NO LIKENESS, NO PAY: THE MARKET FOR PORTRAITURE IN NORTH CAROLINA, 1790-1840

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ABSTRACT

GEORGINA GAJEWSKI: No Likeness, No Pay: The Market for Portraiture in North Carolina, 1790-1840
(Under the direction of Peter A. Coclanis)

In the early years of the Republic, more artistic activity took place in North Carolina than has previously been acknowledged by scholars. Itinerant artists used a variety of techniques to overcome obstacles in the marketplace in early North Carolina. Advertisements reveal their careful strategies to maximize profit and reduce risk. In addition to itinerants, North Carolinians demanded portraiture from some of the best known artists of the day, as well as public art to bolster civic pride.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The subscriber takes this method of informing his friends and the public in general, that he has just commenced business in the Painting line. He paints in Miniature at a very moderate price... FRED. J. JOCELYN. No likeness – no pay. Wilmington, May 31.1

The subscriber begs leave to inform those ladies and gentlemen who have done him the honor of setting to him, that their portraits are now finished, and ready for delivery. As his engagements require that he should positively leave this city in a few days, he has to request it as a favor that they may be sent for without delay. T. Sully October 10.2

These two artists, Frederick Jocelyn and Thomas Sully, had very little in common – at least superficially. Jocelyn began his career as a painter at the age of twenty, with apparently little formal training. None of his work survives, and his life and career were cut short by smallpox at the age of twenty-four. Thomas Sully studied formal technique in London before returning to Philadelphia for a decades-long career as a portraitist and historical painter that brought national recognition and acclaim.

Despite these differences, Sully and Jocelyn were bound together in more than one respect. Both painted primarily portraits, the most widespread form of art in America in the year 1800. More significant, they were similar in their joint dependence on the market for their patronage. The two announcements above made different requests: Jocelyn actively

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1Hall’s Wilmington (NC) Gazette, 31 May 1798. Compiled in the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts Research Files, Index of Early Southern Artists and Artisans, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, hereafter abbreviated MESDA.
2The Enquirer (Richmond, Va.) 10 October 1806 (MESDA).
their patronage. The two announcements above made different requests: Jocelyn actively sought commissions, while Sully hoped to deliver (and no doubt collect payment for) several paintings already completed. Both reveal, though, that the artists made accommodations for their customers. As a beginning painter, Jocelyn gave his patrons a guarantee of his work; as a well-established professional, Sully still had to go to the trouble of announcing his departure in the newspaper and asking “as a favor” that portraits be delivered. These advertisements and hundreds more with similar wording appeared in newspapers across the South – including North Carolina - in the forty to fifty years after American independence. North Carolina provided another connection between Jocelyn and Sully. Jocelyn advertised his services in the state, while Sully was sought for a very specific purpose by the state government.

North Carolina, though, had no reputation as a cultural or artistic center. North Carolina’s cultural and artistic pursuits were largely overshadowed by its neighbors both north and south, especially in Charleston, and it was not until the twentieth century that the state could again claim a meaningful participation in the artistic movements of the time. Despite being overshadowed, though, North Carolina participated in measurable ways in artistic trends that swept the nation. Analyzing the market for art in North Carolina reveals not only that a substantial market existed, but also illuminates the ways artists navigated the market and what effects this may have had on their art.³

³This paper does not include discussion of Moravian artists primarily because their accomplishments have been well-documented elsewhere. See, for example, John Bivins and Forsyth Alexander, The Regional Arts of the Early South: A Sampling from the Collection of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (Winston-Salem: Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, distributed by The University of North Carolina Press) 1991.
Art of the American North has traditionally attracted more scholarly interest than Southern art, though this trend has begun to shift in recent years. Increased research has created a growing awareness of the diversity and creativity of Southern art and artists. Institutions such as the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts at Old Salem, NC, and the Morris Museum of Art, the first museum dedicated to the art and artists of the American South, have brought attention to this fascinating aspect of our national history. Scholars such as Jessie Poesch and Estill Curtis Pennington have researched and written extensively on the artists of the South and the society in which they worked. North Carolina artists, though, have generally received little in the way of academic analysis.

“North Carolina,” as art historian William H. Gerdts phrased it bluntly, “in contrast to its neighbors, developed only a meager tradition of professional artistry” before the 1920s.⁴ General surveys of American art seldom mention North Carolina or its artists, and even studies of Southern art place more emphasis on neighboring states, especially South Carolina.⁵

William Gerdts’s three-volume study of American art passes quickly over North Carolina art in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with the dismissive comment above. Wayne Craven’s synthesis American Art: History and Culture contains at least ten references to Charleston and none to North Carolina.⁶ Frances K. Pohl, in Framing America: A Social History of American Art, mentions only one southern painter (or painter who worked in the South) in her section on itinerant artists, and a section on commemorative

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⁶Craven, 674.
images of George Washington fails to mention North Carolina's grand statue by Canova, widely acclaimed at the time. Jessie Poesch's *Art of the Old South* describes the purchase of this statue extensively, but mentions few of the itinerant artists who supplied most of the state.

*The North Carolina Portrait Index*, compiled in 1963 by the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America, provides the most comprehensive selection of North Carolina portraiture published to date. This compilation is far from truly representative of the market for portraiture, however, for several reasons. First, the compilers of this volume included portraits present in the state of North Carolina at the time the book was published, so invariably works by North Carolina artists located elsewhere were excluded. This criterion also resulted in the inclusion of portraits whose only connection to North Carolina is that the owner lived in the state in 1963. Further, many portraits have since then been attributed to North Carolina artists. Finally, all collections of extant portraits likely underestimate the original number painted. If even one commission resulted from each stop on an itinerant's journey, the number painted over an artists' lifetime doubtless exceeds the number surviving today. For that reason, this paper does not attempt an extensive list of North Carolina portraits, but suggests other ways to evaluate involvement in the arts.

The sparseness of academic treatment of North Carolina art may be due to the perceived sparseness of artistic activity, especially in comparison with major cities such as Philadelphia and New York in the North, and Charleston in the South. In the early years of

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the American Republic, North Carolina had nothing to rival the wealth, culture, and style of Charleston, the South’s most densely populated city. Charleston, by 1800, was a bustling port with fifty thousand residents, inhabitants of one small peninsula overlooking the harbor, busy with the traffic of agricultural exports and manufactured imports. The city thrived on trade, founded in 1670 by the Lords Proprietors, later became an outlet for the rice and indigo made plentiful by the application of slave labor to favorable climates. Its wealthiest residents controlled much of South Carolina’s wealth, and established a society eager to emulate that of its European forbears, by adopting those manners and outward symbols that signified cultural refinement. ⁹ This effort to maintain genteel appearances would later prove detrimental to city growth, but at the turn of the eighteenth century, it provided an outlet for goods and services unmatched in the region. ¹⁰ Competing for space on the crowded streets were the homes, studios, and galleries of some of the nation’s most prominent artists, attracted by the concentrations of wealth and high society. Samuel F.B. Morse, (later of telegraph fame), among many others, both famous and obscure, painted and/or exhibited in Charleston during the early years of the Republic. ¹¹

North Carolina’s major ports at Wilmington and New Bern never achieved the levels of wealth or status attained by their neighbor to the south. Both were subject to geographic and climatic turns of fate that prevented the profusion of trade evident in Charleston. The so-

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¹⁰ Don Doyle has argued in *New Men, New Cities, New South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990) that businessmen in New South Charleston passed by opportunities that would have promoted economic growth (such as new railroad lines) in order to preserve the historic architecture and ambiance of downtown Charleston.

called “Graveyard of the Atlantic” off North Carolina’s coast, and the necessity of navigation around the Outer Banks made the cities far less accessible than others along the eastern seaboard. The interior geography of the state worked against hopeful merchants on the coast, as well. Rocky, difficult terrain made the transport of goods to or from the interior an expensive prospect, and that same terrain was less conducive to the growth of the cash crops than was the case for North Carolina’s neighbors both north and south. The result was less vigorous trade and a more diffuse and less wealthy populace. The streets of North Carolina’s cities were not lined with merchants or artisans eager to gain the favor of wealthy and socially ambitious patrons. Few major artists visited the state, and none established galleries there. For the most part, North Carolinians did not have reputations as arbiters of taste or promoters of the arts, and this was not to change for some time.

This was not a phenomenon based on population alone. In fact, North Carolina’s free population outstripped that of South Carolina by nearly 145,000 in 1800. However, North Carolina’s free population was more dispersed than that of South Carolina, with only three counties boasting more than 10,000 residents, as opposed to seven in geographically smaller South Carolina.\(^{12}\) To compound the difficulties of living or traveling in North Carolina, roads were exceedingly difficult to traverse, winding unpredictably through rocky and swampy terrain. While overland travel was universally difficult to some extent throughout the country, a system of waterways and ports could make up for this deficiency. North Carolina, however, had fewer rivers and its main ports were smaller and less accessible than Charleston. North Carolina’s difficult terrain, resultant transportation

difficulties, and the absence of a geographically concentrated gentry class ensured that the state played no major role in the careers of nationally prominent portraitists.  

How, then, best to evaluate early North Carolina's role in the arts? With no major galleries or studios and a sample of existing work not necessarily representative of the whole, it makes sense instead to analyze other forms of written evidence pertaining to artists in the state and commissions of artwork by North Carolinians. In this case, the most readily available sources are advertisements and announcements from artists, and records of particular commissions. Economic analysis of these documents can reveal something about the artists and the environment in which they worked. Economist David W. Galenson has written extensively on the economics of art, and his logic informs the analysis in this paper.

...what ever their feelings toward the market, all artists take market conditions into account not merely after they have made their work, but while they are making it. Current market conditions consequently have a substantial impact on both the form of artists' work and its content. It follows that understanding the art market of an era is central to understanding the art of that time...  

The market can be influential in a variety of ways, and economic theory can be a useful tool in examining the behavior of both artists and consumers of art. This is because economic theory at its most basic relies on common sense precepts of human behavior.

First, people make choices based on what they believe are the benefits and costs associated with the alternatives. These choices involve risk because the outcomes lie in the future. An artist may have chosen to travel to a certain market based on information that some demand existed at that location, but he could not be sure of the outcome of his trip before he embarked. Second, decisions involve costs. Making one choice precludes others,

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and the cost of that choice will be the benefit gained from the next best alternative. The artist who chose to travel to Wilmington, for example, would forgo the benefits of staying in his present location or traveling somewhere besides Wilmington. Third, people respond to incentives, and react in predictable ways when incentives change. Incentives need not be monetary or even material. Often the incentive to have a portrait made was the preservation of a memory, rather than any expected increase in the intrinsic value of the portrait. Fourth, people make decisions in an environment not entirely of their own making. Laws, institutions, and social, cultural, and moral influences affect people’s decisions. For example, an artist (or any other businessperson) would be reluctant to enter into a contract without a legal system of sufficient power to enforce the contract.\(^{15}\) When combined, such ideas form a framework that can be used to interpret primary documents to gain some understanding about people’s motivations and the structures that guided their decisions.

That framework is the market. In economic terms, “market” refers to the entire theoretical space where transactions occur, rather than a concrete location for trading. The collective decisions of buyers and sellers, subject to the principles above, define the characteristics of the market for a particular good: what, specifically, will be produced, in what ways, and for which consumer. This arena of transactions is composed of supply (producers) and demand (consumers). Their interactions answer the above questions in the following ways.

First, the goods produced are determined, usually, by what people will buy. If they value a good more than the dollar amount of its price, they will buy it. In the case of art, however, this relationship is somewhat modified. Since the artist has creative input into the

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\(^{15}\) Gary M. Walton and Hugh Rockoff, *History of the American Economy*, 9th ed. (Australia: South-western, Thomas Learning, 2002) 16. The fifth precept, according to Walton and Rockoff, is that “understanding based on knowledge and evidence imparts value to opinions.”
final product, often he or she will attempt to express some feeling or idea that is unrelated to its possible marketability. In addition, as an artist undertakes a piece of art, the qualities of the final product are uncertain, and therefore impossible to tailor exactly to a consumer’s demands. As we will see, however, the specifications of the consumer in early America sometimes shaped the defining characteristics of the final piece.

Second, how the good is produced is generally determined by the desire of the supplier for profit. Economizing behaviors reduce costs and therefore increase the profit margin. Here, again, the art market often differs because of the creative quality of the final product, and the desire of the artist to maintain a pride in his or her work. For example, an easy way to reduce cost would be to use inferior tools and media, but—for some artists—this would not be an acceptable option, regardless of whether the customers were aware of such a practice.

Third, the distribution of goods is determined quite simply by who is willing and able to pay for them. The result, clearly, for artists would be gravitation to areas of concentrations of higher incomes, or deeper markets, and this was the situation in the South, with artists gravitating to Charleston. Some additional economic principles can help explain why major centers of art were, and are, few and far between. In the markets for most goods, a single dealer would have much to gain by relocating to an area without a similar vendor, because that dealer would then be the most convenient to a certain population, and avoid vigorous competition through lowering of prices from nearby dealers. Dealers of art/artists tend to cluster together for reasons that override these concerns. Works of art are often highly differentiated; that is, there are no perfect substitutes for each piece. As a result, art dealers are less likely to compete primarily through price. So, clustering in a single geographic area
would not drive down prices as may happen in some less differentiated market. This clustering can have a distinct advantage as well, since consumers of costly goods such as works of art would be likely to want to compare one work to another. Therefore, the buyer would be more likely to visit a gallery if it were in the same area as several others, and the dealer or gallery could rely on a greater number of possible customers.\textsuperscript{16}

North Carolina, then, was unlikely to have any major art center with Charleston to the south and cities such as Baltimore, New York, and Washington, D.C. to the north. However, despite this lack, North Carolina had a vigorous, if dispersed, market for artists' professional services.

This dispersed demand most often was supplied by the itinerant artist, not an uncommon figure in the South before about 1840. The job of the itinerant was usually to produce a credible likeness for posterity in an age without photography — a commemoration of the subject often passed down in the family.\textsuperscript{17} The painters worked in oil on canvas or board, with compositions that usually focused on the face.\textsuperscript{18} More utilitarian was the miniature, often painted in watercolor on ivory or bone, intended specifically to preserve a likeness in an easily transportable format (usually only a few inches in height and width). While fine artists often painted full-scale portraits as well, some specialized in the


\textsuperscript{17} Portraits of this type (commemorative in nature) depicting African-Americans are exceedingly rare, especially in the American South. For the importance of racial imagery to identity and visual culture, see Kay Dian Kriz and Geoff Quilley, eds., \textit{An Economy of Color: Visual Culture and the Atlantic World, 1660-1830}, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003). For the role of portraiture in promoting antislavery sentiment, see Richard J. Powell, "Cinque: Antislavery Portraiture and Patronage in Jacksonian America," \textit{American Art}, Vol. 11, No. 3 (Autumn, 1997), pp. 48-73.

challenging format of the miniature, preserving a high level of detail on a small surface. The "golden age" of the miniature is said to be the two decades surrounding the turn of the eighteenth century, at the center of the period addressed in this study, and indeed many of the North Carolina artists who survive in the public record identified themselves as miniaturists.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{19} Poesch, 162; See Table 1.
CHAPTER 2

PORTRAITS COMMISSIONED IN NORTH CAROLINA

Artists working in North Carolina included both academic and non-academic painters working under a variety of influences and constraints. "Academic" generally refers to artists who had had some professional instruction, often from another highly skilled artist. For American artists at this time, this meant traveling to Europe and especially England to learn classical techniques. Many renowned painters of the day adopted the "Grand Manner" of painting, which borrowed from classical antiquity and the European old masters for technique and inspiration.\(^\text{1}\) American artists returned to America eager to put their knowledge into practice, and often spread European influence not only through their paintings but also through instruction of less affluent artists.

Non-academic refers to those painters not working under these influences, often referred to as "folk" painters. The work of non-academic painters is characterized by the absence of academic conventions for transforming a three-dimensional subject into a two-dimensional image. In other words, these painters invented their own techniques to depict anatomy, perspective, depth, and volume.\(^\text{2}\) Varying degrees of skill and education, though, make some painters' work difficult to classify. Recent scholarship appreciates the creativity


inherent in such works, and scholars have debated whether the differences between 
nonacademic and academic painters perhaps reflect societal differences more than lack of 
skill on the part of non-academic painters.\(^3\) This paper will argue, in part, that consideration 
of the economic constraints under which these painters worked may be useful in evaluating 
their final creative products.

While few personal records from artists survive, advertisements and announcements 
in local newspapers provide some information regarding the numbers and movements of 
artists around the state, region, and country. Most of these itinerants were not native to North 
Carolina; they would have produced the same quality of work, though, irrespective of state 
borders. Their advertisements asserted the quality of their work as they moved from town to 
town, state to state. Usually these advertisements differed somewhat in syntax, but little in 
substance. William Joseph Williams, for example, traveled to Fredericksburg, Alexandria, 
Baltimore, Charleston, Norfolk, Richmond, and New Bern between the years of 1792 and 
1820, most often advertising that “Should any Ladies or Gentlemen be desirous of having 
their Likenesses taken,” he would attend to their applications in a timely manner.\(^4\) A 
miniaturist named David Boudon traveled the country during approximately the same years, 
promising “the most perfect resemblance” wherever he traveled, and accepting “no pay if the 
Likenesses be not approved.”\(^5\) The main service of itinerants in the manner of Williams and 
Boudon often was to produce likenesses for those unable to afford portraits by the more 
sought-after artists of the day. Whether because of the lesser skills of the artist, or the smaller

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\(^3\) Margareta M. Lovell, “Reading Eighteenth-Century American Family Portraits: Social Images and Self-


\(^5\) \textit{The National Intelligencer} (District of Columbia) 8 December 1810 and \textit{Raleigh Register}, 3 December 1804 
(MESDA).
size of the likeness, these works usually cost less. Boudon, for example, charged ten dollars for miniatures in 1811,\(^6\) whereas well-known portraitist Thomas Sully painted twenty-five pieces he valued at $2,910, an average of $116.40 each. Itinerants, in fact, formed a network of supply of affordable artwork that varied little across the country.\(^7\) North Carolina’s artistic supply, then, was often determined less by what or who was native to the state, and more by the artists, teachers, and ideas circulating around the country. Despite physical and/or financial barriers to travel, North Carolinians participated in the market, whether they sought out suppliers or waited for them to show up on the doorstep. That they were willing and eager to make use of the same suppliers suggests that their demands concerning art would have been similar to those encountered by artists in other parts of the country.

What, specifically, can be inferred from these advertisements about the artists? Most obviously, they show that artists primarily advertised as portraitists or miniaturists. This represents an economic choice in itself, indicating that people were more likely to pay for images of themselves or loved ones. This was the only way to preserve such an image. These announcements also show the extraordinary mobility of the itinerant artist, and his ability and willingness to seek out new commissions. While prominent painters may have been inclined to avoid North Carolina for the reasons outlined above, these circumstances may have attracted other painters. With less competition from famous painters (or resident painters), their wares would have been in greater demand. The fact that they had fewer fellow artists with whom to compete would reduce the costs and risk associated with a

\(^6\) The National Intelligencer, 1811 (MESDA).

\(^7\) Thomas Sully, Thomas Sully’s Journal. Reproduction: Photocopy (Ann Arbor, Mich. : University Microfilms, inc., 1982) Entry for 1811. The above strategies allowed itinerants to make a living and provide to people in North Carolina a service they would have had to forgo otherwise.
journey to the state. Mobility within the state meant that a large population center such as Charleston was not necessary to make a living, so long as a larger number of smaller areas provided patronage.

The advertisements and announcements themselves show carefully planned strategies for maximizing profit in an uncertain market. The primary economic function of advertising is to transmit information to the intended market, thereby reducing transaction costs to both seller and buyer: the seller does not have to seek out individual buyers, and the buyer has a convenient means of gaining information about the services available for purchase. In fact, advertisements for North Carolina artists functioned to reduce costs, especially for the artist (seller), in several ways.

An emphasis on location, often very specific, allowed the artist to travel and yet be assured that those desirous of his services could always find him. With no permanent or established address, public announcements were vital to let the public know the precise times and places they could expect to be able to sit for a portrait, etc. For example, the aforementioned David Boudon, from Geneva, Switzerland, traveled through North Carolina in 1804, advertising a “most perfect resemblance” and was careful to inform his potential clients of his location: “lodgings [at] Mr. Hoover’s, next door to the Stamp Office of Washington City, opposite the Centre Market.” Boudon wanted to make sure that no one seeking his services would be in the slightest doubt as to where he could be found. Many artists kept regular business hours as well, so that potential patrons would always find them at their painting rooms.

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8 Gwartney and Stroup, 447-448.
9 *The National Intelligencer & Washington Advertiser* (District of Columbia) 26 October 1810 (MESDA).
Additionally, advertisements often employed language designed to solicit patronage, and demonstrated an awareness of the dependence of the artist on that patronage. For example, painter Cornelius Schroeder advertised in 1809, presenting “his grateful acknowledgements to the ladies and gentlemen of Savannah, for the encouragement he has heretofore experienced from them in his profession…”\textsuperscript{10} Schroeder knew the source of his patronage and wished to cultivate it. Similarly, miniature painter Charles Weindel visited Fayetteville in 1826 and “return[ed] his thanks for the very liberal encouragement he has been favored with.”\textsuperscript{11} M. E. Minarte, a portrait and miniature painter, informed his readers that “As he promises to give general satisfaction, he hopes to merit a share of their patronage.”\textsuperscript{12} Beyond mere politeness, this language placed the patron in the superior position of favoring the painter with his or her presence. Daniel Wheaton, professed his intentions to “thankfully and faithfully take the Portraits of all those who may feel willing to favor him with their patronage.”\textsuperscript{13} While the painter may have been the possessor of superior talent, he was still dependent on others for his livelihood, and could not afford, in most cases, to be selective in his clientele. Rather, with his advertisements the painter cast a wide net, willing to catch even the most unpalatable customers in the hopes that they could pay the fee.

When portrait commissions were scarce, artists frequently diversified the services offered. For example, Jacob Marling (1774-1833), Raleigh’s first resident artist, would have

\textsuperscript{10} Republican and Savannah Evening Ledger (Savannah, Ga.) 21 March 1809 (MESDA).


\textsuperscript{12} Western Carolinia (Salisbury, N.C.) 8 July 1823 (MESDA).

\textsuperscript{13} Craig 7, 25.
been unable to support himself in one city by painting portraits alone. In 1815 Marling and his wife came to Raleigh after spending several years teaching drawing and painting in Philadelphia, Fredericksburg, Richmond, and Petersburg, Virginia. Upon reaching the capital city, Marling took advantage of the confluence of (wealthy) political figures and their families to sell his portraits and miniatures.¹⁴ His clientele included Montford Stokes, governor of North Carolina from 1830-1832, and the wife of James Iredell, a U. S. Supreme Court justice from Edenton, NC, in addition to many other men and women among North Carolina’s elite. Marling completed landscapes of the area likely to appeal to local customers, and in fact is perhaps best remembered for his painting of the first state house.¹⁵ In 1818 Marling also sought to establish the first “North Carolina Museum,” where for the twenty-five-cent price of admission, patrons could enjoy a reading room and the collections of “natural and artificial curiosities, sketches, maps, drawings and paintings, rare coins and books.”¹⁶ Marling invested in this venture in the belief that

Everyone who has witnessed the rapid stride made within a few years in behalf of literature in North Carolina, must admit the fact that the opportunity is all that is wanting to all for the genius which abounds in the state. The arts and sciences should go hand in hand, as they do wherever either are found long to flourish. Hence the subscriber hopes, at no distant day, to find that general zeal prevailing here in behalf of the arts which is now exerting itself for the sciences with as much effect.¹⁷

¹⁴ *Raleigh Minerva*, 15 November 1816 (MESDA).

¹⁵ *Raleigh Minerva*, 11 August 1815 (MESDA).

¹⁶ *Raleigh Minerva*, 21 August 1818 (MESDA).

¹⁷ *Raleigh Minerva*, 12 May 1815 (MESDA).
Fortunately for Marling, the museum provided some additional income, though he still needed to devote considerable time to painting and, it should be noted, his wife had worked at the Raleigh Academy teaching drawing and painting since their arrival in 1815.

Many other artists took students or attempted to open schools. During a stay in Fayetteville, North Carolina in 1798, Francis Rabineau announced his arrival in the area and his intentions to paint for those “who will please to employ him.” At the end of the ad, almost as an afterthought, Rabineau mentioned that he would “take a Young Gentleman for the purpose of teaching him in the above art...provided he is of a natural genius.”

Teaching, then, was not his first priority, although some artists included drawing lessons or schools more systematically in their careers, as did David Boudon and William J. Williams. David Boudon, known for his likenesses in miniature, endeavored to “procure a sufficient number of scholars to form an academy” in nearly every city where he worked, including Baltimore, Annapolis, Frederick and Hagerston, Md., Richmond, and Washington.

William Joseph Williams went a step further and established a permanent academy of painting at New Bern, N. C. Having practiced his art in New York, Virginia, and Charleston, Williams moved in 1817 to New Bern where he remained until his death in 1823, painting and instructing his students, both male and female. Society deemed painting among the appropriate accomplishments for young women in particular, though as a mark of gentility

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18 *The North Carolina Minerva, and Fayetteville Advertiser* (Fayetteville, NC) 12 May 1798 (MESDA).

19 *Maryland Gazette* (Annapolis, MD) 5 November 1807; *The Carolina Federal Republican* (New Bern, NC) 8 March 1817 (MESDA).

20 *Maryland Gazette*, 5 November 1807 (MESDA).

21 Simmons, 47. The success of Williams’s career in Charleston is questionable, as in 1804 he “petitioned the honorable Judges of the Court of Common Pleas that he may be admitted to the benefit of the acts of the General Assembly made for the relief of Insolvent Debtors.” *Times* (Charleston, SC), 18 January 1804, 3-4 (MESDA).
rather than preparation for a career. On the subject of drawing and painting, Williams noted in the advertisement for his academy that “to the fair sex it is highly ornamental and useful; and to them, its utility needs no comment.”22 In each of these cases and numerous others, taking in students enabled the artist to supplement other means of income, because students could be found at almost any location.

In addition to devoting their time to other profitable activities, artists modified their work habits and pricing strategies to maximize the return on their portraits. Advertisements demonstrate the ways artists both determined the best way to access the market and communicated the ways they were prepared to accommodate their customers. Painters sometimes advertised in a certain locale to determine the viability of a journey to that city. In 1809 F. J. Belanger, an artist residing in Wilmington, stated his intentions with verbosity:

Mr. Belanger...Respectfully informs the Ladies and Gentlemen of Newbern that it is his intention, provided his exertions to serve them should receive a liberal patronage, to adopt it as his place of residence for a few months. But as the removal of his appartus [sic] to Newbern, would be attended with much inconvenience and expence, he wishes, previous to his determination to proceed to that place, to ascertain the probable success with which the Ladies and Gentlemen of Newbern would honor him.23

He then stated the specific prices of his wares. Having an idea of the exact demand would allow the artist to gauge the benefit to be gained from a trip relative to the commissions he would forgo by leaving his current situation. By arming himself with this sort of knowledge beforehand, the artist reduced the risk associated with traveling to an area with perhaps a low population concentration. Having commissions lined up before his arrival also would enable

22 The Carolina Federal Republican (New Bern) 8 March 1817 (MESDA).

23 New Bern Herald, 20 January 1809 (MESDA).
him to “procure the necessary materials for painting, &c.” and begin work upon his arrival, rather than having to spend time waiting for new customers.\textsuperscript{24} This strategy would have incorporated the cost of advertisements in areas that turned out to have too little demand to justify a trip; however, given high costs of travel, this would have been vastly cheaper than traveling to each place.

Without prior information about demand, how would an artist decide his next stop? Artists such as David Boudon and David Clark made use of the social contacts of their patrons to lead to their next commissions.\textsuperscript{25} Also, certain predictable events such as the convening of the Assembly in Raleigh drew crowds, and the concentration of population attracted artists such as Jacob Marling, mentioned above. Marling was not the first. In 1806, Cornelius Schroeder, who had “been employed for two years past in the Carolinas,” begged “leave to acquaint the Ladies and gentlemen of Raleigh, Members of Assembly, &c.” that he would “remain in the city during the Session.”\textsuperscript{26} Similarly, in 1811, E. Sullivan advertised his skills at miniature painting, “most respectfully inform[ing] the Ladies and Gentlemen (of) Raleigh and its vicinity, and the members of the present General Assembly” that he would remain in the city for several weeks.\textsuperscript{27} The high cost of travel made any itinerant artist wary of an unknown market, but an event like the convening of the Assembly guaranteed a captive audience.

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{26} \textit{Raleigh Register}, 17 November 1806 (MESDA).

\textsuperscript{27} \textit{Raleigh Register}, 8 November 1811 (MESDA).
Upon arrival at their destination of choice, artists used advertisements to communicate their willingness to accommodate their patrons. While many simply indicated that applications would be promptly attended to, others promised more attentive service. Miniaturist David Boudon begged his customers to leave their names so that he could "do himself the honor of waiting on his patrons." 28 Francis Rabineau visited Fayetteville in 1798, promising that the ladies and gentlemen who employed him would be "waited upon punctually on application.” 29 Further concessions were made for ladies; Cornelius Schroeder declared his willingness to "wait on ladies, who may prefer to sit at their own houses." 30 An artist and teacher identified only as "Mr. Rogers" proposed "to open a Drawing-School for the benefit of young ladies and gentlemen," at New Bern in 1787, with the promise that he would "wait on the ladies at their houses." 31 Miniaturist Charles Weindel arrived at New Bern in 1825, and indicated that he would not only wait on patrons at his lodgings, but would also "attend in the country if a sufficient number should be desirous of employing him.” 32 This last statement demonstrates that Weindel not only made concessions to the customer, he also understood the importance of defraying the cost of the journey across more than one commission.

Itinerant artists employed pricing strategies both to attract customers in a competitive market and minimize their own costs of doing business. For a product such as a portrait that,


29 *The North-Carolina Minerva, and Fayetteville Advertiser*, 12 May 1798 (MESDA).

30 *Richmond Enquirer*, Virginia, 20 November 1818, 3-5 (MESDA).

31 *The State Gazette of North-Carolina*, New Bern, 4 October 1787 (MESDA).

32 Craig 5.
arguably, should be similar no matter the painter, price was an important means of competition for the painter. Price was, and is today, indicative to a certain extent of the painter’s skill and reputation. Among those of similar skill, however, even small differences in price can have a proportionally greater effect on the consumer’s willingness to buy.\textsuperscript{33} Too few examples of the prices of certain paintings exist to draw conclusions about which artists’ works, among these lesser known itinerants, was the most or least valued. However, the appearance of prices in advertisements does suggest the viability of price competition to attract patronage. William Ranney advertised portraits “in oil at moderate prices.”\textsuperscript{34} James Guild, advertising miniatures on ivory in New Bern in 1826, offered his miniatures on ivory on the “most reasonable terms” of “from 8 to $16 each.”\textsuperscript{35} This appears to have been a competitive range throughout the period in question, not only for North Carolina but throughout the region. E. F. Belanger charged 5 to 15 dollars for a “Miniature on Ivory & Glass” while visiting New Bern in 1809.\textsuperscript{36} Cornelius Schroeder charged 15 for a likeness in Raleigh in 1806 and Savannah in 1807.\textsuperscript{37} David Boudon advertised portraits for 15 dollars and miniatures for 6 while in Richmond in 1801, which sources indicate was his standard fixed fee, while portraitist Felix T. Sharples presumed “from his experience and the approbation which his Likenesses have always met with” that 20 dollars was a fair price for a

\textsuperscript{33} In other words, there is a high price elasticity of demand.

\textsuperscript{34} Craig 11.

\textsuperscript{35} Craig 14.

\textsuperscript{36} Craig 2; \textit{Newbern Herald}, 2 February 1809 (MESDA).

\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Raleigh Register}, 17 November 1806, \textit{Columbian Museum & Savannah Advertiser}, 4 December 1807 (MESDA).
miniature in 1811. 38 Often, when an artist failed to state an exact price, he instead indicated that his prices were “moderate” or “reasonable.” 39 Cornelius Schroeder went a step further in Savannah in 1807, claiming his fee of fifteen dollars was a “reduced price,” although he had previously charged that price during his visit to Raleigh the previous year. 40 Some artists did reduce their prices to attract customers. M. E. Minarte, visiting New Bern in 1822 (“having lately had the misfortune of being cast away on the Hammock near Cape Look Out”) stated his price for a miniature to be six dollars. A month later in April 1822, Minarte “inform[ed] the public” that he was “determined to reduce the price of his Portraits” to four dollars for a miniature on paper, no doubt hoping to make up in quantity what he stood to lose on price. Group discounts both attracted customers and guaranteed the artist several commissions at once, cutting down on the cost of finding more work. Cornelius Schroeder advertised during a trip to Halifax, N. C., that “He will, if desired, attend families in the country and a deduction in the price will be made to those who will have the Likenesses of their families taken.” 41 Thus he attempted to attract the business of families who, otherwise, would not or could not spend the time or effort of coming to his place of business. Not only would this strategy result in a wider audience, but it would also guarantee that any trips he made to “the country” would be profitable.

Beyond simply setting a price relative to competition, some artists demonstrated fairly sophisticated pricing strategies, such as a guarantee of satisfaction. Francis Rabineau

38 Examiner, Richmond, 11 December 1801; Richards, 80; Norfolk Herald, 18 December 1811 (MESDA).

39 Richards 80; Craig 2-14.

40 Columbian Museum & Savannah Advertiser, 4 December 1807; Raleigh Register 17 November 1806 (MESDA).

41 The North-Carolina Journal (Halifax, NC) 27 October 1806 (MESDA).
traveled to New Bern in 1797, proposing to draw a landscape depicting the harbor, which, as
“every person well knows, is beautiful.” The drawing would then be engraved with copies
made for those who subscribed. “NO LIKENESS – NO PAY,” assured Rabineau, to attract
subscriptions from those unfamiliar with his work.\textsuperscript{42} Frederick Jocelyn advertised in \textit{Hall’s
Wilmington Gazette} in 1798 that having “just commenced business in the Painting line,” he
also guaranteed “No likeness – no pay,” perhaps to overcome any qualms a prospective
buyer may have had about commissioning a novice.\textsuperscript{43} Similarly, J. Weisman announced to
the public in Fayetteville that his portraits would “give general satisfaction or no charge will
be required,”\textsuperscript{44} James Guild assured the New Bern populace that “where he fails, he will
make no charge,”\textsuperscript{45} and brothers James and Robert Bogle guaranteed readers in Salisbury and
Wilmington that if their portraits were not “satisfactory there will be no charge.”\textsuperscript{46} This type
of statement both reassured the potential clientele of the artist’s confidence in his own work
and provided an additional incentive to choose his services over a competitor without a
similar policy.

When an artist’s competition employed similar pricing strategies, product
differentiation became crucial to success. In other words, artists usually claimed superior
artistic skill in addition to moderate prices. Though many relied on their own claims or word
of mouth to convey their worthiness as artists, others exhibited past works to encourage new

\textsuperscript{42} \textit{The North-Carolina Gazette}, Francois X. Martin, printer (New Bern, NC) 5 August 1797 (MESDA).

\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Hall’s Wilmington Gazette}, 31 May 1798. Jocelyn is the only artist among those documented who seems to
have begun his career in North Carolina, and who was possibly native to the state. Unfortunately his life when
he contracted smallpox at the age of 24. His obituary indicates that his family resided in Wilmington, NC, but
the duration of their time there is unknown. \textit{Raleigh Register}, 8 June 1802 (MESDA).

\textsuperscript{44} Craig 7.

\textsuperscript{45} Craig 5.

\textsuperscript{46} Craig 11.
desire to inspect Specimens of his Art, to call at the Raleigh Library, between the hours of 3
and 4 in the afternoon.”47 Cornelius Schroeder informed the public in 1818 that his work
could be seen at “the Eagle Hotel” as well as his “Painting Room.”48 David Boudon carried
with him a portfolio of his own and others’ works to encourage his students.49 Charles
Weindel, during a visit to New Bern in 1825, displayed “the likeness of a lady of this place,
taken since his arrival,” no doubt to demonstrate to those familiar with the lady in question
his skill and rendering an accurate portrait.50 Each of these artists wanted to convey to his
prospective clients that he would be the best at his task.

When combined the strategies above provided the means for itinerant artists to
overcome the obstacles of a sparse and dispersed population and the high cost of travel.
Determining areas of relatively higher demand before traveling and advertising their services
allowed artists to spend less time on the road. Strategic pricing and display of their wares
brought in customers. Though ultimately their levels of financial success are difficult to
discern, we can conclude from the fact that many itinerants returned to North Carolina that
their time here proved profitable. Marling and Williams, for example, chose North Carolina
as their home after many years of itinerancy. In addition, even those who visited only once,
often stayed for a significant length of time, indicating plenty of commissions to keep them
occupied. Although willing patrons probably never flooded the studios of itinerant artists in
North Carolina (as sometimes seemed the case in Charleston, at least before the Panic of

47 *Raleigh Register*, (Raleigh, NC) 1 November 1816 (MESDA).

48 *Richmond Enquirer* (Richmond, VA) 20 November 1818 (MESDA).

49 *Maryland Gazette*, (Annapolis) 5 November 1807 (MESDA).

50 Craig 5.
1819), a sufficient number of residents with the means to purchase a likeness enticed a fairly significant number of artists to the state – at least thirty-five over the period in question, excluding Moravian artists, artists who lived by teaching alone, and those whose presence in the state cannot be confirmed. The fact that this number is probably an under-estimate, and that their time in North Carolina overlapped and ranged from months to years, suggests an adequate supply to meet the demand for an inexpensive likeness.

Though able to make a living by navigating the market in this way, economic constraints may have influenced the final creative product by influencing the ways artists practiced their profession. Scholars such as Margareta M. Lovell have suggested that eighteenth century portraits may “usefully be read as documents of socially appropriate behavior and relationships,” and that differences between urban, academic works and rural, non-academic ones reflect not only “different pictorial conventions” but also different “social ideologies.”

To be sure, societal influences and personal creativity cannot be discounted when evaluating a work of art. Ideas about personal, familial, and even national honor influenced the desire to commemorate a person through portraiture. Artists acted as more than impersonal reproducers of people and places. Some anecdotal evidence suggests that the choice of “artist” as profession retained more significance to the artist than as a series of economic transactions. Artists, even aesthetically amateurish ones such as David L. Clark, saw themselves as more than mechanical producers of images. Clark, originally from Virginia, traveled to North Carolina as an itinerant artist in the early and mid-nineteenth century, and suggested in an autobiographical account that pursuit of commissions and profit was not absolute, but tempered by individual tastes and desires. Clark originally published

this autobiography as a series of newspaper articles and as such may have been designed it especially to attract readership. Nonetheless, in his account Clark balances the personal, internal reasons for pursuing his career with his economic concerns in a way that suggests this balance was a necessary and deliberate choice and unexceptional among members of his profession. In other words, his story is completely plausible.

Clark described in detail his decision, much discouraged by his parents, to become an artist. He chose such a career because it best suited his temperament, and as a very young man began to practice his craft.\textsuperscript{52} Rather than conceptualizing his art as a means to a livelihood, Clark portrayed the means necessary and the obstacles he must have overcome in order to be able to paint as he wished – the career as an artist was the goal, not the monetary rewards to be gained from it. He took a second job chopping wood to obtain “means...sufficient to invest [him] with everything necessary for making [his] artistic debut,”\textsuperscript{53} including a small and obstreperous horse to carry him and his supplies.\textsuperscript{54} Once on the road, Clark showed an awareness that itinerancy was almost imperative to maintain his career: “My stay at Wytheville was now drawn to a close, having already supplied the demand for my work.”\textsuperscript{55} Clark displayed in his autobiographical sketch a real affection for his chosen profession and belief in the aesthetic value of his work.

Society, then, as well as an artist’s personal attitude undoubtedly influenced any given work of art. However, the dramatic differences in circumstance between academic and

\textsuperscript{52} Clark 1-8.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid 18.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid 19.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid 28.
non-academic painters cast doubt as to whether societal differences can explain all or most of the variation in style. Paintings more likely evolved as a product of the painter's and subject’s input, as well as the constraints on both. Lovell argues that nonemulation of academic style by a rural artist fully aware of those artistic conventions indicates a rejection of that style based on an aesthetic preference for another. This may have been the case for some artists. This line of reasoning fails to take into account other reasons – better supported by the evidence - that non-academic artists may not have adopted academic conventions.

First, awareness of a style or technique does not imply that an artist could emulate such, or would even consider trying, without the help of a skilled instructor. Artists today work for years to master the intricacies of the human form, and most non-academic painters would have had little opportunity for such study. Most, like the itinerants in this study, needed to use free time to generate additional income. In addition, the lower prices itinerants charged meant that they would have had to make up for the price with the volume of portraits painted. The number of commissions would have dictated the amount of time spent on each portrait, and it may simply not have been possible to execute a fully developed portrait in the academic style in the amount of time allotted. An early Kentucky painter, Samuel Dearborn, articulated this facet of doing business: “The low price of two dollars which he [Dearborn] has for small likenesses on paper, it is expected will induce many to substitute them for blank paper profiles. He informs those, the facility of delineating a strong likeness will detain the person but a short time.”56 Who was painted, and in what setting, became largely a matter of expediency as the painter sought new commissions with the least expenditure of time and effort possible. Each of these constraints, therefore, may have influenced the final painting as significantly as the views of painter or subject.

56 Simmons 49,52.
Despite the costs, many artists did seek out instruction from better known artists, indicating anything but a rejection of academic style. Prominent painter Thomas Sully, for instance, seemed to have more students than he could teach. Artists used their training as a selling point when describing their talents, making note of the influences from other parts of the world. David Boudon, advertised both his Swiss origin and his “close and attentive application to study in the best schools in Italy.” John Crawley, “Portrait Painter, and Professor of Drawing,” informed the public upon arriving in Raleigh that he had “for many years past, turned his attention to the Water Colour department,” taught in northern cities, and had acquired the method “practiced by the best English Water Colour Painters.” These examples suggest that not only did the artists themselves value these skills and influences, but so did their potential market.

Some other examples of Southern portraits indicate that different social ideologies did not rigidly divide the academic from the non-academic. Jacob Marling, though fairly “untrained,” painted the portraits of North Carolina’s social and political elite. In 1793 Masonic Lodge No. 22 of Alexandria, Virginia, commissioned William Joseph Williams to complete a portrait of George Washington. Though previously the subject of countless portraits by the most talented and celebrated artists of the day, Washington nevertheless agreed to sit for the portrait by a non-academic painter. The market for non-academic painters, then, included individuals from all levels of society.

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57 Sully, Entry for 4 August 1825: “Students of painting multiply – Mr. Moore of Kentucky, a Mr. Weaton, of North Carolina – applies – also a gentleman of Carlisle!!”

58 Maryland Gazette (Annapolis) 5 November 1807 (MESDA).

59 Craig 10.
In the case of non-academic artists, the view that these artists selectively adopted elements of the academic style to meet their own aesthetic needs cannot explain all the differences between the two. This view implies that the revealed preferences of non-academic artists (the academic conventions they employed or refused to employ) to be the same as their intrinsic preferences (choices unimpeded by circumstance or constraint). In other words, because an artist did not accept some aspect of the academic style, that meant the artist would reject it under any circumstances – which may have been true for some people. On the other hand, it seems likely that, if provided the opportunity of European-style training (relatively) free of cost, more artists may have accepted more elements of that style.
CHAPTER 3

PORTRAITS COMMISSIONED OUTSIDE NORTH CAROLINA

The supply of artists sought after for inexpensive, usually straightforward, likenesses in North Carolina closely mirrored that of other eastern states, as itinerants traveled throughout the country. These artists, however, could not meet the demand for larger, more time consuming works and artwork meant to serve a larger purpose than preserving someone’s image. Many North Carolinians, with the financial means, instead sought the professional services of the most celebrated artists of the day, for both public and private use.

An individual’s financial situation appeared to be the primary, if not only, obstacle to gaining access to a master artist’s talents. In 1825 and 1826, Dr. and Mrs. Pipkin of Murfreesboro, North Carolina, enlisted the services of renowned artist Thomas Sully to take their portraits.¹ After Gilbert Stuart (best known for his portraits of George Washington) Sully was the most popular portraitist of the day. Sully had studied for a year in London under Benjamin West, and returned to America in 1810. Known for their touches of Romanticism, Sully’s portraits often depicted an idealized or at least “improved” version of the subject.² For each of their portraits, Sully charged the Pipkins a standard fee of $120.00,
based on the size of the pieces and what they depicted.\(^3\) In this transaction, the fact that the subjects came from North Carolina made no difference whatsoever; for Sully, as a nationally known artist, anyone who could pay the fee was part of his potential market. Similarly, Joseph Hewes, of New Jersey and Edenton, North Carolina, a delegate to the Continental Congress and a North Carolina signer of the Declaration of Independence, commissioned Charles Willson Peale to paint a miniature that was later given to his fiancée in the form of a brooch.\(^4\) Peale, based in Annapolis, Maryland, had also studied in London under Benjamin West, and was well known throughout the country for his skill in the area of portraiture.\(^5\)

Private individuals working in concert to promote and preserve the arts was decidedly less common in the late eighteenth/early nineteenth centuries. However, in 1821 the Philanthropic Society at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill decided to do just that. The Philanthropic and Dialectic Societies had been founded within months of the University’s founding in 1795, for the purpose of promoting debate and other literary pursuits, and though affiliated with a public university, the Societies operated with the support of member dues and fines for misconduct. In 1821 the Philanthropic Society passed the motion “that it be requested by Society that such regular members as have attained considerable eminence of which Society will be judge, shall furnish Society with their portraits.”\(^6\) This implies that whatever portraits the Society accepted necessarily depicted

\(^3\) Sully, Entry for 5 November 1825: “Hereafter have raised my price for portraits as follows: Head, 40. Bust, 75. Kit cat, 120. Half length, 150. Bishops, 200. Whole length 500. Introduction of a hand in bust, $20.00.” Also, Biddle and Fielding, 248.

\(^4\) MacMillan 115.

\(^5\) Ibid 258.

men whom they admired and judged to be worthy of recognition for their achievements. Though it is unknown exactly why this date was chosen to begin such a venture, competition with universities such as Princeton likely spurred the Society into action. Notable among the collection is the first commissioned, a posthumous portrait of William Richardson Davie, a founder of the University of North Carolina and a North Carolina Governor. In 1824 the Dialectic Society resolved “that a committee of three persons be appointed to search for a likeness of Gen. William R. Davie, and after obtaining one, they be authorized to have a portrait executed by the first artist in the Union at the expense of the Society.”

The Society chose Charles Willson Peale, who completed the portrait in due time, but was yet at a loss as to how the finished work would be transported to North Carolina. “I wish to send the portrait,” he wrote to the Society in 1826, “but am at a great loss to know to what port in North Carolina it should be sent to.” In the end, this matter was resolved and the painting delivered as promised.

Like most of the obstacles generally thought of as barriers to trade, the lack of a major port in this case proved no real problem. The Society was determined to have the best likeness available, to properly commemorate William Davie, and were able with few

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Ibid.


problems to do so. Demand in North Carolina reflected this tendency. While the best known artists of the day may not have been clamoring to provide services to North Carolinians, that does not mean they were not sought out for their talents. Similarly, those unable to travel or afford the best likenesses showed a preference for the services of itinerant artists when given the choice, often spending not inconsiderable amounts on an investment with no concrete returns.

In 1815, a few years before the Philanthropic Society resolved to collect portraits from eminent members, the Governor of North Carolina, William Miller, proposed a similar idea for the state to commemorate national leaders. Pride of the new nation’s unique democratic beginnings fostered a patriotic fervor that drove much artistic production in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. These impulses only strengthened with America’s participation in the War of 1812, sometimes referred to as the second War of Independence, when Americans saw themselves as throwing off British controls for good. Civic pride provided the organizing theme for an outpouring of art and architecture that reflected the nation’s short history, and were evocative of the connections to classical democracies. Thomas Jefferson, especially, inspired the ideas of modeling American architecture on that of the Roman Republic (as opposed to traditional English forms) with his designs of Monticello and the Virginia State Capitol. ¹⁰

The implementation of democratic ideals in the new nation can be seen in the founding of capital cities designed specifically as accessible centers of republican government, where patriotic heroes and virtues were often memorialized. The capitals of Virginia, South Carolina, and North Carolina were established for such reasons. By 1792,

¹⁰ Pohl 93.
North Carolina had finally emerged from an era of political and social fractionalism and unrest following the Revolution. State leaders remained divided, however, in their opinions on the best location for a seat of government. The compromise reached by members of the general assembly was to move the capital to a new area – an undeveloped tract of land in Wake County, chosen for its uncontested and central location. The construction of an entirely new city provided the opportunity for the expression of civic pride in the country’s unique form of democratic government and the state’s own people.

The new capital included five public squares to encourage discussion and participation in the new democracy. The State House was located in “Union Square [,] to indicate the importance of the federal government, and the four surrounding plazas would carry the names of notable North Carolina statesmen to commemorate the example of heroic local founding fathers.” 11

Following the War of 1812, a surge of patriotism prompted North Carolinians to call for the remodeling of the plain brick structure that served as the original state house. This newly remodeled structure was to house a marble statue memorializing George Washington. The loyal sentiment exhibited to the nation’s most prominent political leader was hardly isolated to North Carolina. The state of Pennsylvania had commissioned a full length portrait of Washington several years earlier, and in fact depictions of the first president grew more popular through the early nineteenth century. 12


12 Pohl 93.
So many artists tried their hands at Washington’s portrait that the fledgling American Academy of Art published a set of guidelines for recreating Washington’s likeness, based on several works of good quality known to have been taken from life. This would prevent, so the Academy hoped, “the common, miserable representations of our Great Hero, and ... the shocking counterfeits of his likeness by every pitiful bungler that lifts a tool or a brush.”

North Carolina chose for its likeness famed Italian sculptor Antonio Canova. Governor William Miller had been charged with carrying out the project for North Carolina, and originally was not limited in price, indicating that the quality of the finished project was of utmost importance. Thomas Jefferson, a student and proponent of classically inspired art and architecture, specifically recommended Canova, telling North Carolina’s governor that, “for 30 years, within my own Knowledge, he has been considered by all Europe as without rival.” The statue was completed and delivered in 1821, when Governor Gabriel Holmes returned the thanks of the citizenry to the sculptor:

The sublimity and elegance of this composition, combining freedom, grace, and majesty, will long live a sacred memorial of a grateful republic to his memory and a proud monument of the divine genius of Canova.


14 Poesch 119.

The statue’s final appearance, though, reflected a great deal more than Canova’s genius, as the American Consul, Thomas Appleton, relayed the process of determining certain distinguishing characteristics of the piece. The statue’s seated position was determined by the height of the short ceiling height of the hall where it would be placed, and the scenes depicted on the statue’s base resulted from Appleton’s suggestion. Instead of Roman mythological figures to match Washington’s Roman garb, the friezes showed memorable events in Washington’s life.  

Even before its completion the statue had garnered the nation’s attention. In 1817 Joseph G. Swift, Brigadier-General in the U. S. Army wrote to Governor Miller that the commission of Canova to execute the statue had “inspired a wide spread respect for the State over which you preside.” And not only was it a matter of state pride or patriotism. In 1819 Governor John Branch applied to the Secretary of the Navy for transportation of the state on a warship, based on the grounds that the statue was “a kind of National property and its safe transportation to the United States [was] a just object of National solicitude.” The statue resided in the state capitol until 1831 when a fire destroyed both. During that brief period, however, the statue was known throughout the nation as an example, “worthy of imitation,” of preserving Washington’s virtues for the benefit of present and future citizenry. In addition,

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16 Ibid. 31, 37-38.


18 This language may have been used for the sole purpose of obtaining transportation, but regardless the Secretary agreed, and a warship was used. See “Governor Branch to Smith Thompson, Secretary of the Navy,” and “Smith Thompson, Secretary of the Navy to Governor Branch,” Connor 41-43.
it was hoped that the example of such a work of art would "diffuse a relish for the arts that embellish society, and call forth a display of the varied powers of man's ingenuity." 19

To accompany Canova's magnificent statue, the state government also sought portraits of Washington for the State House and Senate Rooms, and Governor Miller wrote to artist Rembrandt Peale (son of Charles Willson Peale) for a price estimate. Because of Peale's high quote of $3000, the state instead commissioned Thomas Sully at a total price of $1300 for a "historical portrait," and "copy of Stuart's Washington," both framed.20 The portrait of Washington was delivered without incident on 18 November 1818, but the historical painting depicting "Washington at the Passage of the Delaware" was mistakenly painted too large for its intended room in the state house.21 Though unfortunate for North Carolina, this series of events proved fortuitous for Sully. Had the painting been accepted for display at the state house, Sully would likely have gained little exposure as an historical painter, having previously concentrated on portrait commissions.22 Instead, Sully exhibited the painting in most of the major cities of the mid-Atlantic states. Exhibiting the painting to a wider audience cemented his reputation as a painter of historical subjects as well as portraits. Reviewers claimed that "as an historical painting it ranks amongst the first productions of our country, and richly deserves the notice and encouragement due to native talent."23 The Baltimore Federal Republican exhorted the viewing public to observe the

19 Poesch 120. From an address by Colonel William Polk.


21 Ibid 16.

22 "Mr. Sully has heretofore been ranked in portrait painting, among the first in our country. This is his first effort at Historical Painting...he has been eminently successful." Baltimore Telegraph; Reprinted in American Beacon and Norfolk & Portsmouth Daily Advertiser, 22 March 1820.

23 American & Commercial Daily Advertiser (Baltimore) 17 March 1820 (MESDA).
painting and "see if you do not experience a feeling of exultation at having lived in the country that gave birth to the painter as well as the subject."\textsuperscript{24} Though Sully's original intention had not been to gain this manner of attention, the circumstances of the transaction allowed for this unexpected outcome.

These examples of public funding for art demonstrate a concern that North Carolina should take part in a larger American campaign to foster appreciation both of the fine arts and the values embodied in commemorative images. Though quantitatively North Carolina did not compare to many of its neighbors, especially South Carolina, its residents were in fact participants in a national market for art, with the same suppliers and often the same factors influencing demand. In order to fully participate in this market, North Carolinians engaged in transactions that extended beyond the borders of the state, commissioning itinerants and professional artists alike. People on both the supply and demand side of the market found ways to overcome specific difficulties in the state, whether this was difficult transportation, a lack of wealth and concentrated population, or a lack of resident artists.

Both to painter and subject, the market mattered. In North Carolina, despite a relative dearth of evidence, this market existed as an integrated part of a larger market. Far from an unadulterated product of the creative mind, art work at each financial and social level resulted from a variety of influences on both the supply and demand side of the transaction. Both the highly acclaimed and talented portraitist and the novice itinerant modified their behaviors and artwork to accommodate their patrons.

\textsuperscript{24} Reprinted in \textit{American Beacon and Norfolk & Portsmouth Daily Advertiser} (Virginia) 7 April 1820 (MESDA).
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<th><strong>Artist Name</strong>¹</th>
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<td>1826, 1828</td>
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<td>Fayetteville</td>
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¹ These artists are identified in the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts Research Files, Index of Early Southern Artists and Artisans, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, unless otherwise noted.

² Primary Occupations are self-identifications by the artists.

³ Craig 10-11.

⁴ Ibid 9.


⁶ Craig 11.

⁷ Craig 8-9.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Glor., J. 8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1826</td>
<td>miniature painting and drawing</td>
<td>New Bern</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grady, John G.</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1819</td>
<td>artist</td>
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<td>Gregory, Thomas L. B. 9</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1835</td>
<td>portrait painter</td>
<td>Tarborough</td>
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<td>Guild, James 10</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1823</td>
<td>miniatures on ivory</td>
<td>New Bern</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jocelyn, Frederick J.</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1798</td>
<td>artist/minatures, later teacher/drawing lessons</td>
<td>Wilmington</td>
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<td>Ladd 11</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1829</td>
<td>portrait and miniature</td>
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<td>Loffel, Johannes</td>
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<td>1779</td>
<td>artist/fraktur</td>
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<td>Lorrain, John R.</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1816</td>
<td>artist/portraits</td>
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<td>Marling, Jacob</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1815-1820</td>
<td>painter/minatures/portraits/teacher/drawing and painting academy</td>
<td>Raleigh</td>
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<td>Marling, Louisa</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>1820</td>
<td>teacher/drawing and painting academy</td>
<td>Raleigh</td>
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<td>McGibbon, E. D.</td>
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<td>1833</td>
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<td>artist/minatures/portraits</td>
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<td>Raleigh</td>
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<td>Morgan, William H. 12</td>
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<td>1829</td>
<td>portrait and miniature; taught flower and landscape</td>
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<td>Pender, Josiah Solomon</td>
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<td>1842-1860</td>
<td>portraits</td>
<td>Edgecombe Co.</td>
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8 Craig 6.

9 Craig 10.

10 Craig 5.

11 Craig 8.

12 Ibid.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>1800</td>
<td>painter</td>
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<td>Rabineau, Francis</td>
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<td>Rogers</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1787</td>
<td>teacher/drawing lessons/portraits/miniatures</td>
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<td>Rogers, Nathaniel</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>miniatures</td>
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<td>painter</td>
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<td>Schroeder, Cornelius</td>
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<td>Sully, Thomas</td>
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<td>artist</td>
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<td>1805</td>
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<td>Raleigh</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

13 Craig 11.
14 Craig 6.
15 Ibid.
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