



NO. IX. THE JAMES MCCORMICK FAMILY  
(c. 1804)

*Owned by the Maryland Historical Society*

*Courtesy of the Frick Art Reference Library*

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## JOSHUA JOHNSTON, THE FIRST AMERICAN NEGRO PORTRAIT PAINTER

By J. HALL PLEASANTS

A nebulous figure, a Negro painter of considerable ability and with a style peculiarly his own, was a limner of portraits in Baltimore during the last decade of the eighteenth century and the first quarter of the nineteenth. As far as can be learned, Joshua Johnston, or Johnson, was the first individual in the United States with Negro blood to win for himself a place as a portrait painter, for it was not until many years later that any other member of his race attempted portraiture with even a mediocre degree of success. He deservedly should arrest the attention, not only of those interested in the history of American painting, but also of students of the cultural development of the American Negro.

Of Scipio Morehead, said to have been the first American Negro painter of whom there is any record, we know practically nothing. Phillis Wheatley (1753?-1784), the New England Negro poetess of the latter eighteenth century, dedicates a poem written some time before 1773 to "S. M.—a Young African Painter on Seeing his Works." From these verses it appears that he painted allegorical landscapes, one Aurora as symbolic of dawn and another bearing on the legend of Damon and Pythias. No light is thrown upon the painter's residence nor has any contemporary reference to him been found. The first American Negro portrait painter of whom there has hitherto been a record was Robert S. Duncanson (1821-1871) of Cincinnati, a mulatto of

mixed Scotch Canadian and Negro blood, who studied in England and achieved some contemporary notice in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. He also painted allegorical subjects and landscapes. Edward N. Bannister (1833-1901), said to have been a Negro of Canadian birth, was a landscape painter who lived in Providence and founded the Art Club there. He has hitherto been considered the first American Negro whose painting reached the level of mediocre competence.

The writer in a paper on Johnston and his work, published in *The Walpole Society Note Book* for 1939,\* listed and described thirteen paintings by him. Since that time eight more canvases to be attributed to him have been found, bringing the number of his recognized paintings up to twenty-one. It is of interest that of these eight additional paintings, four have come to light as the result of the reproduction in color in the magazine *Life* for December 9, 1940, of the group painting of "The James McCormick Family" by Johnston (No. IX), which, when seen by an observant lady with a Baltimore background whose home is in Illinois and who is the owner of a similar group, "The Kennedy Long Family" (No. VI), made her feel certain that to Johnston was also to be attributed her own family group as well as three other Long family portraits. This McCormick group, a possession of the Maryland Historical Society, was reproduced in *Life* while it was on exhibition in the "Survey of American Painting," held at the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, in the autumn of 1940.

The thirteen paintings described in 1939 portray twenty-two subjects; these eight additional paintings depict twelve more subjects, bringing the number up to thirty-four in all. None of the canvases are signed or dated, but in nearly every instance, especially where children are portrayed, the date of painting can be quite accurately determined from the ages of the subjects. This series of twenty-one canvases, painted over a period from about 1789 to 1825, shows that the painting activities of Johnston extended over some thirty-five years. The subjects of many of

\* This paper was also reprinted in pamphlet form by the Walpole Society under its title in the Note Book: *An Early Baltimore Negro Portrait Painter—Joshua Johnston*. By J. Hall Pleasants MCMXL (copyright). Through the courtesy of the Walpole Society nearly all of the material that appeared in the pamphlet has been made use of in the present paper, which records also eight additional paintings by Johnston that have since come to light.

the paintings are members of aristocratic or wealthy slave-holding families of Baltimore of that period.

Curiously conflicting family traditions exist as to the reputed ownership of the Negro artist. Three of the present possessors of certain of these paintings severally declare that the painter was a slave in the family of a forebear, but each names as the master a different Baltimorean, contemporary, but unrelated to either of the other two. Thus the late owner of the portraits of the two Smith children had always heard it asserted in her family that the painter was "a Negro owned by General Samuel Smith (1752-1839) of Montebello, father of the two subjects." General Smith won distinction both in the Revolution and in the War of 1812, and was Secretary of the Navy in Jefferson's cabinet as well as United States Senator from Maryland. The owner of the portrait of little Charles Herman Wilmans is just as certain that the painter of her portrait was a Negro blacksmith, the slave of General John Stricker (1759-1825), another Marylander who distinguished himself in the defense of Baltimore in the War of 1812, and in this she is supported by various descendants of the General. The owner of the painting of Mrs. John Moale (Ellin North) and her granddaughter, Ellin North Moale, is not only equally definite as to the ownership of the slave painter by his ancestor, John Moale (1731-1798), husband of the subject, who was colonel of the Baltimore Town militia during the Revolution, presiding justice of the County Court, and a leading merchant and landowner, but also gives to the artist the name William Johnson. He further declares that he was cared for in his latter years in the Moale household during a prolonged illness from consumption from which he eventually died, and in this tradition the owner of the painting is supported by various descendants of Mrs. Moale. Among the Moale descendants it is also said that the artist began his painting career as the slave of a well-known artist whose name cannot now be recalled. The last tradition which will be mentioned, although perhaps important, is that handed down in the family of Hugh McCurdy (c. 1765-1805), a prosperous Baltimore merchant, whose descendant now owns the two very attractive canvases portraying Mrs. McCurdy and three of her little daughters. The owner of these McCurdy paintings makes no claim as to ancestral ownership, nor does she know the



name or race of the painter, but hands down the tradition that he came to Baltimore from the West Indies. The possible significance of this statement will be discussed later. It is of interest that in only one of these four instances is the painter traditionally given a name. That he was originally a blacksmith by trade as one tradition asserts, seems improbable.

Certain conclusions, based upon statements by several of the owners of these twenty-one paintings as to the identity of the artist, seem to be justified. Three of the owners assert positively that the painter was a Negro and a slave, and a fourth, who has heard no tradition as to race, that he was from the West Indies. The remaining owners say that there are no family traditions as to who was the painter of their portraits, nor as to his race. In the case of the Moale painting, the present owner further declares that the painter was a slave named *William Johnson*. It seems fair to conclude, however, from the affirmative evidence that the painter was a Negro or mulatto, and that at some period of his life he had been a slave. On the other hand, it is taxing one's credulity too much to believe that during a painting period covering about a decade, when the Smith, Wilmans and Moale portraits were executed, that our artist was successively owned and made use of as a professional portrait painter by these three very prominent Baltimoreans.

From evidence which will now be produced, it seems quite certain that our painter's name was *Joshua* Johnston, or Johnson, not *William* Johnson as one tradition asserts, and that whether originally a slave or not, he was a "free Negro householder" for some thirty years of his Baltimore residence. An examination of the Baltimore directories, beginning with the first, that for 1796, and ending with the directory for 1824, reveals the name of Joshua Johnston, or Johnson, listed as a portrait painter, or limner, in these and nearly all the intervening years for which directories exist. In only one of the directories for this period, that for 1817, are Negroes listed separately, appearing at the end of the book as "Free Householders of Colour," and in this list we find Joshua *Johnston* as a portrait painter on Nelson Street, Old Town. In other years the names of free Negro householders are designated as "black man" or by a †, and are scattered throughout the directories among the white householders. Slaves were

certainly never listed in the directories. Although in no other instance is there any indication of Johnston's race to be found in the directory listings, there can be little question that he was a Negro, probably a light mulatto, for to have incorrectly listed a white man as a Negro would have been a serious matter, and would have laid open the directory publisher to a suit for libel. Why his race was ignored in the other nine directory listings in which his name occurs and where one would expect a racial designation, it is difficult to explain, unless he were a mulatto of such light color as to have deceived the directory enumerators. In the Federal Census for 1810, Joshua Johnson and all his household appear as of Baltimore, but without street address, and are thus listed: free white *males* under 10 years—1; between 10 and 15 years—2; between 16 and 45 years—1; *females*, under 10 years—2; between 10 and 15 years—1; between 16 and 45 years—1; other free persons—1. In the Census for 1820 no Joshua Johnson, or Johnston, is listed.

Our limner seems to have constantly changed his address, but appears invariably in the directories for a period of nearly thirty years as a portrait painter or limner. In 1796 as Joshua *Johnston* he was on "German str. between Hanover and Howard str.," but whether on the north or south side of German is not noted, a matter of interest in this listing, for it is worthy of note that Colonel John Moale, whom one tradition assigns as his master, then had his town house and garden on the south side of German Street in the block bounded by German, Hanover, Lombard, and Sharp streets. Possibly Johnston was given painting-room space in a small outbuilding on the Moale property. Without tracing in detail all of Joshua's wanderings, we find him as *Johnson* successively in 1800 in Primrose Alley; in 1802, 1803, 1804 at 52 North Gay Street, and in 1810 at 99 High Street (Old Town); in 1814 he had moved to Strawberry Alley on Fells Point; in 1817, once more as *Johnston* he was on Nelson Street, Old Town. But again as *Johnson* in 1819 he had returned to the city proper, and was on St. Paul's Lane near Centre Street; in 1824 he had moved back to Old Town where he was on Sleigh's Lane near Spring Street. After this his name disappears from the directory, probably because of his death. In every entry his name appears as *Johnson*, except in the 1796 and 1817 directories, when it is

spelled *Johnston*. Between 1804 and 1810 only three directories were published—those for 1805, 1807, and 1808. The name of Joshua, under any spelling, is not to be found in these three issues. It is possible that his name does not appear because he was not an actual *householder* at this time, or because he may have been living in the "precincts," as the suburbs of the city were then called, and thus have been outside the area listed in the directories. Or it is even possible that he left Baltimore and became an itinerant painter during this period. In support of this last possibility it should be noted that among the Baltimore paintings by him which can be quite definitely dated, none fall into the 1805-1808 period, although we have examples apparently painted in the years 1804 and 1809. No mention of him has been found in contemporary public records or newspapers. It seems best to adopt the spelling *Johnston* for his name, as it is more likely that this form would have been carelessly entered in the directory listings as *Johnson*, than the reverse.

Affirmative evidence that Johnston was not a slave is afforded by his listing in the Census of 1810 as a *Free Householder*, and by the fact that he was classed as a *Free Householder of Colour* in the 1817 directory. It seems equally certain that he was not a slave at any time during the entire period from 1796 to 1824 when he was listed in the directories. Nor is it credible that a succession of prominent Baltimore slave-holders would have maintained in servitude a talented artist, who painted to order portraits of their friends and acquaintances, and have thus profited over a period of many years by the work of his brush. That he was at first a slave, or house servant, of a portrait painter from whom he learned to paint is more than probable, and that he was allowed to earn enough eventually to purchase his freedom is quite likely, for it was in this way that many capable Negro artisans and tradesmen were given the opportunity to earn their freedom.

Who was the limner's "master," in an artistic or in a legal sense, it would be of great interest to learn. Painting in the early seventeen nineties in Baltimore were Charles Willson Peale, Charles Peale Polk, and Rembrandt Peale, as well as a number of less well-known portrait painters. Certainly some of these portraits by Joshua Johnston have a striking generic resemblance to the work of these three members of the Peale family. One, that

of Mrs. Abraham White and her child (No. XX), is attributed by the owner to Rembrandt Peale and bears a certain resemblance to the latter's earliest work, and another, that of Captain Thomas Sprigg (No. XVI), by its owner to Charles Willson Peale.

It must be admitted however, that the tradition in the McCurdy family that this painter was from the West Indies does not fit well into the theory of a Peale-Polk influence. In the years 1793 to 1795 there arrived in Baltimore from the island of Santo Domingo more than one thousand French refugees who had fled from there as a result of the Negro insurrection against the whites which had broken out in 1793. Many of these refugees had brought with them Negro slaves or servants who had remained faithful to their masters. Among these émigrés with French names there were a number of silversmiths and painters who now began to appear for the first time in the Baltimore records. It is possible that Joshua Johnston was from Santo Domingo, but if so, he certainly adopted a new name, possibly to fit better into a new environment. Be this as it may, some of this group of paintings have rather a French primitive flavor.

The twenty-one paintings which can be unquestionably attributed to the Negro portrait painter have many striking stylistic characteristics in common. All are drawn in the same stiff manner, with a peculiar rigidity of arms and hands, and, it may be added, of legs and feet, where the standing figure is shown. With few exceptions the face is shown about three-quarters full. The eyes and mouth are treated in the same manner in all the portraits. The eyes are always directed forward and the upper lids painted in the same manner. The mouths are all drawn in rather tightly. All the subjects are depicted staring intently, apparently at their painter. In the group paintings there is nothing in the facial expressions of the subjects to indicate the least relation of one to any other member of the group. In twelve of the twenty-one canvases some seventeen children in all are portrayed, either alone or in family groups. The pose of these is strikingly similar. In nineteen of the twenty-one paintings the rather expressionless hands are shown, and in every instance holding such objects as a letter, chart, book, gloves, riding crop, basket, parasol, pencil, whistle, sextant, drawing-board, fruit, or cake. In five paintings, be it noted, strawberry leaves and berries, painted with meticulous

care and in an identical manner, and in two portraits cherries, are to be seen, and the strawberry and cherry baskets also show identical basketwork. Where trees or vines are used in the background, they are painted in the same manner. In two portraits, members of the Bankson family, identically the same earring is worn. In eight canvases, either single figures or family groups, the subjects are seated on upholstered settees or chairs of Sheraton type, studded with innumerable brass-headed tacks, which has given rise to the facetious soubriquet, "the brass-tack artist." The backgrounds are usually plain and sombre. In six instances a rather dark curtain is to be seen, and in four this is red. In five of the paintings an open casement discloses a landscape view. When the floor is shown, as in two instances, it is tessellated. In three of the child portraits there is introduced as an accessory object, an extraordinary looking creature, a white dog with a bushy, squirrel-like tail and pig-like head, either lying on a subject's lap or seated on hind legs. A characteristic cord and tassel is introduced in three paintings, either as a curtain-pull or dress decoration. Thirteen of the sixteen children and three of the mothers are shown in white dresses. In at least four of the canvases a child wears red slippers. The costumes are painted with considerable care, especially the lace collars, cuffs, and caps of the women and children.

In all, twenty-one paintings so completely fit into the Joshua Johnston group as to justify their inclusion without qualification. Three of these, the portraits of Mrs. John Moale and grandchild, and those of the two Smith children, while conforming in general, have, however, a certain fuzzy appearance not found in the remaining more sharply drawn paintings. This fuzziness appears to the writer to be due to over-painting in some old restoration. Four of the paintings are in very bad condition.

To appraise fairly Joshua Johnston as an American painter of the late eighteenth century we should not set our standards unreasonably high. He must in a way be classed with the primitives, although whatever his primitive instincts may have been, his style was certainly influenced by the Peale-Polk family group. Hard

linear painting, well executed and attractive in Charles Willson Peale, was debased by his nephew, Charles Peale Polk; Johnston carried this descending scale still further. The stiff handling by Polk of legs, arms, and figure was carried to a greater degree of rigidity by the Negro, who certainly saw the work of Polk, painting much in Baltimore during the eighties and nineties. Polk may well have been his "master" in a dual sense. One is also reminded of the stiff figures of Ralph Earl—a painter whom Johnston certainly never saw. There is little attempt at modeling; our Negro painter was a two-dimensional man. Many of the mannerisms of Polk were employed. Polk's hands very often have a peculiar pudgy appearance; this is also true of Joshua. Polk applied his paint sparingly, so did Joshua. As a colorist, however, Johnston was more given to the sombre, dark backgrounds, and black or white costumes: Polk often vied with the rainbow. Polk, much more than any other local painter of this period, revelled in accessories; Johnston not only used accessories freely, but employed several of those of which Polk was especially fond.

The writer is hopeful that at any time a contemporary newspaper, letter, or diary reference to Joshua Johnston may turn up, which will clear away much of the uncertainty that now enshrouds him, and verify the truth of the tradition of a "Negro slave artist" who flourished in Baltimore during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and absolutely identify him with the very real Baltimore limner, Joshua Johnston, who is recorded as a portrait painter for over thirty years.

The writer gratefully acknowledges the helpful suggestions which he has received in the critical study of several of these paintings from Mrs. Anne Bolling Wheeler of Boston and Mr. Macgill James of Washington, two highly competent students of early American portraiture. His thanks are due to the Frick Art Reference Library for permission to reproduce its photographs of several of the paintings, and to the Walpole Society for allowing him to use the material in his earlier paper on Johnston.

## I

## MRS. ANDREW BEDFORD BANKSON

(c. 1780— )

*and child*

SUBJECTS: There is some doubt as to the identity of the subject. The owner, Mr. Hugh Purviance King, who is a great-grandson of Mrs. James Beatty (No. III), and also the owner of this portrait, has always heard this subject called "Auntie Bankson." The writer, from an examination of the Bankson pedigree, believes that the subject of this painting is probably Mrs. Andrew Bedford Bankson, a sister-in-law of Mrs. Beatty, but the strong likeness between the subjects of these two portraits raises a question as to this. The subject of No. II is thought to be Mrs. Bankson's husband. There is no family tradition as to the name of the child.

DATE: c. 1804

SIZE: Canvas 32" × 28"

DESCRIPTION: The mother and child are shown seated, three-quarters length, facing the spectator. The mother, seated at the left, is a rather good looking woman in her early twenties, and has brown hair and grey eyes. Her hair is bound with a double circlet of light beads, and the earring which she shows in her right ear is identical with that worn by her sister-in-law, Mrs. James Beatty (No. III). She wears a light brown dress with a lace ruffle around the low neck. Her right hand, resting on the lap of the child seated at her left, holds a bunch of strawberry leaves and berries. The child, apparently a girl of perhaps three years of age, sits at the right end of the sofa. She has light hair and blue eyes. She wears a high-waisted white muslin dress and holds in her right hand a strawberry which she is raising to her lips. The Sheraton sofa is covered with green material and is studded with brass headed tacks. The background is light brown. There is a dark curtain at the upper right from which hangs a white tassel. Compare the positions of the subjects with Nos. IV, V, XII.

OWNERSHIP: The owner is Mr. Hugh Purviance King of Hewlett, Long Island. The painting, with Nos. II and III, has passed by descent to the owner who is a great-grandson of Mrs. James Beatty (Elizabeth Grant Bankson [No. III] ), sister-in-law of the subject.

ATTRIBUTIONS: The owner says that he knows of no tradition in his immediate family as to who the painter was. It is to be noted, however, that the husband of Mrs. Bankson, one of the subjects, was an uncle of Charles Herman Wilmans (No. XXI). The Wilmans portrait is said by its owner, Mrs. Horner, to have been painted by the Negro slave who belonged to General John Stricker. Mrs. Stricker was the maternal aunt of the subject's husband. The writer definitely attributes this to Joshua Johnston.

REPRODUCTION: Frick Art Reference Library photograph No. 17834. Walpole *Note Book*, No. I.



NO. I. MRS. ANDREW BEDFORD BANKSON  
(c. 1780- )  
*and child*

*Courtesy of the Frick Art Reference Library*



NO. III. MRS. JAMES BEATTY  
(Elizabeth Grant Bankson)  
(1775-1851)

*Courtesy of the Frick Art Reference Library*



## II

## MR. BANKSON

Andrew Bedford Bankson (?)

(1773- )

**SUBJECT:** The owner thinks that this is the portrait of his cousin, Gunning Bedford Bankson, a son of Mrs. Elizabeth Bankson (No. I), and a nephew of Mrs. James Beatty (No. III), and that the subject is identical with the child of No. I, painted, he thinks, some twenty years earlier. The writer cannot agree with this identification as he believes that all three of these Bankson family portraits (Nos. I, II, and III), which were painted by the same artist, were painted at about the same time, and that the child of No. I is a girl. The costume of this subject, with powdered hair and queue, is of about the same date, c. 1804, as the others of this group. Mrs. Beatty (née Bankson) had a brother, Andrew Bedford Bankson (b. 1773), who may be the subject of this painting and it is tentatively identified as such.

**DATE:** c. 1804

**SIZE:** Canvas 32½" × 28"

**DESCRIPTION:** The subject, a man of perhaps thirty, is shown three-quarters length, seated, turned slightly to the left. His grey eyes are directed forward. Powdered hair, apparently tied at the back. In his left hand he holds a sealed letter and his right hand rests on his leg. He wears a brown coat, with white waistcoat showing below, white stock, and cuffs, and grey trousers. He is seated on a mahogany chair. The background is brown, with what appears to be a curtain in the upper right. Although in bad condition it is, however, definitely of the Joshua Johnston group.

**OWNERSHIP:** The owner is Mr. Hugh Purviance King of Hewlett, Long Island. The painting has passed, with Nos. I and III, by descent to the owner, who is a great-grandson of the subject's sister, Mrs. James Beatty (No. III).

**OWNER'S ATTRIBUTION:** The owner says that he knows of no tradition in his immediate family as to who the painter was. It is to be noted, however, that the portrait of this subject's nephew, Charles Herman Wilmans (No. XXI), is said by its owner, Mrs. Horner, to have been painted by a Negro slave who belonged to General John Stricker. Mrs. Stricker, the General's wife, was a maternal aunt of this subject. The writer definitely attributes this to Joshua Johnston.

**REPRODUCTION:** Frick Art Reference Library photograph No. 17835.

## III

## MRS. JAMES BEATTY

(Mrs. Carl Heinrich Wilmans)

(Elizabeth Grant Bankson)

(1775-1851)

**SUBJECT:** Mrs. Carl Heinrich Wilmans of Baltimore. She was born in Philadelphia in 1775, and died in Baltimore June 5, 1851. Her maiden name was Elizabeth Grant Bankson. She married, c. 1795, Carl Heinrich Wilmans (1769-1798), a Baltimore merchant, by whom she was the mother of Charles Herman Wilmans (No. XXI) also painted by Joshua Johnston. She married secondly, James Beatty, also a Baltimore merchant, by whom she had issue.

**DATE:** c. 1804; probably when her son's portrait was painted.

**SIZE:** Canvas 20"  $\times$  15 $\frac{3}{4}$ "

**DESCRIPTION:** The subject is a handsome young woman of apparently twenty-five to thirty years of age. This is a head and shoulders portrait with the body and head shown turned slightly to the left. She has grey eyes and reddish-brown hair. She wears a low cut black dress trimmed about the neck with white lace. The earring which is to be seen in her left ear is identical with that worn by her sister-in-law, Mrs. Andrew Bedford Bankson (No. I). Hanging over the front of her left shoulder is a twisted white cord and tassel. There is an olive grey background.

**OWNERSHIP:** The owner is Mr. Hugh Purviance King, of Hewlett, Long Island. The painting has passed, with Nos. I and III, by direct descent to the owner, who is a great-grandson of the subject by her second husband, James Beatty.

**ATTRIBUTION:** The owner says that he knows of no tradition in his immediate family as to who the painter was. It is to be noted, however, that the portrait of the subject's son, Charles Herman Wilmans (No. XXI), is said by its owner, Mrs. Horner, to have been painted by the Negro slave who belonged to General John Stricker. Mrs. Stricker, the General's wife, was a maternal aunt of this subject. The writer attributes this definitely to Joshua Johnston.

**REPRODUCTION:** Frick Art Reference Library photograph No. 17836. *Walpole Note Book*, No. III. *Baltimore Sun*, Dec. 22, 1940.

## IV

## CAPTAIN THOMAS KELL

(c. 1745-1790)

SUBJECT: Capt. Thomas Kell of Fell's Point, Baltimore, and Kellville, Harford County, Md. He was born in England c. 1745, and spent most of his life in Maryland. He died at Guadaloupe, West Indies, in the autumn of 1790, while on a voyage there. He was a sea captain and is said to have commanded the privateers *Dolphin* and *Little Davy* in the Revolution. He married, May 30, 1767, Aliceanna Bond (c. 1748-1814) (whose companion portrait is described under No. V), by whom he had fifteen children.

DATE: c. 1789-1790, as it is the companion portrait of that of his wife who is painted with her daughter Pamela, one of the youngest of their fifteen children.

SIZE: Canvas c. 34" × 28"

DESCRIPTION: This painting is in wretched condition. It shows a young middle-aged man with head and body turned slightly to the left. Hair dark. He wears a green velvet coat with white jabot and light waistcoat, and holds a letter in his left hand. Background dark red hangings.

OWNERSHIP: The painting is owned by Mrs. Edward Alexander of Alexandria, Va., as is the companion portrait, that of the subject's wife and daughter (No. V).

ATTRIBUTION: There is no family tradition as to who was the painter. The writer feels certain from the photograph (he has not seen the original) that this is a very early painting by Joshua Johnston; the companion portrait of the subject's wife and daughter is a completely characteristic and rather crude example of his work—the earliest so far found.

REPRODUCTION: Owner's photograph.

## V

## MRS. THOMAS KELL

(Aliceanna Bond)

(c. 1748-1814)

*and daughter*

SUBJECT: (1) Mrs. Thomas Kell of Fell's Point, Baltimore, and Kellville, Harford Co., Md. She was born c. 1748, and died in Kellville, Apr. 21, 1814. She was the daughter of John Bond (1712-1791), a Quaker, who lived both at Fell's Point and at Kellville, and his wife, Aliceanna Webster (d. 1765). She married, May 30, 1767, Capt. Thomas

Kell (c. 1745-1790) (see No. IV), of Fell's Point and Kellville, by whom she had fifteen children. She was the mother of Judge Thomas Kell, Jr. (1772-1846) of the Baltimore County Court.

(2) Pamela Kell, one of her younger children. Not traced.

DATE: c. 1789-1790

SIZE: Canvas c. 34" × 28"

DESCRIPTION: This painting is in bad condition. It shows a rather young middle-aged woman turned slightly to the right with a little girl of perhaps two years of age sitting on her lap. Her hair and eyes are dark. She wears a white cap and white fichu over a maroon colored dress, and holds in her right hand three cherries and a bunch of grapes. The child is dressed entirely in white with a toy or whistle in her right hand and bunch of grapes in her left. The background is dark red.

OWNERSHIP: The painting was owned in 1930 by Mrs. Edward Alexander, of Alexandria, Va., and is the companion portrait of that of her husband, No. IV.

ATTRIBUTION: There is no family tradition as to who is the painter. The writer feels certain from the photograph (he has not seen the original) that this is a very early but typical painting by Joshua Johnston. Not only are the features, pose and dress of both subjects characteristic, but the fruit and fan held in the hands are equally so.

REPRODUCTION: Owner's photograph.

## VI

### THE KENNEDY LONG FAMILY

SUBJECTS: (Numbered from left to right)

(1) Mrs. Kennedy Long (Elizabeth Kennedy) (1779-1850) of Baltimore, Md., and Pittsfield, Ill. She was the daughter of Andrew Kennedy (1751-1811), a native of Tyrone, Ireland, who settled in Pennsylvania and served in the Revolution. She married, Nov. 16, 1797, her first cousin, Kennedy Long (1763-1824), an Irishman from Belfast, who came to Baltimore and was a prominent merchant here. They were the parents of eight children, the three eldest of whom are shown in this painting. Mrs. Long, after the death of her husband, removed in 1830 with her family to the west, spending her latter years there in Pittsfield, Illinois.

(2) Capt. Andrew Kennedy Long, U. S. N. (1804-1867), of Baltimore Md., and Carlisle, Pa. He was the third child of Kennedy and Elizabeth Long. He married, Apr. 18, 1837, Marion Lowry Donaldson (1813-1870), by whom he had six children.

(3) Eliza Long (Mrs. George Balfour) (1802-1870), of Baltimore,



NO. VI. THE KENNEDY LONG FAMILY  
*Mrs. Long (Elizabeth Kennedy) (1779-1850), and three eldest children*

Md., Norfolk, Va., and Pittsfield, Ill. She was the second child of Kennedy and Elizabeth Long. She married Dr. George Balfour of Norfolk, a surgeon, U. S. N., on whose death a few years later she moved to Pittsfield, Ill.

(4) George Hunter Long (1798-1816), of Baltimore. He died in Baltimore in boyhood.

DATE: c. 1805, from the apparent ages of the children.

SIZE: Canvas 41" × 53"

DESCRIPTION: The mother, shown three-quarters length, is seated at the end of the sofa to the left, with her three children arranged in the order of their ages, the children either standing on the sofa, seated on it, or standing on the floor. The mother has dark hair and blue eyes, the children yellow hair and blue eyes. The mother, the baby, and the little girl wear white dresses. The mother wears a red flower, the two younger children have coral necklaces, and the baby's whistle, the cherries held by the boy and those in the basket, as well as the seat of the footstool are red. The mahogany sofa is covered with black horsehair held in place by the brass tacks so dear to the heart of this artist.

OWNERSHIP: The owner is Mrs. Albyn C. Adams of Pittsfield, Ill., a great-granddaughter of Mrs. Kennedy Long. This painting was given by the latter to one of her younger sons, Thomas Jefferson Long (b. 1808), who gave it to his daughter, Isadora Eliza Long (Mrs. George Harvey), of St. Louis, who gave it to her cousin, Mrs. Albyn C. Adams, a descendant of Mrs. Kennedy Long's youngest daughter, Amelia Juliana Long (Mrs. Thomas Worthington) (1818-1881).

ATTRIBUTIONS: It was the discerning eye of Mrs. Adams, the owner, who noticed the strong stylistic resemblance between her painting and "The James McCormick Family" group (No. IX), reproduced in color in the magazine *Life* for Dec. 9, 1940, when it was on exhibition at the Survey of American Painting, held at the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, Pa., in 1940. This caused her to bring to the writer's attention her painting, as well as three other Long family portraits by Joshua Johnston (Nos. VII, VIII, XIX). There is no tradition in the owner's family as to who painted any of these four portraits; all, however, are typical examples of Johnston's work.

REPRODUCTION: A photograph made for the owner. *Journal Illinois State Historical Society*, Sept. 1941, p. 366.

## VII

## HENRY LONG

(1774-1850)

**SUBJECT:** Henry Long, a native of Belfast, Ireland, who settled in Baltimore about 1791, removing in 1830 to Atlas, Illinois. He was the son of William Long of Belfast, and a brother and business partner of Kennedy Long of Baltimore (No. VI). He was a Baltimore merchant. He married first, Aug. 24, 1809, Eliza Ann Gittings of "Long Green," Baltimore County, by whom he had two sons; and secondly, Aug. 5, 1823, Emeline Green, by whom he had eight children. The oldest of the children by his second wife was Jesse Green Long, the subject of No. VIII. He died in Atlas in 1850.

**DATE:** c. 1805

**SIZE:** Canvas 30" × 25"

**DESCRIPTION:** A man of perhaps twenty-five to thirty years of age, shown three-quarters length, seated on brown chair. He faces the spectator one-quarter front to the right. His hair is dark brown. He wears a white collar and frill, a black coat with brass buttons and a yellow waistcoat. He holds an open book in his right hand. The background is reddish brown.

**OWNERSHIP:** The owner is Mrs. Herbert A. Tuohy, of New York City, a great-granddaughter of the subject. The painting passed from the subject to his son, Jesse Green Long (No. VIII), to the latter's son, Richard Henry Long, and from him to his daughter, Mrs. Tuohy.

**ATTRIBUTIONS:** There is no tradition in the owner's family as to who was the painter. It is the writer's opinion that this is a typical Joshua Johnston painting, the features and pose strongly resembling nos. II, XV and XVI.

**REPRODUCTION:** Frick Art Reference Library photograph No. 34148.

## VIII

## JESSE GREEN LONG

**SUBJECT:** Jesse Green Long of Baltimore, Md., and Pike Co., Ill. He was the eldest son of Henry Long (1774-1850) (No. VII) of Balto., Md., and Atlas, Ill., and his second wife, Emeline Green. He was born about 1822-1823.

**DATE:** c. 1825

**SIZE:** Canvas 16" × 12"

**DESCRIPTION:** This is a half-length painting of a child of about two

years of age, standing, with head turned slightly to right, wearing a dark dress; he is about to eat a strawberry held in his right hand. This description is from a very poor snapshot.

OWNERSHIP: Unknown, but it belongs to a descendant of the subject living in Illinois.

ATTRIBUTION: There is no tradition as to the painter of this portrait. It is one of the group of four Long family paintings which in the writer's opinion are obviously by Joshua Johnston. It is of interest, however, that if the subject is correctly identified, it must have been painted at least as late as 1824-1825, or more than a decade after any other portrait is known to have been painted by Johnston.

REPRODUCTION: A poor snapshot of the painting shows it to be in very bad condition.

## IX

## THE JAMES McCORMICK FAMILY

(Frontispiece)

SUBJECTS: (Numbered from left to right)

(5) James McCormick (1763-1841), of Baltimore. He was born in county Tyrone, Ireland, in 1763, and died in Washington, D. C., June 16, 1841. He was the youngest of three brothers who settled in Alexandria, Virginia, soon after the Revolution. He removed to Baltimore, where he was first employed by the firm of John P. Pleasants & Sons, merchants, and, although unrelated, gave the name Pleasants to two of his children. Later he engaged in business for himself as a merchant at 236 Baltimore Street. He married first, April 12, 1798, Rachel Ridgely Lux (1762-1810). He married secondly, in 1813, Elizabeth Anderson. His first wife, Rachel, and three of his four children, are shown in this painting.

(1) Mrs. McCormick (Rachel Ridgely Lux) (1762-1810). She was the daughter of Colonel Darby Lux, Jr. (1737-1795) of "Mount Airy," Baltimore County, and his wife, Rachel Ridgely (1734-1813). She died November 26, 1810.

(2) William Lux McCormick (1803-liv. 1826). He was born March 8, 1803, and married March 15, 1826, Esther Hough Cottman (1806- ) of Somerset County, Maryland. He has not been traced further.

(3) Sophia Pleasants McCormick (c. 1801- ). Nothing further has been learned of her except that she married a Mr. Hammond.

(4) John Pleasants McCormick (1799-1862), of Baltimore. He died March 26, 1862, aged sixty-two. He married, March 22, 1830, Ann Elizabeth Cottman, of Somerset County, Maryland, the sister of his brother's wife.

DATE: 1804 or 1805, from the apparent ages of the children.

SIZE: Canvas 50" × 70"



DESCRIPTION: The parents, shown three-quarters length, are seated at either end of a mahogany Sheraton sofa with the three children between them in various postures, arranged according to age. The flesh tints of all are pale. They nearly face the spectator. The mother's eyes are brown and she has dark brown hair. She wears a white cap and is dressed in a high-waisted white muslin dress.

The youngest child, William Lux, standing on the sofa next to his mother, has blue eyes and light brown hair, and wears a high-waisted white dress his right hand is on his mother's shoulder. The daughter, Sophia Pleasants, seated in the centre, has blue eyes and brown hair. She also wears a high-waisted white dress with brilliant red slippers peeping out below. She holds in her lap a brown wicker basket filled with strawberries and strawberry leaves.

The elder son, John Pleasants, has blue eyes and dark brown hair, and wears a black coat and white collar with ruffled edging. His left hand rests on his father's shoulder and his right hand grasps a paper held by his father.

The father, who faces three-quarters to the left, has dark blue eyes and dark brown hair and sideburns. He wears a black coat, and white stock and cravat, vest, trousers, and stockings. His right arm rests on the upper edge of the sofa, the right hand holding a letter. There is a paper in his left hand. The mahogany sofa is covered with some dark material fastened along its sides and top with brass-headed tacks. All the figures show the characteristic stiffness of this painter and his rather expressionless hands. Compare the pose of the mother and baby with Nos. I, X, XX. It is framed in its original black wood frame about three inches wide.

OWNERSHIP: This painting belongs to the Maryland Historical Society. It was presented on February 22, 1922, by Dr. Thomas C. McCormick, the grandson of James McCormick and his wife, Rachel Ridgely Lux.

ATTRIBUTION: The late owner, Dr. Thomas C. McCormick, made no statement as to the painter. The writer feels certain that the painting is by Joshua Johnston.

REPRODUCTION: Frick Art Reference Library photograph No. 2984. Walpole *Note Book*, No. IV. The magazine *Life*, Dec. 9, 1940. Alain Locke, *The Negro in Art* (1940), p. 14.

## X

### MRS. HUGH McCURDY

(1775-1822)

*and daughters*

SUBJECTS: (Numbered from left to right)

(1) Mrs. Hugh McCurdy (Grace Allison) (1775-1822), of Baltimore, Maryland. She was born January 11, 1775, probably in Phila-



NO. X. MRS. HUGH MCCURDY  
(1775-1822)  
*and daughters*

*Courtesy of the Frick Art Reference Library*



NO. XI. LETITIA GRACE MCCURDY  
(Mrs. Richard Henry Douglass)  
(1797-1875)

*Courtesy of the Frick Art Reference Library*

delphia, and died in Baltimore, July 22, 1822. She was the daughter of Captain William Allison (d. ante 1788) of Philadelphia, and his wife, Grace (Chambers) Caldwell (c. 1736-1791). She married first, June 17, 1794, Hugh McCurdy (c. 1765-1805), a prosperous Baltimore merchant by whom she had at least two children. After his death in 1805, she married, May 8, 1811, Edward N. Clopper (Nov. 8, 1773- ). She also left issue by her second husband.

(2) Mary Jane McCurdy (c. 1802-1866), of Baltimore. She was born in 1801 or 1802, and died in Baltimore in her sixty-fifth year, on April 8, 1866. She did not marry.

(3) Letitia Grace McCurdy (Mrs. Richard Henry Douglass) (1797-1875), of Baltimore. She was born September 25, 1797, and died August 25, 1875. She married, June 27, 1828, Richard Henry Douglass (1780-1829), a Baltimore merchant. A possible error in the identity of this subject is discussed under No. XI.

DATE: c. 1804, from the ages of the children.

SIZE: Canvas 41" × 34¼"

DESCRIPTION: The mother, three-quarters length, is seated on a Sheraton sofa, the younger daughter stands on the sofa beside her, and the older daughter on the floor to the right. All are dressed in white and are looking directly at the spectator. The mother's eyes are light hazel; her flesh tints are rather pale. Her dark brown hair is bound with a white embroidered bandeau. She is dressed in a high-waisted white muslin dress trimmed around neck and sleeves with white lace. She holds in her left hand a bunch of strawberry leaves and berries. The younger child, of perhaps eighteen months, has light brown eyes and hair, and the flesh tints are pale. She wears a high-waisted white muslin dress with lace trimmed sleeves, and white stockings. A bit of brilliant red left slipper can just be seen. She wears a necklace of gold beads. The older child to the right has very dark brown eyes and dark brown hair; her flesh tints are rather pale. She also wears a high-waisted white muslin dress trimmed with lace, and about her neck a dark ribbon holding a gold ornament. In her left hand she holds a brown wicker basket filled with strawberry leaves and berries. In her right hand she holds, upside down, a black parasol.

The positions of the mother and younger child are almost identical with that seen in Nos. I, IX, XX. The hands are rather expressionless. The sofa is covered with a dark fabric fastened along its upper border with brass-headed tacks. The background is a dark grey becoming lighter below.

OWNERSHIP: This portrait and No. XI were inherited by Mrs. J. Earl Moore of Baltimore, the owner, from her mother, who was the daughter of Letitia Grace McCurdy (Mrs. Richard Henry Douglass) (Nos. X and XI), and the granddaughter of Mrs. Hugh McCurdy.

ATTRIBUTION: Family tradition states that this painting and the companion painting of Letitia Grace McCurdy (No. XI) were both painted by a West Indian artist, whose race is not stated. The writer definitely attributes these two paintings to Joshua Johnston. It seems possible that he may have been a West Indian Negro who learned to paint from one of the Peale-Polk group.

REPRODUCTION: Frick Art Reference Library photograph No. 19751. *Walpole Note Book*, No. V.

## XI

## LETITIA GRACE McCURDY

(Mrs. Richard Henry Douglass)

(1797-1875)

SUBJECT: Letitia Grace McCurdy (Mrs. Richard Henry Douglass) (1797-1875), of Baltimore. She was born in Baltimore, September 25, 1797, and died August 25, 1875. She was the daughter of Hugh McCurdy (c. 1765-1805), a Baltimore merchant, and his wife, Grace Allison (1775-1822). She married, June 27, 1828, Richard Henry Douglass (1780-1829), a merchant of Baltimore. The owner identifies this as her grandmother, Letitia Grace McCurdy, as she does the elder girl of No. X.

DATE: c. 1804, as determined by the age of the subject.

SIZE: Canvas 41"  $\times$  34½"

DESCRIPTION: A standing full-length figure of a girl of about six years, nearly fronting the spectator. Eyes dark brown; hair brown; flesh tints rather pale. She wears a high-waisted white muslin dress trimmed about the neck with lace, white stockings, and bright red slippers. A gold ornament hangs about her neck on a black band. In her left hand she holds a cake towards a curious looking dog with bushy tail seated on his hind legs, the same type of dog introduced as an accessory in other paintings by Johnston. The background is dark grey with a red curtain at the upper left. Through an open casement at the right is to be seen a landscape with trees, hills, and a fence.

OWNERSHIP: This painting and No. X were inherited by Mrs. J. Earle Moore of Baltimore, the owner, from her mother, who was the daughter of Letitia Grace McCurdy (Mrs. Richard Henry Douglass) and the granddaughter of Mrs. Hugh McCurdy.

ATTRIBUTION: Family tradition states that this portrait and the companion painting of Mrs. McCurdy and daughter (No. X) were both painted by a West Indian artist whose race is not stated. The writer definitely attributes these two paintings to Joshua Johnston. It seems



NO. XII. MRS. JOHN MOALE (ELLIN NORTH)  
(1741-1825)  
*and granddaughter, Ellin North Moale*  
(1794-1803)

possible that he may have been a West Indian Negro who learned to point from one of the Peale-Polk group.

REPRODUCTION: Frick Art Reference Library photograph No. 19752. Walpole *Note Book*, No. VI.

## XII

## MRS. JOHN MOALE

(1741-1825)

*and granddaughter Ellin North Moale*

(1794-1803)

SUBJECTS: (1) Mrs. John Moale (Ellin North) (1741-1825) of Baltimore. She was born in Baltimore April 29, 1741, and died there March 23, 1825. She was the daughter of Robert North, an Englishman from Whittington, Lancashire, who came to Maryland about 1724, and was one of the commissioners who laid out Baltimore Town in 1729. She married, May 25, 1758, Colonel John Moale, a wealthy planter and merchant who was colonel of the Baltimore Town militia during the Revolution, presiding justice of the County Court, and the holder of various other public positions. The Moale's town house occupied the block bounded by Redwood (German), Hanover, Lombard, and Sharp streets; and on, or adjoining, this block, Joshua Johnston had his painting room in 1796 on "German Street between Hanover and Howard streets." The Moale country estate was "Green Spring," some ten miles north of Baltimore in the heart of the valley of that name. Mrs. Moale was a woman of strong character and personality. Portraits of her by six different painters are in existence.

(2) Ellin North Moale (1794-1803), the granddaughter of Mrs. John Moale (1), was born February 7, 1794, and died in 1803. She was the daughter of Thomas Moale (1766-1822) of "Green Spring," and his wife, Eleanor Owings (1772-1853).

DATE: c. 1800

SIZE: Canvas 40½" × 35⅜"

DESCRIPTION: Mrs. Moale, a woman of perhaps sixty years of age, is shown seated three-quarters length, nearly full front. She has brown eyes, greying hair, and a rosy complexion. She wears a white cap of lace and ribbons tied under the chin. Her dress is of mustard colored satin with a white muslin fichu and white lace cuffs. A black net shawl over the shoulders extends down the front of her dress. In her right hand she holds a book in a bright red binding. On the table to the left, covered in light grey, rests a pair of white rimmed spectacles. The chair on which she sits is covered with a dark material fastened with brass-headed tacks. Ellin North Moale, a child of five or six, stands,

three-quarters length, at her grandmother's right. She has red hair, dark brown eyes, and rosy complexion. She wears a high-waisted white dress, and holds in her hand a bunch of red flowers which she is tying together with a red string held in the other hand. There is a claret colored curtain at the upper right. The remainder of the background is dark. The fuzzy appearance of this painting seems to be due to old restoration repainting.

OWNERSHIP: The owner is Mr. Roswell P. Russell of Baltimore. The painting passed by descent from the subject, Mrs. John Moale; to her son, Thomas Moale; to his daughter, Mrs. William Lynch Owings (Sophia North Moale); to her daughter, Alice Owings; to her niece, Mrs. Lewis P. Heiston (Alice Owings); to her cousin, Mr. Roswell P. Russell.

ATTRIBUTION: Family tradition attributes this painting to a slave named *William Johnson* owned in the family of Colonel John Moale. The writer definitely attributes the painting to Joshua Johnston.

REPRODUCTION: Frick Art Reference Library photograph No. 3671. *Walpole Note Book*, No. VII. *Bulletin Municipal Art Museum* (Baltimore), Dec. 15, 1941.

### XIII

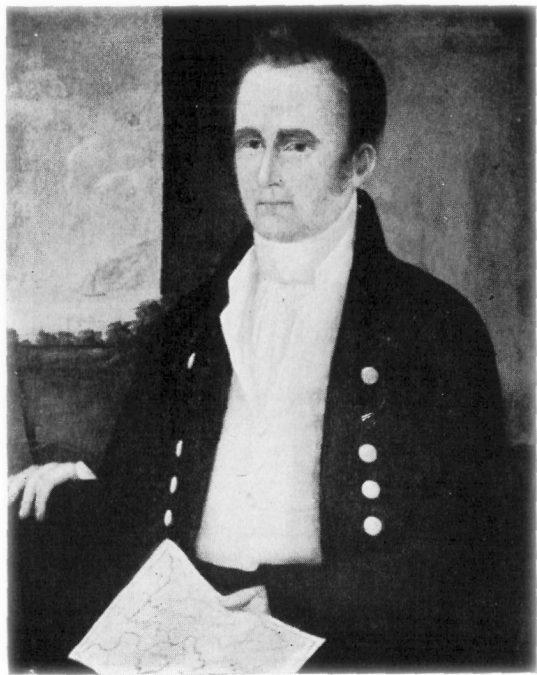
#### MAN OF THE SHURE FAMILY

SUBJECT: The subject cannot be definitely identified. At an auction at the old Shure home at Darlington, Harford County, Md., about 1935, this and another (No. XIV) family portrait were sold. This family, which came from Pennsylvania to Maryland about the close of the eighteenth century, was identified with Darlington and with Shure's Landing on the Susquehanna River which is now under the waters of the Conowingo Dam, and with Baltimore. No living representative of this family can identify with certainty the subjects of these two paintings, viz.—a man holding a chart, probably a Chesapeake Bay captain, and a young girl. They are not companion paintings in size so may not be husband and wife—perhaps they are father and daughter.

DATE: c. 1810

SIZE: Canvas 28" × 24"

DESCRIPTION: Half-length seated figure of middle-aged man, turned one-quarter to left. He has blue eyes and brown hair. He wears a white stock and white waistcoat; coat blue black with brass buttons. He holds in his left hand what appears to be a chart. He is seated on a chair covered with dark red material. An open casement with a distant water view and ships, and hills, is seen to the upper left.



NO. XIII. MAN OF THE SHURE FAMILY



NO. XIV. WOMAN OF THE SHURE FAMILY



OWNERSHIP: The owner, Mr. John Schwarz of Baltimore, acquired this portrait and No. XIV at the Shure auction sale noted above.

ATTRIBUTION: The writer feels certain that this and No. XIV are both by Johnston.

REPRODUCTION: Owner's photograph.

## XIV

## WOMAN OF THE SHURE FAMILY

SUBJECT: The subject cannot be definitely identified. At an auction at the old Shure home at Darlington, Harford County, Md., about 1935, this and another (No. XIII) family portrait were sold. See No. XIII for discussion as to the identity of both subjects.

DATE: c. 1810

SIZE: Canvas  $25\frac{1}{2}'' \times 17\frac{3}{4}''$

DESCRIPTION: She has blue eyes, very dark hair, and fair complexion. She wears a black dress trimmed about the neck and cuffs with white lace; and a white cap. She wears a gold necklace with a topaz fastening and gold and diamond earrings. She holds in her left hand red flowers with green leaves. There is a diamond pin on her dress to left. She is seated on a mahogany sofa with brass-studded tacks and holds a partly open book in her right hand. The background is dark olive green.

OWNERSHIP: This portrait is owned by Mrs. Lawrason Riggs of J., Brooklandville, Md., who acquired it from Mr. John Schwarz. It came from the home of the Shure family at Darlington, Md. See note under XIII for a discussion as to the subject's identity.

ATTRIBUTION: There is no tradition as to the painter of this and the other Shure portrait. The writer is certain this and the other Shure portrait (No. XIII) were painted by Joshua Johnston.

REPRODUCTION: Schaefer photograph.

## XV

## BENNETT SOLLERS

(c. 1780- )

SUBJECT: Bennett Sollers, a Maryland planter who lived near Prince Frederick, Calvert County. He was born about 1780. The date of his death has not been learned. He was the son of James Sollers, also a Calvert County planter, and his second wife, a Miss Elt. He married before 1813 a Miss Rhodes. As far as can be learned the subject never lived in Baltimore.

DATE: c. 1810?

SIZE: Canvas  $28'' \times 24''$

DESCRIPTION: The subject, a man of perhaps twenty-five, is shown three-quarters length, seated on an Empire mahogany chair covered with a red material attached to the chair frame with brass-headed tacks. He faces the spectator one-quarter front to the right. His eyes are grey and his hair and sideburns a light reddish brown. He wears a light coat with brass buttons, a single-breasted yellow waistcoat, and white stock. In his left hand he holds on his lap a writing board, and in his right hand a gold pencil. A large book rests on a table to the right. The background is dark.

OWNERSHIP: Present owner is Mrs. Paul Iglehart of Baltimore. The painting passed from the subject to his son, Augustus R. Sollers, a member of Congress; from him to his daughter, Mrs. Joseph A. Wilson (née Sollers); and finally to her daughter, Mrs. Paul Iglehart.

ATTRIBUTION: The owner says that she knows of no tradition in her immediate family as to who the painter was. The writer feels certain that the painting is by Joshua Johnston.

REPRODUCTION: Frick Art Reference Library photograph No. 19733. *Walpole Note Book*, No. VIII.

## XVI

### CAPTAIN THOMAS SPRIGG

(c. 1765-1810)

SUBJECT: Thomas Sprigg was a sea captain of Prince George's County, Maryland, who later settled in Washington County, Western Maryland. He was born about 1765, and died July 10, 1810. He was the son of Joseph Sprigg (1736-1800), who held various public offices in Prince George's and Frederick counties. It seems probable that the Captain Thomas Sprigg, who married in Baltimore, April 26, 1803, Harriet Minsky, was this subject.

DATE: c. 1805-1810

SIZE: Canvas 36" × 30"

DESCRIPTION: The subject, a man of perhaps twenty-five or thirty years of age, is shown seated. He faces the spectator turned one-quarter to the right. He has dark grey eyes and his brown hair is tied behind with a ribbon. He wears a black coat, white waistcoat, white stock, and grey breeches. He holds a sextant in his right hand and his left arm rests on a wood table upon which lies a partially open rolled map or chart and a measuring compass. At the upper right there is to be seen through an open casement a view of trees and a harbor with ships. The background is dark grey.

OWNERSHIP: The owner is Mrs. Brodnax Cameron of Baltimore, who is a great-great-niece of the subject. It passed by direct descent to a granddaughter of the subject from whom Mrs. Cameron purchased it.



No. XVII. JOHN SPEAR SMITH  
(1786-1866)



No. XVIII. MARY BUCHANAN SMITH  
(*Mrs. John Edward Mansfield*)  
(1788-1868)

ATTRIBUTION: The owner says that according to family tradition this portrait was painted by Charles Willson Peale. The writer definitely attributes this painting to Joshua Johnston.

REPRODUCTION: Frick Art Reference Library photograph No. 19813. *Walpole Note Book*, No. IX.

## XVII

## JOHN SPEAR SMITH

(1786-1866)

SUBJECT: John Spear Smith of Baltimore was born there November 27, 1786, and died November 11, 1866. He was the son of General Samuel Smith (1752-1839) of "Montebello," near Baltimore, a prominent merchant, who was Secretary of the Navy under Jefferson, Representative and United States Senator from Maryland, Mayor of Baltimore, and commander of the American forces when Baltimore was attacked by the British on September 12-13, 1814. The subject was a lawyer and attaché of the United States Legation in London, 1809-1810. He served as aide to his father who commanded the troops in the defense of Baltimore against the British, September 12-13, 1814. He was for many years President of the Maryland Historical Society. He married Caryanne Nicholas, the daughter of Governor Wilson Cary Nicholas of Virginia.

DATE: c. 1797, from the apparent age of the subject. It was doubtless painted at the same time as the companion portrait of his sister (No. XVIII).

SIZE: Canvas 29½" × 24"

DESCRIPTION: This is a three-quarters standing figure of a boy of about ten years of age, facing slightly to the left. He has dark hair and dark eyes and a rather pale complexion. He wears a dark blue coat with white muslin collar with ruffled edge, white ruffled cuffs, and a gold watch fob at the waist. He holds gloves in his left hand, and a riding crop in his right. The background is very dark.

OWNERSHIP: The painting belongs to the heirs of Miss Sally Randolph Carter, who died in 1939. The painting passed from the subject's parents to the subject, John Spear Smith; from him to his daughter, Mrs. Robert Carter (Margaret Smith); from her to her daughters, Nancy Coles Carter and Sally Randolph Carter of "Redlands," Albemarle County, Virginia; the latter survived her sister and it now belongs to her estate.

ATTRIBUTION: The late owner, Miss Sally Randolph Carter, told the writer that this portrait and the companion painting (No. XVIII) of the subject's sister, were both painted by a Negro slave who belonged to General Samuel Smith of Baltimore, the father of the subject, and the great-grandfather of Miss Carter. The writer feels certain that this

painting is by Joshua Johnston, although what seems to be restoration retouching gives it a rather fuzzy appearance for his work.

REPRODUCTION: Ritchie Studio, Charlottesville, Virginia, photograph. Walpole *Note Book*, No. X.

## XVIII

## MARY BUCHANAN SMITH

(Mrs. John Edward Mansfield)

(1788-1868)

SUBJECT: Mary Buchanan Smith (Mrs. John Edward Mansfield) of Baltimore and England, was born November 22, 1788, in Baltimore, and died in November 1868 in England. She was the daughter of General Samuel Smith (1752-1839) of "Montebello," Baltimore, a prominent merchant of Baltimore, who was Secretary of the Navy under Jefferson, Representative and Senator from Maryland, Mayor of Baltimore, and commander of the American forces when Baltimore was attacked by the British in September 12-13, 1814. She married, November 25, 1809, John Edward Mansfield of Diggerswell House, Hertfordshire, England. One of her sons, William Rose Mansfield, commander in chief of the British forces in India, was created Baron Sandhurst in 1871.

DATE: c. 1797, from the age of the subject.

SIZE: Canvas 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ "  $\times$  24 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

DESCRIPTION: This is a three-quarters length seated portrait of a young girl of about eight years of age. Her right shoulder is turned towards the spectator with her face slightly to the left. Her eyes and hair are dark. She wears a high-waisted white muslin dress, trimmed with lace ruffles at the neck and sleeves, and with a ribbon around her waist. She holds in her lap with both hands a small white dog with bushy tail, an accessory characteristic of several of this painter's portraits. She is seated in a chair covered with dark material. The general background is dark. At the upper left is a red curtain. At the right through an open casement is a view of trees and fields. This is a companion portrait of the painting of her brother, John Spear Smith (No. XVII).

OWNERSHIP: The painting belongs to the heirs of Miss Sally Randolph Carter who died in 1939. It passed from the subject's parents to her brother, John Spear Smith, the subject of the companion portrait; from him to his daughter, Mrs. Robert Carter (Margaret Smith); from her to her daughters, Nancy Coles Carter and Sally Randolph Carter of "Redlands," Albemarle County, Virginia; the latter survived her sister and it now belongs to her estate.

ATTRIBUTION: The late owner, Miss Sally Randolph Carter, told the writer that this portrait and the companion painting (No. XVII) of the

subject's brother, were both painted by a Negro slave who belonged to General Samuel Smith of Baltimore, the father of the subject and the great-grandfather of Miss Carter. The writer feels certain that this painting is by Joshua Johnston, although what seems to be restoration retouching gives it a rather fuzzy appearance for his work.

REPRODUCTION: Ritchie Studio, Charlottesville, Virginia, photograph. *Walpole Note Book*, No. XI.

## XIX

## ISABEL TAYLOR

(c. 1785- )

SUBJECT: Isabel Taylor of Ireland and Baltimore, and probably later of Atlas, Illinois. She was a niece of Henry Long (1774-1850) (No. VII), who came from Belfast, Ireland, and was a successful merchant in Baltimore. She was sent for by her uncle when a young girl, educated in Baltimore, and later helped to bring up his two elder sons after the death of their mother in 1812. She was an "uncompromising Presbyterian." It is not believed that she married. Nothing further has been learned about her, except that her lover died at sea.

DATE: c. 1805

SIZE: Canvas size unknown.

DESCRIPTION: The writer has only seen a poor photograph of her portrait. The subject is a girl, perhaps twenty years old, shown one-half length, seated on a chair, and facing one-quarter to the left. Her hair, piled high on her head, shows a long curl over the front of her left shoulder. She wears a dark short-sleeved, low-necked, high-waisted dress with a chain and locket about her neck. She holds a letter in her right hand, said to be from a lover lost at sea.

OWNERSHIP: The owner, Mrs. William Binns, of Pittsfield, Ill., is a descendant of Henry Long, in whose household his niece, Isabel Taylor, lived.

ATTRIBUTION: There is no tradition in the owner's family as to who was the painter of this portrait. It is one of the group of four Long family portraits. The writer feels that in the style of painting, pose, and treatment of the features, the painting is typical of Joshua Johnston.

REPRODUCTION: Snapshot of the painting which is in poor condition.

## XX

MRS. ABRAHAM WHITE, JR.

(1778-1809)

*and daughter*

SUBJECT: (1) Mrs. Abraham White, Jr. (Martha Bussey) was born January 16, 1778, and died October 2, 1809. She lived in Baltimore. She was the daughter of Captain Bennett Bussey of Harford County, Maryland. She married, June 2, 1797, Abraham White, Jr., a Baltimore merchant.

(2) Rose Elizabeth White, the daughter of the above, was born July 9, 1807, and died March 4, 1875. She married, February 2, 1837, Abner Neale, and was the grandmother of the owner.

DATE: c. 1809, as indicated by the child's age.

SIZE: Canvas 30" × 25"

DESCRIPTION: The mother, a woman of about thirty, is seated on a Sheraton sofa, and standing at her left side is a child of about two years of age. The mother has blue-gray eyes and light hair. She wears a high-waisted black dress with white muslin and lace guimpe, and with sleeves trimmed with white lace. In her right hand she holds a half-opened book, and her left arm encircles the child. The child is turned slightly to the left towards her mother. She wears a high-waisted muslin dress trimmed about the neck with lace. Her right hand rests on her mother's shoulder and in her left hand she holds a bunch of strawberry leaves and berries. The sofa is covered with some dark material attached to the frame with brass-headed tacks. The background is grey.

OWNERSHIP: The owner, Judge Francis Neal Parke of Westminster, Maryland, is a great-grandson of the older subject and a grandson of the child of this painting, which he has inherited by direct descent.

ATTRIBUTION: The owner says that he was always told by his family that this painting was by Rembrandt Peale and has never heard of any other attribution. While it bears some resemblance to the very early portraits by Peale, at the date of painting, c. 1809, Peale had become sophisticated and was doing his best work; the writer feels certain that this portrait is by Joshua Johnston. While he hesitates to question the tradition in Judge Parke's family, if Johnston had once belonged to some member of the Peale-Polk group, the tradition would be explainable.

REPRODUCTION: Frick Art Reference Library photograph No. 19656. Walpole *Note Book*, No. XII.

## XXI

## CHARLES HERMAN WILMANS

(1797-1833)

**SUBJECT:** Charles Herman Wilmans of Baltimore. He was born September 2, 1797, and died in a steamship accident on the Ohio, January 18, 1833. He was the son of Carl Heinrich Wilmans and his wife, Elizabeth Bedford Bankson, who later, as Mrs. James Beatty, was painted by Johnston (No. III). He married, in Kentucky, July 10, 1825, Anne Maynard Fontaine. The subject's mother (No. III), her brother, Andrew Bedford Bankson (?) (No. II), and the latter's wife and daughter(?) (No. I), were also all painted by Joshua Johnston.

**DATE:** c. 1804 from the apparent age of the subject.

**SIZE:** Canvas 40" × 33" .

**DESCRIPTION:** A stiff, full length standing figure of a boy of about six years with body and head three-quarters to the right. He has yellow hair, blue-grey eyes, and rather pale complexion. He wears a dark brown suit with white muslin collar, white stockings, and light red slippers with white buckles. He holds white gloves in his right hand and his left arm rests on the muzzle of an upright gun. A white dog with large bushy tail, of the type often used by this painter as an accessory, is seated on hind legs to the left. To the upper right is a dark green curtain with white fringe and white tassel. To the right is an open casement, and seen through it is a vine-covered ruined archway with a view of a distant landscape and large house. The background is dark greenish brown. The floor is tessellated.

**OWNERSHIP:** The owner is Mrs. Susan T. Horner, of Baltimore, to whom the portrait passed by direct descent. The subject is the maternal grandfather of the owner.

**ATTRIBUTION:** The owner says that this portrait was painted by a Negro blacksmith, a slave of General John Stricker. Mrs. Stricker was the aunt of the subject's mother (No. III), and of Andrew Bedford Bankson(?) (No. II) and his wife(?) (No. I).

**REPRODUCTION:** Frick Art Reference Library photograph No. 4448. Walpole *Note Book*, No. XIII.