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# Thomas Sully (1783-1872): Beginning Portraitist in Norfolk

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# THOMAS SULLY (1783-1872): BEGINNING PORTRAITIST IN NORFOLK

by

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B.A. June 1960, Tufts University

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
Old Dominion University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

HUMANITIES

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY
May 1981

Approved by:

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Linda F. McGreevy, Director

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ABSTRACT

THOMAS SULLY (1783-1872): BEGINNING PORTRAITIST IN NORFOLK

Beth N. Rossheim
Old Dominion University, 1981
Director: Dr. Linda F. McGreevy

An examination of the Register of Paintings and Journal of Activities written by Thomas Sully reveals his attempt to begin a painting career in Norfolk, Virginia, 1801-1803. A discussion of portraiture in America in the early 19th century precedes the investigation of the Sully family, their theatrical background and influence on Thomas Sully. Descriptive material on Norfolk is provided as background to a close study of Sully's earliest patrons. Several early portraits are presented to demonstrate a progressive sophistication.

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## PREFACE

The Humanities degree at Old Dominion University has been designed to enable a student to utilize the resources of the university in the most productive and least restrictive way for the purpose of solving a particular problem or investigating a well-defined interest. While the initial stages of course selection toward this degree may be more bewildering than those of a proscribed and conventional program, the rewards for a knowledgeable or fortuitous choice are potentially greater.

I have chosen American studies as a broad field, with emphasis on American cultural life. Art History, English, History and Humanities have worked to a wonderful advantage in allowing me a certain breadth of information and overall vantage point with which to pursue this thesis topic. While my main concern is to examine and chronicle the early professional life of Thomas Sully, a secondary intent is to expand upon the cultural climate of Norfolk in the early nineteenth century. It is hoped that this thesis will benefit from the scope of subject matter to which I have been exposed in the Humanities program and that it will provide enjoyment and historical dimension for the reader.



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# Chapter I

## INTRODUCTION

### Statement of Purpose

It is the intention of this writer to investigate the early life of Thomas Sully as portraitist, and to concentrate upon his brief residence in Norfolk, prior to July 1803, when he resettled in Richmond. His ultimate residence was Philadelphia, from which he embarked on several voyages to England that caused permanent alterations in his artistic style. In his early years Sully and his famed theatrical family moved freely between Norfolk, Richmond, Petersburg, North Carolina, New York and Philadelphia. His stay in Norfolk will be examined closely to probe for the effect of personal influences and the economic environment upon his artistic career.

Special consideration is given to Sully's patrons in Norfolk. Inasmuch as some portraits may remain in the area, unidentified and unrecorded, it may be of future interest to note the ancestral origins of some of Sully's sitters. The relationship between a 19th century painter and his sitters often transcended a purely commercial transaction; many of Sully's sitters guided his career, a few impeded it.

It is interesting to note, among Sully's sitters numerous and intimate connections to the Jewish communities of the eastern port cities. This segment of the population in Baltimore, Richmond,

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and Philadelphia forms a considerable segment of his patronage. A certain symbiosis must have existed between these ambitious merchants and the aspiring painter who portrayed them in aristocratic poses. Unfortunately, these patrons fall outside the scope of this thesis in both time and locale.

The final aim of this thesis is to produce a working bibliography by which further study can be undertaken, especially as the literature on Sully is both sparse and scattered. A limited review of paintings is included.

Methods of Research

A thorough search of the National Union Catalog preceded reading on Sully or background material on romantic painting in the 19th century. Major source material in published form was located and requested on Interlibrary loan. A search of the Art Index, Philip Hamer's Guide to Archives and Manuscripts in the United States (1961); Virginiana in the Collection of the Virginia State Library (1975); and Thomas Clark's Travels in the Old South (1956) were all revealing. Bibliographies of note include Elisabeth Flynn's Thomas Sully (1973) and Barbara Novak's American Painting in the Nineteenth Century (1969). Material on early Jewish families who constitute early settlers in the United States has been well defined by Rabbi Malcolm Stern, in geneology; by Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus, in history; and by Rabbi Myron Berman, in Richmond Jewry. Hannah London has done extensive research on Jewish portraiture in America.

Letters were written to major museums and libraries in an effort to secure unpublished sources of information concerning Sully

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and to establish loci of paintings. This remains, of course, incomplete, as material shifts constantly, but has been the source of considerable information. Responses of note were received from Archives of American Art, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Longwood College, Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, National Portrait Gallery, New York Public Library, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Pennsylvania Historical Society, Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Frick Collection, the Valentine Museum, Virginia Historical Society, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Virginia State Library and Old Dominion University Archives.

Individuals in Norfolk were contacted who were reputed to have Sully portraits in their possession. Most helpful of these associations were: Mrs. Russell Davis, Chairman, Colonial Dames Portrait Committee; Miss Sarah Baker, Portrait of Dr. Pipkin (Biddle and Fielding #1384); Myers House, Portrait of John Myers (Biddle and Fielding #1300). Miss Lela Hine, Hermitage Museum, provided several leads to pictures and information. Monroe Fabian, Associate Curator, National Portrait Gallery, who is preparing a 1983 show on Thomas Sully, extended the courtesy of examining photographs of an unidentified early portrait in the Myers family.

Original unpublished sources were located in the Kirn Memorial Library, Norfolk, in the form of newspapers and census records, and in the Virginia State Archives in the form of tax records on personal property. Material on the Moses Myers family was available on a limited basis in the Old Dominion University Archives with the permission of Mr. Barton Myers, Toronto, Ontario. Additional material on Sully is located in Richmond at the Valentine Museum and the

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Virginia Museum. Microfilm of Sully's Journal (1792-1846), Register of Paintings (1801-1871), and Hints for Pictures (1809-1871) are available at small cost through the New York Public Library. Photographs of paintings illustrated are available for purchase by the owning institution.

## Review of Literature

Published material on Sully is concentrated in one work by Edward Biddle and Mantle Fielding, The Life and Works of Thomas Sully (1921), an Olympian undertaking that has sufficed for almost 60 years as the final word on the artist. Biddle and Fielding gleaned much information from William Dunlap's A History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States (1834), and from Henry Tuckerman's Book of the Artist (1867). Further information is found in the artist's Register of Paintings, in which he recorded all his work from 1801-1871. These number over 2,600 pictures, portraits and subject paintings, finances, visitors, trips and impressions. His Hints for Painting (1809-1871), is the record of the methods of painting absorbed over the years by careful observation and by practical experimentation.

Sully's Register of Paintings has been collated in several forms since its publication by Charles Henry Hart in 1909. Biddle and Fielding have reproduced the Register in alphabetical order by the sitter's last name, with annotated material on the sitter when available. The Inventory of American Art has taken Biddle and Fielding's work and reproduced it in computer form, alphabetized by the sitter's first name.

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Method of research concerning patrons in Virginia concentrate on exhibition catalogs of portraiture in Virginia. The most useful of these are Valentine Museum's Richmond Portraits in an Exhibition of the Makers of Richmond 1737-1860 (1949); Alexander Weddell's Portraiture in the Virginia Historical Society with Notes on the Subjects and Artists (1945); and Fillmore Norfleet's Saint-Mémin in Virginia, Portraits and Biographies (1942).

General information on Norfolk is provided by Thomas Wertenbaker's Norfolk, Historic Southern Port (1962); William Forrest's Historical and Descriptive Sketches of Norfolk and Vicinity (1853); William Stewart's History of Norfolk County, Virginia, and Representative Citizens (1902); W. H. T. Squires' Through the Years in Norfolk (1936); and Roger Dey Whichard's The History of Lower Tidewater Virginia (1959). Colorful descriptive material on Norfolk is provided by Moreau de St. Mery's American Journey (1947); Harry Toulmin's The Western Country in 1793 (1948); and Charles William Janson's The Stranger in America, 1793-1806 (1935).

Several books on early American Jewry mention Sully as a prominent artist patronized by the Jewish communities of Richmond, Baltimore and Philadelphia. Hannah R. London's Portraits of Jews by Gilbert Stuart and Other Early American Artists (1969) has provided invaluable biographical data, while David Philipson's Letters of Rebecca Gratz (1929) establish a vital contact for Sully with the most venerable Jewish families in America. Background on the American Jewry is amply provided in Jacob Rader Marcus's American Jewry, Documents, Eighteenth Century (1959), and Early American Jewry, The Jews of Pennsylvania and the South, 1655-1790 (1955).

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General background on the Romantic painting in America during the early nineteenth century is located in Barbara Novak's American Painting of the Nineteenth Century (1969); John Wilmerding's American Art (1976); Anna Wells Rutledge's Artists in the Life of Charleston (1949); James Thomas Flexner's The Light of the Distant Skies (1969); and Frank Jewett Mather, Charles Rufus Morey and William James Henderson's The American Spirit in Art (1927).

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## Chapter II

## THE SULLY FAMILY AND THE ARTS

### Introduction to American Portraiture, c. 1800

In 1800, America, containing only 5 million souls, largely clustered together in seaport towns along the Atlantic, with a few outposts beyond the Allegheny Mountains, was hardly a hospitable place for an aspiring artist.[1] The populace was wary of a culture form that had traditionally catered to Catholic tastes in Europe and had been the private passion of their autocratic or libertine forebears in Britain.[2] There was little room in the tiny spartan houses for decoration, nor was there an educational tradition to encourage such a desire. Churches were kept bare by the iconographical strictures of their believers. No schools on a uniform level existed. Artists were hard-pressed to find examples of artistic endeavor to use as a guide or to find other painters from whom they could learn proper techniques. Painters who succeeded despite such formidable obstacles were spread sparsely across the wilderness, driven to apprenticeship or travel abroad to seek training. Largely such artists were lead by native talent and economic need. William Wirt, Virginia statesman, noted such a void in education:

> . . . How often, as I have held my way through the western forests of this state, and reflected on the vigorous shoots of superior intellect, which were freezing and perishing there for the want of culture. . . .[3]



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Certainly some artists emerged from this inauspicious background. They could not have been unaware of the great political happenings in America in 1776 and 1789, as manifested by their response to the new republic in a diversity of styles from portraiture to narrative, genre, landscape and still life. The great mainstay of painting remained the rising middle class citizen of the major cities of Boston, New York, Newport, Philadelphia or Charleston who wanted a permanent record of his new importance.[4] Taste and class were the ultimate aims of this rising middle class and the small cadre of painters in America knew how to satisfy a patron's needs. Limners, facepainters, miniaturists, and profile portraitists constituted the largest artistic force in the colonies. Europe also supplied artists whose foreign influences were reflected in the portrait styles of the era.

Interesting forms of portrait painting were practiced. Miniatures, painted on vellum, metal or ivory gained popularity as personal gifts between lovers, spouses or parent and child.[5] These decorative items found their way onto ornaments for bracelets, watch-covers, and snuff-box lids.[6] Many of the leading portraitists considered a miniature commission a reasonable day's work.

Profile portraits were a special variety of painting, often involving the use of ingenious machinery designed for mass production. One could choose to have his profile scissored, drawn, painted, engraved or modeled in wax.[7] Charles Willson Peale (1741-1827) devised a means of turning out great numbers of profiles in a brief period of time by the use of a machine that incised white paper, which he affixed to a dark background.[8] Charles Balthazar Julien

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Fevret de Saint-Mémin (1779-1852), whose profile portraits abound in Virginia, operated an instrument called a "physionotrace" invented in 1786, that caught not only the face, but also the hairstyle, neckwear and clothing. William James Hubard (1807-1862) became so proficient at the scissored portrait that he reduced the time of operation to 20 seconds for which he charged a fee of fifty cents to two dollars.[9]

The origins of American painting owe no small debt to England. Expatriot Americans as Benjamin West (1738-1820) assimilated the styles and themes surrounding him and passed their knowledge to visiting countrymen. John Singleton Copley (1738-1815) added drama to the English scene with his theatrical paintings and John Trumbull (1756-1843) instituted the historical narrative. By 1800, however, the lack of significant native painters had created a void in American painting and the standard passed to Gilbert Stuart (1755-1828), creator of a new American portrait composition. He had returned to America in 1793. Eliminating movement, mood and setting, Stuart concentrated upon a classical, generalized portrayal and influenced an entire generation of followers in this style.[10] Thomas Sully (1783-1872) remained with the more traditional English Decorative Romantic portrait school, preferring to glean his inspiration from Sir Thomas Lawrence's predeliction for sensitive portraits of women. During the height of the Decorative style the lineage can be traced back from Sully to Lawrence through English portraiture to Rubens and Titian.[11] This period is expecially noteworthy in the areas of bravura composition and color.

The Romantic surge in Britain (1760-1860) took many of the same forms as the later Romantic development in America (1800-1850).

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There was a renewed fascination with scientific and archeological discoveries, critical literary analysis and psychological introspection.[12] While the passion for Orientalia and costume romance never blossomed in America as abroad, both areas shared a feeling of destiny and a heightened awareness of the critical political era in which they were living. William Wirt remarks on this aspect of self-awareness in America upon visiting Monticello:

> . . . From this summit, too, the patriot could look down, with uninterrupted vision, upon the wide expanse of the world around, for which he considered himself born; and upward, to the open and vaulted heavens which he seemed to approach, as if to keep him continually in mind of his high responsibility.[13]

The position of England in regard to the development of a painting tradition was, naturally, far advanced of America, although prior to 1760 most British art also concentrated on portraiture.[14] Subsequent to that period, however, academies such as the Royal Academy (est. 1768) were instituted and artists began to show their works at public exhibitions, thereby adding immeasureably to the knowledge of the entire artistic community.[15]

The American center of art and politics in 1800, led by Gilbert Stuart and Charles Willson Peale, was located in Philadelphia. The Pennsylvania Academy, organized in 1805, was only preceded by the Redwood Library, Newport (1747), and the Charlestown Museum (1773).[16] By 1804 Stuart had left for Boston (where the Athenaeum was not founded until 1826), and Peale had relinquished his leadership to his children, who did not equal him in capability.[17] In 1809 Sully began to work in Philadelphia and prepared to embark on his voyage to England for authoritative training. During his most prolific years,

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in England and America, 1810-1850, Sully brought to his easel such luminaries as Thomas Jefferson, the Marquis de Lafayette, Washington Irving, Benjamin Franklin, John Quincy Adams and Mrs. Adams, James Madison, James Monroe, James Knox Polk, Andrew Jackson, Benjamin Rush, Daniel Boone, Edgar Allen Poe and Queen Victoria.[18] Sully maintained his position in American portraiture until the untimely combination of his old age and the invention of the daguerreotype (1839) prompted the demise of his Decorative style.[19]

The Threatrical Sullys

The biographers of Thomas Sully and his theatrical family have proposed a myriad of origins of his family group. Composed of Matthew and Sarah (Chester) Sully along with four daughters: Charlotte, Elizabeth, Harriet and Jane; and four sons: Lawrence, Matthew, Chester and Thomas, the family seat appears to be in Long Crendon, England, where the Anglican church displays memorials to a Sully family.[20] The background of Thomas Sully's father seems open to question, as Henry Budd states that Matthew Sully was a physician who espoused the stage, especially dancing, acrobatics and portrayal of the harlequin.[21] Conversely, an item in the Norfolk Herald, April 2, 1801 states that Sully is an alias for O'Sullivan and that Matthew Sully is "a newphew to the idential O'Sullivan, aide-de-camp to Prince Charles at the memorable battle of Culloden in Scotland in '46."[22] Yet another rumor tells that Matthew Sully's family disowned him because he spurned theology for marriage and the theatre.[23] Whatever the background, the Sully clan seems to have been thoroughly dedicated to the theatre, both in Britain and in America.

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In May 1792 the Sully family arrived in Norfolk from Leath, Scotland after an eight week voyage on the Hope of Hampton, with Captain Beasum, for the purpose of joining the theatre company managed by Matthew Sully's sister's husband, Thomas Wade West, who worked in Charleston, South Carolina.[24] The theatrical troupe was billed as having had 25 years of theatrical experience in Edinburgh and Dublin, with the girls dancing and singing, and the boys performing acrobatics. The father's specialty was circus performing and he listed to his credit, shows at the Royal Circus, Edinburgh.[25] Playbills from April 1793 noted that the Sullys displayed in Richmond, "Surprising Feats of Activity in Lofty Tumbling with Music on the Harpsichord."[26]

Thomas Sully, the youngest son, born June 1783, in Horncastle, Lincolnshire, was first sent for schooling at the academy of William Stanford in New York in 1793.[27] His mother died in 1794 and he may have returned to Richmond briefly.[28] The Sully company moved to Norfolk in 1794 making its theatre debut in a tragedy, "The Earl of Essex."[29] The star performers were Matthew Sully and his children, Chester, Charlotte and Elizabeth.[30] It is uncertain whether Thomas stayed in Richmond or Norfolk.

From 1794-1799 Thomas Sully was based with his family in Charleston and performed with West's company and later with the French company of M. Placide.[31] Surely none of the fantasy world of the stage was lost on Sully as he prepared to assume his rightful role in theatrical performing. It was a bonus, however, for him to be exposed to the theatre, set decoration and to a type of entertainment that may be considered an early derivative of an exhibition.

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Several artists were fully occupied in the business of creating scenery, engineering acrobatic feats, and displaying exhibition pictures and transparencies. Noted names include Audins, Belzons and Oliphant.[32] On May 23, 1794, an evening in which Harriet Sully, five, performed in "A Day in Turkey," Oliphant produced scenery depicting the Garden of Bassa complete with palms and fountains in a Byzantine style.[33] In 1795 Audins painted scenery for a pantomime that included:

> . . . Jupiter and Europa . . . [produced by Placide at the French Theatre, that displays] Olympus in all its lustre, and the Place of the Sun, is taken from the same design as that of the Opera House in Paris, as likewise is the Bull, the Car of Juno drawn by Peacocks, and other decorations. . . .[34]

Unlike most fledgling artists in America, Sully had a unique opportunity to observe famous works of art or their reproductions through the medium of the theatre. While itinerant painters were paying equally inexperienced artists for a bit of knowledge, Sully worked with and observed at first hand interpretations of some masterful paintings.

> . . . On the 4th day of May--the celebrated comic opera 'The Surrender of Calais, or Gallic Heroism' with original music composed by Dr. Arnold. View of the English camp and Intrenchments--The Fortifications of Calais and a striking view of the Gates of Calais (Painted from an original picture of the celebrated Hogarth), through which the melancholy procession moves to the scaffold.[35]

A keen eye for detail and a sense of creativity innate in the artist were evident from an early age. Sully recounted to William Dunlap (1766-1839), the first American art historian, the quest for his grandmother's house upon first returning to his native land.

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> . . . his first care was to see the guardian of his helpless years, to recall to memory the incidents of his childhood, and to employ his pencil in sketching the antique building, whose every door and window, every nook and corner, recalled some scene of that period, that link in the chain of existence when all was novelty--when every object presented to the sense a subject for inquiry, and a lesson in the most important part of man's education.[36]

Sully's early artistic bent was encouraged by Bishop Smith in Charleston in the 1790's, where Sully had the good fortune to meet the painter, Charles Fraser (1782-1860). Sully said of his peer:

> . . . he was the first person that ever took the pains to instruct me in the rudiments of the art, and although himself a mere tyro, his kindness, and the progress made in consequence of it, determined the course of my future life.[37]

Sully's life was obviously not meant for the stage, but his father, unwilling to consign him to the uncertain fortunes of a painter, such as his brother Lawrence was facing as a miniaturist in Richmond, scheduled Sully to apprentice with an insurance broker in Charleston, a Mr. Mayer, in 1795. When it became evident that Sully would not be deterred from the artistic life, he was placed with his brother-in-law, Jean Belzons (Zolbius), for instruction in art.

Belzons engaged in a variety of activities to support himself, including producing transparencies, large paintings, miniatures and scenery. He organized a lottery in 1798, in Georgetown, South Carolina, to sell his picture Representing the Independence of America, which featured thirteen allegorical representations of liberty.[38] In his capacity as Sully's teacher Belzons had a close and unfortunate relationship to the younger man.

Dunlap recounts an altercation between Sully and Belzons that appears to be the result of a misunderstanding, but resulted in

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the wreckage of much drawing material and an exchange of blows.

> . . . Tom looked in despair upon the wreck, and might have submitted to what appeared utter ruin; but when Belzons, his passion increased to frenzy by indulgence, roused the youth's indignation by accusations which he knew to be unjust, and finally attempted to strike him, the spirit of the land of his fathers and the land of his adoption blazed forth, and with agility and power of muscle the assailant was not prepared for, Tom with one blow floored his master; and when in blindness of fury he repeated his assault, again prostrated him. . . .[39]

The energy that Sully displayed during this youthful encounter with Belzons appears to be a character trait that persisted throughout his lifetime. Even in old age Sully was described as a "man fond of manly society and manly pursuits . . . an excellent swordsman."[40]

The sixteen year old young Sully, subsequent to his encounter with Belzons, having no parents upon whom to depend, considered, in those early months of 1799, taking a midshipman's berth to survive. He succeeded, however, in reaching his brother Lawrence in Richmond.

> . . . He found in the harbour of Charleston, a vessel belonging to Norfolk, commanded by her owner, Captain Leffingwell. Sully applied to him for a passage, promising to pay at Norfolk. Leffingwell received him willingly, took him not only into his vessel, but on their arrival at Norfolk into his house; until his brother should remit money to pay the debt, and wherewithal to pass up James River, this was in due time done, and Tom was at home again.[41]

The situation Sully found in Richmond with his brother was far from ideal. Lawrence Sully had married Sarah Annis of Richmond sometime after 1793 and had begun his career as a painter. He advertised in the Virginia Gazette of September 6, 1792, in Richmond, that he had studied at the Royal Academy of London.[42] In his quest for work, he advertised as well in the Norfolk Herald, June 6, 1795,

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that he would portray the ladies elegantly.[43] Lawrence Sully appears to have been an artist of small abilities and often found himself in financial straits.

> . . . I [Dunlap] spoke of Lawrence being in debt, S [Sully] said he was extravagant in purchasing pictures & scarce prints. Was not a gambler, lived in style, was a religious man & told anecdotes of going and reading to an old sick servant &c.[44]

By 1801 Lawrence Sully's family, including Tom, was reduced by circumstances to moving from Richmond to Norfolk. Dunlap records "At this time the younger brother was the better artist, and the main support of the household."[45] One presumes both Sullys had little choice in the subject of the work; ThomasSully consented to paint a stand of colors for a Virginia regiment as well as a sign for the local tavern.[46] In Norfolk, nonetheless, Thomas Sully emerges as a portrait painter identifiable from the itinerants who passed through the colonies earning a subsistance living. He had the good fortune in 1801 to interact with Henry Benbridge (1743-1812), who was living in Norfolk at the time. Benbridge agreed to paint Sully's portrait and in so doing instructed the younger painter in the arrangement of the palette.[47] Benbridge had acquired a method of painting pictures "in the small" from his studies in Italy with an English caricaturist, Thomas Patch (1725-1782), who exaggerated the facial features, englarged the head and diminished the body size.[48] Benbridge never studied either anatomy or drawing, deficiencies that Sully was later advised by Benjamin West to remedy.[49]

Sully made more explorations into the art of oil painting subsequent to his encounter with Benbridge. He made an early copy of an oil by Angelica Kauffman, Telemachus at the Court of Menelaus,

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which was owned by his brother, Lawrence.[50] There exists from this period, as well, a landscape, a watercolor of ruins signed by T. Sully, Norfolk, 1800.[51] Various miniatures complete his output at this stage.

Aside from learning the technicalities of reproducing a likeness, Sully was faced with great deficiencies in manipulation of the media availabe to him. He had great problems in his early attempts in oils.

> . . . so ignorant was he of the materials he was about to use, that he ground his pigments in olive oil, and to his great surprise found that they would not dry. Fortunately there was a sign-painter in Norfolk who explained the mystery, taught him that vulgar flaxseed oil would do him better service, and put him in the way of renewing his labours with better success.[52]

It was in the early years in Norfolk that Sully began the lifelong practice of recording his paintings in a register that ultimately numbered 2,017 paintings, plus miniatures, genre paintings and landscapes. The total is about 2,631 paintings for a life's work.[53] Sully is unique among early American painters in this respect--no other thought to record history so faithfully.[54]

> . . . I [Sully] keep a small slate-book on the pencil table, in which I write such memoranda as occur during each day of the week, which I register, if worth keeping, I record them in the proper books.[55]

The term "if worth keeping" has led to some confusion and speculation in assigning attributions to unidentified portraits that bear a likeness to Sully's style. It is entirely possible that paintings exist that the artist neither recorded nor signed. His grandson, Garrett Neagle, noted, "Grandfather entered on that list only pictures for which he had been paid."[56]

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Sully's difficult years in Norfolk led him to give advice to younger painters. He recommended that an aspiring artist seek good teachers, learn anatomy, perspective and landscape. He felt strongly that an artist should be capable of reproducing the various positions of the body from memory.[57] An early habit Sully cultivated remained a stock feature of his method of painting, making a preliminary sketch of the sitter. He began this method with an early patron, Thomas Armistead. "This was painted on my return to Richmond from a sketch I made of him on paper; and which manner I afterwards adopted, and practiced many years."[58]

In Norfolk Sully had an opportunity to learn the methods by which a painter advertised his services and merchandized his wares. He noted that pictures were displayed in storefront windows or set about the artist's studio. He learned that an interested patron would come to the painter's lodgings to view him at work.

Sully came to respect word of mouth advertising and the value of a charismatic personality as well as the efficiency of newspaper advertising and the personal touch of a letter of introduction. He discovered a picture might need to be altered in size or subject to be made suitable for a certain place in the house.[59]

The artist spent 1801-1802 in Norfolk, much of the time spent working to support his brother Lawrence's wife and three daughters. Lawrence moved to Richmond to redeem his credit and his family followed in 1803, with Thomas Sully close behind.[60] By September 1804, Lawrence Sully's death necessitated Tom's assumption of total responsibility for the family. By 1806 Thomas Sully married his brother's widow and together they produced nine children.[61]

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The cause of Lawrence Sully's death appears to have been alcoholism, according to author James Bailey. Lawrence, thirty-four years old, died ". . . late summer or early fall of 1804; was killed in a brawl with some drunken sailors and tossed into the muddy James."[62]

Presuming that Bailey is correct in Lawrence's habit, the miniaturist was not the only imbiber in Virginia. Reports indicate that drinking was extremely fashionable, often to the point of total drunkenness.[63] Thomas Sully, however, was known as an abstemious man--probably in reaction to the unfortunate fate of his brother. One anecdote exists to testify to the lengths to which Sully would go to avoid imbibing alcohol.

> . . . He [Sully] had a very particular friend who, time and again, insisted that Sully should drink and whose insistence met with equally resolute refusal. Finally, probably to obtain peace and without any expectation of being called upon to fulfill his promise, Sully promised his friend that when the said friend should get married, he, Sully, would on the wedding day, drink all the liquor that his friend should require him to drink. The offer was accepted; the bargain made. Some time after this, the friend was married and the wedding was celebrated in old-fashioned style in the old Virginia mansion. Guests were brought, from all over, to be present at the ceremony, join in the wedding dance and spend the night. Mr. Sully was invited. He came. In the midst of his joy, the bridegroom did not forget Sully's promise and proposed to hold him to his bargain. The happy man therefore detailed a friend to ply the artist with drink ad libitum, not the libitum of Sully, but the libitum of the bridegroom as represented by his friend. Mr. Sully was as good as his word and, inbibing all that he was ordered to take, became royally drunk. Early in the morning he woke, thoroughly ashamed of himself. He went to the stable, saddled his horse and, without making his adieux, rode away--and, I believe, never met his quondam friend and persecutor again.[64]

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The year 1803 in Richmond found Sully attempting to save some of his earnings of $262.00 for the fulfillment of a dream--to study art with the European masters.[65] In 1804, the year of Lawrence Sully's death, Thomas was working in Petersburg, valiantly attempting to raise money for his intended trip. With the tragedy and added responsibility, Sully entered very few lines in the Register after this date. He apologized, "For eighteen months past my memorandums have been neglected."[66]

In a stroke of good luck, Sully, while in Richmond, received as a sitter the famous actor playing the southern circuit, Thomas Abethorpe Cooper, who sat for a portrait in small.[67] Cooper's dashing appearance undoubtedly reminded Sully of his own theatre days.

> . . . Regal is the word for what Cooper was in his 'tandem sulky,' for over the entire seat and silky body was thrown a splendid, roquelaure cloak, trimmed in gold lace.[68]

It is likely that Cooper had met the Sully family on the theatre route since he had been playing in America since 1796.[69] In his travels at that time he surely was familiar with the New York Company of actors, including Matthew Sully, who was playing at Dunlap's Theatre.[70] Cooper also could have known Sully's aunt, Mrs. Thomas West, who was managing the theatre in Norfolk in 1806.[71]

When Cooper offered Sully the money and the encouragement to move his location to New York to increase business and improve his fund of knowledge, the artist was duly compliant.

> . . . I should be very ungrateful not to acknowledge Cooper to have been one of my greatest benefactors. His friendship encouraged me to remove to New York, where he thought I might learn more of the art, from

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> the example and pictures of more experienced artists; and that I might feel a confidence in taking, for me, so adventurous a step, he pledged himself to secure me business to the amount of one thousand dollars; and on my removing to New York, game me authority to draw upon the treasurer of his theatre for money, as I might require it, to that amount.[72]

Accordingly, Sully advertised in the Richmond Enquirer that he was leaving the city and requested patrons kindly to pick up their portraits.[73] By November 1806, the Sully family settled in New York, and the artist sought the advice of artists John Trumbull (1756-1843) and John Wesley Jarvis (1781-1890) from whom he could further his career. Jarvis taught willingly, but Trumbull was a problem. Dunlap relates that

> . . . Sully sacrificed one hundred dollars . . . for the purpose [of learning] and carried his wife to Trumbull's rooms, as a sitter, that he might see his mode of painting, and have a specimen from his pencil.[74]

Sully had a further educational advantage in New York by drawing upon the resources of the newly formed American Academy of Fine Arts (est. 1802), which recognized that artists required learned teachers, study models and facilities in which to exhibit their work. In 1803 the Academy purchased sixteen plater casts, including the Apollo Belvedere, the Laocoön, and the Dying Gaul, plus busts of classical heroes, which were exhibited generously, with Saturday set aside for female viewing, fig leaves in place.[75]

In 1807, with an optimistic spirit, Sully began his diary of life and events, believing that his career as a painter was beginning to be credible.[76] Still seeking new interpretations and methods, however, Sully made his way in 1807 to that master portraitist,

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Gilbert Stuart, then living in Boston. Leaving his family in rented rooms in New York, he arrived in Boston in August, remained for three weeks and returned to New York via Hartford in the fall.[77] Sully gained admittance to Stuart by a letter from Thomas Abethorpe Cooper to Andrew Allen, the British consul, who arranged the meeting. It was agreed for the teaching session Sully should paint the portrait of Isaac P. Davis, which Stuart would critique at its completion.

> . . . Accordingly, Davis sat, and the picture was carried to Stuart. 'He looked at it for a long time,' said Sully, 'and every moment of procrastination added to my torment.' He deliberated and I trembled. At length he said, 'keep what you have got, and get as much as you can.'[78]

> . . . [Sully]. . . Saw Stuart paint a portrait, strange mode of marking hard lines & scumbling over them. Asks Stuart a general mode. 'I'll show you'--brings a mirror 'How many times do you see yourself.' 'Three, the furthest indistinct.' 'So begin your pictures--then come up the second--& if you can to the third.'[79]

It was apparently just this painterly quality that Sully so admired when, upon first viewing a picture by Gilbert Stuart, he remarked he did not think a Vandyck, Rembrandt, Titian or Rubens could be its equal.[80]

Returning to New York in the fall of 1808, Sully found commissions scarce. President Thomas Jefferson had enacted an embargo upon all goods imported into American ports and prosperity ceased. Sully began to consider Philadelphia as a home when approached by sponsor Benjamin Wilcox. While effecting the move from New York he settled his family in a boarding house in Philadelphia, taking a separate set of rooms for painting.

In Philadelphia, because of extreme need and hardship (his property was largely lost in the Philadelphia transit in a blizzard)

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Sully advertised he would paint thirty portraits for $30.00 each.[81] His Journal records: "Mr. Myers, of Norfolk, a subscriber. . . ."[82] Between his thirty subscribers and a letter of introduction from Washington Irving, Sully's hope of success in the states and travel abroad seemed assured.[83] Thus ended the provincial and tenuous phase of his career.

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## Chapter III

## NORFOLK YEARS AND PATRONAGE

### Life in Norfolk, c. 1800

As the scope of this paper is limited to the earliest artistic production of Thomas Sully in Norfolk, Virginia, it is important to describe the environmental conditions that existed in the early 19th century.

As Thomas Sully found it in 1801, Norfolk was one of the most prosperous cities in the new republic, heralded for prosperity in trade and a diversity of goods and population. Anne Ritson, a British traveler recouts:

> . . . The Town is built upon the shore, In length about a mile or more; Quite to the shore the vessels ride, So deep the water, strong the tide; Large warehouses for merchandize, Close to the num'rous shipping rise: To ev'ry port their trade was clear, All nations' colours mingle there.[84]

William Forrest, Norfolk historian writes:

> . . . These were the days . . . one might walk from Norfolk to Portsmouth on the decks of the vessels at anchor in the harbor--when the rich products of the Indies were piled on our wharves, and stored in our warehouses--when . . . Richmond and Petersburg were tributary to Norfolk . . . when the business of Norfolk was comparatively larger than that of New York, and really larger than that of Baltimore--when Norfolk . . . as rich in intellect as she was affluent and progressive in trade boasted a triumvirate at the bar as brilliant as ever entranced a jury, or expounded . . . law; when our majestic Tazewell adorned the Senate--when the gifted Taylor and Wirt wrestled in the Forum, and surpassed



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> the models of antiquity in elegance of diction, power of eloquence, and splendour of forensic triumph.[85]

W. H. T. Squires describes Norfolk:

> . . . A gold flood poured into the harbor and city from all parts of the world. Every ship that could brave the dangers of the Atlantic became a carrier, and Norfolk was a favorite port, rivalling even Boston and New York.[86]

A peace treaty signed with England in 1783 had meant renewed trade with Europe and the West Indies. Norfolk had a unique geography, with a large safe deep harbor in the Elizabeth River, protected by the Chesapeake Bay, and accessible to the James, York and Potomac Rivers. It was obvious as ships increased in size they might find other ports closed, but Norfolk was available, protected and growing to meet the new demands in exporting tobacco, corn, lumber and flour. It would have been a natural conclusion for Sully in 1801 that this center of commerce would shelter men of substance and pride, men who would want their images recorded. There was a sense of destiny of this new country that must have been transmitted to a resident of Norfolk, that a person could turn the course of his life fruitfully here.

> . . . Norfolk was a busy, bustling place at this period [1801-1806]. The population had nearly reached 8,000 including the transient and floating part of the community. There were very many foreigners, principally from England and Scotland, and quite a few from France, Ireland &c. Scores of vessels were at the wharves, taking and discharging cargoes, and the streets and lands, from main street to the river, were thronged with heterogeneous mass of human beings.[87]

Virginia was, in 1800, the most populous state with 880,000 people. Pennsylvania followed with 600,000. Richmond was Virginia's largest city, population 7,000, and Norfolk followed with 3,000.[88]

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Three Virginia towns exhibiting special characteristics included Alexanderia, first port of entry for ships on the southern trade route; Williamsburg, capitol of Virginia until 1799; and Norfolk, the most desirable harbor.[89]

In 1800 Norfolk boasted churches covering the Roman Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian and Episcopalian affiliations. One bank was established, a branch of the Bank of the United States, which had its headquarters in Philadelphia.[90]

During his stay in Norfolk, Moreau de St. Mery found coverting currency a problem. While currencies of several countries abounded, Spanish pieces of eight and English sterling were preferred.

> . . . Everything in Norfolk conforms to English measurements. This combined with the difficulty of computing in currencies whose values in relation to the dollar are not definite, leads to frequent disputes between shopkeepers and customers. The dollar is worth six shillings, which makes one pound worth 3 1/3 dollars, or 17 francs 13 sous, and the shilling 17 1/3 sous.[91]

Passing as well for currency were bills of exchange from a merchant, paper money from the state or federal bank, or a "wildcat" note from a counterfeiter or streetcorner banker. Bartering was often a far more viable means of exchanging goods.

In the early days of the 19th century Norfolk established several printing houses and three newspapers. The Norfolk Directory finds Willet and O'Conner as co-editors of the Norfolk Herald, which published from 1794-1800; 1802-1859.[92] During its second phase, the paper was renamed the Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald. Prior to 1800 the American Gazette and Norfolk and Portsmouth Public Advertiser published for one year, 1795-1796; while the Norfolk Weekly

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Journal and Country Intelligencer continued from September 1797 to September 1783.[93]

Visitors to Norfolk often noted certain undesireable elements, as fire, disease and climate.[94] While Forrest only mentioned the severe winter of 1800, Janson describes:

> . . . In the winter of 1800, returning to Mrs. Paterson's boarding-house, after dark, it was necessary to cross the main street. I was directed where to ford the mud; but after deliberately taking my observations, I lost my bearings, and nearly opposite to the spot where the Borough Tavern then stood, I found myself almost knee deep. I could not effect without the loss of one of my 'shoe boots.' Here the gentlemen find it necessary to weak thick shoes over their boots; and even thus fortified, it is often a matter of difficulty to wade through the mud. Next morning I employed a black man to seek my shoe, for I had worn it only twice, and went to show him the spot where I had sustained my loss; but after much raking and dragging, we were obliged to give up the search. The streets, except Main and Church streets, are narrow, and even these are irregular. Those near the water were so filthy, that even in winter the stench was often offensive in passing. In the hot months of the years 1801 and 1802, contagion made dreadful havoc in this quarter of the town; but the next year a fire destroyed nearly every house where the disease had been engendered, and thus also purifying the air, the town has become less dangerous to the constitution. New houses, built of brick, have been erected upon the site of those which were burning, and more attention is paid to cleanliness.[95]

Although Sully makes no mention at any time in his Journal of the ravages of yellow fever, the epidemics in Norfolk that resulted from the influex of carrier ships from the West Indies in the early 1800's have been well-documented. Norfolk and Portsmouth were the most seriously affected areas; citizens of Richmond became so hysterical over the number of horrible deaths in Norfolk in 1800 that an edict was suggested isolating all refugees from Norfolk.[96] Norfolk's epidemics were annual from 1800 to 1805 when they ceased until 1821.

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Ritson noted the onset of the fever in conjunction with the summer.

> It's at this season of the year
> Symptoms of sickness first appear
> It's then the yellow fever's rage,
> Spares neither youth nor sex, nor age.[97]

Survivors of epidemics knew, as Moreau de St. Mery tells, to leave the city at the onset of summer.

> . . . These hot spells make the climate of Norfolk quite deadly. Bilious fevers, ague and putrid bilious fevers are common. . . . The residents fear their climate to such an extent that those who have the means take a trip, and even go to sea, during the hot season.[98]

Janson describes the treatment for the fevers, which sound equally deleterious as the disease.

> . . . I was copiously bled in the first instance, and blisters were applied to my legs, my feet, and the back of my neck. This regimen, with the good effect produced by strong doses of calomel, and afterwards of bark, effected my cure.[99]

The summers of 1801 and 1802 seem to have been the most dangerous to have spent in Norfolk. It was not uncommon to see 20 to 30 deaths per day during the height of the epidemic.[100] While Sully's Journal records that he painted in Norfolk during the entire summer of 1801, there is a sizeable length of time absent in 1802 during June, July and much of August. A return entry on August 20, 1802, reads significantly: "Miniature of a child (deceased--to her parents)," perhaps another unfortunate victim of the fever.[101]

The Nicholson Map of 1802 outlines the major commercial-residential areas of Norfolk, with its approximately 1,000 houses and stores, demonstrating the close proximity of structures, thus spreading the fever more rapidly (Plate I).[102] Major streets are

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PLATE I

NICHOLSON MAP OF NORFOLK, 1802,
KIRN MEMORIAL LIBRARY

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mentioned in Sully's Journal and can be located on the map. Church Street, parallel to Fenchurch Street, was Sully's residence for a part of his stay in Norfolk.

Public buildings marked on the map include the churches, Norfolk Academy, Court House of Norfolk Borough, the Gaol, the U.S. Bank, the Customs House, Work House and Market House.[103]

Not marked on Nicholson's Map is the Theatre of Norfolk, Fenchurch Street, which certainly would have been an area of interest for Sully in Norfolk.[104] Although Sully never alludes to Norfolk's theatre, it existed in a building near the river on Main Street even prior to the Revolutionary War. In 1793 a warehouse was the site of performances, while in 1795 a brick playhouse was erected on Fenchurch Street.[105] Moreau de St. Mery notes in 1794 that a brick theatre housed performances in the spring featuring Ricketts and MacDonald, who were especially noted for skilled horsemanship.[106] This is precisely the circus of John Bill Ricketts who hired Matthew Sully as his clown.[107]

Ritson describes the theatrical scene in Norfolk as dismal, with the exception of the annual visit of Thomas Abethorpe Cooper, whose friendship helped Sully several years later in Richmond and in New York.

> Other performers only seem'd
> As if they were asleep and dream'd
>
> But this fine actor [Cooper], it was known
> Had from an English audience flown
>
> Reigning a week, this hero great
> Made off, and left Virginia's state,
> Hearing his creditors and wife
> Were coming to torment his life;
> He having given them the slip,
> And from New-York had took this trip.[108]

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It is likely that the Sully clan numbered more than the brothers Thomas and Lawrence in Norfolk in 1801.

> . . . The rest of the family was more or less widely separated until 1800, when most of them assembled in Norfolk. Thomas Wade West [Sully's uncle] had died the preceding summer, but Mrs. West was managing miraculously, to keep the Virginia Company playing in the playhouses which he had built. She welcomed back into the fold her brother and his children, Matthew, Chester, Thomas, Charlotte, and Harriet. Lawrence had moved his family to Norfolk also, but he no longer took part in family theatrical endeavors.[109]

Advertisements in the Norfolk Herald in the spring of 1800 locate the elder Sully still performing in the circus and Lawrence trying to perform and paint simultaneously.[110] There is some reason to think Thomas was following his brother's path.

> . . . Like his father, Thomas Sully, who was to be the most famous of the Sullys, was playing bit parts for which he received no notice whatsoever in the newspaper. Unlike his father, he was doubtless more interested in the money he received as an actor than in any fame that might come to him through histrionic abilities; for while he played minor roles during the entire Norfolk season, he was at the same time studying painting under his brother Lawrence, with whom he was living, and under Henry Benbridge; and in that field of art he was fast outstripping his teachers.[111]

Sully was also learning the hardships involved in pursuing an artistic career in a place unsuited to aesthetic considerations. From Dunlaps writings of 1819 we may form some idea of how an artist set up his shop and recruited patrons in Norfolk. It seemed best, says Dunlap, to recruit business with the landlord.

> . . . October 23, 1819 . . . Speak to the keeper of the Hotel (Matthew Glen) respecting my plans & show his & family my miniature set in gold which he said the owner had left with him for a debt 10 years ago & asked if I could make a portrait of some one of his family to suit the setting. 'Yes' 'How much' 'Twenty dollars' Agreed & thus I have something to do.[112]

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From Sully's Journal we find that he maintained much the same relationship with his various landlords--paying them with pictures for lodging.

Apparently Mr. Glen was satisfied with Dunlap's work for he sent his two daughters to sit for portraits and business so increased that Dunlap had ". . . to refuse admittance to three companies of ladies and gentlemen, as many as fourteen."[113] Obviously it was a common practice to watch the artist at his easel.

Technical problems plagued artists insufficiently trained as Dunlap remembers. In 1806 he writes from Philadelphia:

> . . . I sat down to put a finishing hand to my Washington, when behold, his black velvet coat was peeling off from the ivory and all in holes & patches, I am obliged to give him an entire new one. Then came on snow. . . . The water froze in my pencil, not two yards from the fire, so that several times when I attempted to put colour to the ivory, it was mixed with icy christals.[114]

Sully, likewise, writes of the difficulties of obtaining practical methods for coping with rudimentary supplies and improvised technique. More problems were involved with obtaining supplies as Dunlap mentions in Norfolk in 1819. "I have been endeavoring to procure 2 Mahogany pannels to paint on & the Cabinet maker having no business & his journeyman no work can hardly be bro$^{t}$ [sic] to do this trifle."[115]

Problems regarding patrons, materials and methods were further complicated in the early 1800's by a barter system of payment--poorly designed to afford an artist any semblance of financial security. Dunlap recalls this system of payment:

> . . . Lyfford agrees with me for a portrait & Miniature to be paid for in Hams & other produce . . .

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> Mr. Osborne frame maker calls to negotiate for a portrait for a friend to be paid for in Frames, pannels &c . . . Mr. Hill Lottery Office Keeper agrees for his portrait to be paid in Tickets. . . .[116]

Various methods were used by artists to raise funds including traveling with a picture for a paid public viewing, as Sully did with his Washington at the Delaware in 1820, in Norfolk; also an artist might commission an engraver to reproduce his painting in this medium, as Dunlap did with engraver Asher Brown Durand (1796-1886) in 1819, in Norfolk.[117]

Travel and correspondence were other popular means of testing the market for portraiture. Dunlap, in 1819, recorded the business problems and whereabouts of the major portrait painters in America.[118] Obviously a network existed between painters such as Morse, Trott, Fraser, Shields and Sully that was helpful to the dissemination of knowledge and the location of thriving centers of commerce. Norfolk, when Sully arrived in 1801, appeared to be one of those places blessed with prosperity.

## Sitters in Norfolk

Sully's beginning was entirely unheralded. His first professional year, 1801, is marked by an initial trial in oils, a portrait of his still theatrical brother, Chester.[119] Another milestone occurred on May 13, 1801, when Sully recorded his ". . . first attempt from life, a miniature."[120] After only four days the artist secured another commission: Madame Solage [sic], a miniature portrait completed in three days for $15.00. Soulage is listed in the Norfolk Borough Land Book as a well-to-do merchant, owner of eight slaves, who paid an annual tax on his property of $7.39.[121]

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Simmons Norfolk Directory locates Soulage Lacroiz Andre & Co. at 18 Commerce Street Wharf. While Sully does not mention that this miniature was done in return for merchandise, it may be assumed that this was the case.

In that same spring the Norfolk Herald noted the departure of the elder Matthew Sully from Norfolk.

> . . . I shall ever retain a grateful sense of the many favours received from my Virg--friends particularly in Norfk, and hope shortly to return to express my gratitude.[122]

The years that followed were critical for Thomas Sully, personally and professionally. Increasingly, Lawrence learned he could trust Tom to pay his bad debts.

On June 20, 1801, Sully painted a miniature of George White, $15.00, another in a long string of repayments of ". . . the balance of an account against Lawrence Sully."[123] White was a trade in china, glass and mirrors located at 37 Main Street, and a regular advertiser in the Norfolk Herald.[124]

Again, in August 1801, Sully repaid a debt to Dudley Woodworth. The Journal reads: "Delivered the miniature of D. Woodworth to himself, being the balance of an account against Lawrence Sully."[125] The Norfolk Borough Land Book finds Woodworth holding a license as retail merchant and shopkeeper.[126]

For the last time in 1801 Sully settled a debt against Lawrence with M. Ott, a jeweler, listed at 120 Church Street.[127] Sully notes, "Delivered the miniature of Mons. Ott Zewiller to himself which--he paid me settled our accounts."[128]

The year 1802 appears to have been even worse for Sully--records reveal he painted only eight miniatures and several paintings

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for gross receipts of $90.00.[129] For Lawrence, in Richmond, times may have eased. Personal property taxes reveal he owned a slave.[130] The elder Matthew Sully had returned to Norfolk to play in a farce produced by West's management firm.[131]

Without explanation Sully recorded in his Register an absence from March 13 to August 12, 1802. He marked his return with a picture of William Armistead, a frequent sitter.[132]

By September Sully was painting his landlady, always an indication of hard times. The Journal tells, "Delivered the picture of Mrs. Cooper to her daughter." The Register identifies "Mrs. Cooper, where we boarded."[133] The Norfolk Directory locates "Cooper, Mrs. widow, 47 Church Street."[134]

October was a turning point, artistically, for Sully who used money from his miniature painting to purchase materials for oil painting.

> . . . Delivered the miniature of Mrs. Farlow to her husband; with the money received in payment purchased materials for Oil painting, my first essay with which was a copy of a painting by Angelica Kaughman [sic]. At this time we kept house in Church Street, Norfolk.[135]

At a later point in the Journal Sully remembers this junction.

> . . . Delivered to Mr. Tucker the copy I made in Norfolk, of a picture by A. Kaughman [sic] Telemachus at the Court of Menelaus- The original of this picture was the one which first excited and determined me to paint in oil. It was the very first attempt I made in copying it. I have the original at this time in my possession [1822].[136]

This picture remained in Sully's care until his death. It was listed simply in his will as painting by Angelica Kauffman and left to his daughter, Jane Cooper Sully Darley.[137]

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Realizing the significance of his rapid advancement into oil painting, Sully made special note of his first portrait in oils.

> Register: November 23, 10X12, $10. Thos. Armistead's brother William Armistead being my first attempt in Oil Colours.
>
> Journal: Delivered the portrait of William Armistead to himself. This was my first attempt from nature in Oil Colours.[138]

Life was full of milestones for the 20 year old Sully. In January 1803, his Journal reads:

> . . . Lawrence's family removed to Richmond. At this time being alone I may be considered as 'beginning the world' in my own account. Resided with R. Taylor and Mrs. Brown in Church Street.[139]

His first commission in this independent life in 1803 reads: "Presented the picture of Miss Mary Matthews to her January 14, 1803."[140] The City Directory lists Thomas Matthews, attorney at law, at 77 Main Street, Norfolk.[141] We may question whether this is a relative of Brigadier General Thomas Matthews (1741-1812), 9th Brigade, Virginia Militia, for whom Matthews County is named. Both General Matthews and his wife, Millie Miller, are buried in St. Paul's Churchyard, Norfolk.[142] We may also question whether this portrait was used as payment for legal services regarding the residual debts of Lawrence Sully. His problems with credit reach back to 1797 when he was sued in Richmond.[143]

Janson makes some remarks about bankruptcy in America, during his stay in Norfolk in 1802, that may have a direct bearing upon Sully's responsibility for his brother's indebtedness. Prior to 1802, Janson says:

> . . . They advertise in some obscure weekly newspaper . . . a declaration of bankruptcy . . . assignees

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> take possession, a dividend is made, the certificate signed . . . without any lawful let, suit, trouble . . . or interruption whatsoever. . . . The bankrupt soon opens his 'store' again, with fresh . . . goods.[144]

This corrupt practice was especially prevalent in Norfolk.

> . . . In Norfolk, in Virginia, the evil was growing to so alarming a height, that Mr. Newton, a young lawyer of good abilities, and the representative in congress of that town, at the desire of the more virtuous part of his constituents, brought in the bill to repeal the law.

Almost every portrait Sully painted in 1803 in Norfolk was used to defray Lawrence's debts. On March 1, 1803, the Register records a bust portrait, $20.00 for Macauley Haynes, in oil. The Journal expands:

> . . . Delivered to Mrs. Haynes the Portrait of her son Macauley. This was the first attempt from life on the full size. Mrs. Haynes and granddaughter's Portraits delivered to her. Painted to settle an account against Lawrence, also her son's portrait above mentioned.[146]

The debt that Sully was repaying in the total amount of $45.00 to Mrs. Haynes was for family lodging for March 1803.

Simmons Directory finds "Haynes, Margaret, boarding house, 5 Bermuda Street." An earlier advertisement in the Norfolk Herald, June 6, 1795, reads:

> . . . Miniature painting. Lawrence Sully residing at Mrs. Haynes . . . stay will be short. Mourning and fancy devices executed in the most elegant manner with or without hair, Ladies waited on.[147]

A month later, in April 1803, Mrs. Haynes must have tired of her debtors, for Sully's Journal notes: "Removed April 5 with R. Taylor to the widow Fleming."[148] Ann Fleming is listed at 10 Cumberland Street and found to have owned one slave and one lot.[149] April was the month for collections as Sully painted a portrait of

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Mr. William Davies, collector of the customs, at 2 Main Street.[150] Yet one more picture for repayment was delivered in June 1803 to a lawyer, James Nimmo, at 18 Cumberland Street.[151] For the first time Sully refers to the miniature as a picture "in small" a term coined by Benbridge.

July 1803 was the last month in which Sully resided permanently in Norfolk. To commemorate his leaving he painted a portrait of his roommate R. Taylor: "Presented to R. Taylor, in small, of himself, wife and his two children."[152] The Register notes: "May 6—12 X 10. July 10, $40.00 R. Taylor, his wife and two children in separate."[153]

On July 6, 1803, Sully writes: "Removed to Richmond; resided with L. [Lawrence] in a house rented from Mrs. Leslie."[154]

In a characteristic act of generosity, Sully, upon arrival in Richmond, painted pictures of his father and brother Chester, which he sent to his sister Elizabeth Sully Smith of Charleston.[155]

Three Early Portraits

Three early portraits by Sully bear examination even though they fall beyond the chronological scope of this thesis. While it was hoped that this investigation would reveal early portraits from Sully's Norfolk days, the reality is that paintings from Sully's hand that are located in Norfolk and Portsmouth are from a period beyond 1807. The three paintings discussed here are dated from two to four years after Sully's stay in Norfolk and show a greater sophistication that might be expected of very early attempts. They also reveal a popular romantic posture, in the Victorian manner, that suggests Sully was catering to his clients' guise of gentility.

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In the possession of Mrs. Linda Sully Dreibelbis, Freehold, New Jersey, is an early painting in oil by Sully, Portrait of a Young Man, 1804, inscribed, "Painted by T. Sully, while at the age of 21" (Plate II).[156] Elisabeth Flynn comments that the picture evinces the hand of a miniaturist in its brushwork, pose and dimension.[157] There is, in this portrait, a quality that recurs in Sully's oeuvre--a wistful longing that enhances the physical reality and suggests a spiritual presence. Though some of Sully's sitters gaze directly at the viewer, they rarely challenge his presence. In this early oil painting it is significant to note this quality of aspiration so characteristic of the artist's life and personality.

A portrait in Richmond, Peter Lyons [1734-1809], is listed in Sully's Journal: "Bust of Judge Lyon's, 1805, delivered to his daughter Mrs. Chevalier" (Plate III). In his Register it is noted that this is a bust portrait at a cost of $30.00. The gentleman sits with a solidity worthy of his position, with hands resting lightly on the arms of his chair. The left hand grasps a limp glove, faint trapping of his position. The face is as implacable as the body.

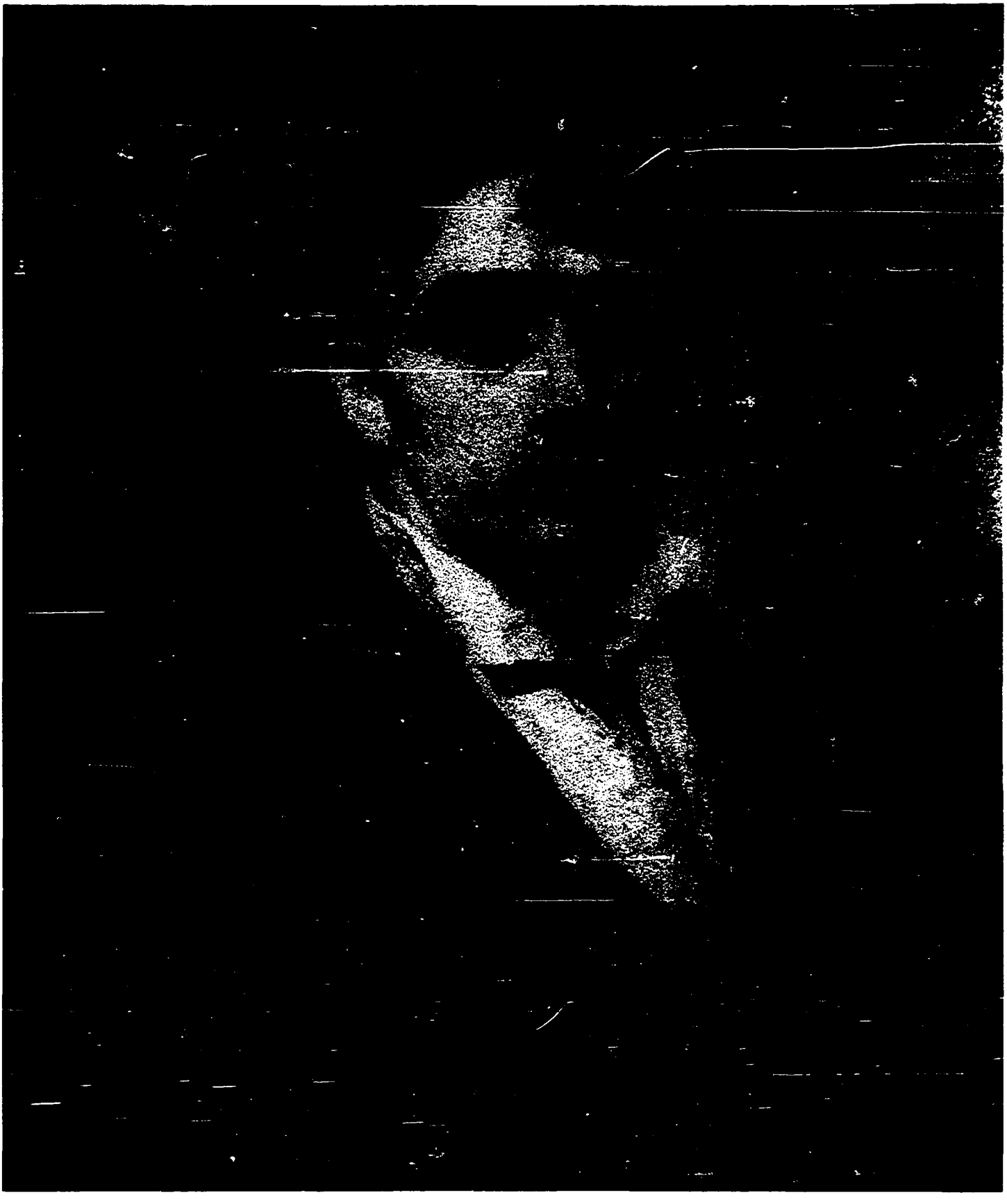
The aristocratic air that surrounds Lyons derives from his association with the notables of the day, men such as Peyton Randolph, John Randolph and Robert Carter Nicholas.[158] Lyons' admirers were able to point with pride to his leanings during the Revolutionary War; he cast his lot with the colonists. Lyons attained the position of President of the Virginia Supreme Court in 1803, three years prior to his sitting for Sully. A letter from Lyons to his granddaughter embodies feelings that characterize both Sully and Lyons.

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PLATE II

THOMAS SULLY, PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG MAN, 1804. MRS. LINDA SULLY DREIBELBIS, FREEHOLD, NEW JERSEY. PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF BEDFORD GALLERY, LONGWOOD COLLEGE, FARMVILLE, VIRGINIA

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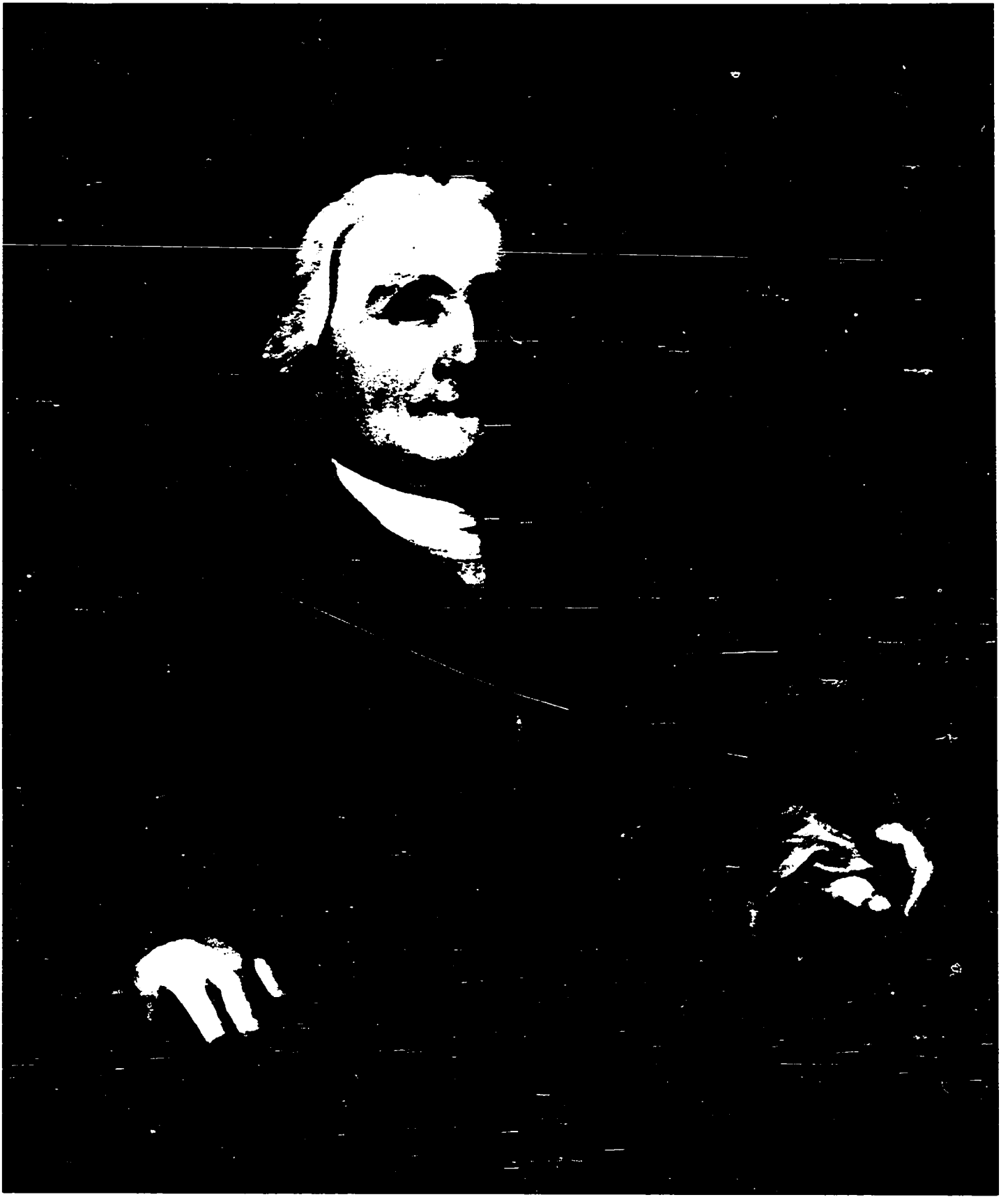


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PLATE III

THOMAS SULLY, JUDGE PETER LYONS, 1805,
VIRGINIA SUPREME COURT

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"Remember that nothing good can be had without labour, and that it is by some degree of toil, or perhaps woe, we every bliss attain."[159]

A painting resides in Norfolk, Portrait of John Myers (Plate IV). Begun on April 17, 1808, the Journal records: "Mr. Myers of Norfolk, a subscriber--delivered to him his portrait. This was painted on thick paper pasted tight to the canvas."[160] The Register reads: "March 18--March 30--, $30.00, bust of Mr. Myers of Norfolk."[161] A letter held by the Chrysler Museum from Sam Hays, Richmond, notes to John Myers that he had seen the portrait on Sully's easel.[162] Sully was in Philadelphia where, lacking business, he offered portraits at thirty dollars per person. "In hope of getting more known and more into practice, I proposed to the public to paint 30 portraits at $30 each, which scheme I found to answer my expectations."[163]

If there is any other connection between the Myers family and the Sullys, it has not be revealed. It could be conjectured that the Gratz family of Philadelphia may have served as an intermediary between Sully and Myers. Rebecca Gratz, influential Philadelphia Jewish philanthropist, was the recipient of a letter of introduction for Sully from her friend Washington Irving that helped to propel Sully into Philadelphia society. "I think," wrote Irving to Miss Gratz, "I cannot render him [Sully] a favour for which he ought to be more grateful than if introducing him to the notice of yourself and your connections."[164] That the Gratz and Myers families were friends is well-documented. Rebecca Gratz was a contemporary of Adeline Myers, eldest daughter of Moses Myers, and they corresponded.[165]

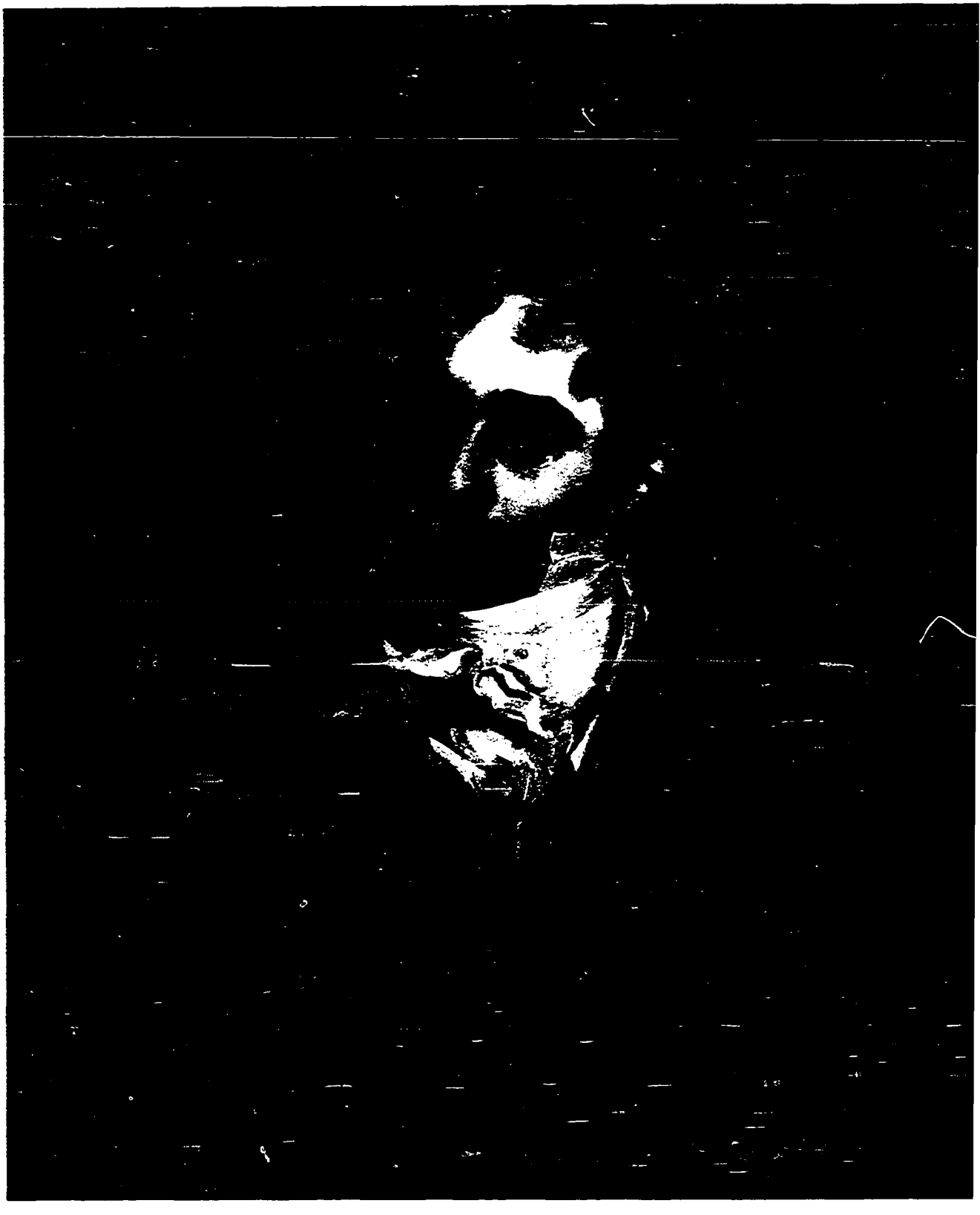
The portrait of John Myers reveals a more sophisticated technique and a more sensitive portrayal of personality than

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PLATE IV

THOMAS SULLY, JOHN MYERS, 1808, MYERS HOUSE,
NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

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seen heretofore. Myers appears, despite his occupation as a businessman, an introspective dreamer. His languorous gaze, relaxed hand, reveal a gentle, yet self-assured personality. He displays no inhibitions about being recorded for posterity. There is a romance projected by his demeanor and coloring that suggest that artist has tried very hard to please his subscription patron. The aristocratic trappings of gloved hand, reddish drapery and carved, upholstered chair lend an air of authority to the figure that supports his right to sport such an unconcerned facial expression. A slight dichotomy appears between the dreamy gaze and a surprisingly erect posture. Perhaps the sitter is not quite as relazed as he pretends. The position of body frontality with a 3/4 facial turn to the left is a usual Sully portrait pose. A right arm draped over the chair adds a further touch of throwaway ease.

The face glows from its dark background with emphasis on the youthful skin of the twenty one year old Myers. His ruddy cheeks, pale forehead and mellow brown eyes, with deep grey brows, are surrounded with gentle tendrils of hair and a sensitive mouth; all combine to create a highly emotional portrait.

The question of such extreme romanticism, harking to the English Proto-Victorian courtly, flattering style seems to find its answer in the geographic locale of the artist's early life. White Northern artists as Trumbull, Sutart and Peale espoused a linearity that was more characteristic of the American need for a distinct visual image, (". . . paint what you see and look with your own eyes. . . ."), Sully took his inspiration less from the exact rendition and more from the cultural climate and English models presented

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to him in fact and desire.[166] In much the same way as Washington Allston (1779-1843) received inspiration from a ". . . love for the wild and marvellous . . ." in his native South Carolina. Sully was indoctrinated in early life into the Virginia love of elegance.[167]

Harry Toulmin comments upon the popularity of English gentility in Norfolk during the early 1800's.

> . . . The dress of the people of Norfolk is much the same as that of the inhabitants of English towns. I was sorry to see [in] many of the women an affection of English fashions and finery. It was not accompanied with neatness and elegance. Perhaps the climate will not admit of it. They are sensible of this with respect to their children and dress them accordingly.[168]

More observations on English tastes in Norfolk are found in Moreau de St. Mery's comments of 1793-1798.

> . . . The house furnishing are simple; the houses are without plate glass or carpets. Tables, side-boards, mahogany bureaus and chairs are always in the English taste, and floors are always carefully washed.[169]

Writing between 1795 and 1797, Rochefoucauld notes:

> . . . The Virginians generally enjoy a character for hospitality, which they truly deserve; for they are fond of company; their hospitality is sincere, and may, perhaps, be the reason of their spending more than they should do, for, in general, they are not rich, especially in clear income. You find, therefore, very frequently a table well-served, and covered with plate, in a room where half the windows have been broken for ten years past, and will probably remain so ten years longer.[170]

Despite the fact that Norfolk had little commerce with England during the period of Sully's residence, except to export tobacco, the love of the English standard remained. Anne Ritson had several biting comments on this anomaly in Norfolk between 1799 and 1809.

> And being daily us'd to see
> The people of this new country;
> And knowing from what stock they rose,

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Could scarce my countenance compose,
When I have heard them proudly name
Their ancestors, of glorious fame;
Who only could remember'd be
By those who brought them 'cross the sea.[171]

Ritson recounts an episode involving ancestor worship that clearly demonstrates the longing for self-image in this land of physical hardships and uncertain futures; the same longing that Sully attempted to fuse with his likenesses.

Once I remember I was pleas'd
To see a family well teas'd:
For ostentatiously they try'd
A neighbour near them to deride;
Whose father, like their own, had been
A traveller across the main;
But they could not exactly say,
Whose father first was sent his way;
'Twas laughable to hear the two,
Place their pretensions full in view.
"My father came in such a year:"
"Mine came sooner, I declare!"
"Yours came, you say! I know it's true,"
"And can your narrative pursue."
"He came not at his own desire."
At which the other taking fire,
With quick response, declar'd, "he knew"
"What t'other meant to bring in view;"
"But he could also make it known"
"His father did not come alone."[172]

Thomas Sully, with his long training in the theatre, knew well how to satisfy the local demand for a portrait that would augment reality. His own affable charm was reflected in the enhancement of every subject and he lost no opportunity to display the positive qualities of a sitter.

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## Chapter IV

## CONCLUSION

The intention of this thesis was to investigate and record the early life and seedling career of Thomas Sully as he lived in Norfolk during the years 1801-1803. It seemed reasonable, in light of his extensive Journal, Register of Paintings, and the Norfolk Directory (1801), which identified by name, address and occupation about 800 of the citizens of the city of Norfolk, to delve into the details of this man's attempt to establish himself as a portrait painter in Norfolk. Areas of interest in this paper include the Sully family theatrical background, the cultural climate in Norfolk in the early 19th century, the class of patrons served by Sully and the prevailing conditions of art in America.

The promise of Norfolk as a major American seaport was a lure for diverse businesses. Surely Sully saw the thronging masses described by Squires et al. as potential clients for his intended career. The shipping industry in Norfolk appears to have involved no less than 15% of the population of the city, with occupations ranging from captain to sailmaker to supplier. More than 60 boarding houses are listed in the Directory, some catering solely to sailors. Shipping, while a prosperous trade, was by its nature a transient industry, a factor poorly suited to the needs of a portrait painter. Many of Sully's potential sitters could not remain in port for the



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three to four weeks necessary to complete a portrait. Permanency was never a sailor's hallmark. It is not surprising that this segment of the population hardly appears in the Register as a source of patrons. One portrait, a Captain Bills, appears to represent the sizeable seafaring population of Norfolk, and Sully recorded a swift completion date of three days, July 22-25, 1801.[173] It is ironic that the mainstay of Norfolk's prosperity acted as an antagonist to Sully's aspirations.

The segment of the population comprising the most fertile field in terms of portraiture remained the merchant class, comprising about 20% of Norfolk's 800 listed citizens. While monetary complexities caused headaches for the import-export trade and for foreign travelers, the general system of exchange was by barter, which included artists. In Sully's case, the barter was of extreme exigency--he was burdened with the responsibility of covering his brother's debts, even though other members of his family resided in Norfolk in 1800. (His aunt, Margaretta West, is listed in the Norfolk Directory as being manager of the theatre.)[174] Surely, however, the reputation of a debtor that attached to Lawrence Sully, miniature painter, reached by extension to Thomas Sully and the latter was forced into a most compromising position regarding his relationship with his sitters in the merchant class. It is significant that no patron emerged to offer support to the young Sully and no letters of introduction appeared in his records until several years following his brother's death, when he assumed a new residence in New York with renewed dignity. He learned to guard his personal reputation with

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extreme care, earning the respect of his peers and the affection of his public.

Sully gleaned practical lessons in "marketing" from those years of harship endured in Norfolk. With no overt cognisance of his achievement, Sully succeeded in fusing commerce with aesthetics, producing a portrait reinvented in the romantic style of Sir Thomas Lawrence. One never senses, in these portrayals of elegance and refinement, the artist's discipline and fortitude in an uncompromising world. "From long experience," Sully defended, "I know that resemblence in a portrait is essential, but no fault will be found with the artist, (at least by the sitter), if he improves the appearance."[175] In many ways this thesis is a testimony to Sully's pragmatism and endurance as well as to his talent.

Thomas Sully was never able to enjoy the artistic facilities available to artists in Philadelphia, in those earliest years, when Peale and his compatriots exchanged ideas and techniques. Materials were often ordered from Philadelphia as Norfolk, in 1801, supported only one picture frame maker, William Morgan, and one other miniature painter, Samuel Brooks.[176] While it is known that Henry Benbridge also lived in Norfolk during this period, certainly no community of artists was formed by these few men.

An isolation born of geography, fostered by a maritime transiency and aggravated by debt was a most inhospitable climate in which Sully proposed to establish a trade. Few plantation gentry existed to patronize his offerings and the burgeoning merchant class knew him largely as a financial delinquent who bartered his brother's debts with pictures. The Sully family transiency in the theatre

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circuit only mimicked the local traffic and no true roots were ever established by a Sully in Norfolk.

The artist that survived this unpromising start in Norfolk became much lauded during his lifetime by his peers, in both his personal conduct and in his commitment to his art and to the state of the visual arts in America. He unstintingly supported organized arts organizations and taught younger artists. The five descendents who followed his trade are testimony to his enthusiasm: Jane Cooper Sully Darley, daughter (Mrs. William H. W. Darley, 1807-1877); Thomas Wilcocks Sully, son (1811-1847); Robert Matthew Sully, nephew, son of Matthew Sully, Jr. (1803-1855); and John Neagle, son-in-law to his stepdaughter Mary Chester Sully.[177]

Norfolk may feel a sense of involvement with the evolution of the arts in America through the valiant efforts of Thomas Sully, the leading portraitist of the mid 19th century. A forthcoming (1983) exhibition in the National Portrait Gallery on Sully will bring his special place in the history of American painting into greater prominence.

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## NOTES

[1]Edgar P. Richardson, American Romantic Painting (New York: E. Weyhr, 1944), p. 11.

[2]Frank Jewett Mather, Jr., The American Spirit in Art, Vol. 12 of The Pageant of American Series (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927), p. 4.

[3]William Wirt, The Letters of the British Spy (New York: J. & J. Harper, 1832), p. 228.

[4]Mather et al., American Spirit, p. 4.

[5]Four Centuries of Portrait Miniatures, Herbert Weissberger, ed. (Pittsburg: Carnegie Institute, Dept. Fine Arts, 1954), n. pag.

[6]Theodore Bolton, Early American Portrait Painters in Miniature (New York: Frederick Fairchild Sherman, 1921), p. vii.

[7]Hannah R. London, Shades of My Forefathers (Springfield, Ma.: Pond-Ekberg Company, 1941), p. 8.

[8]Ibid., p. 19.

[9]Ibid., p. 49.

[10]Richardson, American Romantic, p. 5.

[11]Mather et al., American Spirit, p. 17.

[12]Frederick Cummings and Allen Stanley, ed., Romantic Art in Britain, Paintings, and Drawings 1760-1860 (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art), p. 18.

[13]Wirt, Letters, pp. 74-75.

[14]Cummings et al., Romantic Art, p. 18.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Mather et al., American Spirit, p. 16.

[17]Richardson, American Romantic, p. 16.



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[18]Thomas Sully, Hints to Young Painters (New York: Reinhold Publishing Co., 1965; rpt. 1873), p. vii.

[19]Anna Wells Rutledge, Artists in the Life of Charleston (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1949), p. 1263.

[20]Eola Willis, The Charleston Stage in the XVIII Century (Columbia, S.C.: The State Company, 1924), p. 188.

[21]Henry Budd, "Thomas Sully," The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, 42,2 (1918), p. 99.

[22]Norfolk Herald, April 2, 1801.

[23]Suzanne K. Sherman, "Norfolk and the Sullys," Norfolk Virginian Pilot, 25 March 1950, n. pag.

[24]Thomas Sully, Journal of Activities May 1792-1793; 1799-December 1846 (Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, n. p.) Subsequent references as Journal, n. pag.

[25]Sherman, "Norfolk and the Sullys."

[26]Ibid.

[27]William Dunlap, The Diary of William Dunlap (New York: New-York Historical Society, 1931), p. 708.

[28]Richmond Portraits in an Exhibition of the Makers of Richmond 1737-1860 (Richmond: The Valentine Museum, 1949), p. 193. Mrs. Ralph Catteral of the Valentine Museum tried without success in April 1949 to locate some substantiating evidence of the whereabouts of Thomas Sully and his mother during the years 1792-1794. Her contact was with the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.

[29]Willis, Charleston Stage, p. 192.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid., p. 237. An influx of refugees from St. Domingo, W.I., in July 1793, gave rise to a competitive theatre operation in Charleston under the management of Alexander Placide. See "The French Theatre."

[32]Rutledge, Charleston, pp. 146-147.

[33]Willis, Charleston Stage, p. 217.

[34]Rutledge, Charleston, p. 147.

[35]Willis, Charleston Stage, p. 209.

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[36]William Dunlap, A History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States, 2 Vols. (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1969; rpt. 1834), p. 102.

[37]Edward Biddle and Mantle Fielding, The Life and Works of Thomas Sully (New York: Da Capo Pres., 1970; rpt. 1921), p. 4.

[38]Rutledge, Charleston, p. 147.

[39]Dunlap, Rise and Progress, p. 104.

[40]Budd, "Thomas Sully," p. 124.

[41]Dunlap, Rise and Progress, p. 106.

[42]James Bailey, "The Sullys, Searchers After Beauty," Virginia Cavalcade, IX,1 (Summer 1959), p. 42.

[43]Norfolk Herald, 6 June 1795.

[44]Dunlap, Diary, p. 703.

[45]Dunlap, Rise and Progress, p. 106.

[46]Budd, "Thomas Sully," p. 100.

[47]Dunlap, Rise and Progress, p. 107.

[48]Robert G. Stewart, Henry Benbridge (1743-1812) American Portrait Painter (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1971), p. 18.

[49]Ibid., p. 16.

[50]Dunlap, Rise and Progress, p. 106.

[51]Rutledge, Charleston, p. 161. Watercolor located in the scrapbook of Mrs. John S. Cogdell, in ms. collection of Mrs. Leger Mitchell.

[52]Dunlap, Rise and Progress, p. 107.

[53]Sully, Hints to Young Painters, p. xi.

[54]Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin, VIII (June 1937), p. 21.

[55]Sully, Hints to Young Painters, pp. 6-7.

[56]Budd, "Thomas Sully," p. 110.

[57]Sully, Hints to Young Painters, p. 5.

[58]Sully, Journal.

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[59]Mary Bartlett Cowdrey, American Academy of Fine Arts and American Art-Union (New York: The New-York Historical Society, 1953), p. V.

[60]Dunlap, Diary, p. 694.

[61]Sully, Journal.

[62]Bailey, "Searchers After Beauty," p. 42.

[63]Budd, "Thomas Sully," p. 100.

[64]Ibid., p. 101.

[65]Sully, Journal.

[66]Ibid.

[67]Dunlap, Diary, p. 695.

[68]Reese Davis James, "Yoricks of Yesteryear," Philadelphia Forum Magazine, (n.p., n.d.), p. 11. From Thomas Sully microfile, Archives of American Art.

[69]Charles William Janson, The Stranger in America, 1793-1806 (New York: The Press of the Pioneers, 1935; rpt. 1807), p. 268, fn. 20.

[70]Ibid., p. 260.

[71]Ibid., p. 668, fn. 36.

[72]Dunlap, Rise and Progress, p. 110.

[73]Richmond Enquirer, 6 October 1806.

[74]Dunlap, Rise and Progress, p. 111.

[75]Cowdrey, American Academy, pp. 1-2.

[76]Dunlap, Diary, p. 695.

[77]Sully, Journal.

[78]Dunlap, Rise and Progress, p. 115.

[79]Dunlap, Diary, p. 699.

[80]Ibid., p. 691.

[81]Sully, Journal.

[82]Ibid.

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[83]John Sartain, The Reminiscences of a Very Old Man (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1899), p. 184. The letter indicates some familiarity between Rebecca Gratz and Thomas Sully had been established prior to 1807.

New York, Nov. 4, 1807

I hardly need introduce the bearer, Mr. Sully, to you, as I trust you recollect him perfectly. He purposes [sic] passing the winter in your city, and as he will be 'a mere stranger and sojourner in the land,' I would solicit for him your good graces. He is a gentleman for whom I have great regard, not merely on account of his professional abilities, which are highly promising, but for his amiable character and engaging manners. I think I cannot render him a favour for which he ought to be more grateful than in introducing him to the notice of yourself and your connections. . . .

Ever Yours,

Washington Irving

[84]Anne Ritson, A Poetical Picture of America 1799-1807 (London: Vernor, Hood and Sharpe, 1808), p. 74.

[85]William S. Forrest, Historical and Descriptive Sketches of Norfolk and Vicinity (Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1853), p. 117.

[86]W. H. T. Squires, Norfolk in Bygone Days (Norfolk Ledger Dispatch. serial, 1935-1948, p. 35. Kirn Memorial Library.

[87]Forrest, Sketches, pp. 107-108.

[88]Janson, Stranger, p. 36. Some confusion exists as to the approximate population figures of validity in Norfolk and Norfolk Borough in 1800. Janson's figure of 3,000 is contradicted by Simmons's Norfolk Directory, which finds 6,926 people in Norfolk Borough. Simmons actually details only approximately 800 people in the City of Norfolk.

[89]Margaretta Van Tuyl Douglas, "A Social History of Virginia as Revealed by Travelers Accounts, 1773-1797" (Unpublished Thesis, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC, 1945), p. 29.

[90]Simmons, The Norfolk Directory for the Year 1801, p. 67. Kirn Memorial Library.

[91]Moreau de St. Mery's American Journey, Kenneth and Anna M. Roberts, ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1947), p. 62.

[92]Simmons, Norfolk Directory, p. 34.

[93]Sergeant Room, Kirn Memorial Library, Newspaper records (The Castle Press, 1948), p. 23.

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[94]Forrest, Sketches, p. 102.

[95]Janson, Stranger, pp. 333-334.

[96]Rogers Dey Whichard, The History of Lower Tidewater, Virginia (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1959), p. 236.

[97]Ritson, Poetical Picture, p. 90.

[98]Moreau de St. Mery, p. 53.

[99]Janson, Stranger, p. 394.

[100]Wyndham B. Blanton, M.D., Medicine in Virginia (Richmond: Garrett & Massie, Inc., 1933), p. 225.

[101]Sully, Journal.

[102]Simmons, Norfolk Directory, p. 67.

[103]Whichard, Lower Tidewater, pp. 427-429.

[104]Simmons, Norfolk Directory, p. 32.

[105]William H. Stewart, History of Norfolk County, Virginia and Representative Citizens (Chicago: Biographical Publishing Company, 1902), p. 359.

[106]Moreau de St. Mery, p. 54.

[107]Sherman, "Norfolk and the Sullys."

[108]Ritson, Poetical Picture, p. 146.

[109]Sherman, "Norfolk and the Sullys."

[110]Norfolk Herald, June 17, 1800. "Circus at Brigg Point. 'Sailor's whimsical Description of a fox chase - M. Sully who will ride tied in a bag & change to a sailor's doxy.' With favorite Fricasee Dance between her and the clown." From Valentine Museum Sully file.

[111]Sherman, "Norfolk and the Sullys."

[112]Dunlap, Diary, p. 476.

[113]Ibid., p. 513.

[114]Ibid., p. 369.

[115]Ibid., p. 479.

[116]Ibid., pp. 498-500.

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[117]Ibid., pp. 527, 552, 508-509.

[118]Ibid., pp. 474, 489, 527. Dunlap mentions Charleston and Philadelphia as centers with the work unequally divided. Morse, Trott and Shields were in Charleston in 1810; Sully was in Philadelphia ready to travel.

[119]Chester Sully subsequently made his home in Portsmouth and shows several contacts with the Myers family, an established shipping concern. In June 1812, a note appears showing Chester Sully attempting to borrow money from John Myers, a Thomas Sully patron, citing Theodorick Armistead as a mutual acquaintance. Myers Collection, Old Dominion University Archives.

[120]Sully, Journal, May 13, 1801.

[121]Norfolk Borough Land Book, 1801.

[122]Norfolk Herald, 25 April 1801.

[123]Sully, Journal.

[124]Simmons, Norfolk Directory, p. 35.

[125]Sully, Journal.

[126]Norfolk Borough Land Book, 1801, shows Woodworth to have paid a tax of $.44 for two slaves.

[127]Simmons, Norfolk Directory, p. 26.

[128]Sully, Journal.

[129]Sully, Journal.

[130]Richmond City Personal Property Tax List, 1799-1834. Lawrence Sully resided in Norfolk and in Richmond in 1802. Advertisement in the Norfolk Herald reads: "April 13, 1802, L. Sully miniature painter at Mr. Rissard's No. 8. Dameron's Lane." Simmons Norfolk Directory shows Rissaud's Vaux-Hall gardens at 6 Dameron's Lane (p. 28).

[131]Norfolk Herald, 21 January 1802. "Mr. Robertson & Sully respectifully inform public. Performances for the last time Friday eve. New feats. Mr. Robertson will leap through a baloon [sic] 12' high enveloped in fire works."

[132]Sully, Journal. The subject, William Armistead, was brother to an early patron, Thomas Armistead, identified in Lower Norfolk County Antiquary, Vol. III (Baltimore: Press of the Friederwald Co., 1901), p. 22, as a minister.

[133]Thomas Sully, Register of Paintings (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, n.d., n. pub.), n. pag. Also Sully, Journal.

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[134]Simmons, Norfolk Directory, p. 12.

[135]Sully, Journal.

[136]Ibid.

[137]Thomas Sully, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, file. Microfilm from Archives of American Art.

[138]Sully, Register and Journal.

[139]Sully, Journal.

[140]Ibid.

[141]Simmons, Norfolk Directory, p. 22.

[142]Norma Lois Peterson, The Defense of Norfolk in 1807, As Told by William Tatham to Thomas Jefferson (Chesapeake: Norfolk County Historical Society, 1970), p. 43.

[143]Henrico County Order Book IV, p. 28. August 15, 1797. Suit of Charles Spencer against Lawrence Sully. Suit dismissed February 21, 1798, Henrico County Order Book IV, p. 87. From Valentine Museum.

[144]Janson, Stranger, p. 252.

[145]Ibid.

[146]Sully, Journal.

[147]Norfolk Herald, 6 June 1795.

[148]Sully, Journal.

[149]Simmons, Norfolk Directory, p. 126.

[150]Simmons, Norfolk Directory, p. 13; Sully, Register.

[151]Simmons, Norfolk Directory, p. 25.

[152]Sully, Journal.

[153]Sully, Register.

[154]Sully, Journal.

[155]Sully, Journal and Register.

[156]Thomas Sully (Farmville, Virginia: Longwood College, Bedford Gallery, March-April 1973), p. 10.

[157]Ibid.

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[158]Alexander Wilbourne Weddell, Virginia Historical Portraiture (Richmond: The William Byrd Press, Inc., 1930), p. 302.

[159]Ibid., p. 303.

[160]Sully, Journal.

[161]Sully, Register.

[162]Chrysler Museum at Norfolk, Virginia.

[163]Sully, Journal.

[164]Ibid.

[165]David Philipson, Letters of Rebecca Gratz (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1929), p. 5.

[166]Barbara Novak, American Painting of the Nineteenth Century (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1969), p. 34. Gilbert Stuart to John Neagle.

[167]Ibid., p. 45.

[168]Harry Toulmin, The Western Country in 1793 (San Marino: California: The Castle Press, 1948), pp. 25-26.

[169]Moreau de St. Mery, p. 52.

[170]Douglas, "Social History," p. 105.

[171]Ritson, Poetical Picture, pp. 51-52.

[172]Ibid., pp. 52-53.

[173]Sully, Register, 1801.

[174]Simmons, Norfolk Directory, p. 33.

[175]Sully, Hints to Young Painters, p. 31.

[176]Simmons, Norfolk Directory, pp. 10, 24.

[177]Yale University Art Bulletin, p. 21.

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