

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

WILLIAMS, William Joseph

New York 1759 – New Bern 1823

Portrait and miniature painter in New York from 1779 to 1792. From 1793 until 1807, Williams worked in Philadelphia and as far south as South Carolina (where two advertisements in 1803 mention his use of crayons as well as other media) and New Bern, North Carolina, until 1807 when he returned to New York City. Williams spent the last five years of his life in New Bern. An advertisement in the *Gazette of the United States*, 1.II.1797, offered likenesses from 10 to 100 dollars (presumably in oil).

Williams's portrait of Washington is his best known work. It was commissioned by the Alexandria Masonic Lodge No. 22 (of which Williams was a member and Washington Charter master), whose secretary, Michael Flannery, wrote (29.VIII.1793) to Washington to solicit him "to set for" his portrait, adding "The person we have chosen to execute the painting is Mr Wm Williams, an American Artist – From a number of Specimens we have seen of this Gentleman's performance, we are persuaded he is the most successful portrait painter that we have yet seen or heard of in America". Washington agreed to sit for Williams, despite having refused the year before (his letter to Henry Lee, 3.VII.1792); perhaps because Williams had been introduced as "a luminary of the first magnitude", a kind of person of whom Washington was "so heartily tired". The portrait was completed in .IX.1794.

Bibliography

Bénézit; Groce & Wallace 1957, p. 691; Edward G. Lengel, *The papers of George Washington*, digital ed., 2008; Prime 1932, II, p. 38; Rutledge 1949

Pastels

- J.798.101 John AMOS, pstl/ppr, 49.5x36.2, c.1792; & pendant: J.798.102 spouse, pstl/ppr, 49.5x36.2, c.1792 (Colonial Williamsburg, 1964-175A/176B)
J.798.103 John BLAIR (1740–), pstl/ppr, 49.8x39.5, c.1775; & pendant: J.798.104 Mary Blair, pstl/ppr, 51.8x41, c.1775 (Northampton, Smith College Museum of Art, inv.1977:39-1/2. Don Mrs John G. Painter, née Lillias Armour). Attr. φ



- J.798.107 John BLAIR, Jr (1732–1800), pstl/ppr, 44.6x34.5, c.1790 (Colonial Williamsburg, acqu. a.1987. US PC L1974-674)
J.798.108 Birkett DAVENPORT, civil servant, pstl/ppr, 57.5x45.2, c.1790–1800 (US Masonic Lodge no. 43, 2961-M-3)
J.798.109 William GOOD (1739–1820) of New Bern, North Carolina, pstl, 54.5x44.5 (desc.: PC). Attr.
J.798.11 Dr Peter HUGGERFORD [(–1798)]; & pendant: J.798.111 spouse [(∞ a.1750)], née Elizabeth [Gedney] (1730–), pstl, 53x37.5, inscr. verso "Elizabeth Huggerford/aged 53 years/Painted February 27th 1783" (Mill Stone Hall; a US educational institution; New York, Sotheby's, 16.I.1999, Lot 435 repr., est. \$6–8000; New York, Christie's, 29.V.2002, Lot 95 n.r.) φ



- J.798.113 John JAMESON, Sr, officer, pstl/ppr, 54.9x43.2, c.1790; & pendant: J.798.114 spouse, Elizabeth (1750–), pstl/ppr, 54.9x43.2, c.1790 (US Masonic Lodge no. 43, 2961-M-1/2)
J.798.115 ?Thomas JEFFERSON (1743–1826), 3rd president of the USA, m/u (Jefferson accounts, 12.VII.1792, "paid Williams for drawing my portrait 14 D"). Lit.: Fiske Kimball, "The life portraits of Jefferson and their replicas", *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, LXXXVIII/6, .XII.1944, pp. 497–534p. 510 n.r.
J.798.116 William Person LITTLE (1766–), pstl/ppr, 47.9x38.1 (Raleigh Historic Properties Commission SSSA5537)
J.798.117 Rev. Charles PETTIGREW (1744–1807), bishop of New Bern, North Carolina, pstl/ppr, 62.2x46.0, 1785; & pendant: J.798.118 spouse, née Mary Blount (1750–1786), pstl/ppr, 62.2x46.4, sd verso "Wm Williams Pinxit/Edenton/August 20th/Sept. 15th, 1785"

(Winston-Salem, Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, 3333/3332. Desc.: Charles W. Pettigrew). Lit.: *Antiques*, .XI.1976, p. 1048 repr.

- J.798.119 Catherine SHEPHERD (1783–), pstl/ppr, 53.3x35.5, 1784 (Colonial Williamsburg 1964-174)

The three children of George Warner and Magdalen, née Waldegrave of New York:

- J.798.121 Effingham WARNER (1776–1796), in pink coat, blue waistcoat, ruffled collar, holding a flute, pstl/ppr, 51x37, 1781 (Winterthur DE, Museum, inv. 1957.1145A). Lit.: Jatcko & Ebel 2009, fig. 4 φ



- J.798.123 Garrett Brass WARNER (1781–1785), pstl/ppr, 52x37, 1782 (Winterthur DE, Museum, inv. 1957.1144A. Legs Henry Francis du Pont). Lit.: Schmiegel 1975, pl. VI φ



- J.798.125 Mrs Azriah Williams, née Sarah F. WARNER (1771–1848), pstl/ppr, 52x37, sd verso "Wm William/Pinxit Novr 30th/1781" (Winterthur DE, Museum, inv. 1957.1143A). Lit.: Schmiegel 1975, pl. VI φ



J.798.127 George WASHINGTON (1732–1799), 1st president of the USA, pstl/ppr, 71.1x55.8, 1794 (Alexandria-Washington Masonic Lodge No. 22, Ancient, Free, and Accepted Masons, Virginia). Lit.: Gustavus A. Eisen, *Portraits of Washington*, 1932, II, pp. 505f; Miles 1999, p. 31 repr.; Ingamells 2004, p. 473 n.r., as pnt. φ



J.798.129 Gentleman, pstl, 61x48.3, s (Cambridge, Massachusetts, CRN, 17.XI.2002, Lot 11, \$400)
J.798.13 Man; & pendant: J.798.131 woman, pstl/ppr, 44x38.5, c.1780 (Colonial Williamsburg, inv. 1994-96/97)