

Five Portraits on Panel

by Jacob Eichholtz, 1776-1842

Rebecca J. Beal

If we have wondered how Jacob Eichholtz could have painted so many portraits recorded, we are not reminded that portraits continue to turn up demanding consideration, study and occasionally an attribution to this artist. Sharp black and white photographs are essential for attribution and future identification. In 1969, in addition to many canvases, approximately one hundred twenty portraits, oil on wood panel, were listed in *Jacob Eichholtz, 1776-1842, Portrait Painter of Pennsylvania* published by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Thirty of those catalogued panels are unlocated. Since 1969 two small profiles from early Lancaster days of subjects mentioned here are, among others, added to the many recorded previously. Another profile has recently been given to the Lancaster County Historical Society—the posthumous portrait on panel of LEONARD EICHHOLTZ, JR., a younger brother of the artist, born July 30, 1783 - died Dec. 28, 1828, listed in the Eichholtz catalogue (218).

Most of the portraits on wood are small but not all of them have very early dates. Only a few are documented by the artist's signature on the reverse. Others which are not dated by the artist's early Ledger

are dated approximately, judging from the paint style and the age of the sitter. The posthumous portrait of the artist's brother, measuring nine by seven inches, was dated for us by an inscription in the artist's hand on the reverse: "Portrait of the late / Leonard Eichholtz Esq. / He was, at the time of his death / President of the Common Council / of the City of Lancaster. / painted from Memory by / his brother / Jacob Eichholtz / Feb. 26, 1829." No photograph exists of the artist's inscription as correctly inscribed by the artist.

Unfortunately, the late owner Leonard Henry Eichholtz, Jr., 1873-1955, of Denver, Colorado, altered the artist's inscription by one word due to his ignorance of family genealogy. Incidentally, the Eichholtz relatives who moved from Pennsylvania to Denver spelled the name with one 'h'. The inscription cited above was quoted correctly in a letter to the compiler of the Eichholtz catalogue, dated July 5, 1948, from the owner Leonard Henry Eichholtz, Jr., grandson of the subject's brother Henry Eichholtz, 1785-1871, and son of Leonard Henry Eichholtz, 1827-1911, of Denver, a well known railroad engineer known as "Colonel". Mr. Eichholtz, a grandnephew of the artist, was in error as he stated in this letter of 1948 to the compiler that he had received the painting several years before from "a cousin, Miss Adelia Leman who lived in Lancaster." In a typewritten letter dated Denver, Colorado, May 8, 1922, to another cousin Mrs. Clara Eichholtz Albright (Mrs. Edwin H. Albright) residing in Baltimore, Mr. Eichholtz sent thanks to "Cousin Clara" for her gift of this painting and said, "I think it [the inscription] should read 'painted from memory by his son Jacob Eichholtz.'" He stated in the letter that he had no knowledge of the artist having a brother Leonard, but knew the artist's father was named Leonard. He thought the father Leonard had died in 1828, the year before the painting was made. Leonard, the father, died April 27, 1817. The brother of the artist Leonard, subject of the posthumous profile, died Dec. 28, 1828, not quite two months before the date inscribed on the back of the painting by the artist. At some time after July 5, 1948 and before his death Oct. 31, 1955, Mr. Eichholtz in Denver must have changed the word "brother" to "son" on the inscription as is evident in a photograph of it made for the compiler in Denver, May 1964. The painting was then in possession of Mrs. John R. Gemmill (Eleanor Eichholtz), sister of Mr. Eichholtz, grandniece of the subject. The portrait was probably sent from Baltimore to Denver unframed as a round label on the back of the present frame indicates it was made in Denver.

Circumstances in families occur which may cause change of ownership of portraits. Two years ago two portraits by Eichholtz were offered for sale for the family then in possession of the posthumous portrait of Leonard Eichholtz, Jr. The portrait of Leonard Eichholtz, Jr. was not sold at that time. It seemed appropriate that this small memento by the hand of the artist should have a permanent home in Lancaster. It is now in the collection of the Lancaster County Historical Society. The other portrait, on canvas (201) representing another

brother of the artist Henry Eichholtz, 1785-1871, was sold in the east and is now in a private collection in central Pennsylvania.

Judging from the photograph made in Denver, illustrated in the 1969 publication, page 335, the portrait now in Lancaster appears to have been slightly altered on the left background as former marks on the panel which show in the 1969 illustration are no longer evident. No record of any cleaning or application of any kind has been reported. The illustrations reproduced here were made after the portrait was received from Denver. The colors used are characteristic of other portraits by Eichholtz: a touch of vermilion with high lights on the face and ear and the suggestion of sky colors in the background. The handling of paint is so assured that this portrait of 1829 is not typical of the artist's very early work although painted in the profile style. The black neckband was in vogue around 1830.

The first listed owner of the portrait of Leonard Eichholtz, Jr. was Henry Clay Eichholtz, 1830-1918, a nephew of the subject and son of the artist, who lived the last part of his life in Baltimore where his daughters Clara Rebecca Eichholtz (Mrs. Edwin Hensel Albright) and Miss Katharine Todd Eichholtz also lived until about 1922. It was after the death of Mrs. Henry Clay Eichholtz (Ann Catherine Todd) in 1922 that Mrs. Albright sent the portrait to her cousin Leonard Henry Eichholtz, Jr., in Denver, where it has been in family ownership until 1975.

Another family profile, illustrated here, is obviously an early one, representing JOHN EICHHOLTZ, brother of the artist, born Sept. 21, 1779 - died Lancaster, Oct. 21, 1840. This oil on panel, measuring nine and one-half inches by seven and one-quarter inches, is typical of the likenesses made when Eichholtz was a tinsmith. It was in September 1801 that Eichholtz was hired as a journeyman for tinware, recorded by a George Steinman, with a Frederick Steinman, master. It was in February 1802 that George and Jacob Eichholtz advertised themselves as tin-plate workers on East King Street, "at their father's". *The Lancaster Intelligencer and Weekly Advertiser* carried more than one notice during March 1808 where the artist respectfully informed the Patrons of the Fine Arts that he executed Profiles and Portrait Painting on very moderate terms. A few years later Jacob Eichholtz was offering to Let, by April 1st 1812, a coppersmith and tinsmith worker's shop with tools complete, evidently in favor of the demand for painted portraits.

The costume of this subject, narrow white tie with long ends, blue and white striped waistcoat and other details, help to date this work around 1800, allowing for a few years more or less for the subject's age which may have been twenty-one years. The crudely brushed, awkward figures are not always colorful, few colors being available to the painter. The plain background, similar to many other panels, is in various shades of olive green with a darker shadow area behind the

figure. It is not to be assumed that the oval areas of paint behind the figures with freely brushed backgrounds are the result or pattern of mats having been used. It may have been a traditional characteristic of miniature portraiture or possibly the artist liked to frame his figures in oval. Occasionally spandrels were painted at the base of the portrait only.

Dates of old portraits handed down by descendants should not be accepted without considerable study. Complete reports repeated about the portrait of John Eichholtz from the owner dated November 18, 1973, included two inscriptions: one in pencil on the back of the panel itself and another inscription in ink, supposedly by the same hand, on a badly worn paper label adhered to a wood lining placed over the back of the panel inside the frame. The pencil inscription reads "John Eichholtz of Lancaster, Pa / Painted by Jacob Eichholtz / artist in the year 1798". The inscription in ink on the paper label, as observed in the photograph, was signed and dated by John F. Eichholtz of North Manchester, Indiana, July 31, 1891. It reads where legible "This portrait of John Eichholtz / son of Lenord [sic] Eichholtz / was painted at Lancaster Pa / by Jacob Eichholtz Arst [sic] / in the year 179__/_th Manchester Ind. John F. Eichholtz / July 31, 1891". This inscription, worn or torn in places, indicates that an elderly person may have added "son of Lenord [sic] Eichholtz" between the first and second line as well as other marks. The date in ink, probably written 1798 as on the pencil inscription, is incomplete to-day. The panel is cracked but the paint surface is not damaged apparently.

Early in 1973, in reply to genealogical queries, this portrait of John Eichholtz was reported to Mrs. Janice E. Rodriguez by a cousin of the present owner James Cunning, Jr. of Indianapolis, Indiana, a great-great-grandson of the subject. Necessary data about the portrait has been provided and this compiler secured photographs and Bible records. The past location of the portrait is unknown to the owner until its ownership by John Frederick Eichholtz, 1835-1907, a grandson of the subject and a cousin of George W. Eichholtz, grandfather of the present owner. Miss Gertrude Eichholtz, 1872-1952, daughter of John Frederick Eichholtz, gave the portrait to Mr. Cunning before her death in North Manchester, Indiana. The owner is descended from a different son of the subject than was John Frederick Eichholtz. There may have been good reason for John Frederick Eichholtz to have thought the portrait was painted in 1798. John Eichholtz married Susan (Susanna) Frick on June 27, 1798, the date recorded in Zion Lutheran church records, Harrisburg. He may have sat for his brother as a wedding picture or before the time he went to live in a number of places in Pennsylvania west of Lancaster before returning with a family to Lancaster about 1830.

It is of interest that Eichholtz painted the colorful panel portrait, nine by seven and half inches, of JOHN FREDERICK STEINMAN in 1807. The artist may have had a leisurely sitting of the subject whom

he must have known well at age eighteen. John Frederick Steinman was a member of the family by whom Eichholtz had been employed in his brief business career for the Steinman tinware business.

John Frederick Steinman, Jr. married first, in 1811, Maria Gill and second, in 1824, Mary Smith Fahnestock. There were four children recorded of his first marriage and seven children of the second marriage. He was a noncommissioned officer in the War of 1812, first president of the Conestoga Steam Cotton Mills Company, chief organizer of the public school system in Lancaster, and was active in city affairs. He conducted a successful hardware business on West King Street. (Eichholtz catalogue, 811.)

At the time of an earlier photograph of the back of the painting, an exhibition label of the Loan Exhibition of Portraiture, Lancaster, 1912, covered the faint inscription on the reverse: "John Fredk Steinman Jun... / Taken December ... 1807 / Born 1789 Decem 19th / J. Eichholtz". The quoted inscription was found at the time the portrait was exhibited, catalogue number 34, in the Jacob Eichholtz exhibition, 1969, at The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.

The loose and unfinished brush work with more pigment color than the usual early profiles is half the charm of the character depicted in a three-quarter side view, with the sitter looking toward the observer. Here we have color and high lights in the facial treatment used in later painting—also a feeling for low horizon landscape and colorful sky painted with no hesitation. Certainly this early portrait on panel shows promise and is a successful rendering of the "person" so characteristic of Eichholtz portraits.

In 1971 an inquiry came to the Lancaster County Historical Society and subsequently to this compiler, "Did Jacob Eichholtz ever do small paintings on wood?" The writer had a portrait of Captain Jacob Krug, her great-great-great-grandfather. As far away as Iowa there are, in the same ownership, two large canvasses by Eichholtz of George Hopson Krug, 1785-1869, and his wife Maria Reed Krug, 1786-1834, which were recorded by Eichholtz 1841 and listed in the Eichholtz catalogue as unlocated (434, 436).

The oil on panel of JOHN JACOB KRUG, born Lancaster, July 4, 1750 - died Oct. 8, 1817, not recorded previously, measures as a rectangle four and seven-eighth inches by three and seven-eighth inches, framed with an oval opening of four and three-eighth by three and three-eighth inches. This profile is not unlike others of the same period except for its small size: half-length with no hands showing, high white collar and white tie with gold colored striped waistcoat, dark jacket with rolled collar and brass buttons. It is doubtful if the portrait had been glazed. Even so its history of travel might explain the scratches and small areas without paint. To date the portrait c. 1800-1805 would assume as age to the subject about fifty-five years. The owner interprets the color of the curly hair as grey, not blond, although the sitter

does not appear to be old.

The Krug name in Lancaster dates from the eighteenth century. John Valentine Krug, born in Saxony 1689, died in Lancaster in 1759 where the well known tanning business was established. He and his second wife Eva Spangler, 1726-1802, were the parents of the subject of the little portrait illustrated. After service in the Revolution, John Jacob Krug served in the Pennsylvania Legislature. He belonged to the Union Fire Company and was assistant burgess of Lancaster seven times, 1788-1798. In 1769 he married Rebecca Hopson, 1751-1831. There were two daughters and three sons by the marriage. At the time of his death he was a trustee of the Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity.

This Krug portrait, as well as the two on canvas, probably was in the home of George Hopson Krug, son of the subject, before his daughter Rebecca (Mrs. William Reynolds), wife of Admiral Reynolds, had the portraits in Washington, D. C. Admiral and Mrs. Reynolds adopted Rebecca and Frederick Krug, two of the children of her brother John Hopson Krug, who died in 1869. The three Krug paintings were later given to Rebecca Reynolds Krug (Mrs. Charles McDaniel). The present owner's mother Katherine Krug (Mrs. Arthur L. Nielson), daughter of Frederick Krug, received the three Krug paintings from Mrs. McDaniel, her aunt. After the death of Mrs. Nielson in California, in January 1970, the portraits were acquired by her daughter Alice Ann Nielson (Mrs. Lester P. Benoit) of Clinton, Iowa. The small panel of John Jacob Krug was found in a trunk with family papers in the effects of Mrs. Nielson. The present owner had not been aware of the existence of the portrait until 1970.

The little panel while not unusual in itself is unique because of its old metal frame, measuring over-all seven and one-quarter by five and three-sixteenth inches. Reported as possibly being made of copper which now has a green tinge it seems likely that it was made by the tinsmith-coppersmith-artist Eichholtz, to whom the portrait is attributed. The owner was told by a man familiar with modern methods of welding and metal working that "the back of the frame was attached by an old method called 'sweat soldering' not used for years because of more modern techniques." The frame with a thin bevelled edge has a Germanic feeling with its bold square corners. The double brace, soldered to the back, supports it as a table piece.

The very small portrait of HENRY CLAY EICHHOLTZ, oil on panel, measures four and one-half inches by three and three-quarter inches. Henry Clay Eichholtz, born Aug. 28, 1830 - died Mar. 10, 1918, was the third son of the artist and his second wife Catharine Trissler, 1791-1867. The panel has been dated 1830 in the Eichholtz catalogue (202). This portrait, head and shoulders of an infant with straight fair hair, grey eyes, wearing a light blue frock, in miniature size, is an excellent example of the artist's skill in painting on rough wood long after the crude likenesses of the early 1800 period. Eichholtz painted many portraits of children, particularly family ones, and their faces with large

eyes charm us by their direct gaze and simplicity. In 1912 this subject was listed by William U. Hensel with an asterisk, as exhibited in the Lancaster Exhibition of Portraiture, but it was not in the catalogue and was probably not exhibited. The subject-owner was then eighty-two years old, living in Baltimore where his daughters Mrs. Edwin Hensel Albright and Miss Katharine Eichholtz lived. The portrait was later owned by these daughters who had removed to Philadelphia. After passing from this family ownership, it was given by the writer to The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.

In this short discussion about portraits on panel by Eichholtz a number of thoughts relative to the history, preservation and conservation of old portraits should be evident. The portrait of LEONARD EICHHOLTZ, JR., which for some years was in the hands of descendants of the artist, is no longer the same on the reverse as the artist carefully inscribed it in 1829. Perhaps the owner in 1922 who received the painting as a gift, would not have changed the word "brother" to "son" had his family been interested enough to have had at hand a family genealogy as a guide. At that date not even in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, were there records adequate enough to be helpful in the study of portraits of this family. While compiling the catalogue of Eichholtz paintings (1969) some excellent genealogies of other families had to be consulted, with immediate results for individual histories of subjects, whereas family histories with extraneous material were a burden to the researcher. It should be said that some "family trees" are truly works of art which should be photocopied and passed around in families which are fortunate to have them.

In the study of old paintings the world over it has been gratifying for art historians to come upon paintings which have not yet received restoration and which still retain the original paint even though in worn condition. Conservation is far more satisfactory if layers of paint added by so-called restorers are not encountered. As for the posthumous portrait of Leonard Eichholtz, Jr., the likeness is not spoiled but a part of the background has been altered since it was photographed in May 1964; spots on the left side are no longer obvious. The portrait of JOHN EICHHOLTZ remains essentially as Eichholtz painted it around 1800, except for what time has done to the panel. It is fortunate that the label on the reverse has been recorded before it could disintegrate, as labels or dates written by former owners, accurate or not, cannot last forever. The likeness of HENRY CLAY EICHHOLTZ has been well cared for by members of the family which owned it. Miss Eichholtz and her sister Mrs. Albright were artists of a sort and knew enough not to wash a portrait with soap and water or not to cover over any blemishes caused by time or carelessness. The same might be said for the little portrait of JOHN JACOB KRUG. He looks a bit battle scarred to-day, but he remains as he was found, possibly to be conserved by a professional conservator of whom there are only too few. The portrait of JOHN FREDERICK STEINMAN has been properly cleaned. He is safe for the

time being and can be enjoyed in almost as fresh condition as he appeared in 1807.

Stories have been written about the fate of paintings by other artists, and many tales could be added about the cruel things which have been done to Eichholtz paintings even by the hands of a few of his descendants. Books are available on how to care for paintings; those interested might inquire at libraries or fine arts museums to secure information. Early American art in 1976 is appreciated in the art world and with proper care much of it to-day may still be around in another seventy-six.

Rebecca J. Beal

The portrait panel of Leonard Eichholtz, Jr. is presently on exhibit in the lobby of the Lancaster County Historical Society where it will remain for three months after which it will be placed with the other paintings in the Eichholtz Gallery in the Auditorium of the Society.



LEONARD EICHHOLTZ, JR., 1783-1828
by Jacob Eichholtz, 1829

Portrait of the late
Leonard Eichholtz Esq.
He was, at the time of his death
President of the Common Council
of the City of Lancaster.

Painted from memory by
his Son

Jacob Eichholtz

Feb. 26. 1829.

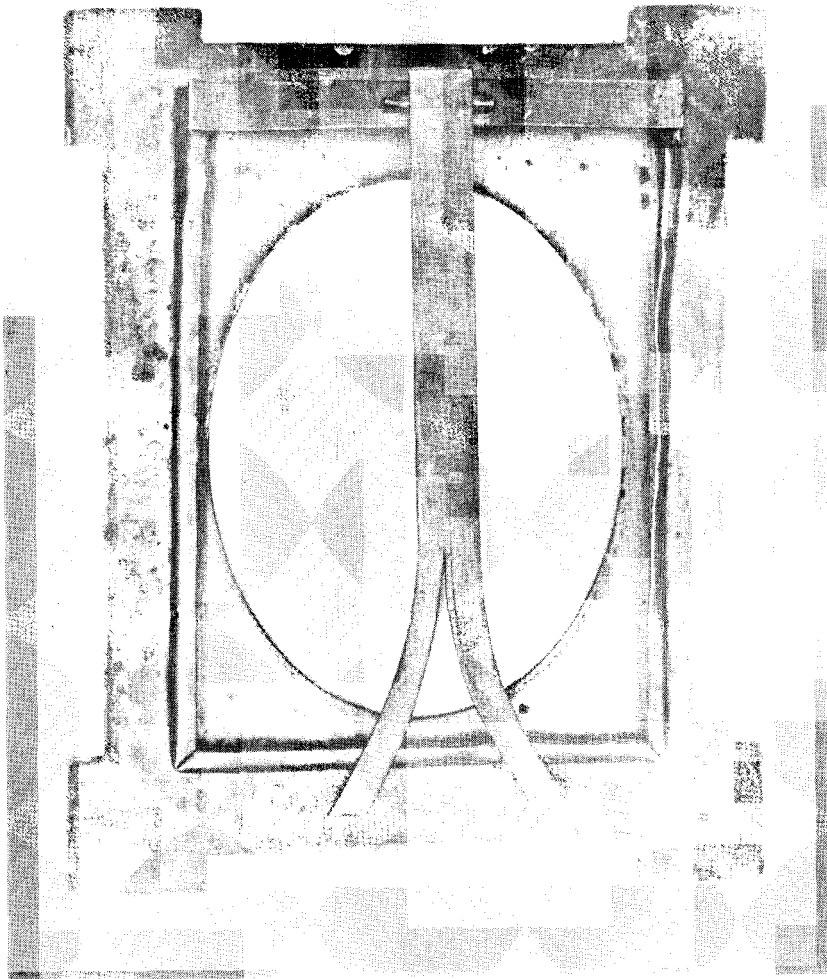


JOHN EICHHOLTZ, 1779-1840
by Jacob Eichholtz, c. 1800
courtesy. Mr. James Cunning, Jr.

This portrait of John Eichholtz
son of Leonard Eichholtz
was painted at Lancaster Pa
by Jacob Eichholtz
in the year 1790
at Manchester Ind. John F. Eichholtz
July 31 1891

LABEL ON REVERSE OF JOHN EICHHOLTZ
Inscription dated 1891
courtesy, Mr. James Cuning, Jr.





**REVERSE OF METAL FRAME ON PORTRAIT
of John Jacob Krug
courtesy, Mrs. Lester P. Benoit**



JOHN FREDERICK STEINMAN, 1789-1884
by Jacob Eichholtz, 1807
courtesy, Mr. John Frederick Steinman



HENRY CLAY EICHHOLTZ, 1830-1918
by Jacob Eichholtz, 1830
courtesy, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts