

Mary Catlin Upham (1765-1833), c. 1830

Anonymous

watercolor on ivory

2 7/8 x 2 1/2 (7.30 x 6.35)

Gift of Grace Williamson Edes Stedman, 1935

Weis 129

Hewes Number: 136

Ex. Coll.: Early provenance unknown; owned by Henry Herbert Edes (1849-1922); to his wife, the donor.

Mary Catlin was born in Deerfield, Massachusetts, and married Edward Upham (1763-1809), a lawyer who practiced in New Salem and Northampton, Massachusetts. The couple settled in Northampton, where he was a leader of the local Jeffersonian party. He died suddenly while running for Congress in 1809, leaving Mary to raise their seven young children alone. There is little information about the life of Mary Catlin Upham, but it is known that she did not remarry.¹ Upon her death at age sixty-nine, her obituary stated: 'Mrs. Upham's life was characterized by Christian humility and uprightness; great fortitude in the discharge of responsible duties under adverse circumstances; and the constant exercise of the spirit of benevolence and kindness. She was excellent in the precept, and impressive in example, and until the day her death was announced, in exercise of those high parental duties which ever devolve upon a mother.'² This miniature of the elderly Upham was once part of an extensive art collection assembled by Henry Herbert Edes, a member of the American Antiquarian Society.³

¹ F. K. Upham, Upham Genealogy (Albany, N.Y.: Joel Munsell's Sons, 1892), 127-29.

² Northampton Courier, 1833, quoted in Upham, Upham Genealogy, 127-28.

³ Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society 32 (October 1922): 237-38.