

David West, Jr. (1790-1825), c. 1796

Christian Gullager (1759-1826)

oil on canvas

21 x 17 (53.3400 x 43.1800)

Bequest of Henry Winchester Cunningham, 1930

Weis 140

Hewes Number: 147

Ex. Coll.: David and Abigail West; to their daughter Abigail West Cunningham; in 1879 to one of her three sons, James, Horace or David Cunningham; to James's son, the donor.

Exhibitions:

1949, 'Christian Gullager,' Worcester Art Museum, no. 24.

1971, 'Early American Paintings from the Collections of the Worcester Art Museum and the American Antiquarian Society,' Worcester Art Museum.

1976, 'Christian Gullager: Portrait Painter to Federal America,' National Portrait Gallery, no. 25.

1977, 'Wellsprings of a Nation,' Worcester Art Museum, no. 262.

Publications:

Louisa Dresser, 'Christian Gullager,' Art in America (July 1949), 168-69.

Marvin Sadik, Christian Gullager: Portrait Painter to Federal America, (Washington, D.C.: National Portrait Gallery, 1976), 96-7.

Rodger D. Parker, Wellsprings of a Nation (Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1977), 139.

The only son of the Boston bookseller David West, Sr. (cat. #146), David West, Jr., was about six years of age when he sat for this portrait holding the family dog. Like the portraits of his father and sister, young David was painted by Christian Gullager during the artist's last year in Boston. David West, Jr., was the older brother of Abigail Leonard West (cat. #144) and, like his sister, grew up in Boston. Very little is known about his brief life. In 1818 he served as a clerk aboard the ship Arab, which made a voyage to the Pacific Ocean and returned to Boston in 1822.¹ His death, at age thirty-five, was recorded in Pomfret, Connecticut, in 1825.²

¹ Frederick Weis, 'Portraits in the American Antiquarian Society,' Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society 56 (April 1946): 115.

² Columbian Centinel February 19, 1825, p. 3.