innovative design, the cannon at Castle Williams could lay down crossfire with both the West Battery and Fort Columbus (previously Fort Jay) on the East River[115]

Sully's half-length portrait shows Williams in uniform, a three-quarter view to the right. His right arm rests on a book and he holds a plan of the fortifications of Castle Williams in his right hand. A large man, Williams fills the field of this small painting, the first that Sully completed of him. Although the details of awarding the commission to Thomas Sully are unknown, he painted Williams' portrait in less than one month: his Register notes the portrait was begun on November 19, 1813, and completed December 13th.[116] On January 10, 1814, the Common Council issued a warrant to "T Sully for Portrait Coln Williams (By ord Bd)…$102.00." A month later, on February 7th, the portrait was framed and a warrant issued for payment to: "JD Vecchio Frame for Portrt Coln J Williams….[$] 35.00.[117]

[115] Burrows and Wallace, Gotham, 423.
[116] Sully, Register, Thomas Sully Papers, Archives of American Art, 25.
[117] MCC, VII: 665, 684.

Williams must have found the portrait satisfactory, as two years later Sully was given the commission for a full-length portrait of Williams for the United States Military Academy at West Point (Figure 50).[118] This later full-length shows Williams seated with his right hand on some papers. However, now Williams is shown in a three-quarter view to the left by an open window. The full-length format is less compressed, and Williams seems more at ease. As in the full-length portrait of Decatur painted in 1814, Sully placed Castle Williams in the background of this full-length painting (Figure 51).

It is not known if Williams was involved in Sully obtaining the Decatur commission. Sully noted that Williams traveled with him to New York when he left to undertake the 1814 Decatur commission; however, Williams like Sully lived in Philadelphia and the evidence is inconclusive. However, it would be tempting to see the use of Castle Williams in the Decatur portrait as a tribute to a friend.

Thomas MacDonough (1783-1825)[119] was the next naval hero to be recognized by the New York City Common Council (Figure 52). Born in Delaware, and orphaned by the age of eleven, MacDonough won a commission as a midshipman in the navy with the aid of his deceased father's political friends. After serving on the U.S.S. *Constellation* in the Mediterranean, and under Captain Decatur on the *Enterprise*, he returned home in 1806 with an impressive education in seamanship, navigation, and gunnery. During his service with Decatur, he took part in the destruction of the *Philadelphia,* an American ship that had been taken over by pirates, and the capture of

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[118] According to Sully's register, this portrait was painted February 14, 1815 to May 1815; Biddle and Fielding, Life of Sully, 321. Williams died May 1815; it is likely that this portrait of him is also from life, as two related studies survive, a watercolor sketch and a drawing. See Fabian, Mr. Sully, plates 23-25. See also Thomas Hamilton Ormsbee, "The Sully Portraits at the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York," American Collector (September, 1940), unpaginated reprint.

[119] MacDonough's name is spelt Macdonough (he signed with both the large and small "d," and also appears as McDonough. I follow Hickey's and Lossing's spelling.

two Tripolitan gunboats, being mentioned for gallantry in later action. MacDonough was subsequently promoted to lieutenant and at the beginning of the War of 1812, given the command of a division of gunboats.

Then, in September of 1812, he was ordered to take charge of all U.S. vessels on Lake Champlain. Although the British had gained control of the lake in the summer of 1813, both nations had been building boats, and by September 1814, the U.S. was on an equal footing with the British.

On September 11, 1814, the two evenly matched fleets faced off. MacDonough, aboard the *Saratoga*, had anchored his fleet near Cumberland Head in Plattsburgh Bay, siting his ships to exploit his superior short-range firepower and draw the enemy closer. Although his ship was twice set ablaze by enemy fire, he managed to bring the *Saratoga* around by use of anchors that he had set before the battle. By turning, MacDonough was able to bring into play a fresh battery of guns and devastate the British with relentless cannon fire. The British attempted a similar maneuver, but without preset anchors they fouled their lines and came to a standstill. After two and a half hours of battle, the British surrendered, leaving the Americans in control of Lake Champlain.[120]

Two weeks after his victory, the Common Council met on September 26, 1814, and:

> Resolved that the freedom of the City in a gold Box be presented to Comre Macdonough and that his portrait be procured and be set up in the Gallery of paintings belonging to this City and that the thanks of the Corporation of this City be presented to his brave officers & crews—which passed unanimously and his Honor the Mayor was requested to forward a copy of the same to Comre Macdonough[121]

[120] Hickey, War of 1812, 190-2.
[121] MCC, VIII: 55

Two days later, Mayor DeWitt Clinton wrote to Commodore Macdonough at Plattsburgh, New York, enclosing the Council's resolution:

> Your recent naval victory in Lake Champlain must be considered as one of the most splendid & most important events of the war, whether we take into view the superiority of the Enemy's force, the skill & gallantry displayed or the intimate connexion of this great achievement with the effectual protection of the northern Frontier of this State & Vermont against the incursions of the Enemy. Amidst the numerous testimonies of the grateful feelings of your Countrymen, you will now receive the unanimous sense of the municipal authorities of this City and I beg leave to assure you that I consider it one of the most pleasing acts of my life to communicate to you this evidence of gratitude & regard & at the same time to express the sentiments of respect which I entertain for you & the gallant men who acted so gloriously under your auspices.[122]

MacDonough responded about two weeks later, in a letter dated October 13, 1814:

> I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 28th ult^{o} conveying to me the resolutions of the Honorable the Corporation of the City of N York. To meet the approbation of my country has always been my greatest ambition & this distingu[i]shed honor conferred on me by your Honorable Corporation is received with feelings of peculiar pride and gratification; permit me to return you my earnest thanks for the friendly expressions contained in your letter…[123]

Jarvis's portrait of MacDonough is consistent with his earlier portraits of Bainbridge and Hull. Like the other two naval officers, MacDonough is dressed in a blue coat trimmed with gold epaulets, white trousers, and black boots. His left arm rests against his hip, near his sheathed sword, and his gloved left hands holds the right glove. His right hand is extended slightly behind him, as though he is reaching for his hat, which he grasps in his hand. MacDonough wears the Society of the Cincinnati medal in his lapel, and a watch fob hangs from under his jacket. He is shown in a natural setting, with

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[122] For a draft of this letter, see DeWitt Clinton Letter to Thomas MacDonough, 28 September 1814, DeWitt Clinton Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University. The final version of the letter was printed in the Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1784-1831, VIII: 63. The only difference in the two letters is the use of "encomium" in the draft; it is replaced with "evidence" in the final version.
[123] MCC, VIII: 63.

rocks and trees on his right, and a view of Lake Champlain behind him. A frigate, probably the *Saratoga,* which flies the American colors over the British flag, is visible in the distance, shown with another frigate and smaller gunboat without colors. Dickson has noted that Jarvis's use of an outdoor setting differs from his earlier Bainbridge and Hull portraits, and may owe something to Trumbull's portraits of Washington and Clinton. However, Jarvis's more matter-of-fact manner is a far cry from Trumbull's heroic ideals. The portrait was completed by December 4, 1815, when a warrant was issued for payment to "J W Jarvis for Portrait Comr Mcdonough…. 400.00."[124]

After a string of portrait commissions that recognized the navy's role in protecting the commercial interests of the nation, the New York City Common Council finally recognized an army officer, Major General Brown (Figure 53).[125] Brown (1775-1828) was born of Quaker parents in Pennsylvania, and became a schoolteacher when his father lost his fortune. He became a farmer in 1809, and was appointed colonel of a regiment of militia. His farm prospered and the area became known as Brownsville. In 1811, the Governor of New York Daniel D. Tompkins commissioned him a brigadier general of the militia. After the war, Brown remained in the army, eventually rising to the post of general-in-chief.

The Niagara River was the scene of the heaviest fighting on the northern frontier, when Jacob Brown led 3,500 men into Canada on July 3rd. Surrounding Fort Erie, Brown's troops compelled the small British garrison stationed there to surrender, and then moved north to confront the main British force. Meeting the British in what came to

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[124] Ibid., 361. The portrait was later engraved by J.B. Forrest for the National Portrait Gallery (1836), I: plate 20, and by T. Gimbrede, reproduced in David McNeely Stauffer, American Engravers on Copper and Steel (New York, 1907), 1061; quoted in Dickson, Jarvis, 358.
[125] Lossing, Pictorial Field-Book of 1812, 607 8.

be known as the Battle of Chippewa, the Americans mounted a bayonet charge that broke the British right flank and forced them to retreat across the river.

Brown then moved his army across the river, and on July 25th again clashed with the British, this time near Niagara Falls. The Battle of Lundy's Lane wore on for five hours, with equally severe losses on both sides. Two weeks later, Brown's forces engaged the British at Fort Erie. This time, the Americans were victorious, with total American losses at about 130, while the British suffered 360 casualties or wounded and about 540 captured. The most critical outcome of the campaign was that the character of the militia, usually unreliable and poorly trained, had been redeemed.[126]

Little more than two weeks had passed since voting to commission a portrait of MacDonough when on October 10th the Council moved to recognize the "skill & entrepidity (sic) of the Hero of Chippewa & his brave companions in arms," and resolved that:

> As a tribute of respect to a gallant officer and his intrepid associates who have added such luster to our arms the Freedom of the City be presented in a gold Box to General Jacob Brown, that his portrait be obtained and placed in the gallery of portraits belonging to this City; and that the thanks of this Corporation be tendered to the officers & men under his command.[127]

The Mayor was asked to sent a copy of the resolutions to General Brown, which he did under cover of the following letter on October 14, 1814:

> In communicating to you the unanimous vote of the Common Council of this City respecting yourself & the gallant army under your command I am at a loss for adequate language to express the sentiments of satisfaction which I experience in this occasion. Without intending to express any opinion on antecedent events, I can with confidence assert that the exploits of the Army under your command on the Niagara Frontier have exalted our military character, have inspired public confidence, and have exhibited

[126] Hickey, Jarvis, 185-9.
[127] MCC, VIII: 59.

> skill, intrepidity and enterprise which would reflect honor on the soldiers of any Country. I pray you, Sir, to be assured of my undeviating regard & of the high respect

Brown replied on November 9th, thanking the Mayor and the Council for the "distinguished mark of honor conferred upon me, the value of which is not a little increased by the prompt & decisive manner in which it was awarded."[128] Clinton notes in his diary, that he received General Brown and "suite" on January 27, 1815; the Freedom of the City was conferred on him the next day, and a public dinner was held with the Common Council in his honor.[129]

Brown's portrait is similar to the Bainbridge, Hull, and McDonough portraits, though his pose has a stiffness that contrasts with the more urbane postures of the naval officers. Shown in uniform, wearing his hat, Brown grasps his drawn sword in his right hand and clenches his gloves in his left, up against his breast. His left foot is slightly advanced, with the knee bent, while behind him on the left is the Niagara Falls with clouds of billowing mist; the left background is occupied with a mounted orderly, who holds a saddled white horse ready for the General to mount. The portrait was completed by December 18, 1815, with a warrant issued for payment to "J W Jarvis for Portrait Genl Brown… 400.00."[130]

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[128] Ibid., 89. A photostat copy of the original letter is in the Jacob Brown File, City Hall Portrait Collection Files, Art Commission of the City of New York. This letter was the start of a long friendship, marked by the exchange of portraits between Clinton and Brown, both painted by Jarvis. On February 8, 1816, Clinton noted in his Diary, "Called on Genl Brown & went with him to Col Trumbull's & Mr Jarvis's. Sat for Jarvis." DeWitt Clinton Diary, New-York Historical Society. Presumably Brown would have sat around the same time. Dickson, Jarvis, 196-7, suggests that the Clinton portrait is the one now in the National Gallery; the Brown portrait was in the sitter's family in 1949. See also Jacob Brown, letter to DeWitt Clinton, December 18, 1814, DeWitt Clinton Papers, Columbia University, Butler Library: My Dear Sir, I have the satisfaction to acknowledge the receipt of yours of the 9th Inst. *I am at a loss to know what answer to return or how to express my sense of the obligation I feel under to you for the interest you appear to take for me*—as this is a private letter I may express to you my feelings." (My emphasis.)

[129] DeWitt Clinton, Diary, DeWitt Clinton Papers, New-York Historical Society.

[130] MCC, VIII: 376.

The following month, the Common Council again decided to commemorate another army officer (Figure 54). On November 21, 1814, Mayor Clinton presented the following resolution to the Council, which approved it unanimously:

> In testimony of the high sense which the Common Council entertain of the important services rendered to the United States & of the luster reflected upon the American character by the successful operations of a small army under the command of Genl Macomb acting in concert with a body of gallant militia hastily assembled from this State & Vermont against a powerful army commanded by the Governor General of Canada in person, whereby the Enemy was compelled to retreat into his own territory & our important Northern frontier was protected from his devastations. Therefore Resolved that the freedom of this City in a gold box be presented to Genl Macomb & that he be requested to sit for his portrait to be put up in the gallery of portraits belonging to this City, & that the thanks of the Common Council be presented to the officers & soldiers of the regular Troops & Militia who acted so worthily at that important crisis[131]

General Alexander Macomb (1782-1841) was the son of a fur merchant of Detroit who moved to New York when Macomb was still an infant. He became a member of the New York Rangers, a volunteer corps, and was subsequently attached to the army as a dragoon. After serving in the corps of engineers as a first lieutenant, he was sent to West Point, where he drafted a text on martial law. He was promoted to captain in 1805, supervised the erection of fortifications at the frontiers in 1808, and when the War of 1812 began he was placed in command of an artillery corp.

Macomb's most famous victory was at the Battle of Plattsburgh, a land action that took place at the same time that MacDonough was fighting on Lake Champlain.[132] After building up their forces in Canada, the British had traveled south along the western side of Lake Champlain intending to attack Plattsburgh. The army of more than 10,000 men halted on the north side of the Saranac River, waiting for support from the British fleet.

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[131] MCC, VIII: 88.
[132] Lossing, Pictorial Field-Book of 1812, 878.

Meanwhile, believing that the British would not attempt a major attack in this area, the Americans had moved 4,000 troops to Sackets Harbor. This left General Macomb with only 3,400 troops, many of whom were raw recruits, to protect Plattsburgh.

On September 11, 1814, while the British fleet engaged with the Americans on Lake Champlain, the British army (led by Canadian Governor-General George Prevost) attacked Macomb's forces. Crossing the Saranac River, a contingent of British routed the American militia, and then paused to wait for reinforcements from their main forces. At that point, Prevost, learning of the defeat on Lake Champlain, precipitously withdrew from battle, leaving Macomb in control of the field.[133]

The Common Council agreed that the gallant actions of Macomb, commanding a small force against the British Goliath, merited commemoration with the commissioning of his portrait. However, by September 1814, Jarvis was busy with four of the six full-length portraits for the City: Hull, MacDonough, Perry and Bainbridge. The Macomb portrait commission was awarded to a "relative newcomer"[134] Samuel L. Waldo.[135]

Born in Windham, Connecticut, Waldo (1783-1861) received his first formal art training in 1799 from Joseph Steward (1753–1822), and then moved to Litchfield. There he met the Congressman John Rutledge, who invited Waldo to Charleston, South Carolina, where he was able to obtain enough portrait commissions between 1803 and 1805 to pay for a trip to London. In 1806, he sailed for England with letters of introduction to West and Copley, and, like so many Americans before him, entered

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[133] Hickey, War of 1812, 190-194.
[134] Dunlap, History, I: 131-2.
[135] Dictionary of American Biography (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943-4), 333-334; Frederic Fairchild Sherman, "Samuel L. Waldo and William Jewett, Portrait Painters," Art in America 18, 81-86; Dunlap, History, II: 205-208; "Artist Biography, Samuel Waldo," The Crayon (New York, May 1861), 98-100; Waldo Lincoln, Genealogy of the Waldo Family (Worcestor, MA: Press of Charles Hamilton, 1902), I: 391-2.

West's studio. His way in London was smoothed by his friendship with John Trumbull,[136] who wrote letters of introduction on his behalf.

In London, Waldo shared lodgings with another American pupil of West, Charles Bird King (1785–1862), studied at the Royal Academy, and exhibited a portrait there in 1808.[137] In 1809 Waldo returned to the United States and established himself in New York City as a studio portraitist. Three years later, Waldo accepted as his apprentice an aspiring artist named William Jewett (1792–1874). The two men became partners in 1817 and advertised themselves as Waldo and Jewett,[138] continuing in business together until Jewett's retirement in 1854. Waldo's popularity surged in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, and he painted many merchants, public officials, and fellow artists.

Waldo's portrait of Macomb, which has been restored recently, shows the officer on a hill with a battlefield beyond him, dressed in blue jacket, white pants with *passamenterie* detail, black boots, and a light blue ribbon around his neck. His left foot is forward, with slightly bent knee, and his right-gloved hand is placed against his hip, against the tassels of his red sash. In Macomb's left hand, which rests on the hilt of a sheathed sword, he holds a hat with white cockade. An unmounted cannon lies in the left foreground,[139] and in the left background a soldier holding a white horse climbs the hill

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[136] Irma B. Jaffe, John Trumbull: Patriot-Artist of the American Revolution (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1975), 215, 238, 265. See also Samuel L. Waldo Letter to John Trumbull, 30 September 1806: "The paternal advice you gave me in your letter, has never been erased from my memory & to be able to follow it will ever give me great pleasure." Charles Henry Hart Collection, Archives of American Art.

[137] A portrait of a Mr. M'Dougle, listed in Algernon Graves, The Royal Academy of Arts, a Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their work from its foundation in 1769 to 1904 (London: Henry Graves and George Bell and Sons, 1906), VIII: 101.

[138] See Samuel L. Waldo letter to Charles B. King, 11 February 1819, where he notes that Jewett is making great improvement and that "we are blest with as much business as we can do continually." Simon Gratz Collection, Archives of American Art.

[139] Tthe artist's signature is on the cannon.

towards Macomb. In the right immediately behind the officer is a broken gun carriage; just above it, the American flag is visible in the far distance.

By July 31, 1815, Waldo had completed the portrait, for on that date, a warrant was issued to him for $400.[140] Oddly enough, the frame for the portrait was ordered in advance. A payment was made on April 3, 1815, three months before Waldo's warrant to "C D Vecchio 2 large picture frames-McComb (sic) & Perry… 220".[141]

The final commission of this series was a portrait of General Joseph Gardiner Swift (1783-1865), commissioned at the suggestion of the Common Council's Committee of Defense (Figure 55). Swift, born in Nantucket, Massachusetts was the first cadet to graduate West Point (1802). He was attached to a corps of U.S. Engineers, and in 1807 was promoted to the post of Commandant of West Point. At the outbreak of the War of 1812, Swift was appointed aid to General Charles Cotesworth Pickney, during which time he became Colonel and Chief Engineer of the Army. For his work planning the defenses of New York harbor and on the St. Lawrence frontier, Swift was brevetted Brigadier-general in 1814. After the war he became superintendent of the West Point; he then served as surveyor of the port of New York for nine years, superintendent of harbor improvement on the lakes, and constructed railroad from New Orleans to Lake Pontchartrain.[142]

The Committee of Defense had been formed in response to DeWitt Clinton's call for action on August 2, 1814, following the British invasion of Chesapeake Bay. The Mayor noted the strategic importance of New York City to the British due to the city's

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[140] MCC, VIII: 272.
[141] Ibid., 178.
[142] Lossing, Pictorial Field-Book of 1812, 638 9, see also pp. 971-4 for information on the fortifications built by Swift and others for the City of New York.

wealth and central location, asked the militia to ready themselves, and called upon the citizens to assist with the fortification of the city. The following week a large meeting of citizens was held in City Hall Park, and a Committee of Defense was selected from the Common Council.[143] Under the direction of the army, thousands of New Yorkers worked on the fortifications, even toiling by the light of the moon.[144]

The Common Council's Committee of Defense made their final report to the full board on November 6, 1815; about nine months after the end of the war. The report addressed in detail their efforts to defend the city, noting that the fortifications and other efforts were the means of "preserving it [New York] from attack possibly from the unhappy fate of the sear of our national Government" and asking that the Council consider asking the state and federal governments to maintain "the works of defence (sic) which now encircle the City."[145] In addition to submitting their expenditures and minutes to the Council, the Committee included a report from General Swift, accompanied by a portfolio of drawings "of the works of defence executed in an elegant & masterly style."[146] They closed their report

> …expressing the high opinion they entertain of the talents & services of that Excellent Officer—the judgment displayed by him in the formation of his plan of defence, his zeal & indefatigable personal attention to the execution of it, and his frank and amiable deportment in his communications with the Committee, [have] excited their high respect & warm esteem, gained the confidence of their fellow Citizens, & will justify the Corporation in enrolling the name of Brigadier Genl Joseph G. Swift among the benefactors of New York They therefore recommend that his portrait have a place in the Gallery of paintings belonging to the

[143] The original Committee members were Nicholas Fish, Gideon Tucker, Peter Mesier, George Buckmaster and J. Nichtie. The Committee members in 1815 were Fish, Mesier, Buckmaster, and J. Mapes, Thomas R. Smith, Gideon Tucker, and Isaac S. Douglass.
[144] The effort of New Yorkers was commemorated in a ballad entitled *The Patriotic Diggers*: "To protect our rights, 'Gainst your flints and triggers, See on Brooklyn Heights our patriotic diggers." Lossing, Pictorial Field-Book of 1812, 969-70.
[145] MCC, VIII: 342-3.
[146] Ibid., 343.

> Corporation, that he be requested to sit for the purpose, and that the Committee be authorized to employ some suitable & skillful artist on the occasion[147]

This final portrait by Jarvis is a full-length painting, and shows General Swift in his dark blue uniform with breeches, his coat trimmed with gold buttons and epaulets, and wearing spurs. He holds a high-crowned hat in his left hand, with a gray cloak draped over his left arm; his right hand hangs down by his side. Nearly facing front, he looks slightly to the right, as though he has been interrupted in watching the men at work in the background. Numerous small groups of laborers (one more clearly depicted than the others)[148] and the rising wall of a fortification are visible behind Swift. The river appears in the distant background, and at the right, an orderly holds the General's saddled horse. Like his fellow army officer Brown, Swift has none of the panache of the naval heroes, and looks more like he is meekly entering a drawing room than performing some heroic exploit. By March 3, 1817, Jarvis had completed the Swift portrait, and a warrant for both the portrait and frame, in the amount of $510 was paid to the artist.[149]

The selection of Jarvis to complete the greater part of this series of public portraits—one of the most important commissions since Trumbull's earlier works—implies a quality in his work that appealed to New Yorkers. Dunlap sums up Jarvis's achievement in his biographical portrait of the artist:

> he painted those full-length portraits of military and naval heroes which will keep him in public remembrance for a short-lived immortality, by their situation in the City Hall of New-york and their great merit. These pictures, by being the most difficult works he ever executed, tested the knowledge he had obtained…. They are historical portraits, painted with skill and force—real representations of men and character, throwing most of the pictures painted for the city of New-York previously, far in the

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[147] Ibid., 343.
[148] Dickson, Jarvis, 190, suggests that this may also be a self-portrait by Jarvis.
[149] MCC, IX: 37.

> back-ground. In the year 1812 I remember meeting Jarvis in that room, afterward enriched by his pencil, and even then he anticipated painting full-lengths for the corporation of the city. The pictures then in the room were the governors of the state (Tompkins and Lewis) by Trumbull. "One of these days," said Jarvis, "you and I will be employed in painting for this room."[150]

Dunlap's story, if true, reveals Jarvis's ambitions, as well as Dunlap's own disdain for Trumbull's works (the "pictures painted for the city…previously). Of especial interest is how Dunlap describes Jarvis's portraits: "real representations of men and character." The realism that Dunlap applauds was the preferred quality for New Yorkers, who could readily identify with Jarvis's ordinary heroes. These approachable men, in contrast with Trumbull's aloof and idealized portraits, or Sully's romantic vision, were simply more accessible to the average viewer. The early American critic John Neal, who praised Jarvis for his portraits, echoes this affirmative view of Jarvis the realist,

> …remarkable for the strong individuality of his favourite heads—bold, natural composition, manner, and attitude. Yet, as pictures, there is too little merit in the work of Mr. Jarvis…If they be preserved, it will be….because they were, in other days, genuine portraits.[151]

Portraits in the Third City Hall

The decision to build a New City Hall was inspired in large part by the desire to have a grand architectural symbol of New York City's economic and political prestige. In a parallel decision, the Common Council embarked on commissioning a new portraiture of heroic and distinguished images related to New York City's recent history. Visual documentation of the interior of the third City Hall during the initial years of its use is scanty, and thus it is difficult to establish where portraits would have been installed when the building was first opened in 1812.

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[150] Dunlap, History, II: 82-3.
[151] Dickson, Observations on American Art, 6.

No documentation has come to light regarding the date of the relocation of furnishings from the second City Hall to the third.[152] In fact, the removal of the Mayor's office to the building was simply noted in the Minutes of the Council, while a small newspaper advertisement announced the move. However, we do know that John Trumbull's portrait of General Washington hung in the Council Chamber in 1816. For in that year, a young man from the West Indies, Richard Barrett, visited New York and Canada and recorded his impressions of City Hall:

> …We were shown into the council chamber, a large room furnished with great expense. Among other pictures of American statesmen & warriors, there is a full-length portrait of Washington—he is represented at least eight feet high…. The splendid drapery with which this apartment is ornamented struck me as more appropriate for the audience chamber of an Eastern King, & the raised seat more like a Throne, than fit for the meeting room of the Mayor & Aldermen of a moderate sized city of republican America.[153]

Barrett's slightly sour tone may be accounted for by the recently concluded war between the U.S. and Great Britain. However, his account is useful; for it indicates how the chambers of the Common Council were richly appointed with "splendid drapery" and that there were in the Council Chamber "other pictures of American statesmen & warriors." The monarchical pretensions that Barrett suggests—a chamber that was "more appropriate for the audience chamber of an Eastern King, & the raised seat more like a Throne"—demonstrate an opulence and glamour that had started with the renovation of the second City Hall, and would continue to characterize New York City's approach to its civic architecture, and to its portrait collection.

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[152] We know that some of the furnishings from the second City Hall had been moved to the new building by 1817. See Blunt, Stranger's Guide, 48.

[153] Richard Barrett's Journal New York and Canada, Critique of the Young Nation by an Englishman Abroad, ed. Thomas Brott and Philip Kelley (Winfield, KS: Wedgestone Press), 13-14.

The following year, Edmund M. Blunt published his Stranger's Guide to the City of New-York, which provides the earliest detailed account of City Hall and its portrait collection. Blunt, a shameless promoter of New York, presents City Hall as "the handsomest structure in the United States; perhaps of its size, in the world."[154] He then proceeds to give a complete listing the portraits in the building, starting with the Common Council Chamber, which contained

> full length pictures of General Washington; of George Clinton, the first Governor of the State of New-York, of governor John Jay, Chief Justice of the United States, and envoy extraordinary to Great Britain; and of Alexander Hamilton, Esq. aid-de-camp to General Washington, and first Secretary of the Treasury of the United States. These pictures were painted by Trumbull, are well executed, and do honor to the talent of the artist. That of General Washington is considered the best likeness of him, during the prime of life, in all the Union.[155]

Although Blunt does not describe the placement of the portraits in the Common Council Chamber, that information can be found in the correspondence and diary of Charles Willson Peale.[156] Peale, who was in New York trying to settle his wife's estate, would have had a particular interest in the collection, having by 1784 established his own museum containing portraits of notable subjects.[157] In a June 1817 letter to his son

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[154] Blunt, Stranger's Guide, 48.

[155] Ibid., 48. Henry Tuckerman, Book of the Artists, American Artist Life (New York: G.P. Putnam & Son, 1867), 88: "Ask an elderly Knickerbocker what picture will give you a good idea of Washington, and he will confidently refer you, as the testimony his father has taught him, to Trumbull's portrait in the City Hall."

[156] The Collected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. A Guide and Index to the Microfiche Edition, for the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, ed. Lillian B. Miller (Millwood, NY: Kraus Microform, 1980), IIB.22 C 12. Peale was in New York for three weeks to try to settle his wife's estate. He wrote to his son, Rembrandt, on June 16, 1817, after completing his trip. Similar information may be found also in his Diary, ibid., 58-60 as well.

[157] Peale's collection remained on the second floor of Independence Hall from 1786 till his death 1827. See Doris Devine Fanelli and Karie Diethorn, History of the Portrait Collection, Independence National Historical Park and Catalog of the Collection (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2001), 67-68, for a brief overview of Peale's project; see also Brandon Brame Fortune "Portraits of Virtue and Genius: Pantheons of Worthies and Public Portraiture in the Early American Republic, 1780-1820," (Ph. D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1987) for an in-depth analysis of the meaning behind Peale's collection.

Rembrandt, Peale noted that the "whole length of the General [Washington] with his horse" was "on the right of the throne over the fireplace," that is, on the west wall, while that of General Clinton was opposite, on the east wall. The portraits of Jay and Hamilton flanked the main entrance to the room on the north wall of the chamber.

Peale did not have the opportunity to do more than list the portraits in the Governor's Room.[158] However, Blunt more fully describes these pictures, which include "the principal naval and military heroes who distinguished themselves during the late struggle with Great Britain, executed by Mr. Jarvis, a young artist of this city."[159] Blunt continues, "The others are the work of Trumbull. The whole display great taste and judgment, and are held to be excellent likenesses." [160]

Apart from these brief nods to aesthetic matters, Blunt's account of these portraits, running to several pages, focuses on the sitters and their deeds, rather than the portraits as visual objects. It is in this way typical of the early nineteenth-century emphasis on the portrait as a political and social object. In fact, Blunt's description of the location of the portraits in the Governor's Room is so exhaustive that it enables us to reconstruct the installation (see Appendix 2).

This account suggests that the War of 1812 portrait series was carefully arranged in City Hall to provide a visible link between the City and the nation's struggle. The

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[158] Miller, Papers of Peale, IIB.22.D8-9: "I went with Brother Philip to get a sight of the Governor's Room in the City Hall. It is 52 feet long and 25 wide-with good furniture and decorated with the portraits of Govr. Tomkins, Comre. Decatur, Commre. Bainbridge, Genl. Swift (Engineer), Genl Brown; ~~Rd. Varick, Mayor~~; Genl Macomb; Govr. Lewis, Comre. Hull, comre. Perry, & Macdonough, whole lengths,and Govr. Styuvesant, the last governor of the Dutch government, Genl Watson, Radcliff Mayor, Sheriff Willet, DeWit Clinton, Ed. Livingston & James Duane, in all ten large whole lengths and one small do. Of Genl. Monkton and in head size 8 pieces. My time was so short that I could not make any notes on these pictures, as I had promised to attend the Historical Society at 4 o'clock." (sic) Peale was also in town during President James Monroe's visit to New York. The President arrived on June 11, 1817; Peale met him on June 12th at City Hall, in the Governor's Room. Diary, ibid., 77.

[159] Blunt, Stranger's Guide, 56, misattributes the portrait of Macomb to Jarvis rather than to Waldo.

[160] Ibid., 54.

layout of the portraits, described in great detail, shows that all of the military and naval portraits commissioned during the War of 1812 were displayed as a group within the Governor's Room in City Hall. However, the installation of these portraits bears closer examination.

The heroes of 1812, hung in one space, associated civic politics with historic victories. But not only were they hung in one room. The War of 1812 portraits, as described by Blunt, were also carefully interspersed with Trumbull's earlier portraits of Governors Lewis and Tompkins, as well as with his half-length portraits of New York City Mayors, so that military portraits alternated one by one with local politicians. This visual concatenation emphasized a connection, though unspecified, between local politicians and national heroes, relating local government to national history. Although there is no documentation of how these portraits and their connections were interpreted by viewers, we might speculate that this installation underscored New York City's national importance, by integrating prominent figures from the war into the visual history of the city.

Subsequent documentation of the installation of the portraits in City Hall may be drawn from images of the building's interior. While the exterior of the new building was depicted early on, the first images of the interior date to 1830. Two drawings by Charles Burton of the Common Council Chamber[161] (Figure 56) and the Governor's Room[162] Figure 57) document the same two rooms that Blunt and Peale described in detail thirteen years earlier.

[161] The chamber is now called the Committee of the Whole Room.
[162] The Burton drawing shows only the central chamber of what is now a suite of three rooms; the other rooms were connected to the central room in 1832 (the east chamber) and 1848 (the west).

Burton's 1831 drawing of the Governor's Room[163] shows a different installation than that described by Blunt. Five full-length portraits of heroes of the War of 1812 are shown from left to right: Thomas MacDonough, Oliver Hazard Perry, Isaac Hull, William Bainbridge, and Jacob Brown. Burton's watercolor also includes six half-length portraits, five against the west wall of the stacked over three of the full lengths, to utilize fully the available wall space. The sixth half-length, which shows the sitter wearing a ruff, may be a portrait of Henry Hudson. The engraving also shows the room as a gallery space, with visitors admiring the artwork.

In the Common Council Chamber, because of the angle of the view, one can barely see the side of a frame of a full-length portrait, which hangs over the fireplace [hidden by the column] on the west wall. The southern wall of the room is shown with the Mayor's chair, placed on a dais and covered with a canopy topped by an eagle.[164] Although not visible in Burton's sketch, the northern and eastern walls would have provided additional space for portraits.

Summary

After the war, portrait commissions became a customary part of celebration in New York City. While other cities commemorated their heroes with presentation silver, public banquets, and in the case of passionately pro-war Baltimore, half-length portraits, New York was the only city to commission lavish full-length portraits of the heroes of 1812. These men were given a hero's welcome by the City, which included the Freedom

[163] The drawing also shows only three windows in the room; there are now five, a change that took place in the early twentieth-century restoration of the room by Grosvenor Atterbury. John Quincy Adams, Jr., The Governor's Room in the City Hall, New York (New York: Art Commission of the City of New York, 1909); this pamphlet was also published in American Architect 96 (July 7,1909) and New York Architect 3 (June 1909). Correspondence regarding the Atterbury restoration may be found in Art Commission Correspondence File #11.

[164] A similar installation of drapery and raised dais may be seen today in the Public Hearing Chamber and the City Council Chamber of City Hall.

of the City in a gold box (a truly extravagant gift for the period), public dinners, fêtes, illuminations, as well as the compliment of a portrait that entered the City's permanent collection.

Despite New York City's ambivalence about the War of 1812, the City commissioned the most substantial public collection of portraits commemorating this war. In 1813, the federal government had been urged to honor these heroes appropriately:

> Our naval exploits are of a character so extraordinary that they have attracted the notice of all nations…*The genius of the arts will call upon her Trumbull to do them justice*…we hope to see the time when the walls of the Capitol…will be decorated with representations of the victories of Hull, Decatur, Jones, Bainbridge, Pike &c, executed in a manner worth of their actions and of our country. [165]

But it was New York City, whose Mayor and merchants vigorously opposed the war, which commissioned this new series of portraits commemorating the War by New York.

Civic pride may have been one reason for the new acquisitions. The New City Hall was finished only weeks before the declaration of war, providing new space for the Common Council, and a grand and relatively empty Governor's Room for the display of portraits. Without the War of 1812 portraits, the Governor's Room as described by Blunt would have been much more modestly decorated, with only two full-length portraits displayed, and half-length portraits filling in the remaining wall space.[166] As the room when constructed had only three windows on its southern wall, rather than the five that it has today, the portraits would have seemed even more sparsely placed.

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[165]"Review of the Third Annual Exhibition of the Columbian Society of Artists and Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts," Port Folio, Third Series, II (July, 1813), 130-131.

[166] According to Blunt, the other full-length paintings of George Washington, George Clinton, Alexander Hamilton and John Jay were hung in the Common Council chamber, on the southwest side of the building (now known as the Committee of the Whole chamber).

Nevertheless, given the economic hardships of the period, an interest in creating attractive interiors cannot account for the commissioning of these expensive and opulent portraits. The commissioning of the War of 1812 portraits coincided with an increased drive for "aesthetic pre-eminence" on the part of New Yorkers, perhaps most clearly articulated by DeWitt Clinton eighteen months after the end of the war in his address to the American Academy of Fine Arts. The idea that the cultural health of a city was an indicator of its economic, political, and social health was not a new concept. However, Clinton was one of the first Americans to make a deliberate connection between aesthetic pre-eminence and political power. During the war, Clinton not only ensured the commissioning of a new series of portraits for City Hall, he also became a tireless advocate for the arts and sciences, achieving recognition as a genuine scholar in this area.

The installation of the naval and military portraits of 1812 in City Hall underscored in a dramatic and concrete fashion the connection between municipal government and national interests. The commissioning of military and naval portraits by a politician who had run for President, and lost, on an anti-war platform seems less than coincidental. Being unable to serve on the field of battle seems to have driven him towards more symbolic ways of demonstrating his military fervor and patriotism. The portrait commissions would certainly have boosted Clinton's credibility as a leader of substance during the war, by providing a physical demonstration and reminder of New York City's connection (and thus, Clinton's connection) to the war effort that had transfixed the nation for the almost three years.

In addition, Clinton and the Common Council formally established a new public space for viewing art within the most important civic building in New York—the

Governor's Room. This space, centrally located on the second floor of the building, remains today one of the most opulently decorated in the building and retains its function as a gallery. By choosing to use the Governor's Room in this way (rather than as an office or place of assembly), Clinton and the Common Council emphasized the central role that art and culture would play in the city's claim for political pre-eminence. After all, though Blunt's descriptions of the Governor's Room in his guidebook of 1817 emphasized the sitters and their remarkable feats over the visual impact of the paintings (even erring in his attribution of some of these works), it is indisputable that Clinton and his colleagues chose to commemorate these heroes and their deeds through portraiture, and create tangible icons of valor that would be placed in City Hall.

Clinton's cultural interests had practical benefits for the politician, since membership in cultural and social organizations could serve as back channels to political enemies. But creating a municipally-funded gallery, a new public space for viewing public figures, went far beyond these associations. This endeavor shows how far the post-Revolutionary war generation had come from the anti-monarchical debates of the previous century. Rather than tearing down visual representations of the monarchy, New Yorkers created a new place for the public to learn how to appreciate, aesthetically as well as politically, their new luminaries, and to appreciate them as part of their city's history. It was now acceptable, even admirable, for Clinton to acknowledge these political, military, and naval figures' claim for posterity. The educative and morally elevating effect of art would, it was hoped, provide the much needed leaven for a new public, a public that now voted.

THE NEW YORK CITY HALL PORTRAIT COLLECTION, 1790-1830
CHAPTER FIVE: PORTRAIT COMMISSIONS FROM 1819-1830, THE "ERA OF GOOD FEELINGS"

Introduction

By the close of the War of 1812, the commissioning of portraits by the New York City Common Council had become a tradition. As a matter of course, New York City Mayors[1] and New York State Governors[2] were painted while in office or upon leaving. These portraits represented the faces of familiar New York figures to the public. Full-length portraits of national figures joined them—Hamilton and the War of 1812 naval and military heroes. These were portraits of men who were not part of official municipal government, but who had celebrity and were known nationally.

With the construction of the New City Hall, most of the portraits in the municipal collection were now displayed in the Governor's Room on the second floor of the building. As the Common Council's resolutions during the war clearly stated, by 1812 this room had been designated as an official portrait gallery.[3] It was accessible to the public and described in detail in period guidebooks.

The period after the war was a transitional one for New York, culminating in the construction of the Erie Canal. By 1815, New York had emerged as a strong and viable commercial power. However, local leaders were aware that the national expansion westward might affect New York's supremacy as a port. Without maintaining New York's connections to the west and guaranteeing the flow of agricultural crops from the

[1] While today the New York City mayoral portraits are gifts to the City, paid for by friends of the Mayor, and painted after leaving office, as the Trumbull commissions demonstrate, at that time there was no restriction on whether one had to be currently serving in office, or leaving office for their portrait to be commissioned.
[2] Although the state legislature had left the city in 1797New York State Governors continued to be painted. The last governor to be so honored was Grover Cleveland, who served as Governor from 1883-1885.
[3] In the Council's resolution commending Hull, dated December 28, 1812, the "picture gallery" is mentioned. Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1784-1831, VII: 253-4.

Ohio and Mississippi valley farms, other competing ports to the south could impair New York's position as the nation's commercial capital.

Strengthening the connection to the west, while remaining in the public eye, was the impetus for DeWitt Clinton's campaign for the Erie Canal. Clinton took charge of the project, later known by his detractors as "Clinton's Ditch," and his advocacy for the canal restored him to public favor. After a protracted battle, on April 17, 1817, legislation funding construction of the project was finally approved. Ten weeks later, Clinton was elected Governor of the State of New York.[4]

The canal exponentially increased commerce and brought vast wealth to the Empire State as well as the city. The post-war optimism that created "Clinton's Ditch" also affected the arts. The restoration of trade and increased territories meant a more prosperous nation, and prosperity was a requirement for the arts and artists to flourish. The growth of New York, with its newly affluent class of collectors, meant a more secure art market, with greater financial opportunities for artists. They hoped that America's cities, though previously provincial and uncultured, would rival Athens with a little effort.

Acquisitions for the portrait collection continued, although not at the same frenzied pace as during the war. Mayoral and gubernatorial portraits were still commissioned, as were portraits that represented New York City's national ambitions and aspirations. Artistic life in New York City also changed. The number of artists working in New York City increased, professional arts education became a reality, and academies, galleries, and other arts organizations provided venues for artists and art lovers to learn how to see.

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[4] Evan Cornog, The Birth of Empire, DeWitt Clinton and the American Experience, 1769-1828 (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 103-117

By examining three portraits of this period (out of the total of eleven that were commissioned by the Common Council from 1819 to 1830), this chapter will focus on how the political issues of the day affected portrait commissions. Although by 1819, mayoral and gubernatorial portraits had become part of the standard protocol of municipal government, these three portraits fell outside the now traditional categories of commissions. These are the portraits of James Monroe and Andrew Jackson by John Vanderlyn, and the Marquis de Lafayette by Samuel F.B. Morse. These portraits will be discussed as representing New York City's interest in asserting its national importance and reinforcing the connections between its local history and the history of the nation.

John Vanderlyn and the City Hall Portrait Commissions

Vanderlyn was born in 1775 to Nicholas Vanderlyn, a small landowner and sign painter, and Sarah Tappen.[5] His mother was related to Cornelia Tappen Clinton, the wife of Governor George Clinton, a family connection that may have served as an entrée to certain Republican circles in later life. Though little is known of his childhood, at the age of two Vanderlyn's native village was burned to the ground by the British, who destroying much of his family's property. Some have speculated that this event strengthened the artist's future pro-Republican and pro-French politics. Certainly, his parents never recovered from the financial blow, although they were still able to provide him with an early education at the Kingston Academy, one of the more prestigious schools of the period. The Academy, from which he graduated in 1791, introduced him

[5] For biographical information, see William Dunlap, History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States (NY: Dover Publications, 1969;reprint of the 1834 edition), II: 31-42; Kenneth C. Lindsay, The Works of John Vanderlyn, From Tammany to the Capitol (SUNY: University Art Gallery at Binghamton, 1970); Louise Averill, "John Vanderlyn, American Painter," (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1971); William Townsend Oedel, "John Vanderlyn, French Neoclassicism and the Search for an American Art," (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Delaware, 1981), and Salvatore Mondello, The Private Papers of John Vanderlyn (1775-1852), American Portrait Painter (Lewiston, New York and Queenston, Ontario: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990).

to the scions of some of New York's affluent and influential families, the Schuylers, Livingstons and Clintons. After leaving Kingston Academy, Vanderlyn pursued his artistic studies at the Columbian Academy of Painting on William Street with fellow students John Murray and John Pintard, both of whom would become influential men in the world of politics and culture.

Vanderlyn was the first American artist to travel to Paris rather than London to study painting.[6] This decision represented a radical departure from a long-standing tradition and well-established aesthetic relationship with the mother country. A letter to his brother dated 1798 suggests that he traveled to Paris because of his patron Aaron Burr's preference, but that he found his time there well spent.[7] Deciding to work under François André Vincent, Vanderlyn studied in Paris until 1801,[8] there meeting Bartow Prevost, Burr's stepson and secretary to James Monroe, and Fulwar Skipworth, the *consul general* and *chargé d'affaires*.[9] These introductions would serve him well by providing him with opportunities for future commissions.[10]

By 1800, due to financial problems, Burr stopped his stipend to Vanderlyn, forcing the young artist to live by his wits and pencil. Able to eke out some portraits to cover his expenses, Vanderlyn lived frugally until 1801, when Burr was able to scrape together the cost of a return passage for him. Arriving in Philadelphia, Vanderlyn

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[6] Oedel, "Vanderlyn and French Neoclassicism," 17.

[7] "I am very happy for my part that it pleased my patron to send me here, for to acquire the knowledge of the Arts there is but one Paris in the Universe. I am certain, though some of my countrymen have preferred London very foolishly, and to their own regret perhaps, had they known more of Paris." John Vanderlyn, letter to Peter Vanderlyn, Paris, 19 March 1798, quoted in Averill, Vanderlyn, "American Painter," 20. "The collection of Paintings here is a superb one already they fill a gallery as long as your Esopus main street, which is about the length of the Louvre," John Vanderlyn to Peter Vanderlyn, Paris, August 14, 1797; quoted in Averill, "Vanderlyn, American Painter," 25.

[8] See Oedel, "Vanderlyn and French Neoclassicism," and Averill, "Vanderlyn, American Painter," for different perspectives on why Vanderlyn selected Vincent as a teacher.

[9] John Vanderlyn, Letter to his Brother Dr. P. Vanderlyn, Paris, 13 July 1798, notes that "he [Skipwith] and me are very intimate and he has offered me a lodging in his house."

[10] Averill, "Vanderlyn, American Painter," 21-2.

traveled to New York City and then briefly to Kingston to visit his parents. Returning to New York, he took rooms in the Government House[11] and started to paint portraits.

Upon his return to America, Vanderlyn found a changed political situation. Although Burr was now Vice President, he was *persona non grata* with the Jefferson administration. When the close election results of 1800 resulted in a tie between Burr and Jefferson, his patron had declined to cede to Jefferson. Burr's actions threw the electoral outcome into the House of Representatives, where Jefferson was eventually selected. Though the debate still rages as to whether Burr actually sought to obtain the Presidency, his reluctance to withdraw from the Presidential contest confused the electoral process and undermined his influence in New York and nationally.

Thus, despite Vanderlyn's hard-won qualifications, his patron would have limited influence in obtaining commissions for the artist. Whether Burr suggested that he go back to Europe, or Vanderlyn decided on his own, by the fall of 1801 he was planning a return trip. In September of that year, Vanderlyn traveled to Niagara Falls in order to paint this natural wonder and have engravings from his paintings made abroad.[12] While trying to raise enough funds for his trip to Europe by painting portraits,[13] Vanderlyn's best opportunity to travel presented itself in a commission by the American Academy of

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[11] Government House, a three-story brick building on the Battery was originally constructed to house the federal government. It served as the official residence of the Governor when the state legislature was located in New York City. After the legislature's removal, the building was leased as a hotel. Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, Gotham, A History of New York City to 1898 (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 300, 368-9.

[12] Burr had written to an associate in the Holland Land Company, Thomas Morris, regarding Vanderlyn's trip, asking for his advice and protection. Averill, "Vanderlyn, American Painter,"30; Mondello, Private Painters, 15-6. Trumbull also painted the Niagara Falls during a trip to Canada in 1807-8; see Irma B. Jaffe, John Trumbull: Patriot-Artist of the American Revolution (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1975), 216-221.

[13] During this period he painted Natalie de Lage, a protégé of Burr's; Theodosia Burr Alston, Burr's daughter;George Clinton, Jr., Dr. Samuel Bard, Abijah Hammond, Stephen Van Rensselaer, Aaron Burr and Pierre Cortland Van Wyck. Averill, "Vanderlyn, American Painter," 33.

Fine Arts to purchase a collection of plaster casts from antique statues, along with any paintings he might be able to acquire.[14]

This trip to Europe in the spring of 1803 gave Vanderlyn the chance to strengthen his relationship with James Monroe. James Monroe, freshly appointed Minister Extraordinary, had arrived in Paris a month before Vanderlyn's return to resolve the lagging negotiations for the purchase of Louisiana. Upon completion of the deal, Monroe traveled across the channel to England to take up his position as Minister, and Vanderlyn accompanied him, seeking an engraver for his Niagara views.[15] While in London, Vanderlyn painted a portrait of Monroe and his wife, and placed his drawings with two firms to be engraved.[16]

The declaration of war by Congress in June 1812 trapped Vanderlyn. He remained in Paris, unable to cross the Atlantic until 1815, when, booking passage in June on the *Maria Augusta,*[17] he returned to New York. Jarvis, Waldo, Jewett, and Dunlap were all working in New York when Vanderlyn returned, and Morse and Trumbull returned the same year from England. However, as the next decades showed, the development of new art institutions in New York also meant the creation of new arenas for conflict among artists.

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[14] Dunlap, History, II: 33.
[15] John Vanderlyn, letter to his brother Nicholas Vanderlyn, London, 30 July 1803, Henry Darrow Collection, Senate House Museum.
[16] Averill, op. cit., pp. 51-3, recounts how, after he left London, Vanderlyn's engravings went missing and his plates were not restored to him for over a decade. Mr. Monroe had deposited them at a firm for safekeeping.
[17] Mondello, 1990, op. cit., p. 43.

Upon his return,[18] Vanderlyn was aware that success in obtaining commissions beyond routine portraiture would require the assistance of his political friends.[19] A few months after his return, he wrote John H. Purviance,[20] secretary to James Monroe, requesting his help with a project to paint General Andrew Jackson for the Common Council of the federal city of Washington.[21] Popular enthusiasm for the hero of the Battle of New Orleans, the last battle of the war of 1812, had continued to grow and no doubt Vanderlyn assumed that Jackson, like the other heroes of the war, would be commemorated in paint.

Purviance replied[22] that he had spoken directly to the Mayor of Washington, but that "when the subject was lately submitted to the consideration of the Common Council, there was rather a disposition to waive it, on account of the penury of funds." However, he assured him of the friendly wishes of "Mr. L[ivingston?] Mrs. Monroe,[23] and Mrs. Hay." Apparently Mrs. Hay had told Purviance that the city of Richmond also intended

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[18] Upon his return, he lodged at Duane Street, near Hudson. See John H. Purviance letter to John Vanderlyn, Washington, November 30, 1815; Coykendall Collection, Senate House Museum; the letter was directed to "Mrs. P. Creyor, Duane Street next door to the corner of Hudson."

[19] A letter of introduction for Vanderlyn from William Thomas Lawrence in Washington, to his brother Samuel Lawrence of New York, dated April 15, 1816, suggests the role that political patronage played in ensuring the success of an artist. Lawrence notes that "even Mr. V. should have friends to let him work in a proper point of view" and emphasizes his success at Washington, having "resided at the house of Mr. Monroe and there painted the portraits of most of the distinguished personages here." Henry Darrow Collection, Senate House Museum. Both Samuel and William Lawrence served in the U.S. Congress; Samuel was also a member of the New York State assembly. Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774 to Present (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, accessed 20 January 2005), available at http://bioguide.congress.gov/biosearch/biosearch.asp; Internet.

[20] Vanderlyn was already well acquainted with Purviance, who in 1804 had assisted him with a problem with his engravings of Niagara Falls. See John Vanderlyn letter to John Henry Purviance, Paris, 15 January 1804; Senate House Museum.

[21] Averill, "Vanderlyn, American Painter," 100, suggests that Vanderlyn planned to paint the Battle of New Orleans, rather than simply a portrait.

[22] Ibid., 246, reproduces Purviance's letter, dated 30 November 1815, in full.

[23] Mrs. Monroe was the first cousin to Mrs. John Pintard; her daughter, Eliza, was the wife of Judge George Hay. Letters from John Pintard to his Daughter Eliza Noel Pintard Davidson, 1816-1833 (New York: New-York Historical Society, 1940), I: 19n23. Vanderlyn had become acquainted with Mrs. Hay as well as the Monroes while abroad. See John Vanderlyn letter to Mr. Monroe, Paris, 28 December 1811, Herbert Darrow Collection, Senate House Museum.

"to have the General's portrait taken;" [24] unfortunately, neither commission ever materialized.

Purviance did suggest a practical course of action to Vanderlyn:

> It would perhaps be well to write a civil letter to Mr. Monroe informing him of your return, referring to his past attentions, and requesting a continuance of his friendly sentiments and good offices, when any suitable occasion may offer.[25]

Vanderlyn's early friendship with Monroe, who would shortly become President, would serve him well in his search for commissions. In 1816, Vanderlyn had painted two half-length portraits of Monroe and Madison, to be exchanged as gifts by the sitters (Figures 58 and 59).[26] In that year, Vanderlyn would also have the opportunity to display them for a few months at the New York Institution, (previously the Almshouse), behind the New City Hall.

However Vanderlyn's own plans were curtailed by the advancement of the American Academy of Fine Arts. The plaster casts and paintings acquired by Vanderlyn for the Academy had languished for years in storage in the Government House. When the Government House was eventually demolished in 1815, the Academy was forced to find a new home for its collection. Having DeWitt Clinton as the Academy's President and a host of influential New Yorkers on its board of directors no doubt assisted the organization, and after three years of petitions, the Academy was eventually able to persuade the Common Council to provide new space on the second floor of the New

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[24] The advisability of taking the General's portrait occurred to Burr, who urged his protégé not to leave Washington until he had obtained a likeness of General Jackson, "a whole length…would sell." Aaron Burr to John Vanderlyn, New York, 8 March 1816, The Huntington Library Photostats, Senate House Museum.
[25] John H. Purviance letter to John Vanderlyn, Washington, 30 November 1815; Coykendall Collection, Senate House Museum.
[26] Averill, "Vanderlyn, American Painter," 103.

York Institution. A ten-year lease was offered, and rent was set at an affordable single peppercorn per annum.

John Trumbull, who had returned from Europe in 1815 a few months after Vanderlyn, had been kept apprised of the developments regarding the American Academy during his time abroad.[27] Seeking to reestablish a foothold in New York City's burgeoning art market, Trumbull recognized an opportunity to advance the arts, and his reputation, through this organization, and began plans for an exhibit to open in the fall of 1816. The difficulty was that, before plans had been made for the Academy's new exhibit, DeWitt Clinton had given Vanderlyn permission to use the rooms. Vanderlyn recalled that:

> I had obtained permission of the president of the society, then De Witt Clinton, to have the use of these rooms… for at least six months. I had these rooms fitted up …and spent fifty dollars in cleaning , painting, and colouring the walls. After my exhibition was open two or three weeks, I went up the river, in July, leaving it in charge of the keeper. During my stay in the country, I received a letter from Mr. Murray, the vice-president, that they would have need of the rooms, and requesting me to remove my pictures. This appeared ungenerous, and was injurious to me. I hastened to town and found one room already cleared. I have sufficient reason for believing that it was through the influence of Trumbull…that these measures were adopted.[28]

Although forced to relinquish part of his space immediately, until October 1816 Vanderlyn was allowed to use one room in the Almshouse where he exhibited *Marius*, *Ariadne*, portraits of Monroe and Madison painted that year, and the copies of Corregio's *Antiope* and Titian's *Danae*.[29]

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[27] See Chapter 2 for John Murray's correspondence with Trumbull regarding the Academy.
[28] Dunlap, History, II: 37-8.
[29] A somewhat unexpected response to his exhibit came at a meeting of the Academy in October, when the drawing teacher John Rubens Smith introduced a resolution at the Academy's meeting that Vanderlyn's paintings be removed on grounds of indecency. The resolution failed, but eventually Vanderlyn removed the offensive paintings. Whether or not Trumbull was the instigator of either the eviction or the motion against his scandalous paintings, Vanderlyn believed that the older artist was actively working against him.

In the face of Trumbull's supposed machinations, Vanderlyn pursued his goal of establishing a gallery where his work could be publicly displayed.[30] The means to this end was to be the panorama. Probably during his studies in Paris, Vanderlyn had become acquainted with Robert Fulton's panorama, which was erected there in 1799.[31] Called by one historian the "newsreels of the Napoleonic era, [32] the Paris and London panoramas attracted a broad audience and were wildly successful.

Vanderlyn believed that there was sufficient interest in the arts in New York City to support such a project. He proposed a larger circular gallery that would hold the gigantic historic or topographic paintings of interest to the general public; these paintings would be the moneymaking part of the proposition and provide a steady source of income for him. The building would also include small galleries where he and other artists could display their work.

In order to cover his construction costs, and trading upon the educational value of the images that would be displayed, Vanderlyn sought the support of New York City philanthropists interested in the arts. As an added inducement, he offered them free lifetime admission to the galleries for the sum of $100; or free admission during its first

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Jaffe, John Trumbull, 264-67, points out that Trumbull did re-energize the Academy, and was thus the prime mover behind Vanderlyn's eviction. However, despite Vanderlyn's assertion (as recorded by Dunlap, who detested Trumbull), no evidence exists to support the contention that this removal was maliciously motivated.

[30] Vanderlyn was also competing with Trumbull for national patronage. See John H. Purviance letter to John Vanderlyn, Washington, 5 February 1817; where Purviance notes that "in this [obtaining patronage for the arts]…it seems essential to employ much personal effort, to see, to known, and to interest no small number of individuals, whose patronage is indispensable...above all it is important, not to have the appearance of asking the boon, in *forma pauperis.*" Henry Darrow Collection, Senate House Museum.

[31] Fulton, along with the American poet Joel Barlow, had seen Robert Barker's panorama in London and taken the idea to Paris, where they received a ten-year patent to exploit the invention. The panorama in Paris remained in operation until 1814.

[32] Richard Daniel Altick, The Shows of London (Cambridge, MA and London: Belknap Press, 1978), 136.

nine-year lease for the sums of $10 and $20. The response was overwhelming and Vanderlyn raised $6,500 out of an estimated $10,000 needed for construction.[33]

Vanderlyn still needed to find a plot of ground on which to build. In 1816, he petitioned the Common Council, which on August 6 noted that:

> A Memorial was presented from John Vanderlyn praying the Corporation to grant him a lease of sixty feet Square of the grounds of the old Alms House fronting on Broad Way for a term of years for the purpose of erecting thereon a Panorama, which was read & referred to the Committee on Arts & Sciences[34]

The location Vanderlyn had selected was near the political and artistic heart of the city, adjacent to the most significant public building in the city, City Hall, and close to the old Almshouse, now the New York Institution that housed several of the most important cultural institutions. Perhaps concerned about the prominence of this location, the Council rejected his initial request and less than three weeks later ruled that:

> The Committee on the petition of John Vanderlyn Reported, that in their opinion it would not be proper or expedient to appropriate any of the public grounds about the City Hall to the purposes contemplated in said Petition (Sigd) Nicholas Fish, Samuel Akerly, Thomas R Smith Which was approved[35]

Persevering with his petition, Vanderlyn approached the Common Council again in February 1817,[36] and on March 31 was given the use of a fifty-foot lot behind City Hall in the northeast corner of the Park. Although this plot of land fronted on Chambers Street, rather than Broadway, and was thus less valuable, it was adjacent to the New York

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[33] Subscribers included Brockholst and John Livingston, Cadwallender Colden, William Irving, Dr. David Hosack, Dr. Varick, Isaac and Charles Kip, John Jacob Astor, Dr. Valentine Mott, and former Governor and Vice President Daniel D. Tompkins. "List of subscribers," New-York Historical Society, quoted in Averill, "Vanderlyn, American Painter," 113. See also John Vanderlyn, "Draft of a communication to the Subscribers, Patrons, and Friends to the Late Panoramic Institution of the New York Rotunda," reprinted in Averill, "Vanderlyn, American Painter," 340-350.

[34] MCC, VIII: 596-7.

[35] Ibid., 618.

[36] The success of Vanderlyn's second petition may have been due to Vanderlyn's agreement to take a less prominent piece of property for the Rotunda.

Institution. The property was rented to Vanderlyn for a minimal rate of one peppercorn per annum for a period of nine years. [37]

The Council's approval of Vanderlyn's petition noted that, because he was a skilled and eminent painter, "his labours…should be patronized and retained at home by a liberal grant of the public ground" for enough time so as to compensate him for the cost of erecting the building. As it had done with the old Almshouse, the Common Council provided free real estate in order to encourage an aesthetic and educational endeavor supported by more than one hundred respected and influential citizens. However, in order to protect itself, the City provided for the reversion of its property upon expiration of the lease, along with "all and every and whatever buildings and improvements may then be standing, erected, placed, or made therein by said John Vanderlyn." This clause would eventually lead to a protracted battle between the artist and the City upon expiration of his lease.[38]

Despite this disturbing clause, Vanderlyn and his supporters anticipated that his lease would be regularly renewed and that he would have the property for decades. Based on these expectations, the artist proceeded to erect a grandiose thirty-foot high brick building with a domed and zinc covered roof.[39] The classical structure was ornamented with a broad pediment with *acroteria*, which crowned the classic portico at the entrance of the building. Because the cost of the building eventually exceeded his original construction estimates, leaving him with greater than anticipated costs to meet

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[37] MCC, IX: 79-80, 99.
[38] Dunlap, History, II: 39-40.
[39] John Vanderlyn, Letter to John H. Purviance, 26 July 1818, reprinted in Averill, "Vanderlyn, American Painter," 252.

from the very beginning of his business venture, Vanderlyn was in debt.[40] Nevertheless, Vanderlyn engaged two panoramic paintings from Barker's and opened the Rotunda, as the new building was called, in 1818.[41]

While the Rotunda was under construction, Vanderlyn received his first portrait commission from the City of New York for a portrait of James Monroe (Figure 60). Virginian-born Monroe (1758-1831), who had served in the Revolutionary Army and as a member of the Continental Congress, was a close friend of Thomas Jefferson, who he had met in 1779 or 1780.[42] Monroe was elected Senator from Virginia in 1790, appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to France in 1794, and elected Governor of Virginia in 1799. In 1803, Jefferson sent him to Paris to finalize negotiations for the Louisiana Purchase. He served as Secretary of State in Madison's administration for two terms. On March 16, 1816, the Republican Party nominated Monroe as their Presidential candidate; almost one year later, on March 4, 1817, he was sworn in as President.[43]

After his inauguration, on May 31st, Monroe embarked on a good-will tour of the United States, visiting thirteen states in three-and-one-half months. Monroe arrived in

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[40] Lillian B. Miller, "John Vanderlyn and the Business of Art," New York History: A Quarterly Journal of the New York State Historical Association 32 (January 1951), 33-44.

[41] After the City took possession of the Rotunda, it was used as a courthouse, and as a temporary building for the U.S. Post Office. The Rotunda was eventually demolished in 1870.

[42] Noble E. Cunningham, Jr., Jefferson and Monroe, Constant Friendship and Respect (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, Monticello Monograph Series, 2003).

[43] Trumbull had met Monroe in Paris in 1794, when Trumbull traveled from London to Paris to visit his engraver. At that meeting, Trumbull had refused to share the terms of Jay's Treaty with Monroe, as Jay had required that Monroe agree not to share those terms with the French. Upon Monroe's election to the Presidency, Trumbull did not approach the President directly regarding his commissions for the Capitol rotunda. Instead, he contacted Jefferson and asked him to write a letter of support to Monroe on his behalf. Jefferson did so, and Monroe responded: "I had the pleasure to receive the letter which you forwarded to me through Col. Trumbull…I am satisfied that he [Trumbull] owes this tribute of respect [the Capitol commission], principally, to your favorable opinion of his merit." Quoted in Cunningham, Jefferson and Monroe, 50.

New York City on June 11, 1817.[44] Four days earlier, in anticipation of his visit, the Common Council had passed a resolution requesting the President "to honour this Corporation by sitting for his portrait, to be placed in the gallery of portraits belonging to the Common Council."[45] The Committee also planned a public dinner in his honor.

Upon his arrival, the Common Council greeted Monroe, who had stayed the previous night at Vice President Daniel D. Tompkins Staten Island residence. The Council, which met at their usual chamber, proceeded to the "Picture Room in the Hall" or Governor's Room, where the President awaited them. This room had been set aside for use by Monroe as a reception chamber during his stay, and was where Mayor Jacob Radcliff and the Aldermen presented their congratulations to the newly elected President. During his visit, he viewed the Academy of Arts, and then visited the Philosophical Hall where he was elected an honorary member, a tribute that was commemorated by a "short & classical address" by DeWitt Clinton.[46] In honor of his visit, the Common Council also directed City Hall to be illuminated that evening[47]

Six months passed before the Committee appointed by the Council to entertain the President on his visit made arrangements to paint the portrait. On December 22, 1817, Alderman Thomas R. Smith, who had introduced the initial resolutions for commemorating Monroe's visit, presented a resolution that:

> Resolved that the committee appointed in May last to request the President of the United States, among other things, to honor the Corporation by

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[44] See Letters from Pintard, I: 65-6: "We have been all in a flutter with the arrival of President Monroe…He arrived yesterday the 11th & his reception has been every way suitable to his dignity & character of our proud City. The public papers will convey the particulars, among other compliments his portrait is to be taken. The City Hall was magnificently & splendidly illuminated last evening & made a most luminous & enchanting appearance. Yesterday was quite a Jubilee, as much so almost as the 4th of July…at noon he will receive the complimentary visits of the citizens in the Picture rooms City Hall."
[45] MCC, IX: 193.
[46] Letters from Pintard, I: 66.
[47] MCC, IX: 194-197.

> sitting for his Portrait, take measures to carry this intention into effect: and that Mr. John Vanderlyn, a well known American Artist, be employed for this purpose under the direction of the same Committee, which Resolution was agreed to[48]

However, due to the President's unavailability because of a busy schedule, the portrait commission languished for years, and on April 5, 1819, the Council received

> A Communication from the President of the United States to Mr. Vanderlyn who was authorized to take his portrait for the Common Council was presented stating that on account of his proposed Tour to the South he could not a present comply with the request to sit for his Portrait but would readily comply with the request on his return in the Autumn.[49]

Meanwhile, in February 1819, Vanderlyn had received another commission from the Common Council to paint a portrait of General Andrew Jackson (Figure 61). Jackson (1767-1845) had been one of the heroes of the War of 1812, having defeated the British in the Battle of New Orleans, fought January 8, 1815.[50] His artillery had totally devastated the British troops during the engagement, killing 2,000 men as well as their leader, General Edward Pakenham. American losses were light, with only 70 men lost, and the disparity of the encounter added luster to Jackson's reputation. Moreover, his victory was the final battle of the war, associating his triumph firmly with the peace treaty and successful outcome of the war. Upon learning of his victory, Congress had

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[48] Ibid., 410. With this commission, Vanderlyn also seized the opportunity to solicit the federal government for a commission for the Capitol; almost twenty years would pass before the artist would receive Congressional patronage in 1837. See John Vanderlyn letter to his nephew, Philadelphia, 3 February 1818; Senate House Museum.

[49] MCC, X: 320.

[50] Donald R. Hickey, The War of 1812, A Forgotten Conflict (Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 211-214. See also Benson J. Lossing's Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812 (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1868), 1053-55 for a biographical sketch of Jackson and his role in the War of 1812. John William Ward's Andrew Jackson, Symbol for an Age (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), is an excellent study of how Jackson's public image was shaped through the press.

voted special commendations to Jackson, awarding him a gold medal.[51] However, four years passed until the City of New York voted to recognize Jackson.

After the War of 1812, Jackson continued to consolidate American rule in the south and west, waging war against the Seminoles in Florida. In order to pursue his military objectives, Jackson overthrew Spanish rule in Florida, believing that Spain was unable to restrain the Seminoles from waging war against Americans. The seizure of Florida by American military forces—in effect, a declaration of war against a sovereign nation by Jackson, without the approval of Congress or the President—escalated international tensions.[52] Monroe was faced with two options: to censure Jackson and return Florida to Spain, or to retain Florida and defend Jackson. Characteristically, Monroe took a middle route. He censured Jackson but told Spain that Jackson had acted out of military necessity.

Jackson's misdeeds came to a head when Congress issued a report on January 12, 1819, condemning Jackson for his actions in Florida. The debate that ensued lasted almost a month, was followed closely by the press, and ended in a vindication of the General on February 8, 1819, when the House voted to exonerate Jackson from all charges. His laurels intact, Jackson left Washington, D.C. to visit his godson, a cadet at West Point.[53] En route, Jackson visited New York.

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[51] Robert B. Remini, Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Empire, 1767-1821 (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 294-6.

[52] Pintard's comments in a February 29, 1819 letter to his daughter regarding the City's reception for Jackson may represent the general view about the general exceeding his authority: "preeminent he [Jackson] is notwithstanding some unlucky mistakes & entrenchments on civil authority, always to be dreaded in a popular government. But his glorious achievements at N.[ew] O.[rleans] mantle a multitude of sins. It is to be regretted that an impetuous hasty constitution has tarnished his laurels." Letters from Pintard, I: 166-7.

[53] Ibid., 369-374.

He was the hero of the hour, fêted in every city he visited. Upon learning that Jackson planned to arrive in New York City that Saturday, Mayor Cadwallader D. Colden[54] called the Common Council to a Special Meeting on Tuesday to plan for his reception. The Council recognized that Jackson was more than a military hero. Unlike the heroes of 1812, Jackson's achievements had strengthened American rule in Florida and satisfied the urge for territorial expansion that characterized the period. As Mayor Colden noted, Jackson's military achievements had been "surpassed only by the great and lasting benefits they have secured to the United States,"[55] that is, the land that had been wrested from Spain. At their special meeting, the Council resolved

> Firstly—That the freedom of the City in a gold box with a suitable inscription be presented to Major General Andrew Jackson at a Common Council to be specially convened for that purpose, and that an appropriate address be made to him by his Honor the Mayor in behalf of the Corporation
> Secondly—That he be respectfully requested to permit a full length portrait painting of him to be taken under the direction of the Corporation to be placed in the Gallery of Paintings in the City Hall.
> Thirdly—That Mr. Recorder [Richard Riker], Alderman [Reuben] Munson, Mr. [Samuel] Stevens, Mr. [Stephen] Allen and Mr. [Thomas] Bolton be a Committee to wait upon General Jackson upon his Arrival in this City and communicate to him…the manner in which they are desirous of giving a public demonstration of the very distinguished interest they take in his character and his fame.[56]

The Council also offered Jackson a steamboat to West Point and back.[57]

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[54] Cadwallader David Colden (1769-1834) was a lawyer and grandson of the colonial governor of New York State. He served as a colonel in the War of 1812, was a member of the New York State assembly in 1818, was appointed Mayor from 1818 to 1821, served in Congress as the New York State Representative from 1821-1823, was a member of the New York State Senate from 1825-1827, and was instrumental in the development of the Morris Canal in New Jersey.
[55] MCC, X: 254-5.
[56] Ibid., 254-5.
[57] Jackson was thus accorded a an honor that had previously been extended to President Monroe. On February 22nd, a payment was made to George Buckmaster [Alderman] for "cash paid on board Steamboat escorting President U. States to West Point & Carriage hire…17.36." Ibid., 262.

Mayor Colden and the Council formally received Jackson on February 23, 1819, and waited upon him in the Common Council Chamber. Although his notoriety stemmed from his recent actions, the Mayor's address focused on the General's heroics during the War of 1812, observing that his victory had "raised the character of our country to an elevation that attracted the admiration of the rest of the world." In fact, the only reference to Jackson's misdeeds was his own statement, in which he alluded to his recent acquittal:

> What I have done was for my country. Had I erred in the discharge of my official duty, that error would have originated in the warmth of my devotion to her interest….but to find that my conduct has been sanctioned by my government and approved by my fellow citizens is a source of happiness unequalled.[58]

The Mayor then presented the certificate of the Freedom of the City in a gold box[59] and thanked the General for agreeing to sit for his portrait. [60]

New York pressed Jackson to its bosom, celebrating for five days.[61] However, the General was unable to remain for his sitting, and Vanderlyn, who was a notoriously slow painter, was required to follow him back to Washington to start the portrait. A letter from John Pintard to his daughter dated February 23, 1819, suggests that Vanderlyn may have completed a portrait study before he left for Washington:

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[58] Ibid., 264-5.
[59] Ibid., 264-5. Once the oath was administered, Jackson signed it and it was filed. According to John Pintard, Letters from Pintard, I: 168, the box cost $500.
[60] Averill, "Vanderlyn, American Painter," 117. See Fitz-Greene Halleck, "On Presenting the Freedom of the City In a Gold Box to a great General," in The Poetical Writings of Fitz-Greene Halleck (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), 257-8, about Jackson receiving the freedom of the city and having time "to sit an hour or two with Jervis," a reference to John Wesley Jarvis.
[61] At a Tammany Hall banquet, held in his honor, Jackson—perhaps unaware of local politics—toasted DeWitt Clinton (who was no friend to Tammany), calling him "the enlightened statesman, Governor of the great and patriotic State of New York." The moment was even immortalized by poet Fitz-Greene Halleck, in "The Secret Mine Sprung at a Late Dinner," who gleefully joked that the Republicans should "Declare the General a fool,…and swear the toast was not his own free choice; Tell 'em that Colden prompted…" Halleck, Poetical Writings, 259-60.

> I have just returned from the City Hall seeing Genl Jackson sworn in as a citizen of this City. I had a short but distinct view of his hard features sufft to qualify me to judge of the fidelity of the Portraits of two of our artists Vanderlyne (sic) & Jarvis, the first appointed to take the picture for the Corpn the second for himself[62]

Vanderlyn was back in New York by early April, but apparently unsatisfied with the portrait he had taken, noting: "The Genl.'s stay here was only a few days and not sufficient to allow as to paint a portrait of him requested by the Corporation of this [New York] City." Vanderlyn wrote to the painter Raphael Earl, [63] located in Nashville, Tennessee: [64]

> As I am anxious of making a likeness of him which shall merit public approbation, I am decided to spare no pains & will submit myself even to be at some expense….The expense I am as before stated willing to incur is to have a portrait painted by you of the Genl. in small.

Vanderlyn asked Earl, who had "the advantage of full sittings" with the General, to paint a small bust, "the head to be about three inches long" that Vanderlyn could use to assist him in his portrait for the City.[65]

Apparently Earl completed the request, as a payment of $100 from Vanderlyn may be found in the Earl Papers. [66] Even with this aid, progress on the portrait proceeded slowly,[67] and the next mention of the painting in the Minutes of the Common Council was a petition from John Vanderlyn, dated November 29, 1819, asking for an advance

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[62] Letters from Pintard, I: 168-9.
[63] John Vanderlyn, Letter to Raphael Earl, 2 April 1819; collection of Harry Bland, New York; transcription of letter in the collection of the Senate House Museum.
[64] See James G. Barber, Andrew Jackson, A Portrait Study (Washington, D.C.: National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1991), 42-6 for a discussion of Ralph Eleaser Whiteside Earl (c. 1788-1838, son of painter Ralph Earl) and his numerous portraits of Jackson.
[65] Ibid., 254.
[66] Ibid., 64.
[67] Vanderlyn was a notoriously slow painter; see Miller, "Vanderlyn and the Business of Art," 35.

towards payment for "the portrait of General Jackson, which he is now painting for the Common Council." A payment of $200 was issued on December 6th.[68]

Meanwhile, Vanderlyn's commission for the Monroe portrait still languished. After receiving his advance from the City, in February 1820, Vanderlyn traveled to Washington, D.C. to work on both portraits of Monroe and Jackson. Although he was given a room to work in at the White House, Vanderlyn complained that the room lacked a fire. After two hours of work he left "with a sensation of a chill on my back & the next morning I could not turn myself in bed, but with violent pain."[69]

Vanderlyn returned to New York and continued working on the Jackson portrait. Writing John H. Purviance on July 16th, Vanderlyn hoped "to be able to get through with the portrait of Jackson in a fortnight."[70] However, he was delayed and it was not until September 4, 1820, that the Finance Committee of the Common Council reported having received a petition from Vanderlyn stating that the portrait was almost complete and requesting that he be allowed to display the painting in his Rotunda. Two weeks later, on September 18th, the Committee issued its findings:

> That it will require some days before the painting will be sufficiently dry to permit its removal, & that there will be no impropriety in suffering it to remain at the Rotunda during that time requested by Mr. Vanderlyn. That the Committee have engaged a person to prepare a suitable frame for the picture, at the price of 70 dollars, & that the whole cost of the subject will be 570 dollars…. Resolved that a warrant pass in favor of John Vanderlyn for 300 dollars…that Mr. Vanderlyn be permitted to retain the said Portrait at the Rotunda until the 16th day of October next….that the Superintendent of Repairs be instructed that on the 16th day of October aforesaid, he remove the said portrait from the Rotunda to the room in this Hall appropriated to this purpose.[71]

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[68] MCC, X: 635, 648.
[69] John Vanderlyn, Letter to John H. Purviance, 8 June 1820; Senate House Museum.
[70] John Vanderlyn, Letter to John H. Purviance, 16 July 1820, Senate House Museum.
[71] MCC, XI: 291, 314-5.

The full-length portrait has darkened over time, especially in the lower portion of the canvas. It shows Jackson dressed in a uniform of blue coat, white trousers, high cavalry boots, and a red sash around his waist tied at the left hip. His drawn saber is in his right hand, held horizontally across his body, and his left hand holds his hat, with a gray cloak draped over his left arm. In the immediate left background, an animated mount is held by an orderly who looks over his left shoulder at Jackson, while to the far right soldiers are in the midst of battle, with smoke rising over them, and red coated British soldiers just visible beyond the U.S. army. The carriage of a cannon has faded from age and is now barely perceptible in the lower right foreground.[72]

Vanderlyn's painting was the first portrait of Jackson commissioned by a municipal government.[73] Five years later, Vanderlyn again painted a full-length portrait of Jackson. This portrait was commissioned by Charleston, South Carolina, which may have selected Vanderlyn because of his earlier New York City commission, and because he was known in the south, having exhibited his work in Savannah, New Orleans, and Charleston in 1821 and 1822.[74] However, that portrait differs dramatically from the New York canvas. Rather than a military man of action, in the Charleston portrait, Jackson is depicted as a restrained gentleman. He stands erect, a glove in his left gloved hand, saber in his right hand, and hat tucked into his left arm. In this portrait, Jackson's sword is

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[72] Asher B. Durand engraved the portrait in 1828, and this engraving reveals details that are now difficult to discern due to the darkening of the portrait over time. See Barber, Jackson: A Portrait Study, 65-67.
[73] Ibid., 67. See also John Vanderlyn letter to James H. Just, New York, 3 February 1825, Henry Darrow Collection, Senate House Museum, regarding this portrait, and Anna Wells Rutledge, "Paintings in the Council Chamber of Charleston's City Hall," in Portrait Painting in America, the Nineteenth Century, ed. Ellen Miles (New York: Main Street, Universe Books, 1977), 25-27.
[74] Barber, Jackson: A Portrait Study, 79.

lowered, and points down, and though a cannon is visible in the left background, most of the background shows a tranquil bay surrounded by trees.[75]

A smaller portrait bust of Jackson by Vanderlyn is also in the collection of the Charleston City Hall. This portrait appears to have been either a study for the New York City Hall portrait, or a later elaboration based on the full-length painting. The tousled hair, position of the head, and details of the uniform, even down to the button unbuttoned at the collar, are extremely close in both portraits.[76]

Vanderlyn's portrait of Monroe was not completed until the following year. On August 6, 1821, Vanderlyn asked the Common Council "for an advance to him of $150 on account for the Portrait of the President of the United States (James Monroe) which he is now painting for the Corporation."[77] Payment was made two weeks later. An additional payment was made on October 29, 1821, for "J Vanderlyn on a/c of Portrait of Pres[iden]t U S….200.[78] The following month, on November 27th, Vanderlyn advised the Common Council

> That he has finished the Portrait of James Monroe President of the United States agreeably to the directions of the Corporation he further stated, that having been obliged to go to the City of Washington for the purpose of completing and taking a Correct likeness of the President and also that of General Jackson and having been of consequence put to very Considerable extra expenses, thereby, he suggested to the Liberality of the Corporation, an allowance of a further Sum beyond that agreed on with him, for the painting of those Portraits. He also respectfully solicited the Members of the Common council to visit the Rotunda where the Portrait now was to view it, Whereupon the Petition was referred to the Finance Committee, and it was resolved that the Invitation be accepted.[79]

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[75] John James Audubon notes that he was asked by Vanderlyn to sit for this portrait, "since my figure considerably resembled that of the General;" entry dated August 10, 1824. The Life of John James Audubon, the Naturalist, ed. Lucy G. B. Audubon (New York: G.P. Putnam, 1869), 107.
[76] Barber, Jackson: A Portrait Study, 66, suggests that this may have been a reworking of the original City Hall canvas, and not a study for the full-length portrait.
[77] MCC, XI: 752, 781.
[78] Ibid., XII: 93.
[79] Ibid., 114-5.

On December 10, 1821, the final payment of $150 was made to Vanderlyn for the Monroe portrait. Two weeks later, on Christmas Eve, the Finance Committee agreed that, "for his extraordinary trouble and expense in taking the two portraits of President Monroe and Genl Jackson," Vanderlyn should be paid an additional $100 "in pursuance of the prayer of his petition and in full satisfaction of his claim." Payment was issued immediately.[80]

The refined and decorous portrait of Monroe shows the President in black coat and shoes, elegantly relieved by white knee breeches, waistcoat, stockings and shirt ruffle. Vanderlyn's 1821 portrait of Monroe was the first presidential portrait acquired by the City of New York since Trumbull's Washington of 1790. Unlike the earlier portrait, Monroe is shown in an interior setting. Despite a sword that lies across the map (possibly alluding to Monroe's early military service), the portrait is a painting of a bureaucrat, more at home around the minutiae of papers and books, rather than on a battlefield. In front view, Monroe stands with his left foot forward, and his left hand nonchalantly supported by his thumb in a pocket. His right hand rests on a large map of Florida partly unrolled on a table covered with a green cloth, a reference to Monroe's acquisition of the state during his Presidency. Books, plans, and other papers are scattered on top and beneath the table, and a red drape hangs over the table. The U.S. Senate is depicted in the right far background, and before the window a red upholstered chair stands in the immediate right background. The carpet has a repeating geometric device that creates a greater sense of recession and space.

[80] Ibid., 142, 163, 170.

The portrait of Jackson, Vanderlyn's first full-length portrait, seems less successful than the Monroe. The horse and orderly in the near left background crowd the General towards the front of the picture plane, and the distant battle is insufficient in scale to balance the looming mid-ground figures. Although a sedate and safe portrait, the Monroe displays a greater compositional competence than the Jackson portrait. Monroe's body seems more substantial and solid, whereas Jackson's body seems almost ephemeral, and the tonality of the Monroe portrait is restrained and balanced.

While Vanderlyn's efforts were respectable, and he received subsequent public commissions from New York City as well as Washington, D.C., his contemporaries were highly critical of these portraits.[81] William Dunlap commented that the two paintings "were of various degrees of merit, and generally much inferior to what was expected from the author of the "Marius," and the "Ariadne."[82] In this, he echoed Vanderlyn's own man in Savannah, who had been sent down to organize his exhibition. He had written Vanderlyn in 1822 that he had "received Genl Jackson… I must say however *entre nous* that I do not think it worthy of the artist of Marius & Ariadne.[83]

John Pintard,[84] writing his daughter Eliza regarding the reception for General Jackson, summed up the problem with the portraits succinctly:

> V[anderlyn] is not happy. His portraits are too stiff & minutely labored. Jarvis executes with spirit & is very successful in giving character to his performances. He ought to have been the artist.[85]

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[81] Vanderlyn's own perspective was that "the encouragement in Painting [in New York] is limited to portraits and he who pains them cheapest, suits them best." John Vanderlyn letter to D.B. Warden, New York, 2 August 1824; Hoes Collection, Senate House Museum.
[82] Dunlap, History, II: 37.
[83] Geo. Schlry, letter to John Vanderlyn, Savannah, 13 February 1822; quoted in Averill, "Vanderlyn, American Painter," 265.
[84] Pintard was a close friend of DeWitt Clinton, despite their political differences; was a founder of the New-York Historical Society, and an active participant in the American Academy of Fine Arts, the Chamber of Commerce, Sailors' Snug Harbor, free schools and Sunday Schools, and the American Bible Society, just to name a few.

For New Yorkers, accustomed to Jarvis's spirited and forceful portraits, Vanderlyn's more restrained and finished style appeared rigid and graceless. His depicted personalities did not sparkle confidently and welcome the viewer, like his predecessor Jarvis's, but seem uneasy and restricted.

Perhaps this difference was due in part to a difference in temperament. Vanderlyn was an unhappy and irritable man. An avowed enemy to Trumbull, who he viewed as the evil genius behind his financial woes, he also detested John Wesley Jarvis. Vanderlyn even ended a warm friendship with Benjamin Trott, the miniature painter, because of his familiarity with Jarvis. A postscript to a letter to his nephew warned that he should steer clear of them:

> You out of regard for me, ought never to be very great with that conceited & ungrateful & envious shuckleskin Trott. He is a man of similar principles with Jarvis.[86]

Samuel F. B. Morse and the City Hall Portrait Commissions

Samuel F. B. Morse (1791-1872) was born in Charlestown, Massachusetts, into the orthodox Calvinist family of Reverend Jedidiah Morse.[87] Morse was educated at Phillips Academy, and then entered Yale College in October 1805. At Yale he began to draw caricatures, and then serious portraits of his friends and classmates, eventually being paid for his profiles and miniatures. After graduating from Yale, Morse worked as

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[85] Letter dated February 23, 1819, in Letters from Pintard, I: 168-9.
[86] John Vanderlyn, Letter to John Vanderlyn Jr., 6 November 1830; quoted in Averill, "Vanderlyn, American Painter," 149, 271.
[87] The standard biographies on Morse are Carleton Mabee, The American Leonardo: A Life of Samuel F.B. Morse (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1943); Oliver W. Larkin, Samuel F.B. Morse and American Democratic Art (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1954); William Kloss, Samuel F.B. Morse (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., in association with The National Museum of American Art, 1988); and Paul J. Staiti, Samuel F. B. Morse (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

a clerk in a Mallory's Bookstore in Scollay Square, Boston,[88] where he met the painter Washington Allston in 1810. Allston became Morse's unofficial painting instructor, and helped him to persuade his father to send him to England to study art.

Morse traveled to London with the Allstons, leaving on July 13, 1811. Like so many of his compatriots before him, Morse studied with the American expatriate Benjamin West, and was admitted to the Royal Academy in October 1811. And like Trumbull and Vanderlyn, Morse became enamored of

> the intellectual branch of the art [of painting]. Portraits have none of it; landscape has some of it, but history has it wholly. I am certain you would not be satisfied to see me sit down quietly, spending my time in painting portraits, throwing away the talents which Heaven has given me for the higher branches of art, and devoting my time only to the inferior.[89]

By embracing the eighteenth century hierarchy of subject matter, and rejecting portraiture as beneath his talents, Morse, like his fellow American artists, ensured unavoidable disappointment for himself. American patronage, as Morse would discover, revolved around portraiture.

When war between the U.S. and England was declared the following year, Morse, like Vanderlyn and Trumbull, was trapped in Europe. During his stay in England, despite the Federalist politics of his family, Morse began to assume a radical Republican point of view. Much to the chagrin of his parents and siblings, who attempted to temper his outlook in their letters to him, Morse condemned the British for their actions against the U.S. Despite his family's warnings, the war fostered Morse's tendency towards rabid nationalism, an inclination that would only strengthen in later years. Nevertheless, the young Morse's interest in politics did not distract him from progressing with his painting.

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[88] Staiti, S.F.B. Morse, 11.
[89] Quoted in Kloss, Samuel Morse, 30, and Staiti, S.F.B.Morse, 32.

His *Dying Hercules*[90] was painted for the Spring 1813 Royal Academy exhibit, and the work garnered praise from the London Globe and the British Press.

Morse continued his studies in England until August 21, 1815, when he departed for America, arriving October 21st, and within two months setting up a studio in Boston. One of his first and most telling encounters with American taste occurred when Morse was approached by Joseph Delaplaine of Philadelphia, who asked him to contribute to his Repository of the Lives and Portraits of Distinguished American Characters, a collection of engravings of prominent Americans. Morse agreed to receive a modest honorarium for completing life portraits of former President John Adams and Massachusetts Governor Caleb Strong and copying John Singleton Copley's portrait of John Hancock. All three portraits were to be used as the basis for Delaplaine's engraving.

However, upon completion in February 1816, Delaplaine rejected Morse's portraits for engraving, demanding that he copy Gilbert Stuart's portraits of Adams[91] and Strong in order to be paid. In contrast with Stuart's portrait of Adams, Morse's painting is disquieting (Figures 62 and 63). Stuart depicts Adams as a hale and hearty elderly gentleman, fully alert, with a keen glance at the viewer. A cloud of gray hair and increased jowls are the strongest indications of his advanced age. Morse's psychological approach contrasts dramatically with the more heroic Stuart portrait. Morse depicts the former president as an infirm and irascible old man, with watery eyes and a face heavily

[90] Kloss, Samuel Morse, 28, and Staiti, S.F.B.Morse , 18-23, link Morse's early student work *The Dying Hercules* to his politics, noting that Hercules had been used as an allegorical symbol of the young American nation by American writers, and that Morse himself used the analogy in a 10 July 1812 letter to his parents.

[91] See Carrie Rebora Barratt and Ellen G. Miles, Gilbert Stuart (New York and New Haven: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Yale University Press, Exhibition Catalogue, 2004), 217-222, for a discussion of this portrait.

marked with age. Adams' mouth is held slightly ajar as though he is startled or confused by what he sees.

Unable to find success with even these modest endeavors, Morse began a period of itinerancy, traveling to New Hampshire, and then returning home to Massachusetts where he met and courted Lucretia Pickering Walker. Unable to succeed with his art in the north, Morse traveled to Charleston in December 1817, at the encouragement of an uncle, Dr. James E.B. Finley, who lived there. Arriving in January, after painting a portrait of his uncle and placing it on display in his studio, Morse found himself inundated with commissions.

By the end of the winter season, Morse had completed or was finishing sixty portraits, having earned more than $4,000.[92] He left Charleston in May 1818. In September, he married Lucretia, and by mid-November 1819 returned to Charleston with his wife, raising the price of a portrait from $60 to $80. The following November, returning for his third season in Charleston, Morse stopped en route in Washington to paint a full-length portrait of President James Monroe that the City of Charleston had commissioned in March 1819.[93] Despite the financial depression that hit the city in 1820, Morse was occupied painting portraits, and the success that he achieved in this city, which depended for its economy on the labor of slaves, may have influenced his future support of slavery.

Like Vanderlyn, Morse turned his sights towards Washington as a source of patronage. Congress's 1817 commissioning of four panels in the Rotunda of the Capitol,

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[92] Staiti, S.F.B. Morse, 51.

[93] Charleston commissioned the portrait during Monroe's tour of the south, and Morse received $750 for the portrait. He painted the study for the portrait in December 1819, and completed the full-length painting in Boston in 1820. Rutledge, "Paintings in Charleston's City Hall," 26-27; Kloss, Samuel Morse, 57-8, 60-61.

to be painted by Trumbull at a price of $8,000 each, encouraged other artists with similar ambitions to attempt to create works of art that would record the nation's history. Morse's next project, *The House of Representatives,* begun in 1821, was a comparable endeavor. Similar to Trumbull's *Declaration of Independence*, completed in 1819, Morse's *House of Representatives* was an attempt to create a particularly American history painting, one that would focus on the political institutions that were the bulwark of the nation, rather than on individual heroic deeds.[94]

Traveling from New Haven, Morse arrived in Washington on November 6, 1821, where he was given studio space in the Capitol. Unlike Trumbull, Morse was not paid for his work, but undertook the painting on speculation, hoping to recoup his expenses by exhibiting the work to an admiring and paying public. The enormous picture[95] kept him busy throughout most of the next year, and the National Intelligencer reported:

> Mr. Samuel F. B. Morse, a distinguished artist, has in hand a painting …the subject is an interior view of the House of Representatives Chamber in the Capitol…. The members are supposed to be assembling for an evening session, and the picture will contain more than a hundred figures, all portraits from sittings by the different persons…. We can hardly conceive of a subject more attractive, and we anticipate for it as an exhibition painting, great success.[96]

Despite this optimistic prediction, after touring the painting throughout the northeast, Morse lost money on his speculative venture.

With the pressure of a growing family, he returned to the security of portrait commissions and eventually settled in New York[97] in the fall of 1824, renting a studio at

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[94] Kloss, Samuel Morse, 68-79; Staiti, S.F.B. Morse, 73-101.
[95] The picture is 86-1/2 x 130-3/4 inches in size, currently in the collection of the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
[96] National Intelligencer, 21 January 1822, quoted in Staiti, S.F.B. Morse, 81.
[97] As early as 1812, Morse had considered moving to New York, writing in a May 17, 1812 letter to his brother, Morse wrote: "Boston is most backward [regarding encouragement of the arts], so, if ever I should return to America, Philadelphia or New York would be my place of abode." Edward Lind Morse, Samuel

96 Broadway across from Trinity Church on Broadway.[98] His selection of New York was based on his belief that New York would soon begin to feel the "influx of wealth from the Western canal," and that the upswing in New York fortunes would mean an upswing in portrait commissions.[99] He was not to be disappointed, finding that he had "as much as I can do in painting."[100]

In August 1824, the Marquis de Lafayette had begun his triumphal tour of the United States at the invitation of the President and Congress, which lasted until September 1825.[101] Lafayette's ship, the *Cadmus*, entered New York harbor on August 15th, which happened to be a Sunday. Because festivities would disrupt the Sabbath order, the party accepted Vice President Daniel D. Tompkin's invitation to stay overnight at his Staten Island home, and Lafayette traveled to Manhattan on Monday, escorted by a flotilla of steamships. Disembarking at Castle Garden, on the Battery, where an audience of 30,000 met him, Lafayette then proceeded to City Hall, applauded by 50,000 cheering spectators along his Broadway route. A civic banquet followed, with fireworks, rockets, transparencies, and illuminations of public buildings that evening.

Lafayette stayed in New York until late September,[102] and as the first city to entertain the hero, New York set the standard for other American cities. Private banquets, sponsored by the Society of the Cincinnati and the Masons, and the extravagant Lafayette

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F.B. Morse, His Letters and Journals (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1914; New York: Kraus Reprint, 1972), 73.

[98] Staiti, S.F.B. Morse, 109; Morse, Letters, 257.

[99] In 1824, Morse also believed that New York offered little real competition to him. Morse, Letters, 102-3: "Colonel Trumbull…these are now old men and going off the stage;" and p. 249: Colonel T[rumbull] is growing old too, and there is no artist of education sufficiently prominent to take his place as President of the Academy of Arts. By becoming more known to the New York public…I may possibly be promoted to his place."

[100] Ibid., 258.

[101] A comprehensive treatment of Lafayette's tour may be found in Lafayette, Hero of Two Worlds, The Art and Pageantry of his Farewell Tour of America, 1824-1825 (New York: Queens Museum, exhibition catalogue, 1989).

[102] Anne C. Loveland, "Lafayette's Farewell Tour," in, Lafayette, Hero of Two Worlds, 63-65.

Ball at Castle Garden, set the city's engravers and printers at work on invitations and broadsides, while painters and carpenters created fantastic settings where the work of jewelers, haberdashers, tailors, and seamstresses could be displayed.[103]

Castle Garden was transformed for the 5,000 guests who attended the ball by hundreds of artisans and laborers. The highlight of the fête was 'a grand transparence [that] was suddenly uncovered,' which 'presented an exact picture of his residence at Lagrange…[with the] inscription below it, "Here is thy home".'[104] The theatrical effects of light showed La Grange through a full day from sunrise to sunset. A pavilion or "Temple of Liberty" for Lafayette's use was set up in the interior of Castle Garden, consisting of thirteen columns supporting a dome topped with an eagle. Made of red, white and blue gauze, the pavilion was lit from within. Flags from nations around the world tented the open fort as well, supported by a large pole with a spiral band ornamented with the names of revolutionary war heroes. The multicolored tent was lit with thirteen chandeliers, and decorated at the top of the supporting "Pillar of Union" with the flags of the 24 American states.[105]

In order to commemorate Lafayette's visit, three days after his arrival, the Common Council resolved:

> Whereas the Common Council are desirous of perpetuating the Memory of a Man who will be distinguished in the Annals of Our country for his Love of Freedom and of Military Glory Whose name will be ever associated by posterity with that of Washington, the illustrious Founder of our republic, And as the portrait of one so venerated will be always looked upon with Interest and will awaken feelings favourable to Virtue and patriotism, Resolved, therefore that the Honble Major Genl the Marquis De La

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[103] Caroline Rennolds Milbank, "'Ahead of the World': New York City Fashion," in Art and the Empire City, New York, 1825-1861 (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000), 253-4.
[104] Craig Hanyan and Mary Hanyan, DeWitt Clinton and the Rise of the People's Men (Montreal and Buffalo: McGill Queens University Press, 1996), 208.
[105] Marc H. Miller, "The Farewell Tour and American Art, in Lafayette, Hero of Two Worlds, 1107-115.

> Fayette be requested to favour this Common Council with sitting for his Portrait to be placed in the gallery of Portraits of the Common Council among those great and good men who have done honor and Service to our Country, Resolved that the Committee of Arrangements be requested to wait upon the Marquis with a Copy of this Resolution and on his acceding to the request that they take charge of the execution of the same.[106]

The Council had already granted the Marquis the Freedom of the City in 1784,[107] but in order to commemorate this occasion, they also resolved to make his son, George Washington De Lafayette, a Freeman of the City of New York, and "that the Certificate of Freedom handsomely engrossed be presented to him in a golden box." As part of its commemorative activities, local artists were commissioned to create a "Tribute of Respect from the City of New York to General Lafayette, the Illustrious Friend of Liberty;" a handmade book. The book contained ornate calligraphic inscriptions of the speeches of the Mayor and the Council's own resolutions regarding Lafayette's visit, as well as watercolors by Charles Burton. A Committee on Arrangements was charged with carrying the Council's wishes into effect.

The City had already received two portraits of the Marquis before they resolved to commission a painting. A month before the Marquis landed, Captain Henry Robinson had sent a letter to the Corporation, along with an engraved "likeness of the Marquis De La Fayette which he begged the Corporation would do him the Honor to accept."[108] Although the Committee of Arts and Sciences was charged to have the engraving framed and "placed in the Gallery of Portraits in the City Hall," its location today is unknown.[109]

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[106] MCC, XIV: 38-9.
[107] See above, Chapter 4.
[108] This may have been a copy of the engraving by Jean-Marie Leroux after Ary Scheffer. Lafayette had brought a number of these engravings with him on his tour as gifts. The painting itself (1822) was given as a gift from Lafayette to the United States House of Representatives. Miller, "Farewell Tour," 146.
[109] MCC, XIII: 793. A photostatic copy of Robinson's letter may be found in the City Hall Portrait File, Art Commission of the City of New York. The letter, dated 10 July 1824, No. 22 Pearl Street, reads "Mr. Henry Robinson's respectful compliments to the Honorable Mayor and Common Council of the City of

About one month later, when the Marquis had already landed, the Captain of Lafayette's ship the *Cadmus,* also sent a portrait to Mayor William Paulding, asking that the Council "give it a place in the City Hall." [110] On August 18th, before issuing their resolution to commission a portrait, the Corporation moved that "the same be accepted and that the Clerk of the Common Council return the thanks of this Common Council to Capt Allyn for his acceptable present."[111] This portrait is also unlocated.

While by 1824, the City had developed a tradition of commemorative portraiture, the Council's decision to recognized the Marquis in this fashion could only have been strengthened by an Address delivered in May of that year by Gulian Verplanck[112] before the American Academy of Fine Arts, on the occasion of its tenth exhibition. Verplanck emphasized the importance of portraiture, which "appeals more directly to the comprehension of everyone." He further argued that "Painting becomes public and national, when its is employed in perpetuating…the features of the brave, the good, the truly great." Civic prestige could only be enhanced by such an addition to the City Hall collection, a "series of historical portraits" which "would form an excellent foundation for a national portrait gallery."[113]

As the Committee of Arrangements worked to properly receive the Marquis, every artist in the City, and many outside of it, jockeyed for the privilege of this

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new York and sends them an engraved Portrait of Gen. Lafayette lately published in France which is presumed as a good likeness assuming that anything relating to so illustrious a Man will be acceptable."

[110] The letter reads: "Sir, Permit be through you to present to the Corporation of the City of New York a Portrait of General Lafayette and pray you to give it a place in the City Hall." Ibid.

[111] MCC, XIV: 28.

[112] "Address [on the Fine Arts] delivered at the opening of the Tenth Exhibition of the American Academy of Fine Arts," in Discourse and Addresses on Subjects of American History, Arts and Literature (NY: J & J Harper, 1833), 123-159. Verplanck was a member of the Bread and Cheese Club, a writer on law and theology, editor of Shakespeare, and a political satirist who targeted DeWitt Clinton and his cronies. Burrows and Wallace, Gotham, 468-71; Cornog, Birth of Empire, 128-9.

[113] Verplanck, "Address at the Tenth Exhibition," 138-141, 156n4.

prestigious commission. On August 30th, the Corporation received separate requests from Vanderlyn and Jarvis, which were referred to the Committee of Arrangements. The Council, perhaps tired of these appeals, resolved "that the said Committee have full powers in relation to such attentions as they may judge it proper to pay to the Marquis on his return and during his residence in the City."[114] This meant that this Committee would have full control over determining who would paint the portrait. The Committee still had not made their decision by November 8th, when the Council received another petition, this time from James Herring. His request "to paint the Portrait of the Marquis De La Fayette required by the Corporation" was read and, like the others, referred to the "Committee appointed on the reception and Entertainment of the Marquis."[115]

However, by the end of the year, the Committee seems to have come to a decision, for on January 4th, 1825, Morse wrote his wife:

> I have just learned in confidence from one of the members of the committee of the corporation appointed to procure a full length portrait of Lafayette that they have designated me as the painter of it, and that a sub-committee was appointed to wait on me with the information.[116]

Only two days later, Morse was officially notified and wrote Lucretia again:

> The terms are not definitely settled; the committee is disposed to be very liberal. I shall have at least $700.00 probably one thousand….Vanderlyn, Sully, Peale, Jarvis, Waldo, Ingham and some others were my competitors in the application for the picture.[117]

Given Morse's own lack of experience in full-length portraiture, it is surprising that he prevailed over Jarvis, Vanderlyn, Sully and Waldo, who had all previously

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[114] MCC, XIV: 53.

[115] Another portrait, a sculptured bust by N. Gevelot, was given to the City on this date as well, and the Council resolved, "That the Bust of General La Fayette, presented to this Board, by N Gevelot Artist and Sculptor, be accepted, and that the same be placed in a conspicuous situation in the Gallery of Paintings, under the direction of the Committee of repairs." The location of this bust is unknown. Ibid., 123.

[116] "The Lafayette Portrait by Morse, Historical Memorandum," City Hall Portrait Collection File, Art Commission of the City of New York; see also Morse, Letters, 259-60.

[117] "The Lafayette Portrait by Morse," 1.

contributed full-lengths to the City Hall "gallery of portraits." Perhaps Morse's most important credential for this project was his extensive set of friends in New York's artistic, literary, social, and political circles. Morse had joined the Bread and Cheese Club, which met at the Washington Hotel at Broadway and Chambers Street. There he developed friendships with James Fenimore Cooper, William Cullen Bryant, William Dunlap, Fitz-Greene Halleck, and Gulian Verplanck.[118]

In addition to his social contacts, Morse had forged political connections. He had painted Isaac Lawrence,[119] a wealthy merchant who, according to William Dunlap,[120] was instrumental in Morse's obtaining the municipal commission. And he was painting the wife of Elisha King, a member of the Common Council, who served on the committee for receiving Lafayette. Moreover, he had sold paintings to the wealthy and politically connected auctioneer Philip Hone,[121] whose niece he painted in 1824.

A self-made man, Hone was a connoisseur with wide-ranging interests in the arts and literature, and more important, a member of the Lafayette reception committee.[122]

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[118] Staiti, S.F.B. Morse, 117. A letter from Morse to DeWitt Bloodgood dated 26 December 1828, regarding Morse's interest in receiving the commission from the "city corporation" for Van Buren's portrait (Inman eventually won this commission), provides some insight into Morse's use of his social connections in the advancement of his career. Morse notes that rather than approach Van Buren directly, as Bloodgood suggests, "it would be more gratifying to me to solicit through friends…than directly to apply to him myself." Simon Gratz Collection, Archives of American Art.

[119] Isaac Lawrence was President of the United States Branch Bank and a Trustee of the Seminary for New York. See Letters of Pintard, I: 322.

[120] Dunlap, History, II: 315.

[121] Hone was elected Mayor in 1825 and served one term, from 1826-27. He was able to acquire a vast fortune as an auctioneer. In New York City, "the auctioneer in early times played a large part in the commercial and private economic life of the city. His function was chiefly the sale of imported goods…. No one except a legally commissioned auctioneer could expose to sale at public outcry any goods except such as were exempt from auction duty [domestic articles]. …[A]s time went on the monopoly of public auction which the law gave to the limited number of appointees seems to have increased to the extent of a total exclusion of private sales, and the auction business reached mammoth proportions." Howard L. McBain, DeWitt Clinton and the Origin of the Spoils System In New York (NY: AMS Press, Inc., 1967), 100-102.

[122] Mabee, American Leonardo, 97.

Although dismissive of Morse's later work, which he found prosaic and unimaginative,[123] he apparently approved of Morse's portraiture and supported him for this commission. This approbation is evident in a list of his own collection of art that, in 1834, Hone provided to William Dunlap. Numbering only 48 paintings, Hone described them as "the works of artists now living, and I do not know of a finer collection of modern pictures." The list included the *Original Sketch of Lafayette by Morse A study for the full-length portrait, painted for the corporation, and now in the Governor's room, City Hall*, [124] (Figure 64) as well as two portraits by Morse, suggesting that despite his critical eye, Hone appreciated Morse's portraiture.

In order to paint Lafayette, Morse had to follow him to Washington, reaching the city on February 7th and taking a room in Gadsby's, the same hotel where Lafayette resided, met the Marquis for the first time. He commenced work immediately, concerned that he had little time.

> "[T]he Marquis will leave here on the 23rd…If he allows me time sufficient I have to fear as to the result. He has a noble face. In this I am disappointed, for I had heard that his features were not good. On the contrary, if there is any truth in expression of character, there never was a more perfect example of accordance between the face and the character. He has all that noble firmness and consistency, for which he has been so distinguished, strongly indicated in his whole face….The General is very agreeable. He introduced me to his son by saying: 'This is Mr. Morse, the painter, the son of the geographer; he has come to Washington to take the topography of my face.'[125]

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[123] Entry for May 15, 1833: "The spring exhibition of the National Academy has just opened…the President, Mr. S.F. B. Morse, and Cole have contributed the pictures which they painted and brought from Europe. The former [Morse's] are hard and cold as ever; the warmth of the sunny skies of Italy does not appear to have had any effect upon the worthy president. He is an excellent fellow…but he has no imagination. He makes good portraits, strong likenesses…but he cannot design. There is no poetry about his paintings, and his prose consists of straight lines, which look as if they had been stretched to their utmost tension to form clothes-lines." The Diary of Philip Hone, 1828-1851, ed. Allan Nevins (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1936), 92-3. In addition, Hone had his official portrait as Mayor painted by Vanderlyn.

[124] Dunlap, History, II: 462-4.

[125] Morse, Letters, II: 259-61.

After only two sittings, completion of the portrait was delayed, not by the Marquis's busy schedule, but by the unexpected death of Morse's wife Lucretia, who expired of heart failure shortly after the birth of their fifth child. Morse returned to New Haven, but learned that his wife had already been buried. In March he took Susan, his daughter, back with him to New York where he waited for Lafayette to return for more sittings and passed the time with portraiture.

Lafayette returned to New York in July 1825, and Morse was able to complete his oil study.[126] Due to his formidable efforts in forming the National Academy of Design in 1825, Morse deferred work on the larger full-length canvas until January 1826. He was still at work on the painting on April 18, 1826, when he wrote his parents that he expected to complete the portrait for the newly established National Academy of Design's exhibition in May. Despite his hopes, Morse was still laboring over the portrait in May 1826, and did not complete it until the summer of that year, after his father's death in June (Figure 65).[127]

Unlike other portrait commissions by the Common Council, Morse was not paid directly for the painting. Instead, payment was made through the Committee of Arrangements, which received six lump payments totaling $6,580.35 for the celebration, made to Richard Riker, Chair, from October 1824 through December 1825.[128] Although there are no records of payments made to Morse by the City, the fee for the portrait was apparently fixed at the wished-for $1000. In Thomas Sully's Journal, he notes that

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[126] Now in the collection of the New York Public Library (Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations).
[127] Kloss, Samuel Morse, 104.
[128] Joseph A. Fitzgerald, NYC Department of Finance, letter to Edward H. Hall, Assistant Secretary, Art Commission of the City of New York, November 13, 1928; City Hall Portrait Collection File, Art Commission, City Hall.

during a trip to New York in July, 1825 he met Morse. While Sully left no record of their discussion, he noted at the end of his entry: "The corporation of New York are to pay Morse $1000 for a whole length of Lafayette!"[129]

The New York City Common Council commission was the first public portrait commission of Lafayette in the U.S. Although numerous portraits of Lafayette were painted and created during his visit, municipal and state governments commissioned only two other full-length portraits (Figures 66 to 68). The Philadelphia commission was in fact a private subscription by public-spirited citizens, and Thomas Sully was awarded the distinction of this commission.[130] His full-length portrait, completed in 1826, depicts Lafayette as a youthful, debonair man about town, top hat and cane in his right hand, left hand akimbo, with the festivities at Independence Hall behind him.[131] The New York State legislature, under the leadership of Governor DeWitt Clinton, not to be outdone by New York City, also commissioned a portrait, and awarded the commission to Charles Cromwell Ingham.[132] He depicted the Marquis as a jovial older gentleman, seated in a lushly red interior; the Marquis's status is hinted at by the bust of Washington placed on the table beside him and the figure of Liberty that is just visible behind the curtain on his

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[129] Journal of Thomas Sully's Activities, Transcript, p. 36, Thomas Sully Papers, Archives of American Art. Vanderlyn, in an April 13, 1850 letter to Alderman Chapman of the Fifth Ward, suggested that the disparity in payments to artists for full-length portraits (he had received $500 for his full-lengths for the City) was due to political favoritism. Henry Darrow Collection, Senate House Museum.

[130] Although this portrait did eventually enter the City's collection, according to Biddle and Fielding, the portrait remained in the artist's hands until he presented it to the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, which in 1848, with Sully's consent, gave it to Independence Hall. Edward Biddle and Mantle Fielding, The Life and Works of Thomas Sully (Lancaster, PA: Philadelphia, 1921), 36-8. Doris Devine Fanelli and Karie Diethorn, History of the Portrait Collection, Independence National Historical Park and Catalog of the Collection (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2001), 197, state that this portrait was purchased from the subscribers by the City in 1826.

[131] The figures in the background are the Philadelphia City Troop, who served as a special escort for Lafayette during his stay in town. Biddle and Fielding, Life of Sully, 203.

[132] The Lafayette Bill passed by the New York State Senate provided for Governor Clinton to select the artist who would execute the portrait. Apparently Vanderlyn was interested in obtaining this commission, and had approached Clinton through Samuel Townsend. Samuel Townsend Letters to John Vanderlyn, Albany, 15 February 1825 and 20 February 1825; Henry Darrow Collection, Senate House Museum.

left. The final full-length was commissioned by the Kentucky legislature, which hired local artist Matthew Jouett. The Kentucky Statehouse portrait by him is a close copy of Ary Scheffer's full-length portrait, the most significant modification being the addition of Washington's tomb in the left background.[133]

Morse's depiction of Lafayette differs dramatically from these more pedestrian portraits, which lack his riveting combination of humanity and immortal splendor. Although similar in dimension to the other full-length portraits in the City Hall collection, the portrait of Lafayette also departs from the traditional grand style format employed by Trumbull, where the sitter is shown in a neutral space, enlivened by architectural elements, drapery, books and furnishings. The usual oratorical gesture employed in Trumbull's portrait of Hamilton or Stuart's *Landsdowne* portrait of Washington has been abandoned as well. Still, Morse did not utilize the more informal approach pioneered by Jarvis, where the sitter appears as though he has just stepped in for a visit, hat in hand. Morse gives us a grand portrait that shows us a hero of the revolution. In fact, by placing Lafayette at the top of a staircase, Morse employs a perspective that is strongly reminiscent of Trumbull's early full-length portraits of Washington and Clinton.

Lafayette is depicted from a low viewpoint, facing the viewer; his closely placed feet and erect still posture contrast with the dramatic swirl of the cape around his body. The background drops back dramatically behind him. To his right are three pedestals, on which stand two busts, one of Washington and one of Franklin. The third pedestal, on which part of Lafayette's cloak and his right hand rest, is empty, awaiting his bust.

[133] Miller, "Farewell Tour," 150-4, mentions that the Marquis had suggested to Jouett, through Speaker of the House Henry Clay, that the artist copy Scheffer's portrait and then "correct" the face when the Marquis had returned from his tour of the south and west.

Behind Lafayette on his left is an urn holding the helianthus, a flower that follows the sun, representing according to Morse:

> …the characteristic stern uncompromising consistency of Lafayette—a trait of character which I then considered and still consider, the great prominent trait of that distinguished man.[134]

Like the helianthus that never deviates from the light of the sun, Lafayette never deviated from following the light of liberty. Lafayette stands at the top of a flight of stairs, a landscape with a low horizon spreading out beyond him. Morse's placement of Lafayette permitted him to completely contrast the figure with the sunset sky, so that clouds and the colors of the sunset surround Lafayette.[135]

Compositionally, Morse's approach to the portrait of Lafayette is similar to his full-length portrait of Monroe, completed 1818-1820.[136] Like Monroe, Lafayette's right arm stretches slightly out away from his body with his hand resting on a flat surface; his left arm remains close to his body, and his hand is occupied with his cloak. In the Monroe portrait, Morse had placed the President's hat in his left hand, but his arm also follows the curve of the body. And like the Monroe, Morse again flanks the figure with architectural elements but keeps the horizon line low. Nonetheless, the portrait of Lafayette is much more successful painting. Morse resolved some of the problems he had with the Monroe portrait by reducing the scale of the elements that flank the figure, so that the Marquis's figure dominates his surroundings and is not compressed by them.

The commissioning of a portrait of Lafayette, a foreigner who had not visited the U.S. since the end of the revolutionary war, and the passionate reception that Lafayette

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[134] Morse, Letters, I: 272.
[135] Staiti, S.F.B. Morse, 124-5, has connected this use of light and shade in the Lafayette portrait to the theme and use of light in the farewell tour.
[136] See above, note 93.

received in New York and throughout the U.S., was probably due less to his achievements, than to his value as a symbolic figure of revolutionary fervor. Lafayette's visit during a period of partisanship in American politics offered a brief reconciliation as Americans united to celebrate their past. Because of age and birth Lafayette was outside the political spectrum, like Washington and Franklin a piece of the revered past rather than the politicized present. One of the younger members of the rapidly aging revolutionary generation, he represented an age that was quickly disappearing.

Lafayette's indelible relationship with Washington, a connection that was underscored by his own son's name, no doubt burnished his significance. Lafayette's association with Washington was also drawn through the theme of sacrifice. Lafayette had sacrificed his aristocratic heritage for liberty in the same way that Washington had sacrificed an idyllic agrarian life. And, Lafayette shared Washington's attribute of disinterestedness. Washington had demonstrated his lack of ambition by resigning his military rank, and then refusing to run for a third term as President. In an analogous fashion, Lafayette had demonstrated his disinterestedness and pure love of liberty by fighting for the American cause, a conflict that would not gain him money or power.

An additional rationale behind the New York commission is suggested in prefatory remarks made by Alderman Zabriskie before the Council voted to commission the portrait:

> Mr. Mayor—At the request of the committee appointed by the Common council, for the reception of General Lafayette, I rise with no ordinary emotions, to proposed for the adoption of the Common council, the two resolutions, now before me… This room in which we meet, to transact the municipal concerns of this city, is graced with the full length portraits of a Washington, a Clinton, a Jay, and a Hamilton—individuals who have established a name which will be transmitted to future generations, ….The Portrait Room in your Hall is embellished with the portraits of many of

> our most distinguished citizens, civil, military, and naval, and who have contributed in no small degree, to establish a national character throughout the world—and permit me, sir, to add, that there is no individual now living, whose portrait will be received with greater admiration and interest, than that of our illustrious visitor, General de Lafayette.[137]

Whereas by this time, the transmission of values to future generations through portraiture was a customary trope,[138] the Alderman added a more ambitious element to his rationale. He noted that the portraits in the City Hall collection are of individuals "who have contributed in no small degree, to establish a national character throughout the world." Rather than commemorating individuals who had specific ties with New York City, or with the region, these prefatory comments reveal the Council's ambition that New York continue to embellish City Hall with individuals of national importance. Mayors and Governors would continue to get their due, but national figures would also be recognized by and incorporated into the City's art collection, becoming part of the history of the City.

Conclusion

The New York City Hall portrait collection provides a rare opportunity to study changes in the meaning of portraiture in New York City after the revolution and during the early years of the U.S. Unlike other collections that have been dispersed over time, the City Hall portrait collection remains largely complete, and, with the exception of one or two portraits, the entire collection remains on view in the building for which most of the commissions were originally intended. The New York City Hall portrait collection

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[137] (My emphasis.) A Complete History of the Marquis de Lafayette, Major General in the Army of the United States of America, in the War of the Revolution; embracing an account of his late Tour through the United States to the time of his departure, September, 1825 (Hartford, CT: S. Andrus, 1846), quoted in Willard L. DeYoe, letter to George J. Lober, Executive Secretary, Art Commission of the City of New York, May 26, 1950; Correspondence File # 26-A, Item 43.

[138] See for example, the Kentucky legislature's resolution, quoted in Miller, "Farewell Tour," 145: "Every citizen of Kentucky is eager to look at Lafayette. In viewing him, the glory of our country, the principles of the revolution… the precious value of liberty, are kindred ideas…[His portrait is] calculated to call up the associate ideas of the talents and virtues by which he acquired his great reputation."

thus provides us with a series of portraits that require study not just individually, but also as a group, for they were commissioned as a series of works by and for municipal government. The collection offers an exceptional window into the processes behind the creation of the earliest American public art, commissioned to represent the emerging democracy.

As New York City, along with the rest of the nation, moved from the monarchical to democratic forms of government, traditional forms of visual representation, particularly portraiture, came into question. With the development of new, representative forms of government, new symbols and new meanings were required to represent a new figure of authority—the electorate. And New York City, due to its role as national capital immediately after the ratification of the Constitution, had a special role to play regarding representation. Its earliest public art commissions under the new governmental structures had national as well as municipal significance.

The Common Council, the governing body of the City of New York during the period in question, specifically commissioned these works through legislative action. This legislative action meant that the New York City Hall portrait collection stands in marked contrast with the development of portrait collections in other municipalities such as Charleston, Philadelphia, and Boston. Certainly, the New York City Hall collection was not the only significant collection of portraits during this period. But the predominance of direct commissions by the City of New York as the basis for the City Hall collection is striking. These municipal expenditures were the clearest demonstration of a deliberate and considered interest in public art on the part of municipal government. The commissioning of civic portraits expressed the view of the New York City Common

Council members towards the expanding role of government, and their faith in the educational and inspirational role public portraiture could play.

As discussed in Chapter 1, after the revolutionary war, the new municipal government assumed increased responsibilities in the creation and management of public spaces, resulting in a new series of portrait commissions. In part, this development was tied to the increased audience for portraits, as well as the impact of notions of gentility and class. But, as we have seen from the hiatus between the first commissions of 1790 and subsequent actions by the Council, it was not until the early nineteenth century that public art commissions would become a fundamental part of the new government's responsibilities.

From 1804 to 1812, the New York City Common Council not only devoted funds to portraiture, it also undertook two major construction projects: the renovation of the second City Hall in 1789 by Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant and the construction of the third City Hall from 1802 to 1814 under the direction of John McComb. The financial, political, and symbolic investment in the infrastructure of the City by the Common Council had parallels with the development of the portrait collection. The comparatively rapid expansion of the collection during and after the construction of the third City Hall was a deliberate effort to adorn the building with visual symbols of civic and national pride.

During this period, the expansion of a "culture of celebration" and the use of portraits in parades, fetes, processions, and other celebratory venues provided expanded access to images for those citizens who previously would have not had any exposure to them. Newspaper accounts about celebrations advanced a public "discourse of

celebration," first used to enhance a sense of national pride, and later to strengthen political affiliations, with portraits utilized in these various events and venues as surrogates for respected individuals.

It was also during this period that New York City established the use of the full-length format for many of its commemorative portraits. The funds expended by New York City on public portrait commissions places the City in a unique category. New York City commissioned some of the largest and most opulent portraits in the nation, portraits that depicted individuals who had national as well as local or regional significance. In comparison, other municipalities usually commissioned portraits of individuals who had local or regional ties to the community. Moreover, these portraits were often half-length paintings.

The War of 1812 saw the addition of many full-length portraits to the City Hall portrait collection, with nine portraits commissioned by the Common Council within a period of less than three years. Chapter 4 examined how portraiture became part of the political theater of the period, accepted and expected as part of celebrations aimed at bolstering patriotic fervor. Both the celebrations and portrait commissions were adroitly used by the politicians of the period to bolster their personal and political reputations, in response to the growing power of public opinion and the ever-expanding electorate.

A new aesthetic sensibility emerged in the forty years from 1790 to 1830, evinced in a comparison between Trumbull's portrait of George Washington, depicted as a heroic figure with white charger, with Vanderlyn's portrait of Andrew Jackson, affectionately known as "Old Hickory." Trumbull's *Washington*, although on foot, is still a sublimely heroic figure. His aristocratic bearing, his position above the action that takes place

behind him, his elegant attire and accoutrements, all derive from the monarchical portraits for which this was the first American substitute. Conversely, in Vanderlyn's portrait, Jackson, although the largest figure, stands on the same level as the soldiers who march behind him. Though the hero of the Battle of New Orleans, Jackson is nevertheless one of many, nicknamed like a friend, not revered as a legend. Sword in hand, he is a man of action, but his posture is awkward and lacks the graceful nonchalance that distinguishes Washington's lounging figure.

This single comparison demonstrates the changes in the world of visual representation over forty years. Public portraiture, originally for a privileged few, presented elegant figures that communicated disinterestedness, elegance, and aristocracy. This was an aesthetic discourse in which public figures visually displayed their authority through meticulously choreographed rituals. The dramatic change from an aristocratic and monarchical based government to democratic rule transformed public art commissions.

Politics and aesthetics in public art were irretrievably connected, and public portraits were judged on both artistic merit and political meaning. Though the earliest City Hall portrait, Trumbull's *Washington*, relied on models of European grand manner portraiture and was an aesthetic success, it was also a political failure, seen as tainted by its connection to monarchical traditions. By 1830, public portraits represented a broader constituency that could now see itself on the walls of this municipal gallery.

The City Hall portrait collection acquainted the viewer with images of contemporaries and heroes. Selected for the patriotic and educational value, as reminders to posterity of the deeds and virtues of the current generation, these portraits were hung in

the politically charged environment of City Hall, and like the *penates* of the Romans, implied their protection of civic virtue. By grouping images together, individual portraits became layered with even more meaning as part of a larger ensemble. A Washington, a Hamilton, a Clinton and a Jay would have still greater impact when viewed together, the virtues of one reinforcing the victories of another. These groupings encouraged viewers to link current local politics and politicians, with national historic triumphs, expanding the arena of local politics to the national stage.

From 1790 to 1830, in spite of a hiatus of almost fourteen years of no acquisitions, about one-third of the total City Hall portrait collection was acquired. I chose to end this study in 1830, when New York had begun its inexorable expansion into a world-class city, one that that could rival London or Paris, and stake its claim as the nation's acknowledged cultural and economic capital. Yet, despite the emergence of photography less than ten years later, the remarkable growth in the collection would continue unabated through the early nineteenth-century, with approximately ten portraits commissioned each decade. From 1830 through the mid-nineteenth century, fifty portraits would become part of the New York City Hall portrait collection. But by the mid-1870s, the acquisition of portraits by the Common Council would dramatically decline, as government focused on the business of governance, and relied on such public institutions as the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1870) and the American Museum of Natural History (1866) to ensure the city's dominance in the cultural arena.

The complete story of the City Hall portrait collection remains to be told. However, the first forty years were the critical years, when intrepid New Yorkers dared to develop a public art that would represent not just their city, but also the nation. It took

two generations of New Yorkers to nurture the city's intellectual life, founding the organizations and institutions that would serve as the basis for the city's thriving business as a national center of art and culture. New York's economic ascendancy would proceed unabated once the Erie Canal, which made the port of New York the gateway for the nation, was completed in 1825. But New York's aesthetic ascendancy was due to the vision of DeWitt Clinton, John Trumbull, and other New Yorkers who believed that a flourishing cultural life was as crucial as a flourishing economic life to the power and prestige of their city. It was those New Yorkers who ensured that government would provide the support for an embryonic public art—support that would pave the way for city's future role as the cultural capital of the world.

APPENDIX 1

Catalogue of Colonel Trumbull's Paintings, Now Exhibiting at the Theatre, New-York. New-York: Printed by Sage & Clough, 1804, 8 pp. (Yale University, Trumbull Papers, Microfilm, Microtext fiche B 2803)

No. 1 The Madona, with our Saviour and St. John.

This beautiful picture was painted by Raphael, in the year 1508; and was the altarpiece of the Cardinal Mazarin's private chapel, when prime minister of France: The expression of the mother, in which awe and veneration are mingled with maternal affection; and of the divine child, in which a supernatural dignity and intelligence are combined with infantine grace, are particularly to be admired.

Raphael is justly esteemed the first of Painters since the revival of the Arts. He was born at Urbino, a small city in Italy, in the year 1483, and died at Rome, in 1520, at the early age of 37.

No. 2. Our Saviour on the Mount of Olives

Every part of this extraordinary composition is at once correct and sublime….Nicolo Poussin, the author of this piece…is justly regarded as the best painter France has produced and as having excelled in the classical purity and correctness of his compositions, as well as in poetical imagination and expression.

No. 3. The Sortie of Gibraltar

4. The Battle of Bunker's Hill.

5. The Death of Gen. Montgomery.

6. Madona and Children: imitation of No. 1. Painted by J. Trumbull.

No 7. The Patron Saints of Bologna. St. Mary Magdalene and St. Apollonia, two beautiful female figures, form the foreground of this picture: the heads of both, particularly the Magdalene, are singularly fine…This is a fine specimen of Guido, who is considered as the most graceful, expressive and elegant of the Bolognese school….

No. 8. St. Jerom (sic), accompanied by an Angel.

Painted by Josef Ribera…he was celebrated for his fine pictures of martyrs, saints, and old men emaciated by abstinence….

No. 9. Portrait of Gen. Washington. Painted by J. Trumbull, at Philadelphia, in 1792.—The back ground represents the defence of the Bridge at Trenton in January 1777, and the artist endeavoured to give to the hero, the age suited to that time, and the anxious yet determined expression natural to a moment on which hung the reputation of the man, and the fate of his country.

No. 10. The Madona and Infant Saviour. By Vandyk.—This is a very fine specimen of the master, who is justly regarded not only as a very fine historical painter, but as being unrivalled in his portraits except by Titian….

No. 11. A Landscape. By Joseph Vernet, a very excellent painter of land and sea views.—He was born at Avignon in 1712, and after having passed many years in Italy with great and merited reputation, was recalled to his native country by Louis XV of France, and died at Paris in 1786.

No. 12. A half-length Portrait of a Lady. By Paris Bordone.—this excellent artist was born at Trevigi in Italy in 1513, and was one of the most successful scholars of Titian, under whose instruction he passed some years….

No.13. Inside of a Stable, with Figures and Cattle. A picture of singular effect. The figures in this piece are truly characteristic of rustic life, and nothing can be finer than the fond anxious expression of the cow separated from her calf. This is an admired work of David Teniers the son, who ranks in the first class of the Flemish artists; and for his faithful representations of scenes and characters in familiar life, for freedom and neatness of execution, and brilliance and beauty of colour, remains without a rival…

No. 14. A Concert.

By the same inimitable hand;--and the more precious as the figures are portraits of the artist and his family.

No. 15. Susannah and the Elders.

A very good picture of Paduanino, who was a scholar of Paul Veronese, and one of the eminent men of the venetian school…

No. 16. A very fine Landscape, by J. Vernet, companion to No. 11.

No. 17. A small Landscape, with two Horses, figures, &c.

A very good specimen of Philip Wouvermans, one of the most eminent Dutch painters….justly admired for the correctness and elegance with which he painted horses, as well as for the delicacy and truth of his scenes in general.

No. 18. A Landscape with a number of Pigs.
….the trees and sky are exquisitely painted.--This is a beautiful work of Karl du Jardin, who is considered as among the most elegant artists of the Dutch School.

No. 19. A half length Portrait of a Lady.

This is a very respectable specimen of the colouring of Titian:--He was born at Cadoro in Friuli in 1480, and died in Venice 1576 aged 96. He is regarded as the greatest of the Venetian artists, and as having excelled all others in modern times, in the truth and beauty of colouring.

No. 20. A village Feast.

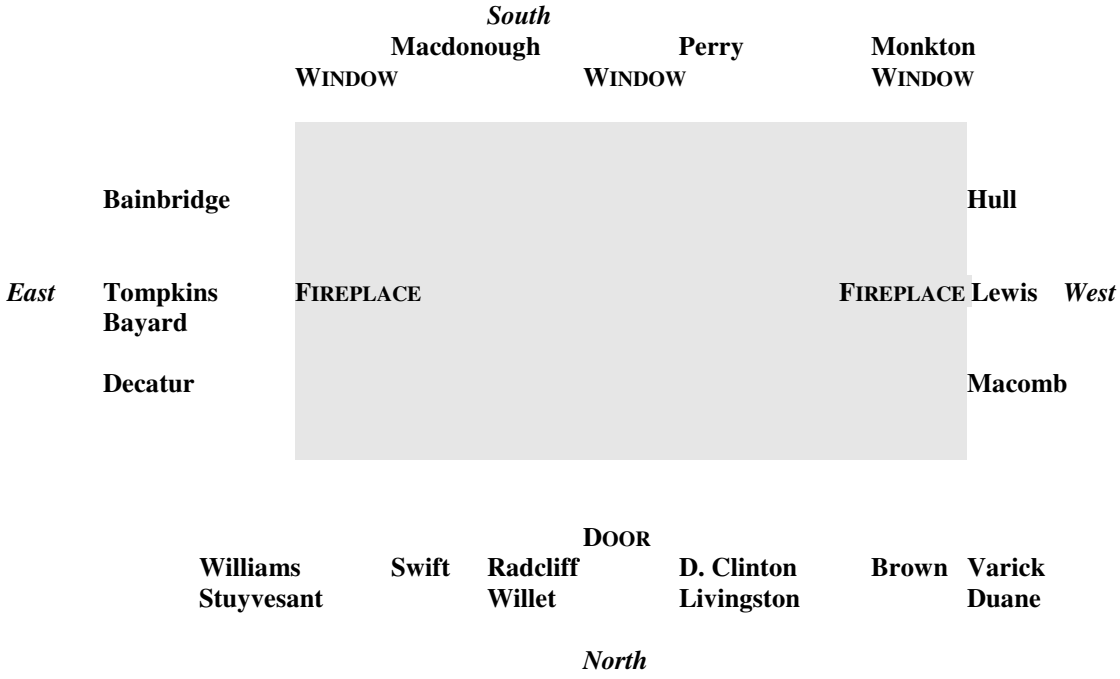
By David Teniers.—One of his most finished and perfect pictures.

No. 21. A Landscape, with Figures and Animals.

Admirably painted by Nicholas Berchem, the first of the Dutch painters of landscape, and second perhaps only to Claude. He was born at Haerlem in 1624—studied some years in Italy—and died in 1683 aged 59.

APPENDIX 2

"1817 Description of Governor's Room, Edmund M. Blunt"



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- Wynant Van Zandt Papers

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