

SOURCES AND/ET DOCUMENTS

AN INDEX OF MINIATURISTS AND SILHOUETTISTS WHO WORKED IN MONTREAL.*

This index identifies the artists who created miniatures and silhouettes in Montréal between 1760 and 1860.¹ These charming minor art forms offered smaller, cheaper² or more intimate alternatives to the full-scale portraiture practised in the province at that time, providing the sort of personal memento that could be carried with one, pressed into an album or even worn in a locket or brooch. This special market was too limited in the colonial centres of British North America to foster indigenous schools of miniature-painting and silhouette-taking (as occurred in the United States, or with full-scale portraiture in Québec) so creation of these works remained in the hands of itinerant artists. These artists arrived from the busier art centres of New York or Boston or from overseas, set up shop for a few weeks, advertised their skills in the newspapers or in a shop window and, when business declined, moved on to the next colonial centre. While miniatures and silhouettes are found in many Montréal collections, the great majority are both unsigned and unattributed, and so little is known of their creators.

Identifying these itinerant miniaturists and silhouettists proved a lengthy task. A reading of Montréal newspapers published during that century: *The Canadian Courant and Montreal Advertiser*, *The Montreal Gazette*, *The Montreal Herald*, *La Minerve* and *The Vindicator and Canadian Advertiser* provided advertisements of thirty-one. A very few miniatures are signed³ or associated by family tradition with a particular artist.⁴ Several silhouettists used a stamp to identify their works.⁵ Other unadvertised visits are recorded in J. Russell Harper's *Early Painters and Engravers in Canada*. The total number of artists reached forty-five. Among the names that appeared were those of portraitists William Berczy and Antoine Plamondon; of the distinguished miniaturists, John Ramage (Irish) and Anson Dickinson (American) appeared as well as Montréal landscape painters R. A. Sproule and James Duncan. But most artists were virtual unknowns, lost to public record except for advertisements such as the following:

*This index was compiled as an appendix to the Concordia University M.F.A. thesis *Miniatures and Silhouettes in Montreal, 1760-1860*.

PROFILE LIKENESSES

Four for 1s 3d with a new invented Patent Physiognotrace
— Half a minutes sitting only is required.

MR. CROMWELL

Portrait, Miniature and Profile Painter, Pupil of the celebrated Artist (Sir) Benjamin West, London; presents his compliments to the ladies and gentlemen of Montreal, and its environs, and informs them that he has taken the Rooms Mr. Metcalf formerly occupied, opposite the theatre, where he takes Profiles in a superior style of elegance. Mr. Cromwell thinks proper to inform the Public, that it is impossible for any person to take Profile Likenesses more correct than himself; having had the most extensive practice, and given universal satisfaction.

No money will be received if the person is not perfectly satisfied with the Likeness. Frames of various patterns — Likenesses cut to fit lockets of all sizes... Hours of attendance from 9 in the morning, till 2 in the afternoon, and from 3 till 8 in the Evening. Montreal, 26th Dec. 1808.⁶

By tabulating and analyzing the details mentioned in their advertisements and in the standard biographical dictionaries, a composite picture can be drawn. Itinerant miniaturists and silhouettists came from the United States, Great Britain, Europe and Canada, in that order. Their travels might be limited to trips between Québec and Montréal⁷ or might range the length of the Atlantic seaboard.⁸ Their stay in Montréal was typically of only a few weeks or months' duration. Their training too was varied. A few had attended respectable art institutions and advertised the fact. The majority were suspiciously silent on the subject. While miniaturists outnumbered silhouettists two to one, few artists practised one craft alone. Other artistic pursuits such as portraiture, landscape-painting, engraving or art-teaching frequently accompanied, or in some cases overshadowed, their skills as miniaturists or silhouettists. Presumably diversification improved an artist's chance of survival. Among the silhouettists different techniques were popular at different times; for example, machine cutting between 1800 and the 1820's and hand cutting afterward.⁹ Also from the charts came evidence of the key differences among the art forms themselves: the silhouette, executed quickly (with the novelty of that speed), often in duplicate and inexpensive; the miniature on ivory generally quite expensive because of its more delicate and translucent ground and the

greater time and skill that it entailed; and the miniature on paper, as the poor cousin, offering just quick, cheap portraiture in small scale.

Unfortunately, identifying the miniaturists and silhouettists who worked in Montréal provides only a partial solution to the problem. Without samples of an artist's work, no attributions can be made on more than the most tentative basis. This is regrettably the case for most of these artists.

Roslyn Rosenfeld
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Notes:

¹ The miniature appeared in Montréal just after the English Conquest, the silhouette nearer the turn of the century. Throughout their Canadian history, silhouettes were referred to as "profiles." Both terms appear in the index. Both media were supplanted by photography by 1860.

² While silhouettes and miniatures on paper were truly inexpensive, the miniature on ivory could equal the cost of a full-scale portrait. Generally, however, it was somewhat less expensive than an oil portrait.

³ For example, *Frederick Griffin* (1798-1879) by William Dunlap, 1820; miniature on ivory, 7.3 x 6 cm, inscribed on reverse "Frederick Griffin / of Montreal / November 1820 / Anno Aetatis/XXII / Dunlap Pinxit," Bank of Montréal Archives.

⁴ For example, *Jane Davidson Ross* (1803?-1866) by James Duncan, ca. 1830-40, watercolour on paper, 10.2 x 9.5 cm., McCord Museum M9556.

⁵ These silhouettists were Eliab Metcalf, Master Hanks and an anonymous artist whose stamp showed a lion *passant* above a crown.

⁶ *The Canadian Courant and Montreal Advertiser*, Jan. 2, 1809, p. 3.

⁷ The Québec based artists Joseph Moran, Antoine Plamondon and Giuseppe Fascio each made working visits to Montréal.

⁸ Examples of such truly itinerant artists were the silhouettist Bouker and miniaturists Anson Dickinson and William Dunlap.

⁹ The physiognotrace designed by the French artist Gilles-Louis Chrétien in 1786 was the most common silhouette machine used in North America. It seems to have been based on the pantograph, placed vertically, with a sight attached for tracing the profile.

NAME	ORIGINS/ TRAINING	DATE IN MONTRÉAL	TRAVELS
"The Artists"	British; Society of Arts, London	Oct. 1832, Mar.-Apr. 1833	
T. H. Bell	English	Feb.-June 1820, Sept. 1820, Apr. 1821	poss. Baltimore 1810-18
William Berczy Sr. (1744-1813)	b. Saxony; European training	1804/5-13	Europe, U.S.A., York, Québec, London
William Berczy Jr. (1791-1873)	b. London; studied under father	1805-19	
Mr. Bouker	American	ca. 1808	New Brunswick, Upper & Lower Canada, 9 states of U.S.A.
Peter M. Choice		Jan. 1816	
Mr. Claxton	Europe (British?)	Sept. 1828	
C. G. Crehan (Crehan)	French; "élève de l'académie de peinture de Paris"	1844-47	
Mr. Cromwell	pupil of Benjamin West	1809	1808 Québec, 1809 Montréal
Crowe		late 18th century	
G. Dame Jr.			

ACTIVITIES	PRICES/TIME	LOCATION OF WORKS	MONTREAL ADS
profiles, miniatures on paper; art-teaching	50¢, few minutes		<i>Mtl. Gazette</i> 27 Oct. 1832 5 Mar. 1833 -early Apr.; <i>Can. Courant</i> 6-20 Mar. 1833
miniatures on paper (physiognotrace); portraits	\$2.00, one sitting \$5.00		<i>Can. Courant</i> 9 Feb.-June 1820, 19, 23 Sept. 1820; <i>Mtl. Herald</i> 7-14 Apr. 1821
miniatures; pastels; portraits; architecture		Chateau de Ramezay; McCord Museum; Vaudreuil Museum; private collections	
miniatures; portraits; landscapes			
profiles	2 for \$1.00	Metropolitan Toronto Library Board	
machine cut silhouettes; painted silhouettes	15d, half price to visitors of museum		<i>Mtl. Herald</i> 27 Jan. 1816
"profile ptg. in colours and bronze"			<i>La Minerve</i> 25 Sept.- 6 Oct. 1828; <i>Mtl. Gazette</i> 23, 27 Oct. 1828
portraits; miniatures; lithography; art-teaching			<i>La Minerve</i> 26 July-1 Nov. 1847
cut and painted profiles; portraits; miniatures	4 for 1s 3d, 30 secs.		<i>Can. Courant</i> 26 Dec. 1808, 2 Jan. 1809
miniatures		McCord Museum	
miniatures; portraits: canvas, silk	\$10-\$20		<i>Can. Courant</i> 10, 27 Mar. 1809; <i>Mtl. Gazette</i> 27 Feb.-13 Mar. 1809

NAME	ORIGINS/ TRAINING	DATE IN MONTRÉAL	TRAVELS
De Milon		1789	
Anson Dickinson (1779-1852)	b. Connecticut	1811; intermittently 1820-25	extensive travels in U.S.A., Montréal, Québec
Louis Dulongpré (1754-1843)	b. France	ca. 1785	Montréal, Québec
James Duncan (1806-1881)	b. Ireland	ca. 1827-1881	
William Dunlap (1766-1839)	b. New Jersey; studied under Benjamin West	14 Aug.-Oct. 1820	extensive travels in U.S.A., Montréal, Québec
Thomas Edwards	American; Boston	ca. 1835?	
Adolphe (Victor) Ernette	French	1841? 1844	Québec, Montréal
Giuseppe Fascio (c. 1810-1851)	b. Corsica	1834, 1836, 1848?	New York, Montréal, Québec, Ottawa
George Freeman (1789-1868)	b. Connecticut	Nov. 1816, Aug. 1817	Montréal, England, New York, Philadelphia
Jean-Joseph Girouard (1795-1855)	b. Québec; studied under François-Thomas Baillairgé and G. F. Baillairgé	1813	
Jarvis Hanks b. 1799	b. New York State	ca. 1827	York, Montréal, Québec, Charleston, S.C., Salem, Mass., Halifax
William Hillyer (act. 1832-64)	American	1844-45	active New York, Montréal

ACTIVITIES	PRICES/TIME	LOCATION OF WORKS	MONTRÉAL ADS
miniatures; teacher at girls' school			<i>Mtl. Gazette</i> 28 May, 1789
miniatures; portraits		Chateau de Ramezay	<i>Mtl. Herald</i> 23 Sept.-9 Dec. 1820; <i>Can. Courant</i> 23 Sept.-2 Dec. 1820
miniatures; portraits; relig. photographs			
miniatures; portraits; landscapes; lithography; photographs		McCord Museum; <i>Viger Album</i> Bibl. mun. Mtl.	
miniatures; portraits	\$30.00 \$25.00-\$120.	Bank of Montréal Archives	<i>Can. Courant</i> 23 Aug.-23 Sept. 1820; <i>Mtl. Herald</i> 12 Sept.-11 Oct. 1820
painted profiles; miniatures; portraits; lithography; art-teaching	50¢-\$5.00	McCord Museum; private collections	
miniatures; art-teaching			<i>La Minerve</i> 4 Jan. 1844
miniatures; portraits; art-teaching	\$3.00	Chateau de Ramezay; McCord Museum; Soc. hist. du Saguenay	<i>La Minerve</i> 16 June-17 July 1834, 8-25 Aug. 1836
miniatures			<i>Mtl. Gazette</i> 18 Nov. 1816; <i>Mtl. Herald</i> 2 Aug. 1817
miniatures		Archives nationales du Québec	
cut and bronzed profiles; papyrotomia	2s 6d	Bank of Montréal; Chateau de Ramezay; McCord Museum; private collections	<i>La Minerve</i> 27 Aug., 6 Sept. 1827; <i>Mtl. Gazette</i> 20 Aug.-6 Sept. 1827
miniatures; portraits			

NAME	ORIGINS/ TRAINING	DATE IN MONTREAL	TRAVELS
Luke Kent	London	1803-04	
(lion stamp)		1850	
William Lockwood (c. 1803-1866)	English	1844? 1852, 1861	Toronto, Québec, Montréal
B. Lyon		1809	
R. McNaughton	American	1818-19	New York, Montréal
Eliab Metcalf (1785-1834)	b. Massachusetts	1808	Guadeloupe, Montréal, Québec, Halifax, New Orleans, Caribbean
Joseph Moran (1786-1816)	b. St-Jérôme, Québec; apprenticed to Dulongpré	1808-09	Montréal, Québec
Saunders Nellis	American?	1845	Mass., Rhode Island
Robert Parker Jr. (d. ca. 1865)	b. St. John, N.B.	1848-50	Montréal, England
Antoine Plamondon (1804-1895)	b. St-Roch, Qué.; studied under Légaré in Can., Guérin in France	1833, 1836	France, Montréal
Jona. Purinton	American	1803	Salem, Montréal, New York
John Ramage (ca. 1748-1802)	B. Ireland; studied Dublin, Society of Artists School	1794-1802	Halifax, Boston, New York, Montréal
Gerritt Schipper (1770-1825)	b. Holland; studied in Paris	1808-09, 1810	Boston, Salem, Charleston, S.C., New York, Amsterdam, Montréal, Québec England

ACTIVITIES	PRICES/TIME	LOCATION OF WORKS	MONTRÉAL ADS
profiles (physiognotrace)	\$2.00/10 min.		<i>Mtl. Gazette</i> 24 Dec. 1803-16 Jan. 1804
cut and bronzed profiles		McCord Museum	
miniatures		private collections	
cut and bronzed profiles (machine)	2/1£ 3d		<i>Mtl. Gazette</i> 4 Aug.-9 Oct. 1809
miniatures; portraits			<i>Mtl. Herald</i> 19 Dec. 1818-3 July 1819
hollow-cut and painted profiles; gold on glass jewellery profiles	2/15d/1 minute	Chateau de Ramezay; McCord Museum	<i>Mtl. Gazette</i> 5 Sept.-7 Nov. 1808
miniatures; profiles (physiognotrace); portraits; miniatures on paper; church paintings	2/10s 3d		<i>Mtl. Gazette</i> 5 Dec. 1808, 23 Jan. 1809
cut profiles; armless entertainment		private collections	<i>Mtl. Gazette</i> 20 Sept. 1845; <i>La Minerve</i> 18-25 Sept. 1845
miniatures			
portraits; miniatures		private collections	<i>Mtl. Gazette</i> 29 Sept., 1836; <i>La Minerve</i> 27 June, 1826
miniatures			<i>Mtl. Gazette</i> 8-15 Aug. 1803
miniatures; portraits		McCord Museum; McGill University Library	
miniatures; miniatures on paper	\$20.00 \$6.00 & \$3.00	McCord Museum	<i>Can. Courant</i> 8-22 May 1809; <i>Mtl. Gazette</i> 31 Oct. 1808, 15 May 1809

NAME	ORIGINS/ TRAINING	DATE IN MONTREAL	TRAVELS
C. Schroeder (Schroder)	b. Germany; active New York	1819, 1831	New York, Richmond, Va., Montréal, Québec
Mr. Seager		1831	Québec, Montréal, Toronto, Mass., Halifax
Henry C. Shumway (1807-1884)	b. Connecticut; studied National Acad. School; active New York	1844	Washington, Hartford, Montréal
Robert A. Sproule (1799-1845)	b. Ireland; studied London, Dublin	1826-40	Montréal, Québec
Levi Stevens (d. 1832)		1810-11, 1815, 1819	Montréal, Toronto
Henry Thielcke (act. 1832-66)	British; Royal Academy School	early 1830's	Québec, Montréal
John Thompson	Scottish	1805-06	New York, Montréal, Halifax, Jamaica, Charleston, S.C.
J. Wilson		1830	
Charles Woodley 1801?	"from London"	1833	Québec, Montréal

ACTIVITIES	PRICES/TIME	LOCATION OF WORKS	MONTREAL ADS
miniatures			<i>Can. Courant</i> 28 Aug.-11 Sept., 23 Nov. 1819; <i>La Minerve</i> 6, 10 Jan. 1831; <i>Mtl. Herald</i> 27 Nov. 1819
bronzed profiles (machine)	\$1.00		<i>Mtl. Gazette</i> 8-15 Oct. 1831
miniatures			<i>Mtl. Gazette</i> 21 Nov. 1844
miniatures; landscapes; art-teaching			<i>Can. Courant</i> 8 Jan. 1831; <i>La Minerve</i> 17 May, 18 June 1832; <i>Mtl. Gazette</i> 26 Nov. 1829; <i>Mtl. Herald</i> 30 Sept.-20 Dec. 1826
miniatures; portraits; engraving			<i>Can. Courant</i> 13-27 May 1811, 4-11 Nov. 1815, Jan.-Apr. 1819
portraits; miniatures; art-teaching			
portraits; miniatures; profiles; landscapes; embroidery patterns; patterns; art-teaching	\$20.00-\$100.00 1-5 guineas 25¢-\$1.00		<i>Mtl. Gazette</i> 23 Dec. 1805- 13 Jan. 1806
art-teaching; portraits; miniatures			<i>Mtl. Gazette</i> 13 May-July 1830
miniatures; portraits; landscapes			<i>La Minerve</i> 15 July 1833; <i>Mtl. Gazette</i> 11-18 July 1833