

EDWARD EVERETT (1794-1865), 1828

Attr. Anson Dickinson (1779-1852)

watercolor on ivory

3 7/8 x 3 (9.8425 x 7.6200)

Gift of Janelle Hardin Morton, Norah Hardin Lind, and Mary Welby Hardin Watkins, 1991
Hewes Number: 46

Ex. Coll.: Early ownership unknown, possibly owned by the sitter's wife Charlotte Brooks Everett (1800-59); through the Everett family to Philip Lesley Hale (b. 1865); to his widow Lilian Wescott Hale; to their daughter Nancy Hale Bowers (1908-88); to her granddaughters, the donors.

This portrait (cat. #46) is attributed to the artist Anson Dickinson, who began painting miniatures in 1802 in New Haven, Connecticut, and moved to New York City in 1804. For thirty years, Dickinson travelled up and down the eastern seaboard and into Canada seeking commissions for miniatures. He kept a log of all of his sitters organized by date and in the year 1828 recorded a visit to Washington, D. C., where he had previously been successful in finding patrons among the nation's politicians and their families. The artist advertised his presence in the city in the National Intelligencer.¹

In his logbook, Dickinson noted on January 1, 1828, that he painted a miniature of a 'Mr. Everett.'² The diary entry made by Edward Everett, then a young Massachusetts Congressman, on the same date confirms that he was the 'Mr. Everett' who sat for Dickinson. 'I went to Dickinson to have my miniature painted at C.'s request.'³ His wife, Charlotte Brooks Everett (1800-59), who had given birth to their third daughter four days before her husband sat for Dickinson, was the likely recipient of the miniature. She had remained in Boston with their children rather than set up housekeeping in the capital.

In the 1820s, Dickinson was one of the most sought-after miniature painters in the nation, and it is possible that Everett's wife wished to have a more current likeness than the earlier image of her husband painted by Sarah Goodridge (cat. #45).⁴ Several of Everett's colleagues in Congress, such as Louisiana Representative Edward Livingston (1764-1836) and Vermont Senator Horatio Seymour (1778-1857), also patronized Dickinson, and Everett may have selected the painter based on their recommendation.⁵

¹ 'A. Dickinson, Miniature Painter, at Major Wheaton's opposite Dr. Thornton's, F. Street.' National Intelligencer, December 8, 1827, January 3, 1828, and January 5, 1828.

² Mary Helen Kidder, ed., List of Miniatures Painted by Anson Dickinson 1803-1851 (Hartford, Conn.: Connecticut Historical Society, 1937), 37. This remarkable logbook documents nearly fifteen hundred miniatures painted by Dickinson between 1803 and 1851.

³ Edward Everett Diary, January 1, 1828, Edward Everett Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society. When this miniature arrived at the American Antiquarian Society it was listed as a portrait of an unknown member of the Everett family. The resemblance of the sitter to a photographic reproduction of a stipple engraving of the young Edward Everett, located in the files of the Society's Graphic Arts Collection, along with the diary entry, support this identification of the sitter.

⁴ Everett had another miniature painted of himself later in his career by the artist Richard Morell Staigg (1817-81) that was engraved by John Cheney (1801-85). A copy of the print is in the American Antiquarian Society's Graphic Arts Collection.

⁵ Mona Leithiser Dearborn, Anson Dickinson: The Celebrated Miniature Painter 1779-1852 (Hartford, Conn.: Connecticut Historical Society, 1983), 16.