

# PROFILE

Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery News

Winter 2004–5





## From the DIRECTOR

In the many years I've been at the Gallery, I've found that the middle word in our name, "portrait," means different things to different people. A great number reserve it for painting or sculpture, viewing the word only in classic fine-arts terms. More than once, I've

heard someone say "I don't have a portrait" of so and so, "just a photograph." This kind of thinking may have influenced the Gallery's early restriction on collecting photographs, a ban that was fortunately lifted in the early 1970s.

Since then, we have continually broadened the variety of portraiture we acquire and display, including not only our initial collecting mediums of paintings, sculpture, prints, drawings, and medals, and then photographs, but also posters, caricatures, and folk art of both earlier eras and our own day. And as we look to the future, we will include audiovisual, multimedia, and other electronic formats. As we reinstall our collection, we are more and more aware of the need to share all forms of representation of lives, to explain when they were introduced, and to show how the form used affects the way we "see" these remarkable individuals.

I find myself increasingly using the term "portrayal" rather than "portraiture" to capture all the ways our great museum aspires to evoke the lives that have shaped our history. "Portrayal" allows us to acknowledge the place of performance in those depictions, such as Hal Holbrook's classic *Mark Twain*, as well as the many wonderful theatrical programs produced by our own Education Department. The word "portrayal" lets us acknowledge works of music or dance and also the literary arts—most notably biography—all of which convey the spirit of particular individuals.

And thinking broadly in other ways, we have also come to investigate more and more the question of "image," which is literally a creation that can be acquired and displayed in a gallery but also an intangible term describing the public view of a life—an individual's "persona" or sometimes "myth." Our curators and historians and educators challenge themselves to understand what a painting says about the symbolic role of the subject, as in Margaret Christman's fascinating discussion in this issue of John Singleton Copley's depiction of Henry Laurens, president of the Continental Congress, or perhaps the image that might both serve and imprison a celebrity, as in Amy Henderson's inquiry into the allure of Greta Garbo, or even an image of alleged criminals that can be refuted by humane rendering, as in Wendy Wick Reaves's examination of Aaron Douglas's *Scottsboro Boys*. Reviews by Anne Collins Goodyear, Eileen Kim, and Warren Perry further reveal the complexity of portraiture, portrayal, and image. This is the perspective that enriches the twenty-first-century National Portrait Gallery. ✨

*Marc Pachter*

# PROFILE

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**Cover:** A major new acquisition of both historical and artistic significance, Aaron Douglas's moving portrayal of Clarence Norris and Haywood Patterson, two of the Scottsboro Boys, speaks to the seriousness of racial prejudice in the 1930s. See article on page 4.

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## PROFILE



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National Portrait Gallery

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# CURATOR'S CHOICE The Scottsboro Boys

Clarence Norris and Haywood Patterson

*Pastel on paper by Aaron Douglas, c. 1935*

## Wendy Wick Reaves

CURATOR OF PRINTS AND DRAWINGS

In the long struggle for civil rights and racial equality in America, few episodes had the impact of the infamous Scottsboro Boys case. When nine black teenagers falsely accused of raping two women on a freight train were tried in Scottsboro, Alabama, in 1931, white juries found eight of the nine guilty, and they were sentenced to death. The widely condemned verdicts and the subsequent reversals, retrials, and hearings—including two successful appeals to the United States Supreme Court—mobilized protests across the country and the world. The International Labor Defense (ILD), the legal arm of the Communist Party, hoping to recruit black workers to their cause, led the defense instead of the more deliberate NAACP. Their involvement encouraged a global response from whites and minorities alike.

As the nine youths languished in the brutal Alabama prison system, their lives were largely destroyed; together, they spent 130 years in jail, despite the recantation of one of the alleged victims. Clarence Norris (1912–1989) and Haywood Patterson (1913–1952), the subjects portrayed in NPG's recently acquired pastel by African American artist Aaron Douglas, were prominent figures in the case. Norris was paroled in 1944 and pardoned by Governor George C. Wallace in 1976; Patterson spent sixteen years in prison and escaped to Michigan in 1948, where the governor refused to extradite him.

Douglas's moving portrait provides the opportunity to pair a critical historical story with a powerful work of art. The Kansas-born artist, armed with a BFA from the University of Nebraska, settled in New York City in 1925 and became the leading visual artist for the Harlem Renaissance. After publishing his drawings in Alain Locke's *The New Negro* and in national magazines, Douglas illustrated thirteen books by such acclaimed authors as Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes, and James

Weldon Johnson. In his illustrations and painted murals, Douglas created new, modernist prototypes to express the African American experience, incorporating influences from Egyptian art, West African sculpture, cubist painting, and Art Deco design.

Ultimately, he became an influential professor at Fisk University. Douglas made this portrait in a more realist manner, avoiding any hint of modernist stylization. His mentor, German artist Winold Reiss, had drawn imposing pastel portraits of Harlem authors. Like Reiss, Douglas focused on the essential humanity and dignity of his subjects.

This drawing was probably made around 1935, when the Supreme Court unanimously overturned the convictions in the Norris and Patterson cases because

of Alabama's exclusion of blacks from the jury rolls. By this time, a one-year fellowship had exposed Douglas to the modern European and African art collected by Albert C. Barnes, and he had spent another year studying in Paris. He was also newly politicized. He had joined the Communist Party in the early 1930s, and as head of the Harlem Artists Guild, he was demanding more black participation in the WPA's art program. Douglas was undoubtedly moved by the cover of an ILD pamphlet that featured photographs of Norris and Patterson surrounded by the phrases "save our lives," "they must not burn," and "join the fight to free them." Even more powerful is Douglas's wordless copy of the two likenesses. The stark, isolated faces, drawn in beautifully blended pastels, mutely confront their audience. The picture speaks to the profound response to this soul-chilling miscarriage of justice and the seriousness of racial prejudice in America. ✨

**Further reading:** James Goodman, *Stories of Scottsboro* (New York: Vintage, 1994); Amy Kirschke, *Aaron Douglas: Art, Race, and the Harlem Renaissance* (Jackson, Miss.: University Press of Mississippi, 1995), and Jim Miller, *Moments of Scottsboro: The Scottsboro Case and American Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, forthcoming).



# HISTORIAN'S CHOICE Henry Laurens

*Oil on canvas by John Singleton Copley, 1782*

*transfer from the National Gallery of Art;*

*gift of the A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, 1942*

## Margaret C. S. Christman

### HISTORIAN

The portrait of Henry Laurens (1742–1792) of South Carolina, pictured in his role as president of the Continental Congress, is one of the most arresting and elegant pictures in the Gallery's collection. But the grandeur of the setting—although quite in keeping with conventions of eighteenth-century European portraiture—cannot help but raise a smile from those of literal mind. Laurens, in fact, during the greater part of his thirteen months in office, presided over a struggling Congress in exile that fled from Philadelphia one step ahead of the British army to meet at the simple courthouse in York, Pennsylvania. Certain documents on the table refer to the Franco-American alliance, ratified on May 4, 1778, at York, and to the August 6 formal reception of the French minister at Philadelphia, where Laurens, “seated in a Mahogany armed Chair on a Platform raised about two feet with a large Table covered with Green Cloth,” accepted the letter of credentials from the king of France.

Exaggerated though the scenery may be, the man is believable enough. Here is the feisty—“always captious & up-pish”—character who looks ready (despite the exquisite torture of a gouty foot) to rise in defense of his own honor and the dignity of Congress. In December 1778, Laurens called for a congressional inquiry into a “groundless and unwarranted” appeal that had gone out to the public over the heads of Congress. His motion quashed, Laurens declared that in view of “the manner in which business is transacted here,” he could not “remain any longer in this Chair. I now resign it.” He would not leave Congress, however: “I am determined to continue a faithful and diligent laborer in the Cause of my Country.”

Laurens posed for his portrait in early 1782, just after he had been released from nearly fifteen months' imprisonment in the Tower of London. Sent by Congress to secure a much-needed loan from Holland, Laurens had been captured by a British man-of-war on the high seas. His dispatch bag, hastily thrown over the side of his ship, failed to sink, and when fished from the water, it disclosed a draft of a proposed treaty with the Netherlands. Charged with high treason, Laurens was held captive until finally exchanged for General Cornwallis.

The erstwhile Bostonian John Singleton Copley, riding the crest of his English career, had been asked to portray Laurens as the basis for a print to be undertaken by Valentine Green—a companion piece to a mezzotint of General George Washington. The president of the American Congress, was, after all, the closest thing the upstart rebels had to a king, and it was expected that “the public will be gratified by a genuine representation of that distinguished character.”

On the very day the engraving (one is in the Gallery's collection) was advertised for sale in London—November 12—Laurens received word of the death of his son John (remarkable for his futile effort to persuade South Carolina and Georgia to allow slaves to fight for their freedom), who had been killed in one of the last skirmishes of the Revolution. Distressed though he was, Henry Laurens, obeying an order from Congress, set out for Paris to join Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, and John Adams in negotiations to bring the war to a close. Gone was the plum velvet suit. “When I was called upon to sign the Preliminaries for Peace I was in deep mourning for that brave honest man, that good soldier,” Laurens wrote. “I feel somewhat of comfort from reflecting that my blood in him has sealed the Testament of a long seven Years civil War.”<sup>✻</sup>



# Garbo Lives!

Amy Henderson

HISTORIAN

The enigma and allure of Greta Garbo (1905–1990) was something she understood completely: “I am only an image, and that is all I can be to you.” As we celebrate the centennial of her birth, the aura of Garbo’s star quality still radiates: “glamorous,” “mysterious,” “aloof,” and “enchanting” were words commonly used to describe her. And although she retired from movies more than six decades ago, at the age of thirty-six, Garbo remains a legend from Hollywood’s golden age.

Born Greta Gustafsson in Stockholm on September 18, 1905, the stagestruck adolescent won a scholarship to study at the city’s Royal Dramatic Theatre School. Here she met Sweden’s leading film director, Mauritz Stiller, who became her mentor: first, he changed her name to “Greta Garbo,” and then, when MGM studio chief Louis B. Mayer offered him a contract to come to Hollywood, he brought his protégé along. Garbo and Stiller arrived in New York in 1925 and were introduced to photographer Arnold Genthe. Fascinated by Garbo’s eyes and by “what is behind that extraordinary forehead,” Genthe persuaded her to sit for a photo session that transformed her career. The results of this sitting, soon published in *Vanity Fair* magazine, convinced MGM that Garbo had a very special quality, and she was quickly signed to a contract.

Still only twenty, Garbo had a bit more baby fat than fit the MGM mold, teeth that needed straightening, and a mop of hair that was entirely too frizzy. The studio glamour doctors went to work, and her metamorphosis yielded results. In 1926 Garbo made an auspicious Hollywood debut in *The Torrent*, and the next year played opposite John Gilbert—then one of the screen’s most popular leading men—in what became a tremendous box-office hit, *Flesh and the Devil*. Their chemistry sizzled both on and off the set, and they would be paired in several other films, including *Love* (1927), *A Woman of Affairs* (1928), and *Queen Christina* (1933).

As the *Los Angeles Times* noted at the time, Garbo represented an “utterly different type” of movie star. Earlier stars such as Mary Pickford or Lillian Gish conveyed innocence; Colleen Moore and Gloria Swanson were prototypic Jazz Age flappers; Clara Bow had “It.” But all seemed dull and dated when the screen filled with Garbo’s lambent aloofness and sophistication. Her evanescent movie image was enhanced by the art of still photography, particularly the 4,000 photographs taken between 1929 and 1941 by MGM’s chief photographer, Clarence Sinclair Bull.

Theirs was a wonderfully simpatico relationship: “When the pose was to my liking,” Bull recalled, “I quickly adjusted the lights and made the picture. Garbo read my face out of the corner of her eye. . . . All I did was light the face and wait. And watch. [She was] the easiest of all stars to photograph, having no bad side and no bad angles. . . . She never seemed to tire of posing.” James Wong Howe, a leading MGM cinematographer, agreed with Bull on the ease of working with Garbo: “She was like a horse on the track—nothing, and then the bell goes, and something happens. When the camera started to roll, she started



Garbo by Arnold Genthe, 1925



Garbo by Clarence Sinclair Bull, 1939



Poster insert from *Grand Hotel*: (from top down) Garbo and John Barrymore, Joan Crawford, Lionel Barrymore, and Wallace Beery by Joseph Grant, 1932



to come to life.” Fellow movie star Bette Davis described the Garbo magic as instinctive: “her mastery over the machine was pure witchcraft. . . . No one else so effectively worked in front of a camera.”

However masterful she appeared onscreen, however much she enjoyed the public face of her stardom—and there are indications that she did—the obsession of her personal life was solitude. Garbo the Star loved being worshiped on the silver screen and was said to be “crazy about pictures of herself.” Yet the increasingly private Garbo resented the fame she had worked so carefully to cultivate: “The story of my life,” she once said, “is about back entrances and side doors and secret elevators . . . so that people won’t bother you.” MGM was not above using Garbo’s eccentricities for publicity: when she made her transition from silent to sound films in *Anna Christie* (1930), MGM trumpeted “Garbo Talks!”; in *Ninotchka* (1939), the marquee headlined “Garbo Laughs!”

Among her movies in the thirties was *Grand Hotel*, which won the Best Picture Oscar in 1932; *Anna Karenina*, for which the *New York Times* called her the “first lady of the screen” in 1935; and *Camille*, where critics hailed “the sheer magic of her acting” in 1937. After the “cinematic champagne” and “sparkling satire” of *Ninotchka*, her final film was the 1941 disaster *Two-Faced Woman*, which was not only panned by critics but condemned by the National Legion of Decency for “impudently suggestive scenes, dialogue and situations; suggestive costumes.”

And what about that most-famous-of-all-Garboisms? She insisted that she never said “I want to be alone,” only that “I want to be *left* alone.” Perhaps the great irony of her life was that by trying to avoid publicity, she became one of the most publicized women in the world. ✨



*Garbo in Queen Christina* by Joseph Grant, 1933

Below left: *Garbo in The Kiss* by Joseph Grant, 1929

Below right: *Garbo in Wild Orchids* by Joseph Grant, 1929

All images on this page are gifts of Carol Grubb and Jennifer Grant Castrup.



# Book Review

Under a Wild Sky: John James Audubon and the Making of “The Birds of America” by William Souder (New York: North Point Press, 2004), 367 pp.

E. Warren Perry Jr.

RESEARCHER, CENTER FOR  
ELECTRONIC RESEARCH &  
OUTREACH SERVICES

He killed thousands of birds and cruelly experimented on many animals, including catfish, a bald eagle, and his very own hunting dog. With friends, he buried a rat in a pot, its tail protruding from the dirt, and gave the complete ensemble to another friend, claiming it was a rare flower. He served jail time for bankruptcy and knifed a man in Kentucky over ownership of a steamboat. Today, his drawings and paintings of American wildlife are respected worldwide, and his name is synonymous with environmental concern and wildlife preservation. A true enigma, John James Audubon was not even his name until he came to America in 1803 to look after his father's business.

William Souder's *Under a Wild Sky: John James Audubon and the Making of “The Birds of America”* is a thorough and polished account of the adventurous Audubon (1785–1851), born Jean Rabin in Saint-Domingue. Both Audubon's real adventures and his fictional accounts—he told others falsely and often that he studied painting with Jacques-Louis David—find their way into Souder's historical narrative. Souder also records Audubon's passionate pursuit of acceptance into the strict company of American and British scientific academies.

Although Audubon's technique of moving nature from the outdoors to the canvas was well within the realm of the acceptable in the early nineteenth century, today his process would be anathema to the society that now bears his name. According to Souder, “At one time or another, Audubon killed specimens of all but a handful of the more than four hundred species of birds he ultimately painted, plus most of the quadrupeds of North America, from squirrels to alligators to moose.”

Simple enough to describe, his process was to kill, clean, position, and paint. One difference, however, between Audubon and his contemporary, Alexander Wilson, is that Audubon portrayed his ornithological subject matter at life size. A second difference is that Audubon posed his birds in nature, conducting activities that he had either imagined or witnessed. For example, his *Black Vulture* appears to be eating the

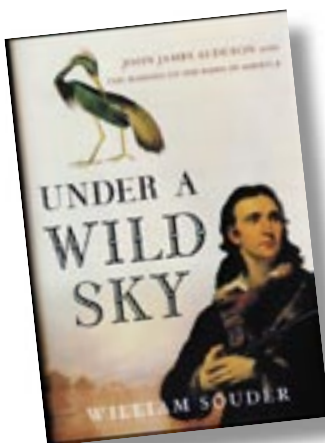


John James Audubon by an unidentified artist, c. 1841, transfer from the National Gallery of Art; gift of the Avalon Foundation through the generosity of Ailsa Mellon Bruce, 1951

flesh of a deer carcass, while his female *Great Cormorant* is portrayed tending her young through tall grass. With the exception of the display of birds in the Peale Museum in Philadelphia, wildlife work for the scientific community was usually posed and drawn on a small scale and without the aesthetic benefit of habitat, weather, and fauna in the forms of prey or predator.

By 1823, Audubon was living in Louisiana, drawing and teaching, having amassed great debt but also having assembled a vast portfolio of American wildlife art. When he arrived in Philadelphia in 1824, he hoped his art would receive acclaim, but his work was received poorly by the Academy of Natural Sciences and George Ord, a friend of the late Alexander Wilson. As Souder states, “Against Ord's energetic opposition to him throughout the city and the orchestrated campaign to prevent his election to the academy, Audubon never had a chance.” His work was well received throughout Britain, however. The Scots elected him to the elite scientific Wernerian Society in 1827, and he was elected to the Royal Society in London in 1830.

These successes coincided with the publication of Audubon's most lasting achievement—what he called his “great work,” *The Birds of America*, containing 435 hand-colored images and distributed in 87 parts. A stunning achievement, also recognized in the United States, the publication of *The Birds of America* eventually propelled Audubon into the ranks of the Academy of Natural Sciences in 1831, seven years after his initial rejection. ✨





# Book Review

Portraiture, by Shearer West (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 256 pp.

Anne Collins Goodyear

ASSISTANT CURATOR OF PRINTS  
AND DRAWINGS

Shearer West's new book, titled simply *Portraiture*, defies our expectations for standard histories. West adopts a topical approach to this complex subject rather than a strictly chronological one, much like Richard Brilliant did in his 1991 book with the same title. But while Brilliant's treatise addresses scholars, West's study opens the field to a wide audience. Her book will be of special interest to those willing to consider portraiture in new ways.

Clearly influenced by the legacy of deconstruction, which involves examining and questioning assumptions implicit in literary and artistic works, West refutes the notion that portraiture provides transparent, readily understood pictures of its subjects. Instead, she emphasizes that portraiture is a culturally and historically determined practice: "Portraits are not just likenesses but works of art that engage with ideas of identity as they are perceived,

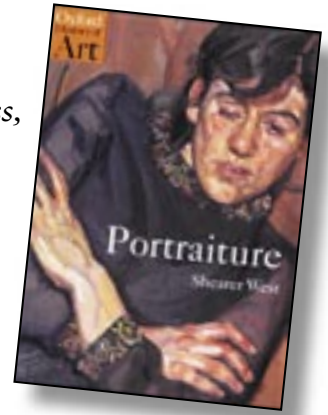
represented, and understood in different times and places" (p. 11). To this end, she acknowledges that portraiture, because of its emphasis on the individual, has historically tended to be a Western practice, and she focuses her history accordingly.

West opens with two chapters devoted to fundamental issues: "What is a portrait?" and "The Functions of Portraiture." Other chapters address widespread themes and tendencies in portraiture such as power, gender, group subjects, and self-portraiture. Within each of these sections, she works roughly from past to present, but mixing works from different periods. This approach leads to unexpected comparisons, such as that of Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger's late-sixteenth-century depiction of Elizabeth I and Gilbert Stuart's late-eighteenth-century "Lansdowne" portrait of George Washington, to reveal the longstanding tradition of portraiture as a political tool. She also pairs Jan van Eyck's early-fifteenth-century rendering of Cardinal Niccolò Albergati with Alice Neel's late-twentieth-century nude self-portrait to provide an intriguing perspective on the larger social significance of aging and its portrayal. West even includes a discussion of the institutional history of portrait collections, touching on the national portrait galleries of London and Washington, D.C.

Perhaps most important, *Portraiture* demonstrates that the genre is alive and well. West's final two chapters address the relationship of portraiture to early-twentieth-century modernism and to contemporary post-modernism. In each, she acknowledges that the new technology of the camera, the invention of abstraction, and the onset of social change have transformed portraiture. Yet even while discussing portraiture's waning popularity among some modernists, West points out that other avant-garde artists, such as Picasso and Matisse, embraced it, applying their formal experiments to this ancient art form.

If pictorial abstraction transformed portraiture at the opening of the twentieth century, West suggests that recent identity politics—concerned with gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and nationality—have shaped contemporary portraiture. Quoting Brilliant's observation that "the traditional view of the fully integrated, unique, and distinctive person has been severely compromised by a variety of factors" (p. 210), West includes Cindy Sherman and Yasumasa Morimura, whose work resists easy identification as portraiture. Both artists adopt a variety of personae in the photographs they take of themselves.

West provides a nuanced overview of portraiture from antiquity to the present. Readers will find themselves thinking more critically about the claims implicit in any human depiction. In addition to conceptual insights, West's survey provides valuable supporting material: biographical information about each of the artists represented, a useful timeline of historical events, detailed footnotes, and an annotated bibliography. In a compelling manner, this study reveals both continuities and breaks in the history of portraiture, testifying not only to the vitality of portraiture today, but to the enduring relevance of its long tradition. ✨



© Estate of Alice Neel, 1980

Alice Neel, self-portrait, 1980

# Book Review

Daniel Boone: An American Life by Michael A. Lofaro (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2003), 192 pp.



Daniel Boone by Chester Harding, 1820

## Eileen Kim

SPECIAL TO *Profile*

Michael A. Lofaro's biography demystifies the legendary Daniel Boone (1734–1820), an outdoorsman who met both extraordinary success and setbacks with a steady reserve of humor and wit. In his retelling, Lofaro revisits the man himself, who is often engulfed in the shadow of his own legend.

Already a gifted hunter at eight years old, Boone came of age during the French and Indian Wars of the 1750s and enlisted in Major General Edward Braddock's militia. Although Braddock's campaign ultimately failed, the experience marked a turning point in Boone's life: fellow wagoner John Findley had just returned from Kentucky—a reputed hunters' paradise—and his stories planted a lifelong passion for the frontier land in Boone. He never forgot Findley's tales, and in 1775 he established the colony of Boonesborough, where he, wife Rebecca, and an eventual ten children would make their new home. But "settling" would be a term loosely applied to Daniel himself. Rebecca and the young Boones would grow all-

too-accustomed to his frequent absences during his "long hunts," which ranged anywhere from several months to two years.

Despite Boone's prowess as a hunter and frontier explorer, his family was not immune to danger. Although he extricated daughter Jemima and even himself from abduction on separate occasions, his eldest son James was tortured and killed by Native Americans during a 1773 expedition. Seven years later, Shawnees killed Boone's brother Edward, and in 1782 his second son Israel died in the Battle of Blue Licks, the last major battle of the Revolutionary War. The pioneer was hardly inured to such loss. Having failed in trying to rescue Israel, he wept bitterly, relating the pain "to think that my poor boy has fallen prey to the scalping knife."

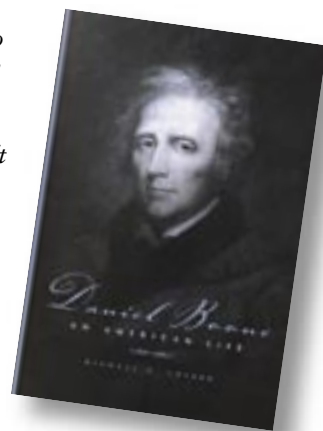
Boone enjoyed a measure of eminence during his lifetime, serving in a number of local offices in Virginia and as a county representative to the Virginia state assembly in 1781–82. Holding one of Kentucky's largest land claims at nearly 100,000 acres and subject of an internationally distributed biography (John Filson's 1784 *The Discovery, Settlement, and Present State of Kentucke . . . to Which is Added, an Appendix, Containing, . . . the Adventures of Col. Daniel Boon*), Boone seemed all but a living legend. Yet these successes spoke little of his struggling business endeavors, the reality of his debt, and his hotly contested land claims, all of which eventually deprived him of his property. Boone's final years would be spent as a penniless, albeit debt-free, man.

A constant thread throughout Lofaro's narrative is Boone's good-humored, fun-loving tempera-

ment, which may well have been his mainstay through the ups and downs of his life. Lofaro infuses his account with lively anecdotes that few might expect from the veteran explorer. As a young boy he didn't think twice about punching two girls who dumped fish guts on him or spiking his habitually tipsy schoolteacher's stashed bottle with tartar emetic. This spirit still blazed strong in his final months, when portrait painter Chester Harding visited to create this final likeness of the rugged old pioneer. In response to Harding, who asked if he had ever gotten lost since he didn't carry a compass, Boone slyly replied, "I can't say as ever I was lost, but I was *bewildered* for a couple of days."

Lofaro concludes that Boone's "varied careers . . . were mere occupations, just so many categories that tell little of the essential unity of Daniel Boone." He portrays Boone as a dual pioneer and preserver, the embodiment of a fundamental American paradox between civilization and wilderness. This final assessment posits an overly broad thesis culled from the varied threads of Boone's life, but Lofaro nonetheless presents a personable, touching literary portrait of the famed yet enigmatic explorer. ✨

Former Assistant to the Deputy Director Eileen Kim recently left NPG to obtain her M.A. at the University of York in England.



# Paul Peck Presidential Awards

*George M. Elsey and Brian P. Lamb*



On October 28 the National Portrait Gallery held its third annual Paul Peck Presidential Awards, a unique national program. Each year the Gallery presents two awards, one for service to a President or the presidency, and one for portrayal in a literary or visual medium. Both winners receive a \$25,000 prize and a specially minted medal. In 2004 we celebrated two men who helped formulate policy and establish institutions at the beginning of new eras in our country. **George M. Elsey** served President Franklin D. Roosevelt at the end of World

War II and helped draft President Harry S. Truman's March 1947 speech that enunciated the Truman Doctrine and the American Cold War policy of containment; he also served President Lyndon Johnson. In 1979, **Brian P. Lamb** founded and became CEO of the cable network C-SPAN, which provides American viewers with an unmediated view of the workings of their government. In 1999 he produced the much-heralded series *American Presidents*, which depicted the lives of the then forty-one Presidents.

The awards dinner and reception, attended by Smithsonian Secretary Lawrence Small, who spoke about the importance of this program, was held at the Castle Building on the Mall. NPG Director Marc Pachter welcomed guests, including previous winners Brent Scowcroft (2002) and Thomas Pickering (2003). Also present was James Fallows, former speechwriter for President Jimmy Carter, and Landon Parvin, former speechwriter for President Ronald Reagan.

Pickering presented the award for service to Elsey, and Stephen Hess, senior fellow emeritus in governance studies at the Brookings Institution, presented the award to Lamb. Paul Peck, who endowed the program, concluded the evening with remarks.

From the awards' inception, the program has included an educational component, and we are fortunate to have the Close Up Foundation and the Junior Statesmen Foundation as two of the nominating groups of the Peck Awards. Both groups organize activities that seek to educate high school and college students about our political system, and they worked with the Gallery's Education Department to plan two programs for this event. On October 29, approximately ninety college students and interns



Photograph by Juan Carlos Briceno

*Left to right: Brent Scowcroft, Thomas Pickering, Paul Peck, Brian Lamb, Lawrence Small, George M. Elsey, Marc Pachter*

from the Washington, D.C., area, along with high school students representing the Junior Statesmen Foundation, attended a morning taping of *Close Up on C-SPAN*, moderated by John Milewski and featuring Elsey and Lamb. Later that day, about fifty students sponsored by the Junior Statesmen Foundation—from high schools in Connecticut, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Maryland, and the District of Columbia—participated in Town Hall sessions with the award winners in the Lecture Hall of the S. Dillon Ripley Center. Moderated by Marc Pachter, the Town Hall sessions were supported by the National Portrait Gallery's Paul Peck Fund for Presidential Studies. ✨



*The audience for the Town Halls included high school students from the mid-Atlantic region*



*Town Hall panelist Peter Wiley with George M. Elsey*



*Panelists Ashley Neely and Julie Siegel with Brian P. Lamb*

Photographs by Hugh Talman

# THEN & NOW

## *Vacancy on the Court, 1795*

Margaret C. S. Christman

HISTORIAN

*In his second term, President Bush will clearly be making one or more Supreme Court nominations. It is expected that this event will be accompanied by a great deal of partisan rancor. Supreme Court nominations and confirmations by the Senate have been contentious from the very beginning of our history, as is evident in President George Washington's nomination of John Rutledge to the high court.*

On June 30, 1795, President George Washington opened two related pieces of correspondence. One was from John Jay, resigning, as expected, his post as the first chief justice of the United States. Jay had returned from England—where he had negotiated a treaty contrived to settle violations of the 1783 peace treaty and resolve commercial difficulties with the old enemy—to find himself having been elected governor of New York. The second communication, dated June 12, was from John Rutledge (1739–1800), a former Supreme Court associate justice and presently chief justice of South Carolina. Rutledge, at pains to point out that he did not mean his letter to be an application, went on to say that since he had heard that the office of chief justice was about to become vacant, “I feel that the Duty which I owe to my Children should impel me, to accept it, if offer'd” because it was “more respectable & honorable” than his present station.

Rutledge's willingness to resume service on the federal bench (with its arduous circuit-riding duties) was greeted by Washington “with much pleasure,” and “without hesitating a moment” or consulting with members of his cabinet, he offered Rutledge an interim appointment as chief justice. Confirmation would await the December return of the Senate. In the meantime, Rutledge was summoned to the capital at Philadelphia to take the oath of office and preside over the August session of the Court.

Rutledge's qualifications were without question. Educated in the law at the London Inns of Court, he had been on the national stage since the Stamp Act Congress of 1765, and Washington had come to know him personally when the two served together at the First Continental Congress. Rutledge left the Second Continental Congress to assist in the drafting of South Carolina's constitution, under which he became the wartime governor. At the Grand Convention in 1787, Rutledge played a major role in framing the U.S. Constitution.

Just when Washington's letter of appointment was on its way to Rutledge, the terms of the Jay Treaty (ratified behind closed doors on June 24) were leaked to the press. The francophile Jeffersonian Republicans (who stood in opposition to President Washington and the Federalists) damned the treaty as both an affront to America's ally France and a return to English domination, and they enveloped the country in an orgy of effigy burnings and protest meetings. At a gathering held in St. Michael's Church in Charleston on July 16, Rutledge got up and denounced the treaty. In an account published



*John Rutledge by John Trumbull, c. 1791*

in the *South-Carolina State-Gazette* (and reprinted in newspapers across the country), he was quoted as saying, “he had rather, the President should die, dearly as he loves him, than he should sign that treaty,” and pronounced himself to be “for war rather than his country should approve the measures that will effect her annihilation.”

Rutledge's fellow Federalists, determined that for the sake of peace and trade the treaty must go into effect, were appalled at the apostasy of one of their own. “A driveller & fool appointed Chief Justice,” sputtered Secretary of the Treasury Oliver Wolcott. Shocked and pained, Federalists saw in Rutledge's “crazy speech” truth to the rumors of insanity that had been bruited about

Charleston since the death of Mrs. Rutledge in 1792. They lost no time in spreading stories—among themselves and in the press—about Rutledge’s “attachment to the bottel [*sic*], his puerility, and extravagances, together with a variety of indecorums and imprudencies.”

In a burst of political opportunism, the task of vindicating Rutledge was taken up by the Jeffersonian Republicans, who could not help but be gleeful over the Federalist embarrassment. They proclaimed that Washington, who knew Rutledge very well, would hardly appoint a deranged man to such an important office. Rutledge’s “unpardonable sin” was in speaking out against the Jay Treaty.

Washington sent Rutledge’s name to the Senate for advice and consent on December 10. “I hope however disagreeable it may be,” wrote Oliver Wolcott, “to imply an error of judgment in the President in appointing Mr. Rutledge, that he will not be not be confirmed in office.” That outcome would be the first time the Senate differed with the President on any nomination of importance, but speculation was that the President had not been pleased by Rutledge’s speech and “probably would not feel hurt at his rejection.”

Federalist Senator Rufus King of New York, uncertain as to how he should vote, asked Alexander Hamilton for advice. Hamilton, the champion of the Jay Treaty and the *Federalist Papers*’ principal commentator on the judiciary, replied that if there was nothing in the case but Rutledge’s imprudent speech, the reasons for confirming him would outweigh those for rejecting him. “But if it be really true—that he is sottish or that his mind is otherwise deranged, or that he has exposed himself by improper conduct in pecuniary transactions,” Hamilton opined, Rutledge should not be confirmed.

Retired South Carolina Federalist Senator Ralph Izard, conceding that Rutledge was “in a great measure deprived of his senses” after the death of his wife, “felt able, from personal observation,” to assure his successor, Jacob Read, that Rutledge was now “completely altered.” Izard shrewdly observed that “the enemies of government” (by which he meant the Jeffersonians) “are making every possible exertion to do mischief.” They were in hopes that Rutledge would not be confirmed “and if so, will immediately raise a clamor and endeavor to ascribe the rejection to party.”

On December 15, with ten members absent, the Senate rejected Rutledge by a vote of fourteen to ten. Every Federalist except for Jacob Read voted against him. Every Republican voted for him. The lineup, Read aside, mirrored the vote on the Jay Treaty. Wrote Thomas Jefferson, “the rejection of Rutledge by the Senate is a bold thing, for they cannot pretend any objection in him but his disapprobation of the treaty.”

On December 26, John Rutledge jumped into Charleston harbor but was pulled out of the water by passing slaves. Two days later Rutledge, probably unaware of the Senate vote, sent President Washington his letter of resignation as chief justice, saying “it requires a Constitution less broken than mine, to discharge with Punctuality & Satisfaction, the Duties of so important an Office.”✱

**Further reading:** Maeva Marcus et al., eds., *The Documentary History of the Supreme Court of the United States*, vol. 1, pt. 2 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).



*John Jay by Gilbert Stuart and John Trumbull, begun 1784, completed by 1818*

# NPG Schedules & Information

## NPG on the Road



### New York City

The National Portrait Gallery and the Metropolitan Museum of Art have joined forces in organizing a large exhibition of works by **Gilbert Stuart** (1755–1828) that gives vivid insight into the premier portrait artist of the new republic and the remarkable individuals who were his subjects. A section devoted to Stuart's celebrated portraits of George Washington, which includes NPG's Lansdowne portrait and the paired life studies of George and Martha Washington, is a centerpiece of the show. After closing on January 16, 2005, the exhibition will reopen on March 27 at the National Gallery of Art, which is hosting the show for NPG.

*The exhibition in New York is made possible by The Henry Luce Foundation and The Peter Jay Sharpe Foundation. The Washington venue is made possible by the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation and Target Stores.*

## NPG at Home

Preparations are well under way for the July 2006 opening. Gallery spaces and exhibitions have been assigned, and in less than twelve months, artwork will begin to return to the building. These preparations include conserving and photographing objects, writing new biographical and curatorial labels, designing and fabricating furniture, developing and producing multimedia and educational programs, and developing innovative web-based research and online exhibitions.

Future issues of *Profile* will provide sneak previews of the revitalized permanent collection and special exhibition installations as well as the innovative features that will complement and enliven the collection.

See other exhibition-related websites at [www.npg.si.edu](http://www.npg.si.edu)

## NPG in Demand

Throughout its renovation period, the National Portrait Gallery's collection has been in high demand from institutions around the world. Our extensive loan program has allowed us to maintain a strong connection to the museum community. As our 2006 reopening approaches, however, loans will be reduced. The following objects from the collection are now on public view:

- *New Cinema* by Robert Rauschenberg is on loan to the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library in Austin, Texas, through August 29, 2005, for "Signs of the Times: Life in the Swingin' Sixties."
- Portraits of Alfred Stieglitz and of Edward Steichen with Auguste Rodin, both by Marius de Zayas, are included in the Reunion des Musées Nationaux's traveling exhibition, "Alfred Stieglitz and His Circle: Modernity in New York, 1905–1930." This exhibition is the first in Europe to examine Stieglitz's contribution to modern photography in the United States, as well as his role in bringing the European avant-garde to America at the turn of the century.
- The molded paper mask of Myrna Loy by Wladyslaw Theodore Benda is on view at London's Science Museum in "Future Face," through February 28, 2005. Organized by the Wellcome Trust, this exhibition challenges the viewer to explore the many meanings of "face" through the lenses of art, science, and technology.
- Alice Neel's self-portrait (see page 9) continues to travel with "Me! 20th-Century Self-Portraits," an exhibition that examines how artists have dealt with the shifting notion of self. It is currently on view at the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, where it will remain through January 9, 2005.



Edward Steichen and Auguste Rodin by Marius de Zayas, c. 1910–12, bequest of Katharine Graham



Myrna Loy by Wladyslaw Benda, c. 1940

# NPG Schedules & Information



## Portrait of a Nation Tour Itinerary

Portrait of a Nation encompasses a series of exhibitions organized by the National Portrait Gallery while the Patent Office Building is closed for renovation. For further information, contact the Department of Exhibitions and Collections Management at (202) 275-1777; fax: (202) 275-1897, or e-mail: NPGExhibitions@si.edu.

### *Women of Our Time: Twentieth-Century Photographs from the National Portrait Gallery*

*Final venue:* George Bush Presidential Library & Museum, College Station, Texas  
Through January 2, 2005

### *American Women: A Selection from the National Portrait Gallery*

Naples Museum of Art, Florida  
January 7–April 3, 2005

*Final venue:* Columbia Museum of Art, South Carolina  
April 30–July 10, 2005

## Other Traveling Exhibitions

### *Gilbert Stuart*

*Co-organized by the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the National Portrait Gallery*  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City  
Through January 16, 2005

National Portrait Gallery at the National Gallery of Art  
Washington, D.C.  
March 27–July 31, 2005

### *Retratos: 2,000 Years of Latin American Portraits*

*Co-organized by the San Antonio Museum of Art, the National Portrait Gallery, and El Museo del Barrio*

*This project and all related national and local programs and publications are made possible by Ford Motor Company Fund.*

El Museo del Barrio, New York City  
Through March 20, 2005

San Diego Museum of Art, California  
April 16–June 12, 2005

Bass Museum of Art, Miami Beach, Florida  
July 23–October 2, 2005

National Portrait Gallery at the S. Dillon Ripley Center,  
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.  
October 21, 2005–January 8, 2006

San Antonio Museum of Art, Texas  
February 4–April 30, 2006

## From the Curator's Bookshelf



Charles Willson Peale: Art and Selfhood in the Early Republic by David C. Ward  
(Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 236 pp.

Son of a convicted felon, Charles Willson Peale (1741–1827) rose to lead a staggeringly full and successful life. Best known as a prolific portraitist, Peale was also a Revolutionary War soldier, a radical activist, an impresario of public spectacles, a naturalist, an inventor, and the proprietor of the first modern American museum. David C. Ward's new book, textured with references to the history and culture of the time, is the first modern critical biography of Peale. Linking the artist's autobiography to his painting and illuminating the man, his art, and his times, *Art and Selfhood* shows Peale's emergence as that particularly American phenomenon: the self-made man. For further information, contact the University of California Press at <http://www.ucpress.edu>.

David C. Ward is a historian and deputy editor of the Peale Family Papers at the National Portrait Gallery. ✨

# Portrait Puzzlers

1.



Determined to create music with a distinctly American voice, this conductor/composer wrote works that include *Candide*, *Wonderful Town*, and *West Side Story*.

2.



Her paintings of flowers and her beloved New Mexico comprise some of her best-known work.

3.



This Apache warrior's ferocity in the late nineteenth century became a part of American frontier legend.

4.



Her "Battle Hymn of the Republic" became the North's unofficial anthem during the Civil War.

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Answers: 1. Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990) by René Bouché. Oil on canvas, 1960, gift of Springate Corporation.  
2. Georgia O'Keeffe (1887-1986) by Una Hanbury. Bronze, 1967. 3. Geronimo (1829-1909) by A. Frank Randall. Aluminum silver print, c. 1887. 4. Julia Ward Howe by John Elliot (1858-1925) and William H. Cotton (1880-1958). Oil on canvas, c. 1910 and c. 1925. Transfer from the Smithsonian American Art Museum; gift of Maud Howe Elliot, 1933. All images are details.

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