

Basic Detail Report



Title: Jared Sparks

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Date: 1827-1828

Primary Maker: com.gallerysystems.emuseum.core.entities.RecordXPerson@3efb2

Medium: Oil on canvas

Description: The New Britain portrait of Jared Sparks (1789-1866) (1) is one of several canvases begun about 1827-28 that remained unfinished at Stuart's death. Although only lightly sketched in, Sparks's features, which emerge from a gray-brown background, are well delineated, giving the sitter the air of an energetic, affable, intelligent, and remarkably handsome young man. Stuart may have required perhaps only one or two more sittings with Sparks in order to finish the portrait.

When Stuart began the painting in 1827, historian Jared Sparks was about to go on a research trip to Europe to gather material for the project that would become his greatest work-the publication of the writings of George Washington. The son of a Connecticut farmer, Sparks began his career as a minister in Baltimore. In 1823 he resigned to become the owner and editor of the influential Boston publication the North American Review. In 1838 he turned down the Whig nomination for Congress in favor of a position as the first professor of history at Harvard University. He later served as its president. Sparks became one of the nation's first and foremost historians. His works on the Revolutionary period include The Life of Gouverneur Morris, The Works of Benjamin Franklin, The Library of American Biography, and The Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution, in addition to his pioneering twelve-volume series The Writings of George Washington. (2) MAS

BIBLIOGRAPHY: William Dunlap, "A History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States," 2 vols. (New York: George P. Scott, 1834), vol. 1, pp. 161-222; George C. Mason, "The Life and Works of Gilbert Stuart," (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1879); Lawrence Park, "Gilbert Stuart, An Illustrated Descriptive List of His Works" (New York: William Edwin Rudge, 1926); Charles Merrill Mount, "Gilbert Stuart, A Biography" (New York: W. W. Norton, 1964); "Gilbert Stuart: Portraitist of the Young Republic," 1755-1828, exhib. cat. (Providence: Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, 1967); Richard McLanathan, Gilbert Stuart (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1986). On Sparks, see Herbert Baxter Adams, "The Life and Writing of Jared Sparks" (Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1893). Notes: On Sparks, see Herbert Baxter Adams, The Life and Writing of Jared Sparks, (Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1893).

Dimensions: 27 1/4 x 22 1/8 in. (37 x 32 1/2 x 4 3/8 in. framed)