

# De SIMONE COMPANY, *Booksellers*

415 Seventh Street S. E., Washington, DC 20003

[desimonecompanybooks@gmail.com](mailto:desimonecompanybooks@gmail.com)

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## COLLECTION OF AMERICAN SILHOUETTES, 1794-1845



We are pleased to offer as a collection this group of silhouettes which covers the highs and lows of the field, including an African American profilist, a women profilist, folk art, and the great names, Edouart, Medford and Peale. The collection includes hollow cut silhouettes done in the cut and paste fashion, hollow cut silhouettes with black textile backing, a series of bust images, hand painted silhouettes, color portraits, full length silhouettes, and silhouettes highlighted with China white and color. As this description came together, it became apparent that this collection of silhouettes was an exhibition of the American artform looking for an exhibit. It includes 29 silhouettes, 2 color portraits, 18 bust silhouettes, all from the period before 1845, plus 50 silhouettes from the 1890's.

\$ 17,500.00

Asma Naeem sums up the artform in the following way in her exhibition catalogue published by the National Portrait Gallery entitled, *Black Out: Silhouettes Then and Now*, issued in

2018. *"Indeed, during this time, hundreds of thousands of Americans hung silhouettes on their parlor walls or pasted them into scrapbooks as family mementos. Of course, because they were far more affordable than oil paintings, and were made quickly, and in multiples, silhouettes were bound to be hugely popular and certainly democratized portraiture well before the advent of photography in 1839."*

For a full description visit:

## De SIMONE COMPANY, *Booksellers*

HIS LEDGER BOOK CONTAINS EXAMPLES OF 1,846 SILHOUETTES



BACHE, WILLIAM. *Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Brownlow*, Philadelphia, 1794.

Pair of signed hollow cut silhouettes pasted to card stock, image measuring 2 ½ x 1 ¾ inches. Names of both sitters and the date 1794 appears in ink on the verso of the silhouette. Encased in a contemporary ivory veneer wooden frames with original glass painted with a thick black border highlighted with a white fillet enclosing the hollow cut silhouette. Ivory veneer shows some wear but otherwise in very good condition.

Beautifully executed and signed hollow cut silhouettes from one of the masters of the art working in the last years of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Bache, an Englishman, began his trade in America in the city of Philadelphia and over the decade that he was active as a portrait artist, he traveled up and down the East Coast producing shades and profiles in many of the major cities along the coast. In 1803 he spent months in New Orleans and during that period of time he produced nearly 1900 profiles, many of which were preserved in his ledger of duplicate cuts. "He rented a room on Royal Street. His patrons cut across socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic lines – they were French, Spanish, West Indian, Anglo, and free and enslaved African Americans – and included doctors, lawyers, merchants, priests, soldiers, planters, and politicians."

“Bache charged sitters twenty-five cents for four silhouettes, likely cut from a piece of paper that had been folded twice. Sitters could pay an additional twenty-five cents for each with additional ‘shading in black’ or two dollars for ‘painting in colors in miniature style.’” A price on the rear of the portrait of Mrs. Brownlow written in pencil was \$ 12.00 which suggests a couple of very expensive frames.



Naeem, Asma. *Black Out Silhouettes Then and Now*. Washington: National Portrait Gallery, 2019, pp. 87, 98. Rifken, Blume J. *Silhouettes in America, 1790-1840: A Collector's Guide*, p. 40-43. Carrick, Alice Van Leer. *Shades of our Ancestors*, Boston, 1928, pp. 60-69.

“WAS ONE OF THE FINEST SILHOUETTE ARTISTS”



BACHE, WILLIAM. *Mr. and Mrs. Abel Cutting*, Philadelphia, 1794.

Pair of signed hollow cut silhouettes pasted to card stock, image measuring 2 ½ x 1 ¾ inches. Names of both sitters and the date 1794 appears in ink on the verso of the silhouette. Framed in old but not contemporary wooden frames, new glass. Very good condition.

Well chiseled profiles of husband and wife, cut by hand with added flourishes featuring eyelids, wisps of hair with flowers and ribbons, and a suggestion of a collar and ribbon tie in costume of Abel Cutting. These two hollow cut silhouettes were made before Bache's and his partners Isaac Tood and Augustus Day patented an improved 'physiognotrace', an apparatus that traced the outline of the head, and with a mechanical arm like one used on a pantograph, reduced the size of the image, that was then cut and embellished as required. Charles W. Peale used the first apparatus of this type as early as 1785, when he did the notable silhouette of President Washington.

In an advertisement published by William Bache he writes, "Cutting, shading, and painting of profile likenesses in a new and elegant style from long experience and great success in business and aided by an improved Physiognotrace, [the artist] feels confident of rendering general satisfaction." Bache surely delivered great satisfaction with his elegant hollow cut silhouettes, cut assuredly and made elegant with added India ink curls on the border of the cutting and Chinese white highlights added to the background paper. He referred to these stunning silhouettes as "shaded profiles."

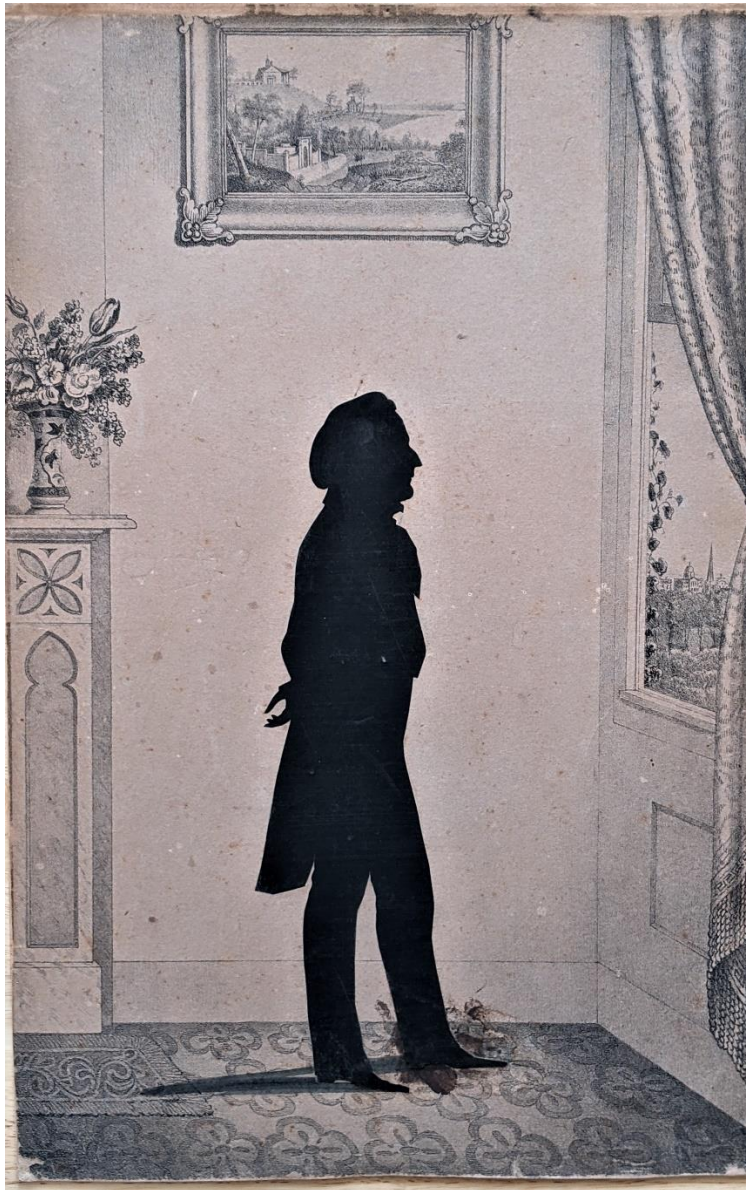


William Bache (1771-1845) came to the United States from England as a young man, and it appears from the records that he created silhouettes for about a dozen years, from the mid-1790's to the 1807 or so. In addition to hollow cut silhouettes like the examples above, Bache made painted cuts, that after tracing were painted with India ink directly as a profile. These later silhouettes were signed with an embossed signature that appears in some examples.

Naeem, Asma. *Black Out Silhouettes Then and Now*. Washington: National Portrait Gallery, 2019, pp. 87, 98. Rifken, Blume J. *Silhouettes in America, 1790-1840: A Collector's Guide*, p. 40-43. Carrick, Alice Van Leer. *Shades of our Ancestors*, Boston, 1928, pp. 60-69. See also [www.peggymcclard.com](http://www.peggymcclard.com) for comments by Peggy McClard a dealer in American folk art.



“AT HIS BEST WILLIAM HENRY BROWN’S MEN ARE UNSURPASSED. NO UNEQUALLED!”



ATTRIBUTED TO WILLIAM HENRY BROWN. *Unidentified Man in a Parlor Room Overlooking a City Scape.* (Mount Vernon ca. 1835?)

Full-length hand cut and drawn hollow cut silhouette pasted to a stock lithographic image of a parlor setting and a view of the Capitol Building. Silhouette size 9 x 2 ¼ inches. The silhouette is tightly framed in a later frame and there is an ink smudge at the bottom of the lithographic image.

Well designed and well cut, the silhouette illustrates a man, perhaps a politician, posed in a deliberative manner and looking out at a city scape. The setting of this silhouette is probably Washington, D. C. or Mount Vernon. The painting in the lithography on the wall above the profile is of Washington's home and the view from the window appears to be the Capitol of the United States.

William Henry Brown career as a profilist began as early as the 1820's and continued until just before the Civil War. He is often compared to Edouart because of his use of the lithographic background but it is apparent from his early work, which is began at least 15 years before he arrived in the United States, that his hand cut profiles distinguished his work from all other specialists in full-length cuts. Brown is also famous for his delicate cuts of processions and large groups of people in congregation. His cuts often illustrate intricate designs of America in motion. As the critic Charles Henry Hart wrote in an article entitled "The Last of the Silhouettists" for *Outlook*, he describes Brown as being "amazingly clever at cutting ships under sail, cleaving the billows or becalmed, tossed on the stormy wave crests, or riding securely at anchor. In these designs the delineation of the varied motions was executed with uncommon skill."

Rifken, Blume J. *Silhouettes in America, 1790-1840: A Collector's Guide*. Burlington, Vermont: Paradigm Press, 1987, p. xii. Alice Van Leer Carrick, *Shades of our Ancestors*, Boston, 1828, pp. 150-162.

A COLLECTION OF 89 HOLLOW CUT SILHOUETTES BY CHAMBERLAIN  
ARE NOW IN THE COLLECTIONS OF THE AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY



ATTRIBUTED TO WILLIAM CHAMBERLAIN. *Unidentified Young Woman*. New England  
ca. 1820?

Bust length hollow cut silhouette on white paper of a young girl, cutout backed with black textile. Profile measuring 3 x 1 inches. Figure enhanced with the addition in gray ink of wisps of hair and a patterned collar. The paper stock has minor discolorations, but generally in very good condition. Later gilt frame.

Not much is known of William Chamberlain except that he worked for a couple of years as a profilist and traveled throughout New England. There is a collection of 89 hollow cut silhouettes by Chamberlain's at the American Antiquarian Society, given to the institution by his granddaughter.

The characteristics of this image of the Unknown Woman are the finely cut features of the head, and the separate cuts of the head and the torso, leaving white paper to be decorated with a finely designed collar. Also the sweep of the concave and convex cut at the base of the torso are quite distinct. A quote that appears in Peggy McClard's Blog that she attributed to Chamberlain's granddaughter reads, "He made the profiles with the aid of a profile machine. He usually cut his



profiles in duplicate and these (the collection at AAS) are the ones he preserved.” Other silhouettes artists, like Orson Warren of New England also cut designs in this style during the 1820’s. His work is also worth examining.

Carrick, Alice Van Leer. *Shades of our Ancestors*. Boston, 1828, p. 121. Rifken, Blume J. *Silhouettes in American, 1790-1840, A Collectors Guide*. Burlington, VT., 1987, p. 50-51. Peggy McClard, *Silhouettes Bios. Blog*, 2020.

KNOWN AS “THE INCOMPARABLE EDOUART”



EDOUART, AUGUST. *Sidney Brooks Against a Lithographed Marine Background*. Saratoga Springs, New York, ca. 1840.

Signed and dated “Augst. Edouart fecit 1842/Saratoga springs”. Full-length hand cut and drawn silhouette pasted to a stock lithographic image of a marine setting printed as background. Silhouette size 8 ¼ x 2 ½ inches. Mounted in an old, perhaps original bird’s eye maple frame; some minor peeling to inner gilt liner and bumps to the corners; realigned more recently by Shreve, Crump, and Low Company, framers in Boston.

This image of Sidney Brooks is characteristically cut with a delicate balance of head to body. The face is distinguished by finely controlled snips that upon close examination accentuate the slope of the forehead, the slight protrusion of the eye socket, the delicate cut of the eyelid, and the proportional slope of the nose leading down to the mouth and chin. Edouart highlights the face by making the collar of his shirt white and gives the costume a flourish by cutting the tie at a similar angle to the nose.

It was quite common for Edouart to paste his hand cut profile to a lithographic sheet printed with the instruments of the profession of the sitter, in this case a maritime scene which suggests Brooks connection with the sailing. It is thought that this is the same Sidney Brooks (1813–1887) who attended Phillips Academy and Amherst College. He was the founder of the Pine Grove Seminary, a classical and nautical academy and was headmaster for 20 years. A small archive of his papers are in the Special Collections at Amherst.



August Edouart (1789–1861) was perhaps the most prolific and accomplished silhouette artist of his day, whose shade portraits included images of the nobility and illustrious personages in France and England, thought to number over 50,000. In 1839, at the same time the daguerreotype was emerging as a competitive method for portraiture, Edouart came to America and traveled up and down the East Coast making paper portraits. Saratoga Springs was a destination for artists like Edouart, who followed wealthy Americans summering in the Springs to enjoy their leisure time. An exhibition catalogue of silhouettes cut by Edouart while in the United States was prepared in 1913 by Arthur S. Vernay and includes a list of 3,712 documented portraits. The list includes six Presidents of the United States, hundreds of politicians including Daniel Webster and Henry Clay, financiers and capitalists, lawyers, doctors, professors, preachers, and numerous

group portraits of families and business men. He worked in America for ten years returning to London in the winter of 1848.

According to A. Hyatt Mayor, writing in the Introduction to Andrew Oliver's book, *Auguste Edouart's Silhouettes of Eminent Americans*, Edouart's technique was both painterly and exquisitely executed. "He began each silhouette by studying the line of the forehead relative to the nose; the nose to the lips, and lastly the line of the lips with the chin; the relation of the mouth to the chin. . . He cut from sheets of thin paper printed solid black on one side only. . . He folded the sheet down the middle, white side outward for better visibility, and held the fold toward the left. He first pierced any holes there might be, then cut the features while moving the paper as much as the scissors, if not more. Edouart separated the two silhouettes that he had cut simultaneously and mounted one for the client on plain paper or a lithographica background." The duplicate silhouetted which resulted from cutting the folded paper was kept by Edouart for further research and exhibition.

Oliver, Andrew. *Auguste Edouart's Silhouettes of Eminent Americans*, Charlottesville: for the National Portrait Gallery, 1977. *A Collection of American Silhouette Portraits Cut by August Edouart, on Exhibition*. Introduction by Arthur S. Vernay, New York, 1913. Rifken, Blume J. *Silhouettes in America, 1790-1840: A Collector's Guide*. Burlington, Vermont: Paradigm Press, 1987.

## REMARKABLE ILLINOIS COMMUNITY SILHOUETTE ALBUM



FOLK ART SILHOUETTES. Black Paper Silhouette and Photograph Album. Downer's Grove and Hinsdale, Illinois, circa 1890.

Oblong octavo album, 7 x 10 inches. 35 pp. Twenty-five leaves on which are mounted fifty silhouette bust profiles (about 4 x 5 inches each), forty-three are identified; an additional silhouette is laid in with an envelope cover. The album also contains ten leaves contain eleven mounted photographs, ten of which are identified. Inside back cover is a label reading "Ward's Album for Unmounted Photographs". Leatherette cover worn, leaves chipped at corners, some disbound, paper stock fragile at edges; photographs pasted in.

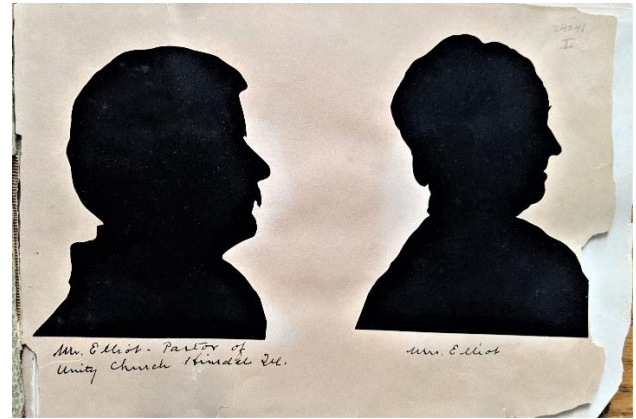
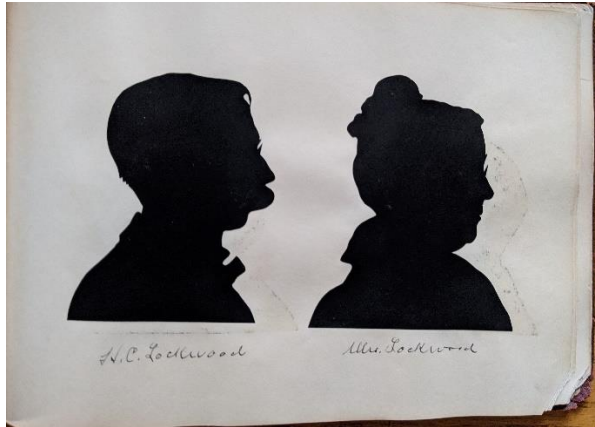
Attractive and expertly cut black paper hollow cut silhouettes of residents in the Downer's Grove section of Hinsdale, Illinois, in the late 1880s and early 1890s. One of the more notable examples is that of Chauncey F. Ryder (1868-1949) landscape painter, etcher, lithographer, who studied at the Art Students League in New York and at the Académie Julian in Paris. Ryder spent a few years in Chicago prior to 1891. His wife, Mary Dole Keith, is also silhouetted.

There are also silhouettes of Rev. (C.F.) Elliott and his wife (Henrietta), pastor of The (then) Unity Church. The Unitarian Church of Hinsdale was founded in 1887 by William Channing Gannett, a blueblood Bostonian and "Unity Man"; intellectual renegade radicals of the west who asserted that religious authority was not to be found only in the Bible but rather in intuitive, direct experience of God.

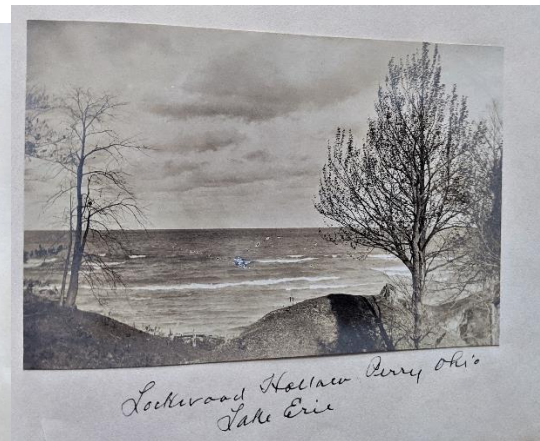
Downers Grove was founded in 1832 by Pierce Downer, a religious evangelist from New York. The village of Hinsdale was first settled after 1833. At that time, the area ran along Old Plank Road and was known as Brush Hill. Until the 1890's, Hinsdale had about 2500 residents and its streets were unpaved.

The early photos in this album show the development that occurred in the 1890s with photos of newly built: "Brush Hill"; "Hinsdale Freight Depot"; "Robbins House Hinsdale"; "Hinsdale Passenger Depot"; Unidentified (Two women & two children in a sulky style cart with horse; "50 Garfield Ave. Hinsdale, Home of the Lockwoods"; "Meacham House Hinsdale"; "Brush Hill";

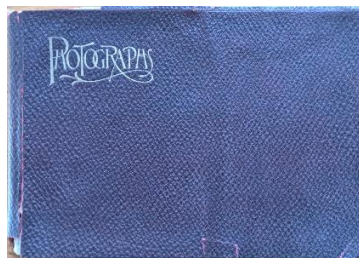




"Hinsdale Club House". Other photos are "Bay View, Little Traverse Bay, Mich." and "Lockwood Hollow, Perry Ohio, Lake Erie". The "Robbins House" shows the domicile of William Robbins, a stone mansion built in 1864 with a fortune made in the California gold fields.



Silhouette portraits include: Mr. Elliot - Pastor of Unity Church Hinsdale Ill., Mrs. Elliot, Mr. Temple, Mrs. Temple, Mr. Chas. Warren, Mrs. Warren, Willard Edwards, Mrs. Edwards, Hoyt Stewart, Mrs. Stewart, Mr. Weiss. Mrs. Weiss, Mr. Eustis, Mrs. Eustis, Chauncy Ryder, Mrs. Ryder, Mr. Wm. Gordon, Mrs. Gordon, Unidentified, Unidentified, Alec Gordon, Helen Gordon, Dana Slade, Mrs. Slade, Eugene Crosby, Mallie Crosby, Unidentified, Miss Ellen Arquit, Unidentified, Bird Crosby, Mr. Peckham, Mrs. Peckham, Herman Fox, Judge Conover, Mrs. Conover, H. C. Lockwood, Mrs. Lockwood, Hazel Lockwood, Adaline Smith, Robt. Gardner, Mrs. Carter, Byron Carter, Unidentified, Unidentified, Unidentified, Ethel Warren, Mrs. Cyrus Warren, Unidentified, Mr. Raymond, Mrs. Raymond, Miss. Arquit, Unidentified, (Envelope) Laura Lockwood.



RARE, FULLY PAINTED SILHOUETTE BY A PROVINCIAL SHADE PROFILIST



FOSTER, J. *Unidentified Sitter at His Desk*. Portsmouth (N. H.), ca 1840.

Fully painted silhouette, image measuring 5 ½ x 5 ½ inches applied to card stock. Colored with black, blue, and gray inks, highlighted with gold in the hair and hands. Card stock brown with age and showing some spotting. Period bird's eye maple frame with some loss of gilt to the inner liner; frame bumped at corners.

On the verso of the silhouettes is a pasted label which reads, "J. Foster/Silhouette Artist,/Queen Street,/Portsmouth/Portraits taken from 1s. to 5s./Time of Sitting 4 Minutes."

Very good example of a fully painted and colored silhouette, executed by a local artist with limited success. The composition of the silhouette depicts a seated well-dressed man doing his accounts or letter writing at a desk, which is decorated with a candle, paper and writing board. The picture lack perspective as well as the accurate rendering of the physical activity of the seated man.

Color painted silhouettes became more common after the introduction of photography to the competitive field of portraiture. Highly skilled profilists used color to smooth edges, define features, and add details that enhanced the image. "In addition, painted silhouettes usually have such embellishments as hair, collars, stocks, vests, bonnets, lace, or combs. Some of these items may be painted on in various tones of the same black India ink or water color that comprise the main portion of the silhouette. Sometimes the details are enhanced by the use of Chinese white or an application of gold paint, a technique known as bronzing."



In this case Foster used many of the techniques associated with the color painted silhouette suggesting he was trained by a more experienced artist. Yet his limited skills prevented him from creating excellent work of art, even though the anonymous sitter is well documented.

Naeem, Asma. *Black Out Silhouettes Then and Now*. Washington: National Portrait Gallery, 2019, pp. 83-84. Rifken, Blume J. *Silhouettes in America, 1790-1840: A Collector's Guide*, p. 4. Carrick, Alice Van Leer. *Shade of our Ancestors*. Boston, 1928, p. 136. In Carrick's book there are two illustrated examples of these designs.

FEW EXAMPLES OF METFORD'S SILHOUETTES SURVIVE IN THIS COUNTRY



Metford, Samuel. *Unidentified Couple Reading Prayer Books. Friends Meeting House. New Haven, 1837.*

Pair of signed full-length cut-and-paste silhouettes. Images measuring 8 ¼ x 6 inches. The black paper silhouettes are highlighted in white gloss and ink and pasted to a white paper stock; the paper stock is enhanced with a very light application of dark wash to create a landscape. The entire image is enclosed within a black wash border. The paper shows some toning due to age. The silhouette is housed in an original frame with original glass and is protected with a later backing board and brown paper. Very good condition.

Samuel Metford (1810-1896) was from Glastonbury, England and came to the United States around 1830 and traveled up and down the East Coast making silhouettes. He returned to England in 1844. He worked in the style of August Edouart, cutting full-length portraits and taking particular care to highlight his sitter's costumes in white gloss. Metford also featured a white collar, a flourish initiated by Edouart. In her entertaining history of the silhouette or "shade" as she refers to them, Alice Carrick writes in part, "Metford who belongs in this chapter only because so little of his work is known, is almost the latest of these less celebrated profilists; he is also one of the best."

This profile of the Quaker couple is beautifully rendered and delicately cut by one of the masters of the trade. The gentle slope of the woman's face and the emphasis on the eyelash is particularly painterly and exhibits the quality of Metford's design skill and execution. The highlights of the hat and bonnet, the delineation of the collars, and the application of different tones of black to the drapery of the costumes demonstrate his skill with the scissor and brush that Metford brought to the artform.

Carrick, Alice Van Leer. *Shades of our Ancestors. American Profiles and Profilists.* Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1928, p. 136 showing two examples of his work. Rifken, Blume J.





*Silhouettes in America, 1790-1840. A Collector's Guide*, Burlington, Vermont: Paradigm Press, 1987., pp. 104-5.

“A TALENTED AND WELL-TRAINED ARTIST”

METFORD, SAMUEL. *Wortham, Stephen Thomas & Wife, of Newport, R.I.* [Newport, R.I: ca. 1840].



Pair of signed, full-length cut-and-paste silhouettes; images measuring 7 ¼ x 2 ½ inches and 5 ¼ x 3 ¾ inches. The black paper silhouettes are highlighted in white gloss and ink and pasted to a white paper stock. The paper shows some toning due to age and light foxing near images, else very good.

Biographical information on Metford that appears on the website of the National Portrait Gallery reads in part, “Samuel Metford was born in Glastonbury, into a Quaker family. In England he came to specialize in full-length silhouette likenesses, cut from black paper and embellished with gold and white paint. According to the standard text on British silhouettes, Metford made 'some very fine family groups - Father and Mother surrounded by their children and pets, with hand-painted backgrounds of imposing rooms whose tall windows looked out on wide landscapes, or a seascape with a tall-funneled steamship in a prominent position.' Metford moved to America in about 1834, and spent some ten years there, working mostly in Connecticut but also in New York and South Carolina. He returned to England in the early 1840s, and lived there for the rest of his life, although he revisited America in 1869 and 1867. He died at Weston-Super-Mare.”

The couple in this example are identified by old hand-written legends in pencil that appeared on the verso of the silhouettes. They have been removed and attached to the back of the frame. Metford indicates that Wortham was a writer by depicting him with a quill in his hand, but no biographical information has been found to further identify the sitter. .

Metford's signature appears at the lower right corner of Mr. Wortham's silhouette.

Stephen Thomas Northam.  
These 3 silhouettes done by same man  
Stephen T. Northam was born  
May 13, 1769. Died March 13,  
1856.

Mrs. Stephen T. Northam, (Mary)  
daughter of Mr. & Sarah Duncan  
Fargley.

Carrick, Alice Van Leer, *Shades of our Ancestors, American Profiles and Profilists*. Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1928, p. 113. Rifken, Blume J. *Silhouettes in American, 1790-1840. A Collector's Guide*. Burlington, VT., Paradigm Press, 1987, pp. 104-05.



PART OF THE REPERTOIRE OF AN ITINERANT ARTISTS WHO TRAVELED FROM CITY TO CITY



PAINTED PORTRAITS. *Unidentified Family, Father, Mother and Child.* N.p., ca. 1840.

Pair of seated painted portraits on cardstock. Images measuring 7 x 4 ¼ inches. Colored with India ink and watercolor. Cardstock showing some light foxing and a bit toned by age. Old matching frames, possibly original, glass missing.

Handsome pair of portraits with well delineated facial features on both the husband and wife, although they are one dimensional and flat in their format. Not unlike the flat dimensionality of the silhouette. The artist has taken considerable care with the rendering of the man's vest with its gold buttons and the woman's collar and head veil are highly detailed. Not so successful in the rendering of the babe in arms and her gown. Of interest is the choice by the artist to depict the woman and child in a pose reminiscent of medieval presentations of the Virgin Mary with Christ feeding at her breast.

Like silhouette and miniature portrait paintings, painted portraits were very much a part of the repertoire of the itinerant artists who traveled up and down the coasts looking for sitters and paying customers. Although these portraits are not done in profile they are part of the genre of portraiture exercised by artist like Walter Rossiter and Jacob Schoener.



PROBABLY CUT BY ONE OF THE FIRST AMERICAN AFRICAN AMERICAN ARTIST  
WORKING IN AMERICA -- MOSES WILLIAMS



PEALE, CHARLES WILSON. *Gallery of Four Silhouettes*. Philadelphia, ca. 1800.

Four hollow cut silhouettes cut on white wove paper and backed with black cloth each measuring  $4 \frac{3}{4} \times 3 \frac{1}{2}$  inches. Set with a painted glass frame of black and gold and enclosed in a period gilt frame. The glass shows some discoloration and the frame some minor chipping and rubbing to the patina of the gilding. Each is signed with an embossed marking "Peale's Museum".

Early examples of the production of silhouettes from the Peale Museum, showing flourishes and delicate cuts characteristics of the turn of the century. In this case the hollow cut forms are not pasted to the white paper, but rather backed with a black textile that creates the contrast against the white paper stock. Set within the painted glass frame, this series of images, though unidentified, appears to represent President Washington in the upper right and perhaps members of this family. Hollow cut silhouettes backed with textile are quite rare and this example suggest that the portrait series was created for a wealthy sitter willing to pay Peale for an exquisite presentation including a painted glass gilt frame.

In addition to his many firsts as an American promoter of culture and natural history, Charles Wilson Peale was the first silhouettes artists to use the mechanical device called the physiognotrace brought to America from England by John Isaac Hawkins in 1784. The device was capable of tracing the head of a sitter and reducing it in size to a  $4 \frac{3}{4} \times 3 \frac{1}{2}$  inch drawing on a piece of paper, which was then cut out with embroidery scissors and knife. In his desire to promote his apparatus, Hawkins

provide one to Peale who used in his Museum. The physiognotrace silhouette machine was an immediate success and produced many, many thousands of profiles well into the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

Moses Williams, a Mulatto boy and son of a slave family later emancipated by Peale, became one of the most prolific operators of the physiognotrace device. “Moses Williams traced and cut the vast

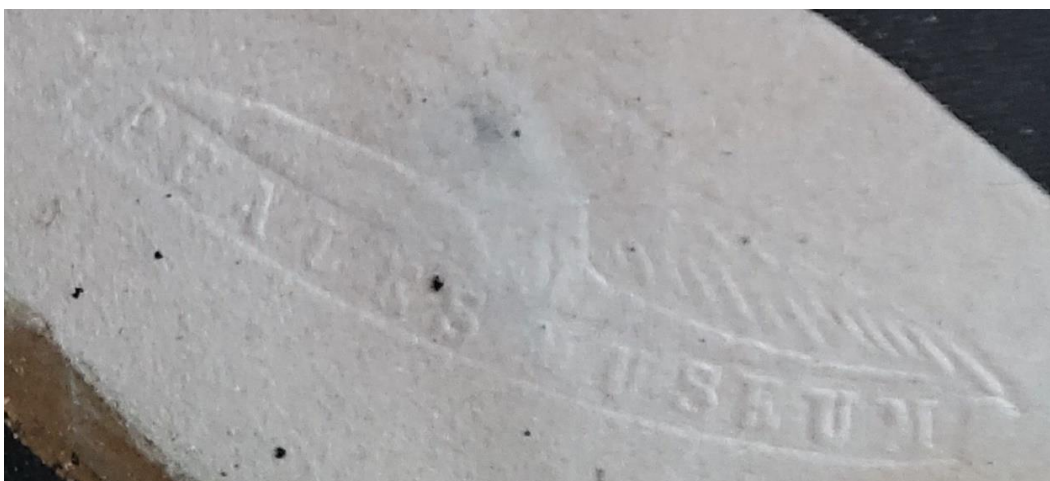


majority of profile portraits that were made using the machine,” although he also cut many by hand. This quote appears in a substantial article by Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw entitled “Interesting Characters By the Lines of Their Face: Moses William’s Profile Portrait Silhouettes of Native American,” in *Black Out Silhouettes Then and Now*. Dubois Shaw documents the life of Moses Williams and describes his considerable contribution to the success of the Peale Museum

through the profits generated by the silhouettes he created. She notes that at age 27 he was freed by Peale and was able to purchase a two-story house and marry a white woman who was Peale’s family cook.

In addition to Williams, Peale employed Marth Ann Honeywell, “a woman born without arms and only three toes on one foot” who also cut silhouettes and signed them with here name and with the phrase, “cut without hands.” Like so many artists at the time, Honeywell traveled up and down the Coast seeking sitters and making a name for herself. Her silhouettes are quite rare and are extremely expense when they come to the market.

One of the issues with collecting “Peale Museum” silhouettes is that a number of fakes appeared on the market after the brass embossed plate with the name of the museum was found by a couple of antique dealers, who produced fakes for the market. See the next description of more details on how to identify the fakes.



ONE OF THE FAKES SOLD INTO THE MARKET IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY



PEALE, CHARLES WILSON. *Silhouette of President George Washington*. Philadelphia, n.d.

Hollow cut silhouette cut from pulp made paper, backed with black textile; image measuring 4  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 3  $\frac{1}{4}$  inches; paper measurement 8  $\frac{1}{4}$  x 5 inches. Image of President Washington surrounded by 13 stars. Simple black wooden frame.

In 1928, Alice Van Leer Carrick wrote in her book *Shades of Ancestors*, that “rumors have reached me of the work of clever men – I hesitate to ascribe their virtuosity to any city! – who have copied the stamp, which they then affix to profiles cut from sheets of old paper. Flyleaves torn from ancient books are excellent for this purpose, I am told.”

This thesis is brought up to date by the antiques and folk art dealer Peggy McClard of Weare, New Hampshire. On her blog, under the heading of Silhouettes Bios. McClard writes in part:

The most faked silhouettes in the world have the impressed signature “Peale’s Museum” under a spread eagle. That is because, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, a couple of unscrupulous

antiques dealers named Collins found the original stamp. They set about making horribly cut fakes and stamping them with what had been one of the most rare of stamps from Charles Wilson Peale's Museum. The fakes are easy to spot (although they come up for sale all the time as original pieces). First, the silhouette cutting is sloppy, and the subjects are quite often George Washington and other great statespersons. Second, the paper used by Peale's real tracing machine was  $3\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$  inches. The size of Peale's paper could not vary because his tracing machine was set up to hold a  $3\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$  inch piece of paper and automatically reduce the size of the profile while it was being traced around the actual person. The fake silhouettes are on paper that tends to be 6 x 8 inches...it is impossible that this size paper was used in Peale's tracing machine. (2020)





LESS REMARKABLE FOR THE PROFILES THAN THE CUT-PAPER WORK THAT ENCLOSES THEM



PENNSYLANIA DUTCH VALENTINE SILHOUETTES. *The Family "B": Father, Mother, Son & Daughter.* ca., 1820.

Set of four bust length hollow cut silhouette on white paper, cutout backed with black textile. Profiles measuring 2 x 1 ¼ inches. With an elaborate hand cut border with a dome at the top enclosing a heart and the initials of the sitter. Some toning to the paper stock and a few wrinkles, otherwise very good and well preserved. Housed in a later frame.



Beautifully rendered series of profiles, deftly cut with emphasis on the hair and ribbon ties and embellished with an intricate pattern that acts as a border to the image. The border is a complicated series of horizontal and vertical cuts forming a repeating pattern that gracefully turn at the corners, and at the top of the border below the dome, form a repeating squiggle design. The dome is constructed of a similar pattern of cuts, which enclosing a heart, indicating the valentine theme, the initials of the sitter, and their initials.

Of these rare hollow cut silhouette Alice Carrick writes, "Amateur valentine silhouettes, also a much older Continental custom, may be picked up, too, every now and then. These, with the exception of the quaint cuttings sometimes to be found in the Pennsylvania Dutch country, are desirable only because of sentiment and rarity. The Pennsylvania pair which I illustrate are less remarkable for the

profiles themselves than for the characteristic cut-paper work which encloses them."

Carrick, Alice Van Leer. *Shade of our Ancestors*. Boston, 1928, p. 136. In Carrick's book there are two illustrated examples of these designs.

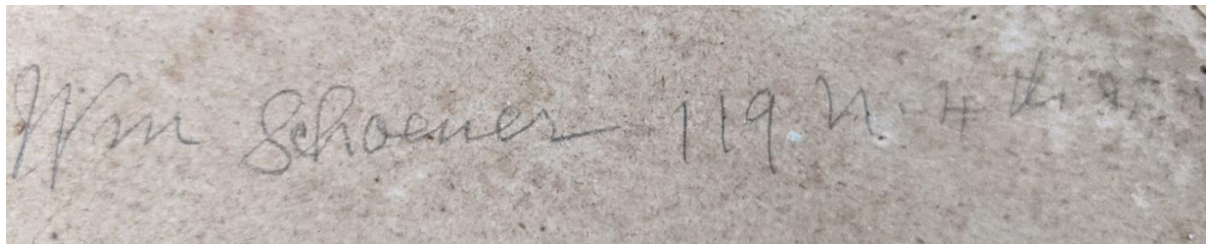
COULD HIS BROTHER THE MINIATURE PAINTER JACOB SCHOENER BE THE ARTISTS?



UNIDENTIFIED ARTIST. *William Schoener of Reading, Pennsylvania.* ca.1840.

Full-length hand cut and drawn silhouette pasted to a stock lithographic image of the politician and entrepreneur William Schoener, Silhouette size 8 ½ x 2 ¼ inches. Spare background with foreground delineated with gray wash. Brown wooden frame, probably not original.

Sensitive hand cut portrait, with an expressive face and determined stance with crossed arms and staggered legs. Although unidentified this portrait of William Schoener could very well have been executed by his brother the noted miniature painter Jacob Schoener. In addition to the note in pencil on the back of the silhouette with William's name, this profile comes from as part of an archive of Jacob Schoener's letters, drawing books, and miniature paintings. It is not known if Jacob executed many silhouettes but is certainly is conceivable as many artists crossed over from painting to cutting when the situation warranted it. Much of the archive of Jacob Schoener is in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress.



ATTRIBUTED TO AUGUSTE EDOUART, OR PERHAPS WILLIAM BACHE??



SILHOUETTE BUSTS. *Collection of 18 Duplicate Hollow Cut Profiles, From the Notebooks of One of the Masters.* N. p., ca. 1830-1850.

Collection of 18 duplicate hollow cut profiles collected in two frames. Each image measures 3 x 2 inches and they pasted to a piece of white wove paper. The frames differ in size, date, and color, and were probably chose to fit the sheets of profiles. Very good condition.

Part of the process of cutting a profile was to fold the paper once or twice so duplicate copies of the image could be made from one sitting and one series of cuts. Both Bache and Edouart, consummate hollow cut artists, made duplicates and pasted them in ledgers along with the name of the sitter and in some case the costs. The National Portrait Gallery in Washington was given as a gift by Sarah Bache Bloise her grandfather's Ledger Book which contained 1,846 duplicate busts that we made from 1803 to 1809, mostly from his visit to New Orleans.

Alice Carrick in her chapter of Edouart, relays the story of his return to England after ten years making silhouettes in America. Just before landing the vessel he was on was wrecked and although much of the luggage went to the bottom of the sea, all the crew and passengers were saved. Fortunately so was "Edouart's case containing the American Collection of Silhouettes and many English, Scottish and Irish folio, was saved and brought to shore." This collection made its way back to American and rather than being given to an institution, the owner decided that they should be put back into the market so collectors and institutions could enhance their existing collections. An exhibition was organized to show the collection and a catalogue entitled, *A Catalogue of Silhouettes by August Edouart* was written by Arthur Vernay and published in 1913.

Naeem, Asma. *Black Out: Silhouettes Then and Now.* Washington National Portrait Gallery, 2018, item 6. Carrick, Alice. *Shades of our Ancestors.* Boston, 1928, pp. 138-149.



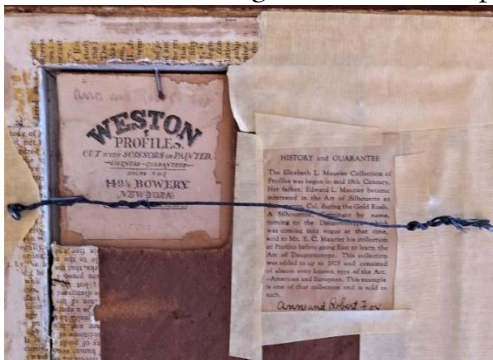
RARE EXAMPLE OF A WESTON SILHOUETTE HIGHLIGHTED WITH CHINA WHITE



WESTON, (MARY PILLSBURY)?? *Ann and Robert Fox*. New York, 1845.

Pair of hollow cut silhouettes, pasted on white paper; measuring 4  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 1 inch and 3  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 1 inch. The background is a hand painted landscape featuring trees, a small knoll off to the left and a wash applied to connote the sky. The silhouettes are highlighted with Chinese white which accentuates the costumes of the two sitters. Set with a gold frame, probably of a later date; on the verso of the frame there is a label advertising Weston Profiles.

Very well cut and articulated silhouettes of brother and sister, Robert and Ann Fox. Young Ann is depicted as offering her brother flowers from a basket which she is holding by her side. Robert is in the act of reaching for the flower a pose which is unusual as it connotes action, a characteristic



not often found in profile art. As with the previous example of a Weston silhouette, the authorship is in question and more research needs to be conducted to determine whether this is by Mary Pillsbury Weston or by Mary West, sister of James and Robert Weston.

Peggy McClard. *Silhouettes Bios., Blog*. 2020.  
Amanda Hinckle. "Silhouette Sleuthing: The Mystery of the Weston Profile Arts." *Winterthur Museum Blog*, November 2018.

## A CASE STUDY OF ATTRIBUTION: 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY WOMEN ARTISTS IN AMERICA



WESTON (MARY PILLSBURY)?? *Mrs. R. Quinn of N.Y. and Mrs. C. Stockton of N.J.* New York, 1831.

A pair of hollow cut silhouettes, pasted on white paper; images measuring 6 ½ x 3 inches each. Signed "by Weston N.Y. 1831". Framed in old black frame, with gilt liner, Labels beneath both of the silhouettes with the names in ink of the two sitters. On the back of the frame there is a label which reads, "Weston/ Profiles./ Cut with Scissors and Painted./ Likeness Guaranteed/ Hours 8 to 7/ 149 ½ Bowery/ New York/ N.B. a Fine Selection of Frames, Glass, Ovals. Flats &c." Another handwritten label in ink reads "Taken at American Museum/ Apr. 6<sup>th</sup>, 1831."

A very attractive and detailed pair of silhouettes with a focus on the head and bonnets of the two women. An intricate series of snips capture an extravagance of headpieces, and the accentuates slopping bodice of the women's garments.

There is some controversy about who exactly "Weston" the silhouette artist was. According to research presented by Peggy McClard, Mary Pillsbury Weston was a well-trained artist, who studied in New York and Connecticut, married into the Weston family and not only created some very rare silhouettes but also was a portrait painter and she exhibited her paintings in galleries and at the

World Fair in 1893. McClard writes in part, “ Weston cut whole families, embellished them with Chinese white and pale blue and laid them upon watercolor backgrounds of a much more complicated nature than those done by Edouart, Metford, or even William Henry Brown. Unlike other artists of the day, she used color in her backgrounds such as subtle shades of green and brown. Her silhouettes are very rare.”



Additional research on Mary Pillsbury Weston was conducted by Amanda Hinckle, Curator at Winterthur Museum. She suggest that Mary Pillsbury Weston, a noted artist and portraitist, was not the Weston who cut the silhouettes that are simply signed “Weston”. After an exhaustive study of New York City records, she concludes that the Weston’s with the address at 149 ½ Bowery was a family of daguerreotypists who lived at 142 Bowery. As part of their business, Mary Weston, sister of James and Robert Weston, was probably responsible for the profiles. It is a fascinating article and a testament to research into “women artists” in 19<sup>th</sup> century America.

Peggy McClard. *Silhouettes Bios., Blog*. 2020. Amanda Hinckle. “Silhouette Sleuthing: The Mystery of the Weston Profile Arts.” *Winterthur Museum Blog*, November 2018.