

Arthur Armstrong *Lancaster Painter* *1798-1851*

by Ruth Arnold and Irwin Richman
Photographs by Mark H. Dorfman

Clinical, dispassionate study of the known body of Arthur Armstrong's paintings reveal him to have been a very talented artist. If he was not the equal of his celebrated contemporaries, Charles Loring Eliot, John Neagle or Thomas Sully, he was a first rate regional or provincial painter, and at least equal in talent to Lancaster's hallowed and favored Jacob Eichholtz, his older townsman.

Eichholtz (1776-1842), was a prolific painter who did not turn professional until his thirties. A student by turn of both Gilbert Stuart and Thomas Sully, Eichholtz had a state-wide reputation. For some years he lived in Philadelphia where he apparently undercut the more famous painters of his day in price competition. He painted a number of leading figures of his day including Nicholas Biddle and his arch rival, Andrew Jackson. However, as it has been observed "Dutchmen don't transplant well" and he returned to Lancaster while making periodical painting trips to the outside. Perhaps more than anything else, Eichholtz's Philadelphia successes ensured his enduring popularity in Lancaster. Lancastrians have always felt close to Philadelphia and in many instances felt themselves to be proteges of the Quaker City. Generations of Lancaster's middle and upper-class families have prided themselves "on always doing our shopping in Philadelphia." Talent, family, a pleasant personality and the Philadelphia success apparently established Eichholtz firmly in Lancaster.

Armstrong had the talent but apparently little else—and especially no outside fame. Additionally, oral tradition suggests that he was not the most pleasant of people, and he refused to paint those he didn't like. An

ability to put his sitters at ease, no less than a command of his brush and paints is necessary for a successful portraitist's career. John Smibert, for example, who many consider the premier first-rate professional to emigrate to America did not prosper in Britain because of lack of the social graces rather than a talent deficiency.

Armstrong was born in Manor Township in 1798. His father, James Armstrong, Sr., was apparently a prosperous farmer and was related to General John Armstrong who served as Secretary of War in the Madison Administration for a single year, 1816. Absolutely nothing is known of Arthur Armstrong's early life until 1820 when he opened a painting studio on the square in Marietta, a canal and river town on the Susquehanna, and announced himself as a painter and teacher. No paintings done in Marietta have been located and only one painting that can definitely be attributed to the 1820's has been found—this of John Jay Libhart (1806-1883) painted circa 1825-1827. It is signed on the back with what was to become the characteristic Armstrong stencil "A. Armstrong, Artist; Lancaster, Pa." According to Libhart family tradition, John Jay was one of Armstrong's Marietta students and became his lifetime friend. Libhart who was to become a lawyer and a jurist was also a very talented nature study artist associated with naturalist Samuel S. Haldeman of Bainbridge. The small 21"x25" half length portrait is the most linear and hard edged of all the known, signed Armstrong works and demonstrates the direct sense of composition that was to characterize all of Armstrong's work. It is also the most primitive of his documented paintings. In its harsh contrasts and awkward foreshortening it demonstrates that his training to this point had been minimal. A portrait of an old woman which we are attributing to Armstrong shares many of these qualities. Another of Armstrong's students was John Henry Brown (1818-1891) who was to become a prominent miniaturist. Interestingly, Brown painted a portrait of Christian Gast in 1842. After Gast's marriage to Maria Ecker a companion portrait was ordered. Armstrong painted it in 1845, the year Brown moved to Philadelphia.

Armstrong family tradition has maintained that Armstrong studied painting in Philadelphia—no one is quite sure with whom—but it certainly took place some time in the late 1830's, the period which remains the greatest of mysteries of his life and this might be the period when he left Lancaster County for points south and west, apparently living in Virginia and Kentucky. Certainly one of his greatest contemporary triumphs was a creation made for a Kentucky fire company. However, nowhere is it mentioned as to whether it was painted in Kentucky or in Lancaster.

The picture is on a rich blue silk, and is intended as a banner for the Washington Fire Co. of Louisville, Kentucky. The back of the canvas represents the Washington Family, which is not a mere covering of the bare material, but with a persevering assiduity the artist has left nothing unfinished. The scene is under the portico of the mansion at Mt. Vernon and consists of the domestic family circle. In the distance is seen the Potomac, studded with sails. In short, the whole is beautifully worked out and more worthy of the gallery than the back of a banner.

The source of this no longer existent work is quite possibly the familiar Edward Savage painting of the Washington family which was widely known through prints.

The earliest date that we can positively place Armstrong in Lancaster City is 1829 when "After several preliminary meetings, a final meeting of citizens of Lancaster was held at the public house of Widow Eichholtz, E. King St. on the 8th of July, 1829, at which time and place the Mechanics Society of Lancaster City was organized..." Armstrong was its first treasurer. The Mechanics Society was evidently modeled on the Philadelphia Junta which Franklin had organized a hundred years before. In the 19th century the term "mechanic" was often applied to craftsmen, among whom portrait painters were counted, rather than following our twentieth century conception. In 1839 the society built its own headquarters, "Mechanics Hall," which "housed a library, and room for concerts, balls, lectures, entertainment and night schools."

That Armstrong was involved in the organization of the Mechanics Society shows that he was well known and respected in the community. This was further attested to when he was appointed to the building committee of the American Fire-Engine and Hose Company in May, 1838. The building he oversaw "...was completed and first occupied in December, 1838. Its cost was \$906.48 1/2."

Armstrong's first documentable Lancaster studio, in 1831, was on East Orange Street "one door south of Metzger's Inn, known as The Sheaf of Wheat." Judging from surviving paintings, the height of his local career was in the 1840's. However, there is evidence to suggest that there were extended trips out of the city. An 1843 advertisement notes "...that he *continues* [emphasis authors'] the above business (painting) in all its various branches, and now is ready to execute all orders in his line, as signs, military and civic flags." An 1849 newspaper announcement notes "his coming to Lancaster" in December, 1849.

It is probable that it was in the '40's when he "...built a fine studio of classical design on Orange Street (on the north side between North Queen and Christian Streets) and fitted up the second story as a gallery to exhibit paintings." Admission to the gallery was 25 cents and for this fee the visitor could on any day see "from 70 to 80 paintings on various subjects." He also had a large collection of prints. In the pre-museum age, it was quite common for artists to charge the public to see their paintings. America's first museum, Peale's Museum founded in Philadelphia in 1787 developed out of Charles Willson Peale's picture gallery. Apparently the building was disposed of in 1848, before one of his sojourns. It does not appear in the inventory of his estate and after 1849 his studio address is variously given as being Mechanics Hall or on the second floor of the Kramp building at the northeast corner of North Queen and East Orange Streets.

He apparently was never able to support his family solely as a painter, and in addition to sign, flag and banner painting, he was a gilder and frame maker. Many surviving Armstrong's have a simple gilded frame which he

no doubt made. At least one Eichholtz painting in the collections of the Lancaster County Historical Society has a similar frame. It is not unlikely that there are at least several Armstrong's mistakenly identified as Eichholtz's hanging on Lancaster County walls. Additionally, he always gave art lessons. In 1843 he advertised "Portraits painted at various prices from five to twenty dollars and upwards." This was a modest fee at the time—probably less than half of what Eichholtz could command and a fraction of Sully's prices. Unfortunately there are no known portraits by Armstrong of people Eichholtz also painted. It would be interesting to make comparisons.

The bulk of our surviving paintings are from the years 1840-1850 and show a much more sophisticated polished approach than his painting of John Jay Libhart. A nineteenth century writer fairly appraised his painting style noting:

It does not require a connoisseur in the fine arts to discover something remarkable in the style of Mr. Armstrong's painting; he leaves nothing in the dark for the imagination to work out; it is bold and distinct, and yet the distance is kept with such a natural harmony as to give it at once that ease and softness essential to the art.

Again there is the intriguing question—with whom did he study? It is, of course, possible or even probable that he worked with Eichholtz—many Armstrong's have something of the flavor of Stuart. There is also the strong possibility that he studied with Thomas Sully. That he knew Sully's work is undisputable. With minor variations, Armstrong's portrait of his daughter, Margaret Katherine (1836-1911), which was probably painted when she was 5 or 6 years of age c. 1841 is an almost direct copy of Sully's, "The Rosebud," of 1839 which is now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Sully painted two full developed versions of the picture. The first, "Girl with Dog and Flowers," of 1828 is in the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. Armstrong's version differs from both in the background. He omits the building and substitutes a typical framed landscape. However, the 1839 painting shows the girl with a lower cut dress than the 1828 version and she has a hat full of flowers, rather than a basket. This suggests that Armstrong was in Philadelphia in 1839.

From existing paintings and lists we know that Armstrong painted landscapes, still lifes, religious and historical pieces as well as portraits which were his mainstay. Most commonly his paintings when signed, are marked by three line stencil placed in the middle of the canvas.

"A. Armstrong
Artist
Lancaster, Pa."

Apparently Armstrong also made stretchers and stretched canvas for other artists as well. Several of these are also known to exist and are stencil marked in the lower right hand corner. His own works often have an execution date brushed in by hand beneath the stencil. Only four canvases are

known to be completely hand signed. The most complete signature, now obliterated, by relining, reads:

“Painted by A. Armstrong, 1842
Age of Mr. Cockley 40
of — wife — 33 -”

We have located thirty-six signed or otherwise documented Armstrong paintings, there are six paintings that we are now attributing to Armstrong, and two paintings long believed to be Armstrong's which we have proved not to be. Of the forty-two Armstrong's all but two are portraits and of the portraits, eleven, and probably thirteen are family members, most of these pieces may have been used as samples in his gallery because their ranges of size, composition, and detail is rather wide. On the basis of close critical comparison with known Armstrong likenesses, a pair of previously unidentified portraits can now reasonably be designated as portraits of the artist and his wife.

The largest surviving number of portraits are pairs or fragments of pairs of married couples, apparently in their thirties or forties. There are only two known surviving portraits of elderly people although two additional ones are listed in the Woolworth show list. Following the contemporary convention, the seated man inclines toward the right and the woman toward the left. All are, however, full face views. It is interesting to note in passing that the portrait of Mrs. Gast inclines toward the right. Armstrong had to paint it in accord with the existing portrait of Mr. Gast by Brown. Husbands and wives are almost always attired in black and white. The women usually have a white collar and/or head covering, occasionally lace which Armstrong painted with the precision of a seventeenth century limner. His women very often wear some simple jewelry, a broach, earrings, a ring, or a chain all skillfully done. Armstrong has been called “a one hand painter” because, characteristically each of his paired portraits show a single hand sometimes pointing, resting on the lap, or draped over the posing chair - several men hold a book or a document. Hands were a problem he never successfully conquered and they are often awkwardly painted. He also had trouble with ear lobes and Armstrong ear lobes are almost as much his trademark as almond shaped eyes were a mark of Charles Willson Peale's paintings. As was especially popular in central Pennsylvania, his posing chairs and settee were upholstered in red. There were apparently three chairs, two lolling chairs in the Empire-Restoration style, one with a wooden frame back and the other with a curved completely upholstered back, the third is armless with a frame side and upholstered top. The Empire settee has curved arms and back and an exposed frame. Usually the subject is seated against a plain rear lighted brown background, however, several portraits have a conventionalized column, drape, and idealized landscape background. Three family portraits show minor deviation from the formula but the dates of these pictures as opposed to the ages of the sitters suggest that they were painted from earlier portraits or memory rather than from life. The dual portrait of Mr. and Mrs. Cockley is a rare survival and of awkward composition, but the elements are famil-

iar—black and white attire and the familiar posing chair. The $\frac{3}{4}$ length portrait of the dentist, Dr. Welchens, holding a dental implement is possibly unique in American art.

Armstrong's portraits of teenaged boys and unmarried young men, are similar to those of their elders. The exceptions are the early portrait of Judge Libhart and a large portrait of Armstrong's son, James, who died young. Libhart sits at the corner of a late Windsor decorated settee and holds a palette. James' likeness was probably painted posthumously from an earlier study. He holds a closed book and his palette and an unfinished painting are behind him.

Girls of marriageable age are invariably shown in white and pastel shades, although the portrait of Emily Jane Kieffer attributed to Armstrong has her wearing a black lace shawl. Portraits of young women also often show both hands and arms. A portrait of Margaretta Kellar Heinitsh is probably the most opulent of Armstrong's paintings, showing the subject in an elaborate lace trimmed gown, sitting on a fur trimmed pink satin opera cloak. Very unusual in American portraiture are pairs of portraits of sisters. Armstrong's portraits of his daughters, Elizabeth and Amanda, posed in the same dress, were perhaps prophetic. Neither married, and lived in the family home on North Duke Street until their deaths in 1913 and 1920.

Most colorful of all Armstrong portraits are those of young children. Two surviving pictures are appealing double portraits of sisters. One informant remembers as a young girl seeing "a great many paintings like mine (Mary and Anna Hurford)." The girls are brightly dressed with pink, reds, and blues predominating. Their accessories, often flowers, add a further bright touch. The single portrait of Margaret Kerfoot is strongly inspired by the Sully in color as well as composition. The most important portrait for local history is the very appealing and possibly posthumous portrait of Armstrong's daughter, Ellen Mary, which shows a street scene looking south on North Duke Street showing Trinity Lutheran Church and the old spire of the Episcopal Church in the distance. An almost identical portrait with a landscape view through the window shows a young boy, Martin H. Baer. In general, the attributes of his subjects are standardized. Roses and other flowers for females, faithful dogs for children generally, and an occasional book or document for a male.

The sole surviving Armstrong landscape, a view of the estate of Bernard Flynn, has a primitive caste, but the use of dark foliage framing in the foreground shows that the artist was aware of the popular landscape techniques of his period. This device was widely used by the Hudson River School painters and can be traced to Claude Lorraine. Armstrong's "Sir Walter Raleigh Imprisoned in the Tower of London" is probably based on one of the prints in his collection as were the other historical and religious paintings he did.

Very little about Armstrong's personal life is known. He married Harriet Wentz and fathered at least six children, five girls and a boy. His

son, James Thomas, who was also an artist, died at 20. His daughter, Elizabeth, also painted; two daughters, Helen and Harriet, died young. The only of his children to marry was Margaret Katherine. From the number of portraits he painted of them, and especially of the posthumous portraits, we can infer that he was a devoted parent.

While we do not know what caused his death, we can infer that it was a lingering illness, because of the \$58.50 in medical charges paid out by his estate, a very substantial amount for the period. There are also expenses for drugs and the services of a nurse. His total estate including \$752.88 owed to him and considered "doubtful" was \$1295.00, a modest amount, but not the estate of a failure. His death notice in the Lancaster *Intelligencer* on Tuesday, June 17, 1851 was brief.

In this city, on Sunday night at 12 o'clock Arthur Armstrong, Esq., (Artist) died in the 53rd year of his age. His friends and those of the family are respectfully requested to attend his funeral this (Tuesday) afternoon, at 4:00, without further notice.

There are two lists of paintings done by Armstrong, neither from his lifetime, but rather both date from his daughters' old age. Thirty portraits are listed as being "located at his daughters' home" in a 1912 article in the *Lancaster County Historical Society* (hereafter referred to as "1912 list"). Fifteen Armstrong's (several the same as those in "his daughters' home" were exhibited in the 1912 *Loan Exhibition of Historical and Contemporary Portraits illustrating the Evolution of Portraiture in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania*, organized by the Iris Club and the Lancaster County Historical Society (hereafter cited as "Woolworth show" after the site). 1912 is the last time any attempt was made prior to this article to gather information about Armstrong's work. Quite possible the paintings in the Misses Armstrong's home were gathered as possible exhibition pieces for the loan exhibition.

I. KNOWN ARMSTRONG'S

1. *Amanda Haldeman Armstrong* (1830-1913), oil on canvas, 47 ½ x 35 ½, unsigned, 1848. This is the companion portrait to #6 below. The artist's daughter at age 18. Her dress is white, her shawl and the rose are pale pink. She is seated on the red upholstered settee with a red drape. There is an idealized landscape to the back that is continuous with that in #6. She wears earrings, a bracelet and a ring. One hand is covered with a glove. The painting is mentioned in the 1912 list of paintings and was exhibited in the Woolworth exhibition. Donated to the Lancaster County Historical Society by her sister.

Collection: Lancaster County Historical Society

2. *Self Portrait*, c. 1850, oil on canvas, 19 ½ x 17 ½, signed on back with stencil. This known self portrait from his daughter's estate

served to identify the subject in #3.

Collection: Lancaster County Historical Society

3. *Self Portrait*, c. 1840, oil on canvas, 25" x 30", signed with stencil. Note the gold eyeglass chain visible on the shirt front. The subject sits on the red upholstered back chair.

Collection: Drs. Irwin & M. Susan Richman, Bainbridge, Pa.

4. *Mrs. Arthur Armstrong* (born Harriet Wentz), c. 1840, oil on canvas, 25" x 30" companion portrait of #3. Note the beautiful detail of the earrings and the eyeglass chain. She holds a white handkerchief and sits in the same chair as #3.

Collection: Drs. Irwin & M. Susan Richman, Bainbridge, Pa.

5. *Mrs. Arthur Armstrong and Daughter*, c. 1840, oil on canvas, 42 1/2 x 34 1/4, unsigned. Mrs. Armstrong is wearing what appears to be the same dress as in #4 with the dress top closed and the addition of a small collar. During much of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries it was quite common to alter the appearances of a dress in this way. Note the broach. The background drapery is red and the subject is seated on a pink cloak or flowing cloth. The child, attired in a white dress and bright blue slippers, is quite possibly Margaret Katherine Armstrong whom her father painted after the Sully portrait, #22A below. The child is wearing what appears to be the same dress and slippers as in this portrait, although her hair appears slightly lighter in color. Portrait was a bequest to present ownership from the artist's daughter, Elizabeth.

Collection: Lancaster County Historical Society

6. *Elizabeth Groff Armstrong* (1832-1920), oil on canvas, 46 1/2 x 35 1/2, 1848. Signed on back with stencil, by hand: 1848 (also inscription[?] E.G. Armstrong, age 16 years). The companion portrait to #1. She is dressed in what is apparently the same white dress and pink shawl, or ones with minor variations as in #1 and wears the same jewelry. Elizabeth faces to the left and is seated on the red settee against a red drapery and a continuation of the landscape of #1. There are slight variations of hand positions between #1 and this painting, and this subject does not wear a glove. Another small variation is in the rose corsage both wear; #6 has five leaves and no stem, this one has four leaves and a stem. It is mentioned in the 1912 list of paintings, but was not exhibited at the Woolworth building probably because of its similarity to #1 at a time when the rarity of companion portraits of sisters was not appreciated.

Collection: Lancaster County Historical Society

7. *Ellen Mary Armstrong* (1843-1846), oil on canvas, 29 1/2 x 24 1/2, c. 1846, unsigned. This appealing portrait is quite possibly posthumous. It is one of the few portraits that shows the face full front. The little girl seated on a blue pouf wears a white frock tied with pink ribbons and holds a basket of pink flowers. One blue and white bootie is off (it has been suggested that this is a symbol of a posthumous portrait). A

spaniel dog holds a pink flower in its mouth and a brilliant red flower rests in the foreground. To the right is a window showing North Duke Street cityscape looking south at Trinity Church steeple and the old steeple of the Episcopal Church. This painting was part of the bequest of Elizabeth Armstrong and is mentioned in the 1912 list misspelled as "Helen who died young."

Collection: Lancaster County Historical Society

8. *James Armstrong, Sr.* (?-1831) oil on pieced canvas (there is a center seam), 29 ½ x 24 ½, c. 1840, unsigned. This, like the preceding portrait, is from the Elizabeth Armstrong bequest and is probably posthumous. While the painting stylistically is of the 1800's, the clothing is of an earlier period and the appearance is of a man in his thirties or early forties. The subject is shown seated in the red upholstered wood frame trimmed chair and holds a letter. There is a winter landscape of evergreens and craggy hills in the background quite unlike the usual rolling countryside of an Armstrong portrait.

Collection: Lancaster County Historical Society

9. *James Thomas Armstrong* (1828-1848), oil on pieced canvas, 23 ½ x 19 ¼, signed by stencil on back, hand dated 1846. The artist's only son is shown resting on the arm of the red upholstered settee. A portrait of James Thomas was listed in the 1912 article and this portrait was a bequest of his daughter Elizabeth.

Collection: Lancaster County Historical Society

10. *James Thomas Armstrong* (1828-1848), oil on canvas, 47 ½ x 35 ½, unsigned, c. 1848. This monumental and probably posthumous painting was no doubt done from the life study of #9. James, an artist, is now shown seated on the same chair as is his grandfather in #8 (is this the Armstrong "chair of immortality"?). Young Armstrong, an artist, sits in front of a red curtain with a landscape background. He holds a closed book; an unfinished painting stands on an easel and his palette and brushes lay beneath it. Like #9 this was a bequest from his daughter Elizabeth. It or #9 may be the painting mentioned in the 1912 list.

Collection: Lancaster County Historical Society

11. *Martin H. Baer* (b. 1843), oil on canvas, 24 ½ x 29 ½, signed with stencil on the back and hand dated 1845. This portrait of a young boy is almost identical to the portrait of Ellen Mary Armstrong (#7). A typical Armstrong landscape, this one with a lake, replaces the cityscape of the Ellen Mary portrait. The only other difference is that there are blue ribbons at the shoulders of the boy's dress, instead of the pink on the little girl's. Baer lived a full life, thereby, this portrait disproves Armstrong's use of the "one bootie off" convention as a symbol. The face in this portrait is much more vibrant and individual than is the face of Ellen Mary. The present owners acquired it from a granddaughter of the sitter.

Collection: Drs. Irwin & M. Susan Richman, Bainbridge, Pa.

12. *Mr. Cockley and Wife*, oil on canvas, 52" x 52", signed, identified and dated by hand on rear, 1842. The original inscription which has now been covered in the relining process gives the age of Cockley at 40 and Mrs. Cockley at 33. Cockley sits on the usual red upholstered chair with a red drapery, column and landscape background. It is unclear precisely what Mrs. Cockley holds in her left hand. The Cockley portrait is possibly of Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Cockley of Lancaster. Mr. Cockley was the first president of the Lancaster Locomotive works.
Collection: Reading Public Museum

13. *Catherine Elizabeth and Emily Luretta Druckenmiller*, oil on canvas, 37" x 48", signed with stencil on the back and dated, 1849. This very appealing portrait of two sisters born in 1845 and 1847 is among the most colorful of Armstrong's surviving works. The older sister is dressed in blue and the younger in pink and both wear red coral necklaces. The shawl Catherine holds in so unlikely a fashion was probably a studio prop and shows up in portraits #1, #5, #6. Two lambs gambol in the background.

Collection: Lancaster County Historical Society,
gift estate of Myra Druckenmiller

14A. *Mrs. Christian Gast*, oil on canvas, 28 ½ x 24 ½, signed with stencil and hand dated on back, 1845. Maria Ecker Gast was the wife of a prominent Lancaster businessman. This portrait was both listed as being in the Armstrong home in 1912 and exhibited at the Woolworth show. On the back it still has a label "#93" which was its catalog number in the show. The blue shawl is a very unusual touch of color. It was painted as the companion portrait for 14B. In 1912 it was owned by the sitter's daughter, Mrs. Annie Martin.

Collection: Mr. & Mrs. Thomas F. Godfrey, Lancaster, Pa.

14B. *Christian Gast* by John H. Brown, oil on canvas, 28 ½ x 24 ½, signed and dated on the back, 1842.

Collection: Mr. & Mrs. Thomas F. Godfrey, Lancaster, Pa.

15. *Rev. Henry Harbaugh* (b. 1817), oil on canvas, 36" x 28", signed on back with stencil and hand dated, 1842. Attribution of the subject is based on genealogical data compiled by the present owner's mother. This is probably one of a pair.

Collection: James D. Watt, Jr., Pottsville, Pa.

16. *Margaretta Kellar Heinitsh* (1829-1896), oil on canvas, 59" x 47", signed with stencil on back and hand dated 1851. Painted the year of Armstrong's death, this is the most opulent of his known paintings and was painted before Miss Kellar married William E. Heinitsh who in 1852 had the contract to take the clock dials down from the old court house and "...he smalt, or sand and gild same." The lace of her dress is beautifully done and she is wearing the characteristic jewels Armstrong painted so well. Her fur trimmed pink opera cloak is an especially lavish detail. She is seated in the armless posing chair with draperies and a broad landscape behind her. The painting is on the

1912 list as being "owned by her daughter, Miss Margaret Heinitsh" and was exhibited at the Woolworth building show.

Collection: Frederick Heinitsh, Lancaster, Pa.

17. *Alexander Hood* (1806-1875), oil on canvas, 24 ½ x 29 ½, hand signed, identified and dated on back 1842. Hood read law with Thaddeus Stevens and was a successful lawyer. In 1839 he was Clerk of the Orphans Court and from 1802 to 1866 he served as Collector of Internal Revenue for Lancaster. The background is a red drape and a conventionalized romantic landscape. He sits in the rounded back arm chair. Collection: Lancaster County Historical Society

18. *Mrs. Alexander Hood*, oil on canvas, 24 ½ x 29 ½, unsigned, almost certainly 1842. Born Mary Frazer, she died before Hood who later remarried. She is seated in the same chair as her husband and the landscape in the back is a continuation of the background in #17. She wears no jewelry, but great attention is given to her collar and bonnet.

Collection: Lancaster County Historical Society

19. *Mary and Anna M. Hurford* (1838-1928, 1834-1924), oil on canvas, 49" x 34", unsigned, c 1842-1843. The girls are the daughters of Lewis and Sara Downing Hurford, the grandmother and great-aunt of the present owners. The girl on the left is dressed in white and holds a straw hat trimmed in blue which is very characteristic of Thomas Sully. The other figure is dressed in pink and holds a small bunch of grapes (a sign of prosperity). The grapes and the traditional rose (purity) is in a basket at Anna's feet. Also note the grey rabbit at the lower right. The background is unique. The girls stand beneath a palm tree which is part of a jungle landscape. There are more familiar temperate zone flowers in the foreground. This treatment suggests a familiarity with the work of Thomas Cole who often combined tropics and more familiar flora into exotic landscapes. Possibly Armstrong owned prints of Coles' most popular religious subjects where this treatment occurs.

Collection: Misses Mary and Ellen Appel, Lancaster, Pa.

20. *James Harper Jefferies* (1824-1912), oil on canvas, 20" x 24", signed on back with stencil and hand dated 1840. James, the son of Thomas and Mary King Jefferies, in a brown suit with a black tie and buttons and a white shirt. There is no chair visible and, accordingly, he is probably posed standing supporting a red and brown spined book on an unseen table. The portrait is on the 1912 list belonging to Miss Susan Jefferies. When exhibited at the Woolworth show its ownership was listed as being the subject's brother, C. Augustus Jefferies, although Jefferies was reported "...still living at the age of eighty-eight years at his home in Sunbury."

Collection: Mrs. J. Edward Smith, Lancaster, Pa.

21. *The Reverend Allen John*, oil on canvas, 24" x 32", hand signed and dated on back. "Painted by Armstrong Lancaster, Pa 1840". The very grim looking gentleman holding the *Holy Bible* was a Methodist minis-

ter who served at the Asbury, Wastelands, and Georgetown Methodist Episcopal Churches in the 1840's.

Collection: Mrs. Mabel Edwards, Strasburg, Pa.

22A. *Margaret Katherine Armstrong Kerfoot* (1836-1911), oil on canvas 25" x 35", unsigned, c. 1841. Margaret was the only one of Armstrong's three daughters to reach maturity to marry. The composition and detail of this painting is very clearly based on Thomas Sully's "The Rosebud" painted in 1839. The only major change is the background elimination of the building in the upper left hand corner and the substitution of a framed landscape. Margaret Armstrong was probably also painted by her father in #5 with her mother. Her hair was shown to be a darker brown than in this painting where Armstrong perhaps lightened the color to heighten the "Sullyesque" effect. This painting is on the 1912 list and was part of Elizabeth Armstrong's bequest.

Collection: Lancaster County Historical Society

22B. Thomas Sully, *Child With Dog and Flower*, oil on canvas, signed and dated lower center, "TS#1828." Note that the girl's dress is higher than in the Armstrong and that the child holds a basket instead of hat full of flowers.

Collection: Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia Pa.

22C. C. Thomas Sully, *The Rosebud*, oil on canvas, signed and dated, 1838. The obvious source for the Armstrong.

Collection: Boston Museum of Fine Arts

23. *John Jay Libhart*, oil on canvas, 21" x 25", signed on back with stencil, also inscribed "J.J. Libhart," c. 1825-1827. Young Libhart is shown wearing a white ruffled shirt, pale yellow vest and dark jacket. Note the stickpin on the shirt. He is seated on either a painted red chair or the corner of a settee. He holds a paint brush in his left hand, a palette in his right (with only a rather strangely painted thumb showing). This is the earliest known Armstrong and the most primitive. Libhart was an Armstrong student whose artistic speciality was as a naturalist. Professionally he was a lawyer and judge.

Collection: Joseph Libhart, Marietta, Pa.

24. *Henry Gottlob Lipp* (1825-1920), oil on canvas, 29 1/2 x 24 1/2, signed on back with stencil, hand inscribed "(?) Lipp" and dated 1850. This portrait actually shows a portion of the sitter's right hand, a most unusual feature since his left hand is fully shown holding a book. He sits in the wooden framed red upholstered arm chair against a blue drape. On the right is a horizon with the sun rising over the water. This is probably an allegory to the sitter's age 25. This is quite possibly half of a pair of portraits. It was given to the Lancaster County Historical Society by Ida V. Lipp.

Collection: Lancaster County Historical Society

25. *William Nicholson*, oil on canvas, 25" x 30", signed on back with stencil, c. 1840.

Collection: Dr. & Mrs. David Raab, Lancaster, Pa.

26. *Mrs. William (Lucretia) Nicholson*, 25" x 30", unsigned, c. 1840. The companion to #25 is the most "Sullyesque" of the known Armstrong women. The pair (#25 and #26) were found in Philadelphia in 1978 where they were taken in the 1940's by a migrating Lancastrian. Collection: Dr. & Mrs. David Raab, Lancaster, Pa.

27. *Edwin M. Schaeffer* (1819-1889), oil on canvas, 25" x 30", probably unsigned, undated, c. 1840-1850. The subject sits on a red upholstered chair against a romantic sky. Note the watch chain in this photograph taken with a polaroid camera by the owner. Portrait on the 1912 list.

Collection: Ruth E. Neblett, La Habra, Calif.

28. *Mrs. Edwin M. Schaeffer*, oil on canvas, 25" x 30", unsigned, undated, c. 1840-1850. Susan Hoffman Schaeffer sits on the same chair as her husband. She wears a gold chain around her neck with a dark lace trimmed shawl over it. The background is the same romantic sky as #27. The surface of the painting has been abraded by an attempt to clean it with steel wool and turpentine. This portrait, like #27, is on the 1912 list. Also on the same list there is a pair of portraits of other "Schaeffers" with the same spelling, "portraits of the late Emanuel Schaeffer and second wife, property of Miss Lou Herr of Philadelphia" (present location unknown)."

Collection: Nancy Bromer, Marietta, Pa.

29A. *Samuel Welchens, D.D.S.* (1822-1880), oil on canvas, 50 1/2 x 35 1/4, signed on back with stencil and hand dated, 1850. Welchens was appointed a member of the executive committee of the "Harris Dental Association of Lancaster, Pennsylvania" when it was organized June 21, 1867. He served as the organization's president, 1869-1870. The subject stands by a red upholstered armchair trimmed in gold fringe. There is a blue drape with gold fringe and column to the right with a landscape and romantic sky. Placement of the column *et al* to the right rather than the left suggests that this was conceived as a single portrait rather than as part of a pair. The drapery and column treatment can be compared to the portrait of the Cockley's, #12. While the drapery color is different, the column is identical. Marking this painting as probably unique in American art is the fact that Welchens holds a dental implement in his hand. Possibly this portrait was inspired by Armstrong's having seen John Neagle's "Pat Lyons at the Forge." Collection: Lancaster County Historical Society

29B. Hand detail.

29C. *Mrs. Samuel Welchens* probably by Miss Mary A. McCann of Baltimore, oil on canvas, 50 1/2" x 35 1/4", unsigned and undated. Collection: Lancaster County Historical Society

30. *Thomas Wentz* (1780-1820), oil on canvas, 23 1/2 x 19 1/2 (physical evidence suggests that at one time it may have been on a smaller stretcher), unsigned, c. 1848. A lot holder in Petersburg in 1814, he

was the father-in-law of the artist. This was probably painted from an earlier portrait or perhaps from memory. Stylistically it is closely related to #31 which is dated 1848. The costume is c. 1810. It is on the 1912 list and was part of Elizabeth Armstrong's bequest.

Collection: Lancaster County Historical Society

31. *Mrs. Thomas Wentz* (d. 1817), oil on canvas, 29 ½" x 24 ½", signed on back with stencil and hand dated, 1848. Catherine Erdan Wentz was the artist's mother-in-law. This was probably painted from an earlier portrait. Mrs. Wentz is shown dressed in the style of 1810 sitting on the red armchair with the wooden frame with both of her hands showing. There is a pink shawl over the arm of the chair and draped behind her. This is possibly the same prop shawl seen in #13 and #22A. Note the ring. This portrait is on the 1912 list and was part of the Elizabeth Armstrong bequest.

Collection: Lancaster County Historical Society

32. *Portrait of a Girl*, oil on canvas, 30" x 25", signed on back with stencil, c. 1850. The subject is dressed in white and wears a small brooch and a gold chain around her throat. Her chair is entirely covered with a pink fur trimmed opera cloak which may be the same one worn by Margaretta Keller in #16 and the sitter could possibly be her relative, or even a sister.

Collection: Huber Art Center, Shippensburg State College

33. *Portrait of a Man*, oil on canvas, 29 ½" x 24 ½", signed on back with stencil and dated, 1846. The man sits on a red upholstered settee.

Collection: Lancaster County Historical Society

34. *Portrait of an Old Man*, oil on canvas, 25" x 30", signed by stencil and hand dated on back, 1843. The man's neckware is dark green and his hand is perhaps the most accomplished Armstrong ever painted. Note the delineation of the veins.

Collection: Arthur L. Reist, Lancaster, Pa.

35. *Sir Walter Raleigh Imprisoned in the Tower of London*, oil on canvas, 47 ½" x 35 ¼", signed by hand on back "Arthur Armstrong, Artist, Lancaster, Pa." and inscribed "Sir Walter Rolley (SIC.) painting from his (?)ife" c. 1845. Raleigh in red cloak comforts a distressed lady dressed in white and black as a guard stands in the rear. This, like several missing historical and biblical paintings, was probably done from a contemporary nineteenth century print.

Collection: Lancaster County Historical Society

36. *The Estate of Bernard Flynn*, oil on canvas, 44 x 29 ½", signed with stencil (now covered by relining) and hand dated 1848. The landscape shows the foreground framing favored by Hudson River landscape painters and traceable to Claude Lorraine. Flynn's house, still standing, is shown as the yellow three story building in the center. The mill is now gone and the other building has been moved. Legend holds that Mr. Flynn is in the carriage in the foreground. This was probably

painted in the studio from sketches made on the site. Greens, blues and yellow-browns predominate. For all but a few years this painting has hung in the pictured home.

Collection: Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Lestz, Lancaster, Pa.



I-36 Estate of Bernard Flynn

II. ATTRIBUTIONS

1. *John Hatz* (1801-1858), oil on canvas, 25 x 30, unsigned, c. 1840. Long attributed to Eichholtz, the style is clearly Armstrong's. Because of stylistic features Mrs. Beale did not choose to include this work in her catalog of Eichholtz's works.

Collection: Lancaster County Historical Society

2. *Emily Jane Kieffer*, oil on canvas, oval 21 ½ x 26 ½, unsigned, c. 1840-1850. The portrait has a Lancaster history. The painting style, the treatment of the earring, the ear lobes and the lace mark it as almost certainly by Armstrong. Portions of it can be compared to #4, #16, #32. Special thanks are extended to Miss Billie Lee Coleman of Harrisburg for bringing this painting to our attention.

Collection: William Penn Memorial Museum, Harrisburg, Pa.

3. *James Stewart* (1826-1888), oil on canvas, oval, 30" x 24", unsigned, c. 1850. Possibly by Armstrong. The painting style and geometry are typical of Armstrong. There are several problems, however, (1) Stewart would only have been 25 the year the artist died and (2) Stewart faces to the left. In other Armstrong pairs the gentleman faces right.

Collection: Lancaster County Historical Society

4. *Mrs. James Stewart* (1832-1903), oil on canvas, oval, 30" x 24", unsigned, c. 1850. Possibly by Armstrong. The style of painting and especially the lace and jewelry are typical of Armstrong. The problems that exist here are three fold: (1) like the portrait of her husband, she faces in an opposite direction from known Armstrong's, (2) both hands show, and (3) in 1851 she would have only been 19 years old.

Collection: Lancaster County Historical Society

5. *Portrait of a Woman*, oil on canvas, 30 x 25, unsigned, c. 1840. The footed urn of flowers is very unusual and suggests the sitter's interest in botany or horticulture. It is far different from the often generalized flower pieces found as attributes in many 17th and 18th century portraits. The zygocactus in bloom is especially interesting. The woman's hairstyle is identical to the treatment in #28 (Mrs. Schaeffer). The dress is possibly the same one worn in the portrait of Mrs. Christian Gast, #14A, and a facial resemblance may suggest a familiar relationship. The arm posed on an architectural element is unusual but is seen in "Mr. Cockley and Wife," #12.

Collection: Art Museum, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pa.

6. *Portrait of an Old Woman*, oil on canvas, 30 x 25, unsigned, c. 1830-1835. This portrait is framed as part of a pair with #34 above, but looks the opposite way. She sits in the round backed upholstered armchair and both hands show. In the crudeness of the hands and the lace, this picture is clearly related to that of Judge Libhart.

Collection: Arthur L. Reist, Lancaster, Pa.

III. APOCRYPHA

1. *Louise Heinitsh*, oil on canvas, oval 34" x 20 1/2", c. 1865. While this painting appears on the 1912 list it is certainly not an Armstrong as family records show this child was born after the artist's death. The back of this painting is marked by stencil "From Theo. Kelley

Artist Colorman

18 South 8th St., Phila.^d

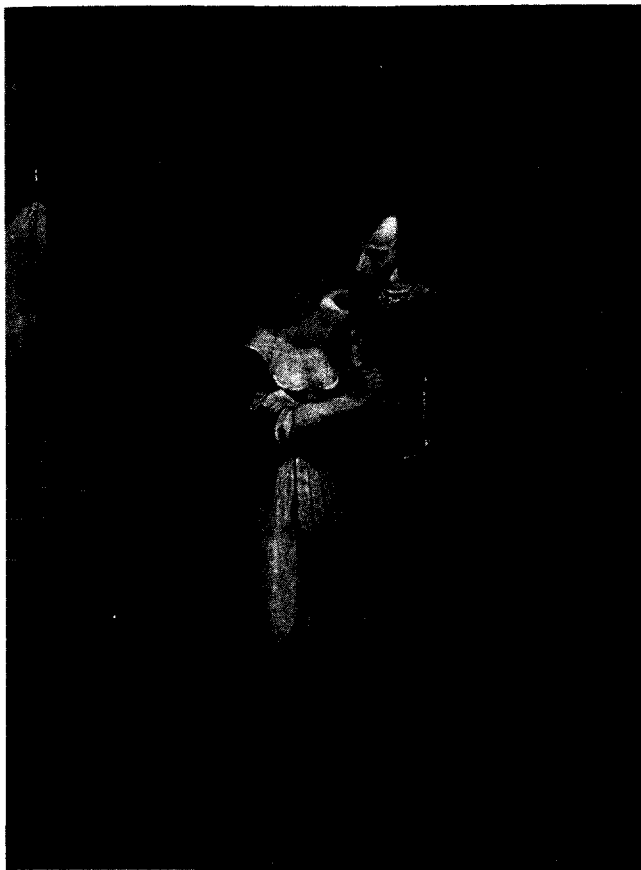
Also note that the subject's mother was painted by Armstrong in 1851, before her marriage! See #16 above.

Collection: Frederick Heinitsh, Lancaster, Pa.

2. *Charles Luther Heinitsch*, oil on canvas, oval, 34'' x 20 ½'', unsigned, c. 1865. There is a dust cover which prevents examination of the back of this canvas. Again, this child was born after Armstrong's death and it is assuredly not in his style even though it is on the 1912 list and was exhibited in the Woolworth building.
Collection: John Heinitsh, Lancaster, Pa.

IV. MISSING PAINTINGS

1. *Mrs. Jacob Albright* (1817-1897) 24'' x 29''. Bust facing right. Born Susan Dorwart, the subject married twice, first to B.M. Sherer then to Albright who was a mayor of Lancaster. In 1912 the painting belonged to her daughter, Mrs. Wilson Clark (#4 Woolworth show).



I-35 Sir Walter Raleigh

2. *Arthur Armstrong*, "Portrait of himself as a youth." (1912 list)
3. *Mrs. Arthur Armstrong*, "Portrait of his wife and young daughters at her side." (1912 list)
4. *Harriet Armstrong*, "Portrait of his daughter, Harriet, who died young." (1912 list)
5. *Michael Brenneman*, "a portrait in oil...." (1912 list)
6. *Mrs. Jacob Burg*. Born Mary Ihling in Lancaster. The painting a "Bust," facing left, 24" x 32" was owned in 1912 by a grandson, G.L. Fondersmith.
7. *George Foltz*, 19" x 24", 1837. Owned in 1912 by Mrs. Charles Foltz, (#34 Woolworth show).
8. *Col. John W. Forney*, "owner unknown" (1912 list).
9. *Hon. William Clark Frazer* (1776-1838). "Bust, facing right 23 ½" x 23 ½", painted by the artist for his own studio. Born in Rich Nick, Kent County, Delaware. In 1836, by appointment of President Jackson, was Chief Justice of the Territory of Wisconsin." Owned in 1912 by a granddaughter, Miss Susan C. Frazer, (#90 Woolworth Show, 1912 list).
10. *Mrs. Margaret Haldeman* (1912 list).
11. *Mrs. John Herr*. Owned in 1912 by M. Louise Herr (1912 list).
12. *Mrs. John Levergood*. "Owned by herself" (1912 list).
13. *Nathaniel Lightner* (1755-1820), 1846. "Half-length seated, facing front, 24 ½" x 29 ½", Father of the artist, Adam Lightner." Owned in 1912 by granddaughter, Mrs. David McMullen (#158, Woolworth Show).
14. *Rudolph F. Rauch*, 1845. "Prothonotary of Lancaster Co. in 1842" and banker. Owned in 1912 by daughter, Miss Clara Rauch, (#195a, Woolworth Show).
15. *Mrs. Rudolph F. Rauch*, 1845. Same ownership as #14 (#195b, Woolworth Show).
16. *Jeremiah Rohrer* (1827-1902), dated in catalog 1852 (? misprint). "Half-length facing right, 24 ½" x 29 ½"." Born in Lebanon, Pa. In early life he was a carpenter and builder in Middletown. 1864 moved to Lancaster and established Rohrer Liquor Store. 1912 "Owned by the Jeremiah Rohrer Estate" (#209, Woolworth Show).
17. *Emanuel Shaeffer* (b. 1760) owned by "Miss Lour Herr of Philadelphia" (1912 list).
18. *Mrs. Emanuel Shaeffer*. His second wife. Same ownership as #17 (1912 list).
19. *Peter Shindle*, 25" x 30", 1840. "Painted as a fifer when almost eighty years old....was a fifer in the Revolutionary War." Owned by his great-granddaughter, Mrs. Emma R. Fishel, in 1912 (#225, Woolworth Show)

20. *Kitty Snyder*, oil on wooden panel, owned by John Brenneman in 1912 (1912 list). This is probably Catherine Snyder, a sister of George Snyder, builder of the Snyder Brick Tavern, and wife of Michael J. Brenneman.

21. *Unidentified Gentleman*. Oil on wooden panel owned in 1912 by John Brenneman (1912 list).

22. *Fruit Piece* - peaches, grapes, watermelons, etc. (1912 list).

23. *The Entombment of Christ*. "...five large figures, now owned by J.B. Lichty of Lancaster" (1912 list).

V. CANVAS BACKS AND SIGNATURES

1. Pieced canvas (portrait of his father). Note typical frame and stretcher construction.

2. Armstrong stencil and casually brushed date. Reverse of portrait of Mrs. Gast.

3. Full Armstrong signature. Rear of painting of Mr. Hood.

About the contributors

Irwin Richman, a member of our society, has lived in the county for eight years. Educated in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia, he has a Ph.D. in History from the University of Pennsylvania, and he has worked in Central Pennsylvania since 1961.

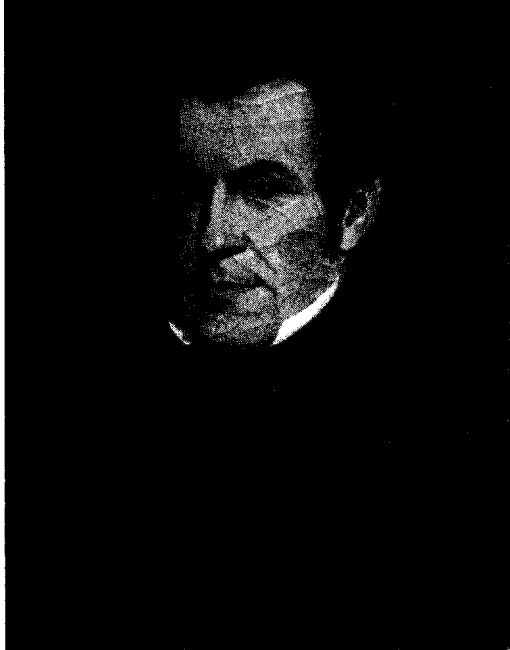
His career began with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission as an Historian in the Bureau of Archives and History, and later he became Curator of Science, History, Industry, and Technology at the William Penn Memorial Museum. Since 1968 he has been on the faculty of Capitol Campus, Pennsylvania State University, in Middletown, where he is Professor of American Studies and History and Chairman of the Graduate Program in American Studies.

A prolific author, Dr. Richman is the author of over one hundred articles and reviews and the author of four books, most recently *Pennsylvania's Decorative Arts in the Age of Handcraft*. His especial interest is the arts of Pennsylvania and this work on Arthur Armstrong is part of an ongoing study of the culture of our region.

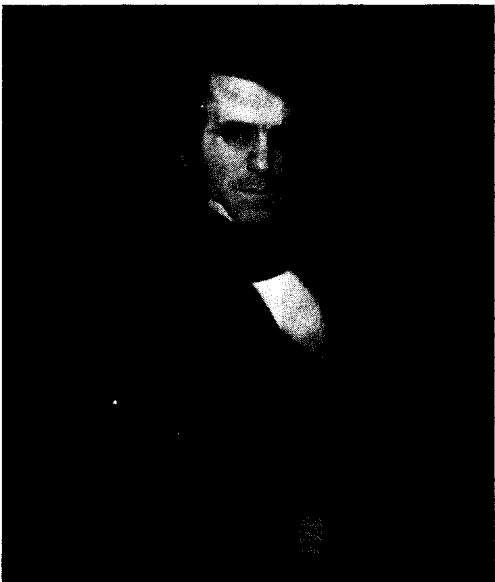
Ruth Arnold is curator of Public Affairs at the William Penn Memorial Museum. She is a graduate student in the American Studies Program at the Capitol Campus, Pennsylvania State University.



1-1 Amanda Haldeman Armstrong



1-2 Self Portrait



1-3 Self Portrait



1-4 Mrs. Arthur Armstrong



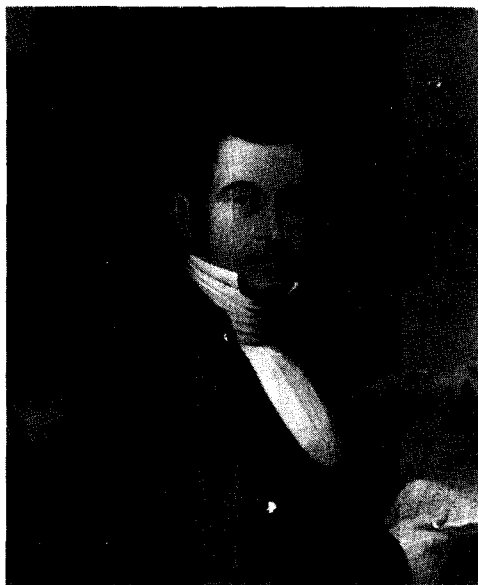
I-5 Mrs. Armstrong and Daughter



I-6 Elizabeth Groff Armstrong



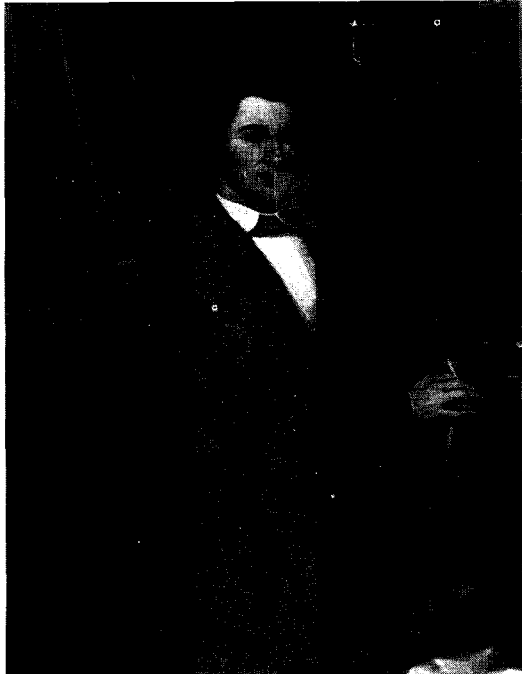
I-7 Miss Mary Armstrong



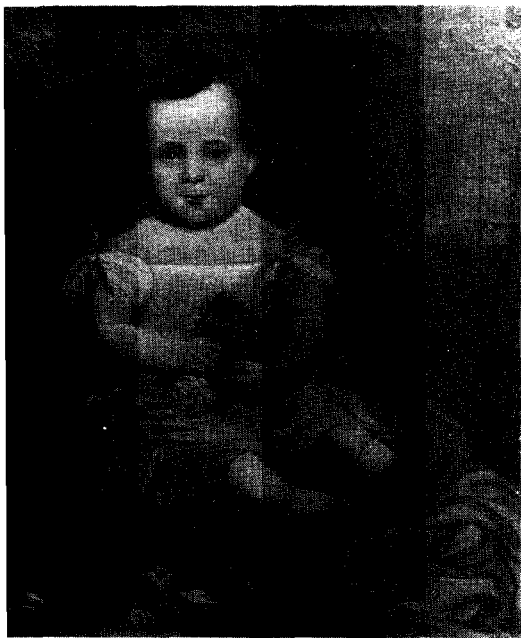
I-8 James Armstrong, Sr.



1-9 James Thomas Armstrong



1-10 James Thomas Armstrong



1-11 Martin H. Baer



1-12 Mr. Cockley and Wife



I-14A Mrs. Christian Gast



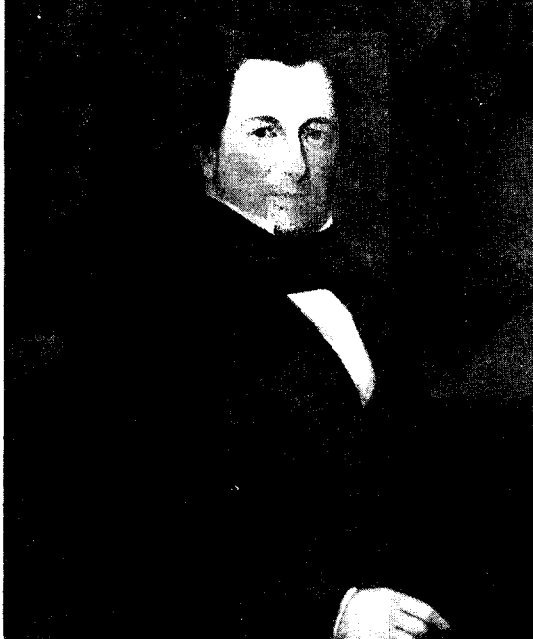
I-14B Christian Gast



I-13 The Druckenmiller Girls



I-15 Rev. Henry Harbaugh



1-17 Alexander Hood



1-18 Mrs. Alexander Hood



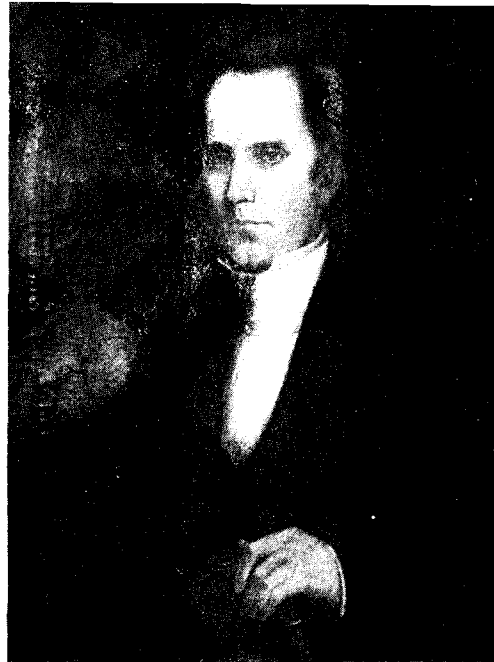
1-16 Margareta Keller Heinitsh



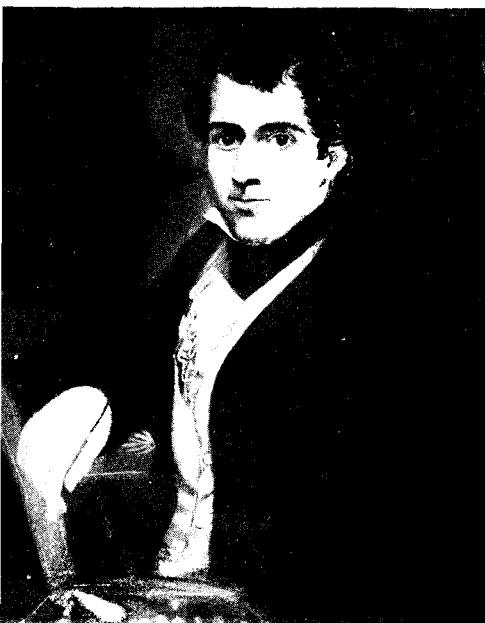
1-19 Mary and Anna Hurford



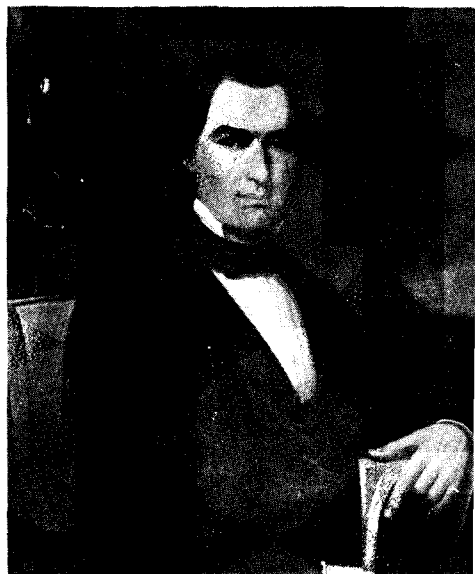
1-20 James Harper Jefferies



1-21 The Rev. Allen Jones



1-23 John Jay Libhart



1-24 Henry Gottlob Lipp



I-22A Margaret K.A. Kerfoot



I-22B Child With Dog and Flower



I-22C The Rosebud



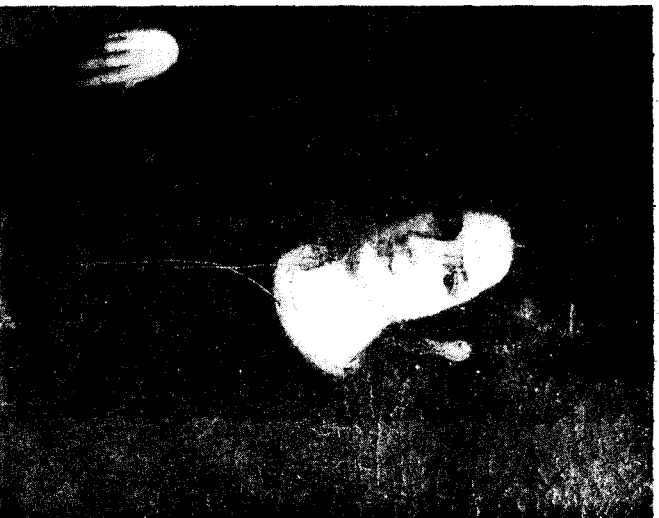
I-25 William Nicholson



I-26 Mrs. William Nicholson



I-27 Edwin M. Schaeffer



I-28 Mrs. Edwin M. Schaeffer



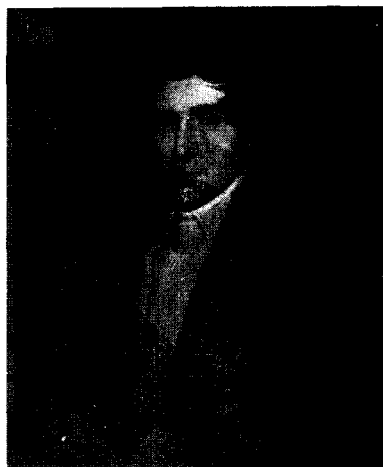
1-29A Samuel Welchens



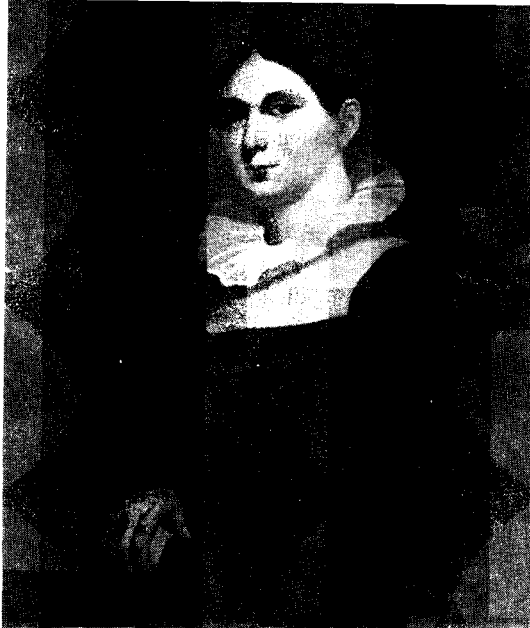
1-29B Hand Detail



1-29C Mrs. Samuel Welchens



1-30 Thomas Wentz



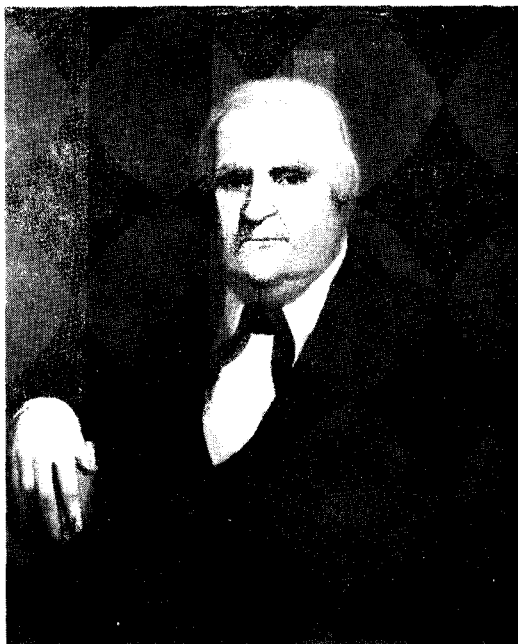
I-31 Mrs. Thomas Wentz



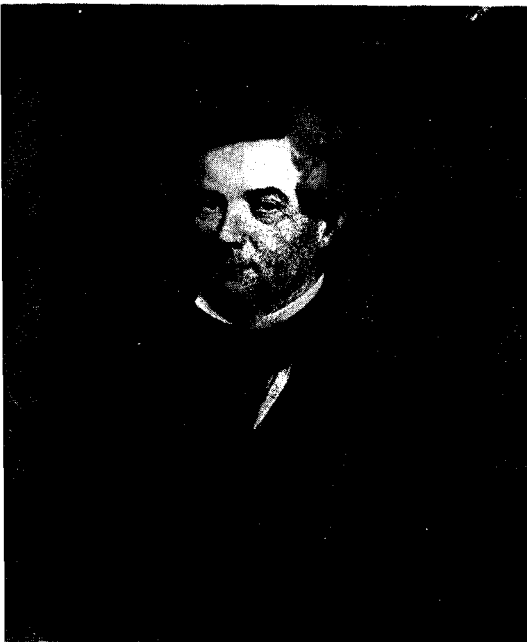
I-32 Portrait of a Girl



I-33 Portrait of a Man



I-34 Portrait of an Old Man



II-1 John Hatz



II-2 Emily Jane Kieffer



II-3 James Stewart



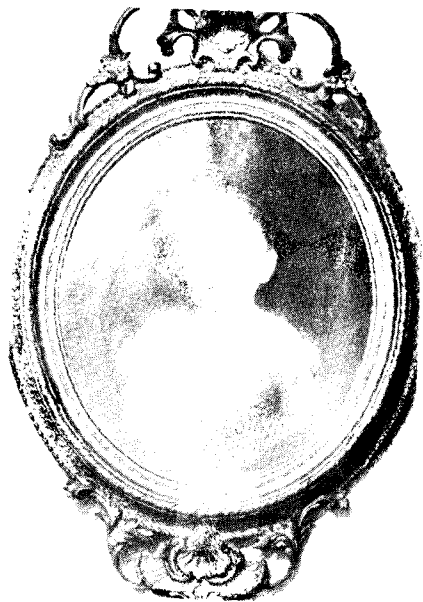
II-4 Mrs. James Stewart



II-5 Portrait of a Woman



II-6 Portrait of an Old Woman

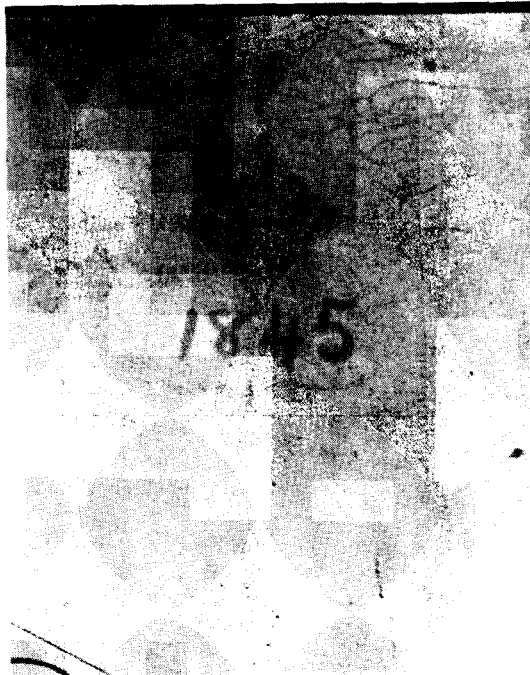
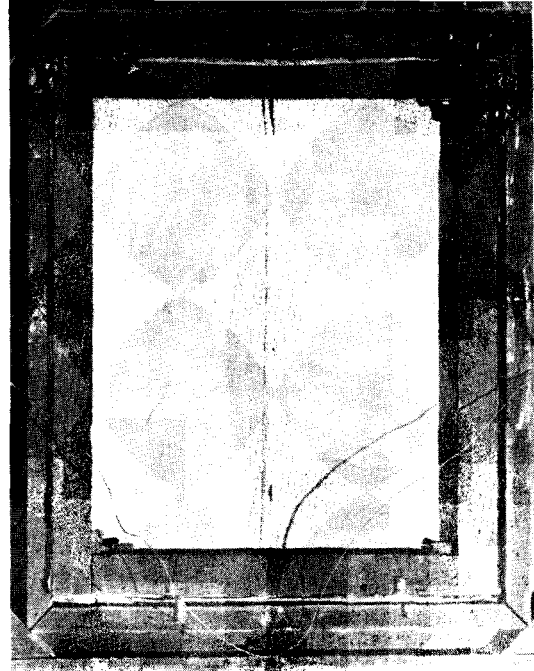


III-1 Louise Heinitsh

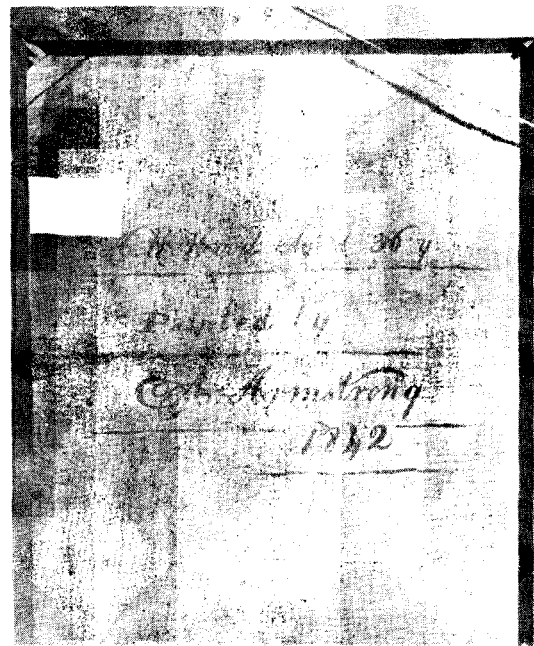


III-2 Charles Luther Heinitsh

V-1 Pieced Canvas



V-2 Armstrong Stencil



V-3 Full Armstrong Signature