Charles Willson Peale (1741-1827) was born in Queen Anne’s County, Maryland. By a chance encounter with artist John Singleton Copley, Peale became his student during the years 1768-1769. In 1770 he moved to London, England bearing a letter to Benjamin West, who kindly received him and accepted Peale as his student at the Royal Academy. In London, Peale studied modeling in wax, casting and molding in plaster, engraving in mezzotint, and miniature painting.

In 1774, after studying with West, Peale returned to Annapolis and began painting portraits. In 1776, on the eve of American Independence, he established himself in Philadelphia. His estate, which is on the campus of La Salle University, can still be visited. Peale became one of the most important painters in the American colonies, and his services were much in demand. Among his portraits are many famous Americans such as George Washington, John Hancock, Benjamin Franklin, Robert Morris, Alexander Hamilton, and his friend, Thomas Jefferson.

He commanded his own company of volunteers during the struggle for American independence, and shouldered a musket at the battles of Trenton and Germantown. Peale’s diary of day-to-day accounts as a militiaman in the Continental Army of George Washington is now found in the collection of the Smithsonian Institution. During the Revolutionary War, Peale began painting portrait miniatures of American patriots and soldiers, while in camp before and after battle. His most famous subject was George Washington, whom he first painted in 1772 while Washington was a Colonel in the Virginia militia. Peale is believed to have completed over sixty portraits of Washington, including a full length one, *Washington at Princeton* (1779), which sold in 1995 for more than 20 million dollars, a record amount for any American portrait.

Peale was truly a Renaissance man, skilled not only in portrait painting, but in the making of harnesses, coaches, clocks and watches; besides working as a silversmith, he was skilled in carpentry, dentistry, optometry, shoemaking and taxidermy.

It is said of him that he “sawed his own ivory for his miniatures, moulded the glasses, and made the shagreen cases.”

He also had a great interest in natural history, and in 1785 began collecting and preserving objects for the purpose of establishing a museum. By the following year, Peale realized his dream and opened the first American public museum, eventually renamed the Peale Museum. In 1791, he began an earnest effort to create an art academy in Philadelphia which eventually bore fruition as the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.

Despite his many interests and accomplishments, it is by his portraits of America’s Founding Fathers that he is best remembered.

Although five of the pieces are only attributed “in the manner of” Charles Willson Peale, the remaining nine are actually in his hand, thus representing what is believed to be the largest, and perhaps the finest, collection of Peale miniature portraits in private hands.

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CHARLES WILLSON PEALE (American, 1741-1827)

John Beale Bordley (1727-1804)
Watercolor on ivory
1-3/8 x 1 inches (3.5 x 2.5 cm)
Unsigned

John Beale Bordley was a lifelong friend and patron of Charles Willson Peale. Peale’s father Charles Peale was Bordley’s schoolmaster. It was Bordley who arranged for Charles Willson Peale to travel to England to study under the noted artist Benjamin West. Peale would return to the United States and eventually paint four portraits of Bordley and pictures of two of his sons. Bordley became a Maryland lawyer and farmer who founded the first American agricultural society. George Washington corresponded with Bordley concerning a threshing machine that Bordley owned, as Bordley farmed on a large scale. His farm at Poole’s Island became an important base for supplying the troops of the American army. His writings on agriculture made him a very well known and respected figure in early American society.

A lock of Bordley’s hair is encased in a glass window on the reverse of the gold frame. Biographical material accompanies this portrait as well.
CHARLES WILLSON PEALE (American, 1741-1827)

Richard Cary
Watercolor on ivory
1-1/2 x 1-1/8 inches (3.8 x 2.9 cm)
Unsigned

Lieutenant Colonel Richard Cary was an aide to General George Washington from June to December of 1776 during the Revolutionary War. Peale depicts Cary in his American Continental officer’s uniform in bright color and detail. A lawyer from Virginia who served as a judge on the Court of Admiralty and the first Court of Appeals, Cary was also quite well known as an amateur botanist. He lived in Ostego County, New York after the war and was a large landowner. He married Ann Lowe, daughter of Cornelius Lowe. The portrait is in a beautiful scalloped gold frame and comes with an archive of information on Cary.
CHARLES WILLSON PEALE (American, 1741-1827)

Sir Henry Clinton (1738-1795)
Watercolor on ivory
1-1/2 x 1-1/4 inches (3.8 x 3.2 cm)
Unsigned

Sir Henry Clinton was a British general in the American Revolution, his father the former Governor General of Newfoundland. Born in 1730, he later embarked on a military career and rose steadily through the ranks to colonel by the 1770s. Upon the death of his wife in 1775, he accepted the position of third-in-command in the American colonies just before the Revolution broke out. By 1777-1778 he had risen to the rank of Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in North America. While he personally led his army in the Carolinas, he left the command of forces to Lord Charles Cornwallis, who eventually surrendered the British army at Yorktown. Clinton resigned his commission in 1781 and returned to England, where he died in 1795.

Enclosed in a nineteenth-century frame.
CHARLES WILLSON PEALE (American, 1741-1827)

Catherine Alexander (Lady Kitty) Duer (1755-1826)
Watercolor on ivory
1-1/4 x 1-1/2 inches (3.2 x 3.8 cm)
Frame inscribed verso: Catherine Alexander / Born 1755 - died 1826 / daughter of / General Wm. Alexander / Earl of Stirling / and of / Sarah Van Brugh Livingston / wife of / Colonel Wm. Duer

LITERATURE:

Catherine Alexander, affectionately called “Lady Kitty” by her friend, George Washington, married William Duer with Washington giving her away at the altar. A New York City socialite, her husband was an avid supporter of the Revolution and was a member of the Continental Congress and a signer of the Articles of Confederation. Catherine Alexander Duer was the daughter of General William Alexander, Lord Stirling, an officer in the American Revolution commanding troops in New York City and a favorite of General Washington.

In a beautiful gold frame. The portrait is accompanied by an archive of biographical information on William Duer.
CHARLES WILLSON PEALE (American, 1741-1827)

Robert Livingston (1746-1813)
Watercolor on ivory
1-5/8 x 1-1/2 inches (4.1 x 3.8 cm)
Frame engraved verso Robert Livingston / C.W. Peale / Pinxt

Based on the inscription, the sitter is believed to be New York City attorney Robert Livingston. In practice with John Jay, Livingston became active in the movement for American Independence. He was a member of the Committee of Five which drafted the Declaration of Independence. It was later in his capacity as Chancellor of the State of New York that he administered the first oath of office to George Washington. As U.S. Minister to France he negotiated with Talleyrand the purchase of the Louisiana Territory. He supported Robert Fulton in his successful development of the steam engine, with Fulton naming the steamship Clermont after Clermont Manor, Livingston’s estate.

In a locket-sized gold frame. An archive of biographical information accompanies the portrait.
CHARLES WILLSON PEALE (American, 1741-1827)

Jacob Morris (1755-1844)
Watercolor on ivory
1-3/8 x 1 inches (3.5 x 2.5 cm)
Frame inscribed verso Jacob Morris / Dec. 28th 1775 / Jan. 10th 1844

Based on the inscription, the sitter is believed to be Jacob Morris, son of Lewis Morris, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Jacob Morris fought in the American Revolution, was conspicuous at the Battle of Monmouth, and rose to the rank of general. The town of Morris, New York, located on land awarded to General Morris as compensation for family property destroyed by the British during the Revolutionary War, was named for him. He fought at Trenton, Monmouth, and Rhode Island. He served admirably as an aide-de-camp to Generals Charles Lee and Nathaniel Greene as well. An extensive archive copy of Morris’ war service records is included with this portrait.

Jacob Morris was the husband of Mary Cox Morris, whose Charles Willson Peale portrait miniature is also offered in this auction. These two items are obviously a pair, each portrait enclosed in a locket with the subject’s name, birth, and death dates on the reverse.
CHARLES WILLSON PEALE (American, 1741-1827)

Mary Cox Morris, Wife of General Jacob Morris (1759-1827)
Watercolor on ivory
2 x 1-1/2 inches (5.1 x 3.8 cm)
Unsigned
Frame engraved verso: Mary Cox Morris / July 16th 1759 / Jan. 3rd 1827

Based on the inscription, the sitter is believed to be Mary Cox Morris. On July 16, 1777, Mary Cox married Jacob Morris, a prominent military officer in the American Revolution. Charles Willson Peale’s miniature of him is also being offered in this auction; the two items are clearly a pair. Each portrait is enclosed in a locket with the subject’s name, birth and death dates engraved verso.
CHARLES WILLSON PEALE (American, 1741-1827)

Elizabeth Digby Peale, Mrs. Robert Polk (1744-1777)
Watercolor on ivory
2 x 1-1/2 inches (5.1 x 3.8 cm)
Unsigned

PROVENANCE:
By descent from Rubens Peale, son of the artist.

Elizabeth Digby Peale was the sister of Charles Willson Peale and married Captain Robert Polk in 1765. Elizabeth was noted as an early school teacher in Maryland. Her husband was killed in battle in 1777 as captain of the schooner Montgomery. She is the mother of famed portraiture artist Charles Peale Polk.
CHARLES WILLSON PEALE (American, 1741-1827)

Mary Riche Swift, Mrs. Charles Swift
Watercolor on ivory
1-1/2 x 1 inches (3.8 x 2.5 cm)
Unsigned

Mary Riche Swift was the daughter of Thomas Riche, a Bordentown, New Jersey, Revolutionary War Tory. Mary married Charles Swift and was the mother of several sons, among whom was John Swift, three-time mayor of Philadelphia in the early part of the nineteenth century.

Enclosed in a frame from a later period.
Manner of CHARLES WILLSON PEALE (American, 1741-1827)

Mary McIlvaine Bloomfield, Mrs. Joseph Bloomfield (1752-1818)
Watercolor on ivory
1-3/4 x 1-1/4 inches (4.4 x 3.2 cm)
Unsigned

PROVENANCE:

Mary McIlvaine Bloomfield was the wife of Joseph Bloomfield, a member of the provincial Congress and the fourth governor of New Jersey. He served as a general in the New Jersey militia and helped put down the Whiskey Rebellion. A descendent of Thomas Bloomfield, a major in Oliver Cromwell’s army in England, Bloomfield was the son of a prominent physician. As war with England loomed, Bloomfield served as General Schuyler’s guard officer and brought the Declaration of Independence to Fort Stanwix. He fought in the American Revolution and rose to the rank of major. He also served as governor of New Jersey before being appointed a brigadier general in the War of 1812. The town of Bloomfield, New Jersey is named in his honor. Mary was the daughter of Dr. William McIlvaine of Burlington, New Jersey and was Bloomfield’s first wife. She died in 1818, with Joseph surviving until 1823.

Enclosed in a gold frame.
After CHARLES WILLSON PEALE (American, 1741-1827)

Dr. Ebenezer Crosby (1753-1788), circa 1777
Watercolor on ivory
1-1/4 x 2-1/8 inches (3.2 x 5.4 cm)
Unsigned

Dr. Ebenezer Crosby, surgeon to General George Washington’s guards, was born in 1733 in Braintree, Massachusetts. In 1783 he was one of the original members of the Society of the Cincinnati, the oldest military hereditary society in the United States. A Harvard graduate, he later served as a professor at Columbia College until he died in 1788. Included with this portrait are extensive records of Crosby’s service with General Washington as Surgeon of the Commander-in-Chief’s Guards. The oval portrait is encased in a later gold, rectangular frame.
After CHARLES WILLSON PEALE (American, 1741-1827)

John B. Fitch (1743-1798)
Watercolor on ivory
1-1/2 x 1-1/4 inches (3.8 x 3.2 cm)
Unsigned

The sitter of this portrait is believed to be John B. Fitch, a pioneer in the development of the first successful steamboat. He successfully demonstrated the ship on the Delaware River before members of the Constitutional Convention in 1787. He unfortunately failed to receive the recognition he deserved, and died in 1798.

The portrait is enclosed in a gold case with beveled glass and its original pin.
After CHARLES WILLSON PEALE
(American, 1741-1827)

*General Anthony Lamb, 1787*
Watercolor on ivory
2-5/8 x 2-1/8 inches (6.7 x 5.4 cm)
Frame inscribed verso Anthony Lamb, Aged 19/Painted by Charles Wilson (sic) Peale/1787

**PROVENANCE:**
Acquired from the descendants of General Lamb.

Based on the inscription, the sitter is believed to be Anthony Lamb, son of Brevet General John Lamb who served during the American Revolution and the War of 1812. The elder Lamb was in command at West Point at the time of Benedict Arnold’s treason, but was not present at the time. Anthony Lamb rose to the rank of General and held several commissions and posts such as being a commissioner to the committee who decided where to build Revolutionary War monuments. He was a member of the Society of the Cincinnati. In a gold frame. An archive of biographical material on Lamb accompanies this portrait.
After CHARLES WILLSON PEALE (American, 1741-1827)

Major Ennion Williams, circa 1920s
Watercolor on celluloid
1-5/8 x 1-1/4 inches (4.1 x 3.2 cm)
Unsigned

LITERATURE:

This is a very colorful and detailed Colonial Revival-era copy of a portrait by Charles Willson Peale, after the original in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. In one of his finest miniature portraits, Peale uses vibrant blue and red to depict the young officer in the uniform of the American Revolutionary War army. Ennion Williams was a major in the First Battalion, Miles’ Rifles during the American Revolution. He served with George Washington at the battles of Trenton and Princeton from 1776-1777. Williams kept a meticulous diary in 1775, a transcript of which is included with this portrait along with other biographical information. Williams was the great-grandfather of Dallas, Texas pioneer Edmiston Kennedy Martyn. A lock of hair is enclosed on the reverse of its unusual and beautiful gold frame.
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