

Hannah Weld (1763-1842), 1804

Attr. Gerrit Schipper (1775-c. 1830)

pastel on paper

8 15/16 x 7 7/8 (22.80 x 19.80)

inscribed, on verso, in the hand of Isaiah Thomas, Sr.: 'Miss Hannah Weld. Taken in 1804
and at that time 42 years of
age.'

Gift of Chauncey Nash, 1951

Hewes Number: 143

Ex. Coll.: Isaiah Thomas, Sr. (cat. 123 et seq.); bequeathed in 1831 to his granddaughter Hannah Weld Thomas Crocker (1803-27), who was already deceased; descended through the family to Agnes Olney Minot (1861-1944); purchased from her estate in 1944 by Maurice Rubin of the Colonial House Antiques in Boston; purchased in 1946 by the donor.

Hannah Weld was a sister of Mary Weld Thomas (cat. 132), the wife of Isaiah Thomas, Jr. (cat. 122). She was the eldest daughter of Edward and Hannah Church Weld. Never married, Hannah lived most of her life in Boston.¹ Her name often appears in the diaries of Isaiah Thomas, Sr. (cat. 123 et seq.), and she frequently visited the Thomas family in Worcester. On December 12, 1806, Isaiah Thomas, Sr., wrote: 'Severe snow storm. Arrived at Worcester with Miss H. Weld from Boston in 7 hours--half way in stage and half way in my Sleigh.'² Weld appears to have been a bit of a gossip and Thomas had a falling out with her in the summer of 1808, commenting: 'Saw Miss W.'s anonymous Letter to Mrs. Thayer. It was false, wicked and cruel, and proved Miss W. to be a false friend. It was designed to injure the character of Miss C. and myself...' Their relationship was re-established by 1813 when Thomas began again to manage Weld's investments. Transactions in her behalf that are recorded in Thomas's diary suggest that he had some influence over her finances.³

This pastel is one of five images of Thomas family members produced in 1804, when the artist Gerrit Schipper was known to have been in Worcester.⁴ Owned by Isaiah Thomas, Sr., until his death, this portrait was bequeathed to his granddaughter Hannah Weld Thomas Crocker, who had been named after her aunt. The pastel remained in the family until 1944.

¹ Charles Frederick Robinson, Weld Collections (Ann Arbor, Mich.: privately printed, 1938), 100.

² Isaiah Thomas Diary, December 12, 1806, Isaiah Thomas Papers, 1749-1874, AAS Manuscript Collection.

³ Thomas Diary, August 4, 1808. These transactions appear as quarterly notations throughout Thomas's diary from 1807 to 1815. He often noted: 'At the Bank for Miss Weld,' and 'Paid Miss. Weld Dividend &c.'

⁴ Schipper advertised in the Worcester Spy, September 12, 1804. The other images depict Isaiah Thomas, Sr. (cats. 124, 126); Mary Thomas Fowle Thomas (cat. 125); and Mary Weld Thomas (cat. 132).