

“To Counterfeit the Soul”: Portraiture at Historic Smithfield

Jessica Wirgau

In 1803, James Patton Preston, then just twenty-nine years old, was painted by Gilbert Stuart, perhaps the most sought-after portrait artist of early nineteenth-century America. The bust-length oil painting follows closely the tradition of state portraiture that Stuart perfected in his depictions of George Washington. Likely commissioned after Preston's election in 1800 to the Virginia General Assembly, the dignified image foreshadows Preston's illustrious political career. The original painting is now in the collection of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond (*fig. 1*). A twentieth-century copy hangs in the drawing room at Historic Smithfield Plantation (*fig. 2*).

The Stuart copy serves as an anchor for Smithfield's portrait collection, which epitomizes the creation of a distinctly American portrait style that evolved from British prototypes. This paper will explore the function of portraiture and discuss a selection of Smithfield's portraits in the larger context of American and British art. It will conclude with a closer look at Gilbert Stuart, the formation of a distinctly American, democratic portrait type, and its expression in the James Patton Preston image.

The Function of Portraiture

Some of the most recognizable images in the history of art are portraits, and many transcend their roles as representing the physical likeness of an individual. They provide clues to the sitter's profession and social status, convey information about the style or tradition in which an artist was working, and communicate the values of the society in which the image was created. The ability to serve so many functions is due, in part, to the portrait's role as an inherently public image meant to be seen, interpreted, and appreciated by multiple viewers. Even within a domestic setting, the portrait remains public, often dis-



Figure 1. *James Patton Preston*, Gilbert Stuart, 1803, oil on panel, 25x20 in. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond. Gift of Mrs. Preston Davie (59.19)



Figure 2. *James Patton Preston*, Copy after Gilbert Stuart original, 1980, oil on canvas. Historic Smithfield Plantation.

played in a room, such as the drawing room or dining room, used for entertaining guests or conducting business. Because portraits exist in the public domain, they may be employed to deliver a specific message or imply a particular meaning and have been used to such ends throughout the history of art.¹ In medieval Europe, for example, portraits became an important component of tomb sculpture, commemorating the dead while reminding the living of an exemplary life and, in Italian Renaissance portraiture, the dead were painted alongside the living, and patrons depicted themselves in Biblical scenes, implying both power and piety.

Such examples underscore that portraiture has, by and large, been the privilege of the elite, serving to demonstrate and reinforce social hierarchy while celebrating an individual or an occasion. Among the

European aristocracy, the portrait was often used as an instrument of political influence, representing not just the individual depicted but the abstract principles which he/she embodied, a tradition that was adopted and reinterpreted in America.²

American Portraiture and British Influence: The Smithfield Portraits in Context

Portraiture in America in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries embodied many of our fledgling nation's values and ambitions as well as our society's close association with British culture. From the furnishings in American homes to proper manners and social customs, America looked to England as its prime model, even as it sought independence from British control.

In the arts, such prominent British painters as Sir Joshua Reynolds and Thomas Gainsborough were the standards against which American artists were measured. While artists trained in America enjoyed moderate success, those who traveled to England to study European masterworks were most successful both in Europe and America.

The Georgian era of painting in England, from approximately 1714 to 1830, was centered in London where men such as Reynolds and Gainsborough had a steady stream of patrons from the aristocracy and the royal family. The Royal Academy, founded in London in 1768, further promoted the visual arts by offering classes for instruction and exhibition opportunities for both established and emerging painters. More important, it established public art tastes and promoted classical forms based on ancient Greek and Roman art. Some of the most prominent artists of Colonial and Early America studied in London and were deeply influenced by the doctrines and artist members of the Royal Academy, including John Singleton Copley and Benjamin West, two American artists who enjoyed their greatest success while working in England.

John Singleton Copley painted many of America's elite, becoming the supreme artist of the American colonies by 1760. Copley's works both in America and later in England are notable for his ability to craft the image of his sitters the way they wanted to be seen by the public. Using gestures, props, and costumes familiar to the American viewer, Copley's paintings became visual indications of one's social



Figure 3. *Susannah Smith Preston*, Charles Xavier Harris copy after Jeremiah Theus original , 1876–1936, oil on canvas, 30x25 in. On loan to Historic Smithfield Plantation. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond. Gift of Mrs. Preston Davie (60.52.2)

position. He faithfully depicted the sitter's appearance, while at the same time constructing meaning through the depiction of expensive fabrics and elaborate interiors. Copley, like many American artists, relied heavily on prints of works by Reynolds and others for the latest European fashions.

While Copley enjoyed success in the Northeast, his contemporary Jeremiah Theus was the premier portrait painter in Charleston, South Carolina, for three decades, beginning in 1740. Theus painted nearly 150 portraits, most featuring prominent citizens of Charleston, along with landscapes, crests, and coats of arms.³ Like Copley, Theus attained success by drawing attention to the social position of his subjects, often focusing on costume, delighting in the representation of expensive fabrics, bows, and lace and providing more generalized, flat depictions of the face and body. For example, hanging in the drawing room at Smithfield Plantation is a bust-length portrait of Susannah Smith Preston, wife of Colonel William Preston, wearing an elegant gold dress ornamented with pearls and lace (*fig. 3*). On loan from the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, this is a copy by William Xavier Harris after the original painted by Jeremiah Theus. Theus emphasized Susannah's costume rather than her physical likeness, and, as a result, her face appears similar to many of his portraits of female sitters.

Theus also relied heavily on imported English mezzotint prints for his poses and costumes. London printmakers would publish prints based on painted images of prominent British aristocrats.⁴ American artists closely studied these prints so as to place their own sitters in similar poses, settings, and dress. Given this tradition, one may presume that Susannah did not own the dress she wears in the Smithfield portrait, but that it was adopted for the work from an English prototype.

American artist Benjamin West's influence can also be seen in the works at Smithfield Plantation. Born in Pennsylvania, West settled in London in 1763 and became a charter member of the Royal Academy and later King George III's official historical painter. Working at King George's court, West appropriated the styles of his English colleagues in his dramatic landscape backgrounds and his treatment of classical subjects. West's greatest legacies, however, were the students who passed through his London studio, including such prominent portrait artists as Charles Willson Peale, Gilbert Stuart, John Trumbull, and Samuel F.B. Morse, many of whom are represented at Smithfield.

Hanging in Smithfield's schoolroom above the fireplace is a copy of a portrait of George Washington by one of West's most celebrated students, Charles Willson Peale (*fig. 4*). The original, entitled *George Washington in the Uniform of a British Colonial Colonel*, was painted at



*Figure 4. George Washington in the Uniform of a British Colonial Colonel, Unidentified Artist, twentieth century copy after Charles Willson Peale original, oil on canvas.
Historic Smithfield Plantation.*

Mount Vernon in 1772 and is now in the Washington-Lee-Custis Collection of Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia. Charles Willson Peale began his career as a painter in the 1760s by studying the works of Copley and similar artists. He moved to London where he studied in West's studio for two years but did not choose to pursue his teacher's interest in painting historical events and, instead, returned to America to paint portraits of the Revolutionary War's greatest heroes. The Washington portrait depicts the first president as he would have appeared in the 1750s as a British colonial colonel in the Virginia Regiment. He carries an American hunting gun along with an English-made sword. Like many depictions of aristocratic



Figure 5. Major William Preston, Charles Xavier Harris after original by Matthew Harris Jouett, 1876–1936, oil on canvas, 30x25 in. On loan to Historic Smithfield Plantation. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond. Gift of Mrs. Preston Davie (60.52.5)

gentlemen, Washington is robust, with his right hand tucked into his vest and his protruding stomach subtly alluding to the fine foods that likely graced his table.

A portrait of similar style of Major William Preston, third son of William and Susannah, hangs in the dining room at Smithfield (fig. 5). It is a copy by Charles Xavier Harris of a painting by Matthew



Figure 6. George Washington, Charles Willson Peale, 1777, watercolor on ivory, 1 1/2 x 1 3/8 in. Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of William H. Huntington, 1883 (83.2.122), Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Harris Jouett. William Preston is dressed in the uniform of a cornet of the U.S. Army. He was recommended as the first cornet of a company of cavalry in the Montgomery County militia in 1788, and served in various military capacities throughout his career. He moved his family to Kentucky in 1814, settling on land inherited from his father near present-day Louisville.⁵

According to records at Smithfield Plantation, Major Preston's image was reportedly copied from a portrait miniature, a tradition in America that, like full-size portraits, was adapted from British models but ultimately evolved from medieval illuminated manuscripts and portrait medallions of classical antiquity (*fig. 6*). Miniatures were often painted in watercolor on small pieces of ivory and then mounted in lockets, brooches, and bracelets, becoming both jewelry and intimate mementos of loved ones. Many of the artists already discussed, including Jeremiah Theus and John Singleton Copley, painted miniatures in addition to full-size images. Miniatures are particularly renowned for their delicate and luminous renderings. Unfortunately, the radiance of the subject's flesh and dress painted in watercolor on ivory cannot translate easily to a full-size canvas. If this piece was copied from a miniature, it likely contrasts significantly with the original in its texture, color, and feel. In the schoolroom at Smithfield, flanking the fireplace, are some small prints of other Preston family members also derived from portrait miniatures.

A second generation of American students, who studied under West at the Royal Academy in London, reached prominence in the nineteenth century. One of them, Samuel F. B. Morse, is perhaps better known for his invention of the telegraph than for his painting career. His portrait of Senator William Campbell Preston currently hangs in Smithfield's entrance hall (*fig. 7*). Morse was born near Boston in 1791 and studied painting at the Royal Academy before settling in New York City in 1825. He attempted to secure commissions painting historical scenes but, instead, had a relatively limited career as a portrait painter. He made his largest contribution to the arts through his founding of the National Academy of Design in 1826, an honorary association of artists with a museum and school of fine arts based in Manhattan.⁷

William Campbell Preston was the eldest son of General Francis Preston and Sarah Buchanan Campbell and the grandson of Colonel William Preston. He was also great nephew of Patrick Henry. He studied natural philosophy and law both in the United States and abroad at the University of Edinburgh before representing South Carolina as a United States senator from 1833 to 1842. He was a staunch advocate of slavery and vehemently opposed some of the policies of President Andrew Jackson. In 1842, the South Carolina legislature at-



Figure 7. William Campbell Preston, Samuel F. B. Morse, ca. 1842–1860, oil on canvas, 36x29 in. On loan to Historic Smithfield Plantation. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond. Gift of Mrs. Preston Davie (60.52.6)

tempted to guide his actions in the Senate, and he resigned rather than follow their instructions. He subsequently became president of South Carolina College and later a trustee of the school before retiring in 1857.⁸ He is celebrated in particular as a great orator with strong opinions. The Morse portrait captures his confident personality in his expression and stature.

Copley and West, along with such artists as Theus, Peale, and Morse, drew heavily on European aristocratic painting to depict American subjects both before and after America's war for independence. With the formation of America's democratic government, a distinctly different form of American portraiture emerged, exemplified by the works of Gilbert Stuart. While still drawing on British examples, Stuart adapted them to depict prominent revolutionaries, including Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and George Washington. Moving away from the depiction of wealth and social differences, Stuart's portrayals of prominent statesmen reinforced America's new identity with an emphasis on wisdom, dignity, and the principles of democracy.

Gilbert Stuart and American Portraiture

Gilbert Stuart was an extremely prolific artist; he painted roughly one thousand portraits from the late 1760s to his death in 1828. While he produced some of the most celebrated portraits of the period, his career is often considered uneven, or even tumultuous. Some scholars have even suggested that he suffered from manic depression, going in and out of periods of deep depression and procrastination to periods of intense and rapid production.⁹

For Stuart, portraiture and storytelling went hand in hand. Rather than asking his sitters to remain still so he could faithfully record their likeness, he carried on lively conversations, seeking to capture a distinctive expression or mannerism in his subject. Many prominent Americans who loathed sitting for a portrait quite enjoyed sitting for Stuart, who was extraordinarily entertaining. John Adams said of sitting for the artist, "Speaking generally...no penance is like having one's picture done. You must sit in a constrained and unnatural position, which is a trial to the temper. But, I should like to sit to Stuart from the first of January to the last of December, for he lets me do as I please and keeps me constantly amused by his conversation."¹⁰

Despite his sociable character, Stuart was a great frustration to many of his patrons, family, and friends, always suffering from deep debt and running from creditors. He was a terrible procrastinator and kept many of his sitters waiting years for their portraits, even going so far as to accept a deposit for a painting with absolutely no intention of ever finishing it and collecting the remaining payment. He kept cer-

tain portraits for years, either for his own personal enjoyment or for use in the production of replicas. For example, he kept Thomas Jefferson waiting more than fifteen years for one of his portraits. When the assumed original portrait of 1805 arrived at Jefferson's home in August of 1821, his daughter Martha noticed that the paint was still fresh and suspected it was a recent replica.¹¹

Stuart showed an early interest in both painting and music, but little ambition toward any particular profession until he arrived in Benjamin West's studio in London in 1776. There he both emulated and criticized the work of his teacher and studied closely the paintings of British masters.

By the late eighteenth century, art critics were commenting increasingly on an artist's ability to represent character, in addition to physical likeness, in order to portray qualities such as benevolence, dignity, and intelligence. They strongly promoted the notion that one's soul was reflected in his/her physical appearance and could, in turn, be represented on the artist's canvas.¹² As Stuart began exhibiting his works in London, he became a celebrated example of capturing both body and soul in his work. A 1787 article in the London newspaper *World*, fittingly described his talent: "Stuart dives deep into mind, and brings up with him a conspicuous draught of character and characteristic thought."¹³ Upon his death in 1828, artists of Philadelphia echoed this sentiment with a testimonial memorializing the artist: "His business was to counterfeit the soul...a glance at his copy was sufficient to afford an understanding of the original."¹⁴

In London and later Dublin, Stuart experienced considerable success, yet he thought constantly of returning to America to paint the new American president, George Washington. He wrote to his friend while in Dublin, "When I can net a sum sufficient to take me to America, I shall be off to my native soil. There I expect to make a fortune by Washington alone."¹⁵ Political and social upheaval in Great Britain, combined with mounting debts to English and Irish creditors alike, further expedited Stuart's trip to America. In March 1793, he sailed for New York, where First Chief Justice John Jay was the only person Stuart claimed to know in America who could help him get established.

Stuart had met and painted Jay while in London and came to New York to paint him once again in the spring of 1794. Jay intro-

duced Stuart to many of his New York patrons and wrote a letter of introduction for Stuart to President Washington in Philadelphia. With this letter in hand and a list of thirty-two patrons who had commissioned a total of thirty-nine portraits of the president, the artist moved



Figure 8. George Washington (The Lansdowne Portrait), Gilbert Stuart, 1796, oil on canvas, 97 1/2 x 67 1/2 in. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (NPG.2001.13)

to Philadelphia in November 1794 with the goal of securing a sitting with Washington straight away.¹⁶

Washington sat for Stuart three distinct times in 1795 and 1796. From these three original images, Stuart produced at least one hundred copies that may now be seen in museums throughout the United States and abroad.¹⁷ While details of dress or background were often



Figure 9. George Washington, James Heath after Gilbert Stuart, 1800, engraving, 19 7/8 x 13 1/8 in. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (NPG.81.55)

changed from one copy to another, each work successfully captured the first president's reserved demeanor, the embodiment of democracy, and thus secured Stuart's reputation as America's premier painter.

Stuart painted two full-length portraits of Washington, the most famous of which is the so-called Lansdowne portrait commissioned by Philadelphia merchant William Bingham as a gift to William Petty, first Marquis of Lansdowne (fig. 8). It is widely considered Stuart's greatest accomplishment in America. Washington is standing as if addressing an audience. He is wearing a black velvet suit, the type he wore during public occasions, and his left hand rests on the hilt of the sword he carried with him for ceremonial purposes. The neoclassical decoration on the furniture is derived from the Great Seal of the United States, and thirteen alternating red and white stripes represent the thirteen original states. At the top of the table leg sit two eagles grasping a bundle of arrows — a symbol of war — while laurel surrounds the medallion on the back of the chair, representing victory. Under the table are books entitled *General Orders*, *American Revolution*, and *Constitution and Laws of the United States*, referring to Washington's career during and after the Revolution.¹⁸

In addition to the two painted copies of this work, it was engraved in 1800 by English printmaker James Heath (fig. 9), and one such engraving hangs in the drawing room at Smithfield Plantation. As with English sitters, portraits of prominent American citizens were readily reproduced in the form of prints, and painters often worked collaboratively with printmakers to profit from the widespread sale of their work, a practice in which Stuart actively engaged. To say that Stuart was frustrated by the Heath print would be a substantial understatement, for he had not granted permission to Heath to publish it and was furious upon seeing it. After the Marquis de Lansdowne received the original painting, Stuart contacted Benjamin West in London, asking him to identify a printmaker who could publish the work. Unfortunately, the Marquis de Lansdowne had already granted James Heath permission to produce the engraving without Stuart's knowledge or consent. Stuart first came across the Heath print quite by accident on display in a bookstore in Philadelphia and immediately went to his friend William Bingham, who had commissioned the piece for Lansdowne. Stuart complained that he was receiving no compen-

sation for this “exceedingly bad” engraving. When Bingham offered no immediate resolution, Stuart drafted a letter to Lansdowne which he never sent. In it he writes passionately of the injury he had sustained from the print’s publication: “Thus, without my privilege and participation, despoiled of the fair fruits of an important work, and defeated in the great object of my professional pursuit, your Lordship will readily allow me the privilege to complain.”¹⁹ Stuart’s daughter Jane noted that the incident with the Heath engraving severely troubled him to his death.

Despite this unfortunate situation, Stuart received a significant number of commissions for portraits of Washington and would often work on several copies at a time, a virtual assembly line of portraits. He spent much of his time in Philadelphia working on these copies. Later, in Washington, D.C., and Boston, he continued to produce copies, and he employed similar techniques and symbols in painting other statesmen, including John Adams, James Monroe, and Thomas Jefferson.

An Emerging Statesman: James Patton Preston

With the Washington portraits, Stuart solidified his reputation as the premier painter of prominent citizens and political figures in America in the early nineteenth century. In a new democratic America, the ideal portrayal of one’s character conveyed dignity and inner nobility thought to be achieved, not through inherited social status, but through word and deed.²⁰ Stuart’s Washington portraits demonstrate and enhance the long tradition of portraying leaders as the embodiment of a nation’s driving principles. Washington seems to engage the viewer, inspiring both confidence in his leadership and a sense of approachability. In him nineteenth-century viewers saw the personification of America’s victory over the British and the promises of democracy. Americans and Europeans alike hungered for portraits of the great American revolutionary and statesman, and Stuart’s images delivered. They came to define what is known as state portraiture, and they must inform one’s interpretation of the James Patton Preston portrait at Historic Smithfield.

James Patton Preston, the fourth son of William and Susannah Preston, was born June 21, 1774, at Smithfield Plantation. His three

older brothers, John (1764–1827), Francis (1765–1835), and William (1770–1821), each went on to attain prominent positions in government and the military, and James pursued a similar path. He attended the College of William and Mary from 1794 to 1796 before spending a year in Philadelphia with his brother Francis. He returned to Smithfield by 1798 and became one of the original trustees of the town of Blacksburg. By 1799, he was a justice of the Montgomery County Court and served in the Virginia General Assembly from 1801 to 1804. He later served in the War of 1812 and was wounded in the thigh at the Battle of Chrysler's Field in Canada, an injury that crippled him for life. From 1816 to 1819 he served as governor of Virginia, and he spent much of his time from 1816 to 1837 in Richmond while still overseeing his affairs at Smithfield, particularly after his mother, Susannah, died in 1823. From 1824 to 1837 he served as postmaster of Richmond.²¹ He died at Smithfield in 1843. Among his possessions were multiple slaves, furniture, livestock, and one painting valued at \$1.²² It is impossible to know for certain whether this painting is the Stuart portrait, but it is reasonable to assume that Preston would have kept it in his home until his death, when his possessions were divided among his four children.

Newly established in his political career at the time the portrait was completed in 1803, it is not surprising that Preston would want to commemorate this period in his life.²³ He is depicted in a neoclassical setting, seated in front of a column, with undulating drapery behind him. This style, with its allusions to ancient Greece and Rome, was prominent in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as America identified with and emulated these ancient democratic societies. A glance at Stuart's Washington portrait (*fig. 8*) and those of other prominent American politicians illustrates the pervasiveness of this tradition.

In some cases, the background imagery described above is obvious, and in others Stuart spends little time on the background, merely suggesting a setting with loose brushstrokes, as he does in the Preston image. In many cases, Stuart would focus entirely on the face and leave the background, even the hands and costume of his sitter, roughly sketched. Preston's coat and cravat are relatively well delineated, but the emphasis is on the face and its suggestion of character.



Figure 10. *James Patton Preston*, Unidentified Artist, ca. 1840, oil on canvas. Historic Smithfield Plantation

As in the Washington portraits, Preston gazes directly outward, establishing a trusting relationship with the viewer. He appears young, almost boyish, but his erect stature and serious expression suggest confidence and dignity. Adopting the imagery of state portraits before him, Stuart depicts James Patton Preston as the personification of leadership and dignity.

Adding to the portrait's significance is its status as a public image, even within the Smithfield home. Like the twentieth-century copy, it would likely have been hung in the drawing room, where

Preston and his family entertained guests. His quiet and proud demeanor would introduce him to his visitors as he likely wanted to be seen, a strong and fair leader dedicated to his profession and akin to some of America's most celebrated patriots.

A later small oval painting of James Patton Preston by an unidentified artist also hangs in the drawing room at Smithfield (*fig. 10*). Unlike the image of the young statesmen, here he has aged and appears melancholy, fatigued. It provides a striking contrast to the Stuart rendering and emphasizes the ability of a portrait to influence the viewer's impression of the subject depicted.

In looking at each of the Smithfield portraits discussed here, we strive, as viewers and visitors, to know the Preston family, its history, values, and surroundings. From Theus's early portrait of Susannah to the James Patton Preston images, we respect and admire individuals we have never met but endeavor to know. Through such portraits, we broaden our knowledge of Smithfield and the Preston family and of their relation to American history and to the community of Blacksburg.

Endnotes

1. Shearer West, "Portraiture," *Oxford History of Art* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 43–5.
2. West, "Portraiture," pp. 61–72.
3. "Jeremiah Theus," *The Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.*, 2006. <<http://www.nga.gov/cgi-bin/pbio?30250>> (March 15, 2006).
4. "Early American Painting in the Worcester Art Museum: Jeremy Theus," *Worcester Art Museum* <http://www.worcesterart.org/Collection/Early_American/Artists/theus/biography/index.html> (March 15, 2006).
5. John Frederick Dorman, *The Prestons of Smithfield and Greenfield in Virginia* (Louisville, Ky.: The Filson Club, Inc., 1982), pp. 57–61.
6. Carrie Reborra Barratt, "American Portrait Miniatures of the Eighteenth Century," *Metropolitan Museum of Art Timeline of Art History*, 2000 <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/mini/hd_mini.htm> (June 30, 2006).
7. "Samuel Finley Breese Morse." *The Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.*, 2006 <<http://www.nga.gov/cgi-bin/pbio?22650>> (March 15, 2006).
8. Dorman, *The Prestons of Smithfield and Greenfield in Virginia*, pp. 202–3.
9. Dorinda Evans, "Gilbert Stuart and Manic Depression: Redefining His Artistic Range," *American Art Journal*, 16 (2004), pp. 10–31.
10. Carrie Reborra Barratt and Ellen Miles, *Gilbert Stuart* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004), p. 324.

11. Barratt and Miles, *Gilbert Stuart*, p. 283.
12. Dorinda Evans, *The Genius of Gilbert Stuart* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 44.
13. Barratt and Miles, *Gilbert Stuart*, p. 30.
14. Barratt and Miles, *Gilbert Stuart*, p. 292.
15. Barratt and Miles, *Gilbert Stuart*, p. 79.
16. Barratt and Miles, *Gilbert Stuart*, p. 133.
17. Barratt and Miles, *Gilbert Stuart*, pp. 133–6.
18. Barratt and Miles, *Gilbert Stuart*, pp. 166–9.
19. Barratt and Miles, *Gilbert Stuart*, p. 175.
20. Evans, *The Genius of Gilbert Stuart*, p. 27.
21. Dorman, *The Prestons of Smithfield and Greenfield in Virginia*, pp. 63–5.
22. James Patton Preston, Probate Inventory, 1843, Will Book 7, pp. 130–7, Montgomery County Courthouse, Christiansburg, Virginia.
23. The details of the commission, including how Preston came into contact with Stuart and where the sitting took place, require additional research. Collection records at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (Accession # 59.19) suggest the portrait was executed in Washington, D.C., in 1803, but further evidence must be uncovered to confirm this date. The portrait was donated to the VMFA in 1959 by Mrs. Preston Davie, a Preston family descendant. Research on the provenance of the painting is currently being undertaken by the author.
