Sketch of General Washington, 1777
By Charles Willson Peale
In the Collections of The Historical Society
of Pennsylvania
Reverse of Sketch of General Washington, 1777
By Charles Willson Peale
In the Collections of The Historical Society of Pennsylvania
Among the interesting relics in the Collections of The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, is a small unframed drawing on paper 6\(\frac{3}{8}\) by 7\(\frac{1}{4}\) inches in size, of a bust portrait with face full three-quarters to right, body to left, in uniform with epaulet on shoulder; within an oval border 4\(\frac{5}{8}\) by 4 inches with slight indication of ornament on and above the border, and below is written:

Pencil sketch of General Washington from life taken by Chas. Willson Peale 1777.

On the reverse of the paper is the same inscription written in ink over the indistinct signature, either R. Peale or T. R. Peale and the date, Sept. 8th.\(^1\)

The annual report of the Librarian of The Historical Society in the minutes of January 11, 1869, refers to this accession as:

Worthy of mention is a pencil sketch of General Washington, from life, by Charles Wilson Peale, 1777.

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\(^1\) As mentioned the inscription on the obverse repeats that on the back of the drawing where it is written in ink. The pencilled writing is not unlike the chirography of Titian R. Peale and the signature indistinctly written in ink might be his, although he did not connect his initials in that manner. The handwriting in ink is not recognized; the numeral “7” is as it appears in correspondence of Rembrandt Peale. The signature might be taken for R'Peale although his customary abbreviation of his name was “R. Peale” or “Rem. Peale.” Being the elder brother and most interested in the portraits of Washington his knowledge of this sketch should have weight, while Titian R. Peale, as curator of the Museum and portrait gallery at the time of his father’s death, might have identified the drawing although his interests lay in the field of natural history and judging by his writings his knowledge of his father’s activities as a painter was not free from error.
The Society’s “Catalogue of the Paintings and Other Objects of Interest,” published in 1872, includes this drawing, namely:


No further reference to the drawing appears on the Society’s records.

In “Original Portraits of Washington”, by Elizabeth B. Johnston, published 1882, is a reference to this drawing with the list of donors as described in the Catalogue, including the discrepancy in date from that originally inscribed on the sketch, by which the author confuses the drawing with the life portrait of Washington painted by Peale ten years later, upon which he based his mezzotint engraving of 1787. Apart from this obvious error, the reference to the sketch of 1777 is of interest in that it states the donors of the gift to the Society had purchased it from the widow of Charles Augustus Smith, who it was alleged, obtained it from Rembrandt Peale in 1848, into whose possession it came following the death of his father the artist.

Furthermore, that while in the possession of Mr. Smith, then a resident of Cincinnati, the sketch was placed in a loan exhibition, and quotes an abstract from reference to it in the Daily Enquirer of April 18, 1858, which, quoted in full, is as follows:

Last evening we were shown a pencil sketch of Genl. Washington, taken from life, by Charles Wilson Peale, in the year 1717 [1777]. It was framed from a part of an elm tree, then standing in front of Chew’s house on the Germantown battle
Engravings by Charles Willson Peale

ground, and the frame was made by a son of Dr. Fraley\(^2\) of Revolutionary fame.\(^3\) It is a valuable and most interesting relic, and very highly prized by its owners. Rare, indeed, are likenesses of the "Father of his Country" taken from life, and this will be more curious from other circumstances connected with its history.

The identity of the owner of the sketch in 1858 associates it with circumstances which merit consideration in tracing its history in absence of information confirmatory of Rembrandt Peale's alleged ownership prior to 1848.

When the failure of the United States Bank involved the Philadelphia Museum Company, its collections, including the gallery of paintings were purchased in 1845 by Edmund Peale, a grandson of the founder, and removed to the Masonic Hall. According to the newspaper account of the transaction, Mr. Peale was induced to undertake this responsibility from a reluctance to seeing the valuable collections broken up and taken away from the city for which his ancestor designed it.\(^4\)

Despite the appeals made by the press to save the Museum and spare Philadelphia the reproach its removal would entail, Edmund Peale failed to receive sufficient support to meet his obligations and was forced to abandon the effort in 1848, whereupon the collections were offered at public sale.

Through an arrangement with the United States Bank, the "Gallery of National Portraits" was taken in settlement of Peale's indebtedness, and he was intrusted with the sale of the paintings if a purchaser of the collection as a whole could be secured. Through

\(^2\) Perhaps Jacob Fraley (Pa.). Surgeon's Mate, Hospital Department, 1777–1778. F. B. Heitman, Historical Register of Officers of the Continental Army, 1914, p. 235. Elizabeth B. Johnston, author of Original Portraits of Washington, corrects the date and substitutes the name of Dr. Croley.

\(^3\) Cf. Historical Magazines, New York, September, 1858 (II. 281).

\(^4\) Cf. Alexander's Express Messenger, 4 November, 1845.
the initiative of Mr. George Escol Sellers, one of the former Trustees of the Museum and, in 1848, a resident of Cincinnati, Edmund Peale entered into negotiations at that city with leading citizens in 1851 for the purchase of the paintings. This resulted in forming a society or company at Cincinnati, under the presidency of Nicholas Longworth, to raise funds for the purchase and to erect a building for the gallery. In the meantime the pictures were placed on exhibition at Cincinnati and according to comment in the local press, some sensation was created in Philadelphia when it was known that this old Gallery, so long an ornament to that city, and an honor to it was about to be removed. Cincinnati has reason to be proud of it. As an historical collection, its value is inestimable; and it is now in its proper place, in the Queen City of the West, the Central City of the Union.

Notwithstanding this sentiment and the support of leading citizens, the purpose was not consummated and the paintings were returned to Philadelphia where they were subsequently dispersed by sale in 1854. The failure of the Cincinnati project has been attributed in part to the sudden death of Edmund Peale at Cincinnati during the summer of 1851.

In this connection and bearing upon the ownership of the sketch at this period, it appears that shortly before he left Philadelphia, Edmund Peale lost by death his wife, Mary A., a daughter of Charles Smith of that city.

According to letters of George Escol Sellers, Edmund Peale during his brief and fatal illness was attended by "Charlie Smith", who shared with Mr. Sellers in paying the funeral expenses. Smith it seems took charge of Peale's baggage at the hotel where he died and always represented that he found nothing, besides clothing, of value except a small breast-pin with Napoleon's hair in it, which he gave to the hotelkeeper in payment for a considerable bill.

*Cincinnati Gazette, June 4, 1851.*
General Washington
Miniature painted, 1777
by Charles Willson Peale
Owned by Metropolitan Museum
New York City
This is of interest only so far as it may bear upon the ownership of the sketch prior to its purchase and gift to the Historical Society and the personnel of the donors leaves one to assume that the authenticity of the likeness and its authorship was verified when the purchase was made.\(^6\) The frame which associated the drawing with the date inscribed upon it seems to have disappeared, and in addition to the particulars cited, the sketch offers further grounds for conjecture.

Although the claim that it was a drawing direct from life may be open to question, this does not exclude the possibility of it being based upon a life portrait. While it differs in certain details, the pose is similar to the miniature likeness of Washington now commonly recognized as that painted by Peale directly preceding the battle of Germantown, in 1777.

A close examination of the drawing shows indication of cross lines on the surface, with an indented outline suggesting a copy from another portrait and possibly to its transfer to another surface.

In the absence of authentic evidence to the contrary, Peale did not paint any life portraits of Washington between the years 1777, when the General sat for his miniature likeness during the encampment at Worcester before the battle at Germantown, until he was commissioned, in 1779, to paint the full length portrait from which he also executed a miniature. It is true that during the Encampment at Valley Forge he delivered to Mrs. Washington several miniature likenesses of the General, but these as recorded in his journal were executed while with his family on leave and were presumably copies of his miniature portrait of 1777.

\(^6\) It is significant that among the donors was John A. McAllister, of antiquarian repute who was likely to have been familiar with the history of the drawing, besides Charles H. Hutchinson who in the previous year, 1867, deposited with the Historical Society the writing desk of George Washington. Mr. Hutchinson was a grandson of Charles Willing Hare, nephew of Mrs. Elizabeth (née Willing) Powel, who purchased the desk of Washington in 1797.
When Peale’s household was re-established in Philadelphia after the British Evacuation in the spring of 1778, he again had facilities for painting other than in miniature, the medium to which he was limited while with the army as explained in a letter to Benjamin West referring to his experiences during the war.

Upon his release from Militia service, his activities as one of the Commissioners of Forfeited Estates with other public duties at Philadelphia, afforded little opportunity to practice his art. He, nevertheless, found intervals in which to begin painting portraits of his fellow officers from miniatures executed while in camp, enlarged to head size canvases which characterized the collection he formed as his record of the war. It was then, also in the autumn of 1778, that he undertook to engrave a portrait of Washington.

It was an art he had acquired and practiced in London, and while his engagements as a painter during the subsequent decade afforded scant opportunity for other employment, it would seem that he had at least one engraving in view according to the following letter to Charles Carroll, Barrister, of Maryland, August 2, 1779, in which he refers to a sketch made for a proposed print of David Rittenhouse shortly after Peale’s return from England:

Dear Sir:

One of the greatest happinesses of this life is the Converse of great and good men, and I am pleased with the opportunity of Introducing to your acquaintance the bearer, Mr. Rittenhouse, whom you will find everything that is praiseworthy, and what is very rare, a Philosopher without any oddities of that class of men. I drew his Portrait about 8 or 9 years ago with an Intent to make a print from it. Being in company with the late Rev. Mr. Peters of this City, I asked him what I should put at the bottom of the plate. He gave to me in Lattin, which he then Englished to me thus: “He is much better than he looks”. I dont know but he prefaced it with “Like a singed cat etc.”. I must refer you to Mr. Rittenhouse for all the news of the City &c., and will only say a few words about myself. I have on hand a number of Portraits of Gen. Washington, one the Ambassador
had for the Court of France, another is done for the Spanish Court, one other has been sent to the Island of Cuba, and sundry others which I have on hand are for Private Gentlemen. I did expect that when your Assembly was sitting some one would have moved and got a Vote passed to have a Copy for your State House. Virginia has been Guilty of the same neglect. I freely call it so because I do not believe any Impartial Person will say that his merits do not Intitle him to public marks of Respect.

Please to make my humble Respects to Mrs. Carroll, and believe me to be with great esteem

Your most Obedient Humble Servant

C. W. Peale.

To Charles Carroll, Esq.

Referring to the subject in his manuscript Memoirs, Peale relates that during the study and practice of his art in England he availed himself of the opportunity to make "some essays at metzotinto scraping". After he had painted the whole length portrait or allegory of Mr. Pitt (Lord Chatham), in 1768, for "the Gentlemen of Westmoreland" in Virginia, he made a large mezzotint engraving of it, "in the idea", he states, "that it would be readily sold in America", and this being his first known plate it is of interest to compare it with his later work, especially in considering certain anonymous prints erroneously attributed to him.

Although as far as known the print of David Rittenhouse was not executed, Peale seems to have such an undertaking in mind at a period when the difficulties in obtaining suitable materials were great compared with his experience in London where, he states, he found "persons whose whole business is to ground plates for artists".7

That he continued to have the subject in view is suggested by the following entry in his diary during one of his visits to Philadelphia, prior to his removal from Maryland and enlistment in the Militia:

7The mezzotint process involves planishing the plate, roughing or grounding it with a rocker tool to a uniform indented surface preparatory to scraping and burnishing by which the design is executed.
Engravings by Charles Willson Peale

December 25, (Christmas) 1775, Worked on Mr. Smith's Miniature—visited Mr. John Dickinson, and in the evening, Doctor Franklin. Mr. Rittenhouse tells me to prepare a copper plate for the Engraver—after pumice stone use coal & water & if it want finer, use oil with coal.

The revival of his interest in engraving after release from active service in the army when he attempts a portrait of Washington in mezzotinto, suggests the possibility of the pencil sketch in the Historical Society's collection being the original design for this plate of 1778. The hypothesis invites consideration because thus far no impressions of this engraving have been identified and we know of it only from the circumstances under which it was executed as recorded by the artist, and the description of it in M. Pierre Eugène du Simitière's accession book entitled, "Books, Prints, Maps and Certificates and by whom given";8 which reads:

feb'y 1779 a small mezzotint of a head of Gen. Washington done by Mr. Peale, painter of this city . . . given by him.

Prior to this, Peale had been called upon to paint three life portraits of Washington; the half-length of 1772, of which he retained a head-size copy; the half-length for John Hancock for which Washington gave him two sittings in 1776 and from which he subsequently painted a head in miniature; and lastly the miniature for which Washington sat, in 1777, directly before the Battle of Germantown. As already mentioned, it may be assumed that it was from this most recent life portrait Peale painted the copies delivered to Mrs. Washington at Valley Forge, and by the same token it would seem reasonable for him to select it as the subject of his engraving a year later.

In one of his pocket notebooks or diaries in the possession of the writer, containing memoranda respecting sundry matters, the following entries appear:

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8In the Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.
Octr. 16, 1778, began a Drawing in order to make a Mezzotinto of Gen. Washington—got a plate of Mr. Brookes' and in pay I am to give him 20 of the prints the first 100 Struck off. This day Mr. Wm. Hambleton Received his Tryal for Treason. This Morning I employed in making Miniature Glasses.

Octr. 30th, 1778, Went Shooting with Col. Ramsey, began a Miniature of Mrs. Brown. Pd. Mr. Willis 10/ for Turning a Roller of a press which I borrowed.

15 Novr. 1778, began to print off the small plate of Genl. Washington.

16 Continued the same Business all the Day and found myself at night very unwell, quarry if it was not occasioned by my keeping Coals in the Room which was necessary to Warm the plate, tho' the Coals were of the Common sort and might not be so pernitious as Charcoal. Added to this the Smell of the Oil which heated over the fire must have occasioned a much greater smell.

17 Still unwell—spent the Day at the House of Assembly to hear the debates of Counsel employed.

Novr. 20th 1778, paid Mr. Barkers acct. for Making a Suit for Charley, 9£ 6/

Prints Genl. Washington presented to—

French Ambassador 1
To Mr. Fooks or Merrale 1
To Mr. Rittenhouse 1
To Mr. Payne 1
Mr. Laurence (president of Congress) [Laurens] 1
Mr. McCallister 1
Mr. Dunlap 1
Mr. Davidson 1
Mrs. Jane Brewer 1
Mrs. Rogers 1

Prints of Genl. Washington how disposed of—

Left for Sale at Mr. Dunlaps 2 Doz.

* Probably Nathan Brooks who in the Pennsylvania Journal of November 1, 1775, announced the publication of a “neat Mezzotinto Print of Hon. John Hancock, Esq., price 3s. 9d. to be printed in about 10 days.”

10 Charles Peale Polk.

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These original entries in Mr. Peale’s hand are pertinent because of incomplete abstracts which have been published and misconstrued in support of an erroneous assumption that the artist’s print of 1778 was in half-length based upon his portrait of 1776—a crudely executed plate which bears no comparison with Peale’s half-length mezzotint which shortly followed his portrait of Washington painted in 1779 and engraved in poster-size in 1780, the fact that the plate of 1778 was a head or vignette portrait being established by the entry in du Simitière’s accession book already cited.¹¹

If we judge by the carefully executed titles with identification of authorship which characterize Peale’s earliest engraving of Mr. Pitt and the acknowledged mezzotint portraits which followed, the print of 1778 would doubtless display the same attention to detail, and the title as engraved may perhaps be inferred from the card in the Pennsylvania Packet of November 21, 1778, which reads:

A few Mezzotint Prints of his Excellancy
GENERAL WASHINGTON
Price Five Dollars Each
May be had at John Dunlap’s in Market Street.

The note-book containing the entries relating to this engraving and to sundry paintings is devoted primarily

¹¹ W. S. Baker in The History of a Rare Washington Print, May 6, 1889, quotes abstract from Mr. Peale’s note-book respecting his “small plate of Genl. Washington”, with an apocryphal entry from some unknown source reading: “16th. Continued the same business all day: of prints gave one dozen to those I wish to compliment, and sold 11 Doz. at Five Dolls.” In a footnote on the same page however, he gives correctly the reference to M. duSimitière’s description of Peale’s 1778 plate.
to memoranda concerning properties of persons who “had gone with the enemy” and incident to Captain Peale’s duties as one of the Commissioners of Forfeited Estates. It also contains a diary of a journey to Maryland in December, 1778, in connection with the division of the estate of Mrs. Peale’s mother, Mrs. John Brewer. On this journey Peale meets Mrs. Washington on her way to Camp, and he overtakes the rear guard of Colonel Baylor’s Troop of Horse. At Nottingham, he meets his brother-in-law Colonel Nathaniel Ramsay and his wife who had been stationed with the Maryland troops near Wilmington, and there are references also to the estates of Captain Robert Polk, another brother-in-law of Peale’s who had been killed in action, and to St. George Peale, his brother, the late Register of the Land Office at Annapolis, First Lieutenant of Militia and Commissary of Military Supplies at Baltimore, under whose will Peale was executor and he was executor and guardian also of Captain Polk’s children.

These memoranda which reflect the artist’s activities at this period extend into the year 1779, when he was commissioned by the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania to paint his first full-length portrait of Washington.

As the General, then a guest of Honorable Henry Laurens, consented by letter of January 20, to set for this portrait, it was apparently commenced between that date and February 2, when Washington set out from Philadelphia to rejoin the army at Middlebrook, New Jersey. That he had made some progress with the painting in the meantime is suggested by the statement in the Pennsylvania Packet of February 4, 1779, that “a striking likeness was taken by Mr. Peale of Philadelphia”.

While engaged upon this painting, he records in his note-book:
22nd Feby. 1779 set out on a journey to take perspective Views of Trent & Prince Towns.

| Expenses on the Road—ferry   | 1.3 |
| Bristol                      | 1.30 |
| ferry                        | 0.39 |
| Trent Town                   | 2.10.0 |
| ½ way House                  | 1.12.6 |
| Prince Town                  | 1.0 |
| ferry at Trent Town          | 2.16.9 |
| Shamony ferry                | 6.3 |

£8.13.6

Upon the following page is a pencil sketch of a cannon, front view in perspective as shown in the foreground of the portrait of 1779, with a sketch also of rear view of the same piece.

The itinerary of this journey suggests that having made his perspective sketch of Nassau Hall shown in this painting, he returned to Philadelphia without visiting the Encampment at Middlebrook. As would be customary in painting a canvas of the size, 93 inches by 59 inches, after finishing the head, and perhaps outlining the draperies or figure from life, the portrait with its details of background and general composition would be executed in the artist’s painting room, using the sketches for the background made at Princeton and other studies necessary to the composition.

Having completed this full length canvas, Peale engraved a mezzotint plate in half length, poster-size, showing the figure facing to the right instead of to the left as in the original portrait; the announcement of which in The Pennsylvania Packet of August 26, and September 2, and 9, reads:

12 In one of the replicas of this painting the river shown in the background might be the Delaware at Trenton or at the site of Washington’s Crossing. The claim that he began the studies for the portrait at Valley Forge antedating his commission to paint it in 1779 is negated by his diary during the period of the encampment and by the record of his subsequent activities.
The subscriber takes this method of informing the Public, that he has just finished a Mezzotinto PRINT, in poster size* of His Excellancy GENERAL WASHINGTON, from the original picture belonging to the state of Pennsylvania. Shopkeepers and persons going to the West Indies may be supplied at such a price as will afford a considerable profit to them, by applying at the South-west corner of Lombard and Third-streets, Philadelphia.

N. B. As the first impression of this sort of prints are the most valuable, those who are anxious to possess a likeness of our worthy General are desired to apply immediately.

CHARLES WILLSON PEALE.

* 14 inches by 10 inches, besides the margin.

The engraved title of the plate, which differs slightly from the phraseology of the announcement, includes as usual in Peale’s known plates, the identification of authorship, namely: “Chas. Willson Peale, Pinx’t et fecit 1780”, and reads:

His Excellancy George Washington Esquire, Commander in Chief of the Federal Army
This Plate is humbly Inscribed to the Honorable the Congress of the United States of America
By their Obedient servant

CHAS. WILLSON PEALE.

Following the Washington portrait for the State of Pennsylvania and pursuant to a resolution of Congress, September 3, 1779, Peale painted in full length the portrait Sieur Conrad Alexander Gerard, the first Minister Plenepotentiary to the United States, appointed by the King of France to sign the Treaty of Comity, Commerce and of Alliance. While engaged upon this work and when M. Gerard was about to return to France, Mr. Peale wrote to him on September 18, expressing his obligation for the opportunity of securing “a faithful portrait” through “several long sittings”, and in closing, he expresses his desire to make an engraved copy. “Therefore”, he adds,

I take the Liberty of making the request of your Excellancy, when you get to France to send me a Copper plate prepared for mezzotinto the size of the Print I herewith send, or any other size.
Engravings by Charles Willson Peale

that you would be pleased to direct; also a few quires of Paper proper for that sort of work (which is only made in France).

The hope of getting these things so as to finish such work before I part with the picture induces me to take the Liberty of making this Request and which in any other manner I could not obtain so certainly in a Reasonable time.

I will do myself the honor to send your Excellancy some of the Proofs as soon as finished, which I hope will be acceptable to some of your friends.

That you may have a favourable and pleasant passage is the prayer of your most devoted and very much

Obliged humble Servant

C. W. Peale.

The difficulties under which the artist labored during the Revolution for want of suitable materials is apparent from Peale's references to the expedients he had to resort to, sometimes being forced to make a case or box to protect a miniature until a jeweller could supply one; and having frequently to adapt a watch crystal, for a miniature glass. Although grinding colors was the common practice with the artists of the 18th century, the lack of suitable pigments was a serious handicap and the substitutes obtainable during the Revolution frequently causing loss of color which Peale had occasion to deplore in reviewing his work prior to renewal of commerce with Europe.

The opportunity to obtain materials from France, as in the case of his request of M. Gerard, reveals his situation in this respect.

Among his letters touching upon this subject, is one addressed to Edmund Jennings, of London, then in Paris, dated October 13, 1779, in which he refers to a full-length portrait of Washington shipped in care of William Carmichael\(^\text{18}\) to sell as a venture, from the proceeds of which he hoped to receive materials for painting and clothing for his family. "Amongst the articles", he writes, "I have requested of Mr. Carmich-
General Washington
Original life portrait
Canvas 23 3/4" by 19"
Painted by Charles Willson Peale, 1787
Owned by The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts
Philadelphia
ael, are paper and copper Plates for me to Etch a set of Heads of the Principal Characters who have distinguished themselves during this Contest”.

Other letters at this time acknowledge similar offers from persons going to France, one being addressed to Colonel Laurens,¹⁴ dated March 6, 1780:

Dear Sir:

Prudence tells me that I ought to accept your obliging offer of sending me some Materials for my profession. I fear that I shall be out before I can get any of the kind, my last large canvas is now before me with the outlines of General Washington traced on it. Mr. Carmichael promised to send me of the same articles which I now wish to trouble you for, I then flattered myself that the Confederacy would bring them on her Return, her disaster has given me the alarm. Mr. Paine gives great satisfaction as Clerk of the Assembly, and I have some expectation that something further will be done for him at the close of the present Sitting. An arrangement of the several officers of Government is on hand, and a number of places appertaining to the Land office will be to fill. I hope his past services will not be forgot by the House which owes its existence in part to his exertions in support of the Constitution.

I had the favour of Mrs. Washington to sett as she passed through the City, and the likeness is much approved of, and I have her promise for the Last sitting as she Returns this Spring, my Intention is to bestow much pains to finish this portrait. Your favor of sending the articles agreeable to the underwritten list will greatly oblige

Dear Sir your very [Humble Serv']

C. W. Peale

March 6, 1780.

6 whole length Canvis’s, 1 Doz. half Length Do. 2 doz. three quarters Do.

12 lbs. of white lead—3 lbs. Flake White—½ lb. best Vermilion.

1 Gross best Camel’s hair Pencils, 1 softening Tool large.

2 Doz. small Brushes commonly called Tools. 6 lb. Naples yellow.

¹⁴ This letter may have been addressed to Colonel Henry Laurens who commissioned Peale to paint portraits of Mrs. Washington and of Thomas Paine, besides the full length of Washington, which was captured by the enemy with Colonel Laurens when on his way to Holland, or the letter may have been addressed to Lieutenant-Colonel John Laurens of South Carolina appointed at this time a special envoy to France.
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5 Doz. Glasses for Miniature Pictures of different Sizes but chiefly for Bracelet Size.
12 leaves of Gold beaters skin.
½ oz. of the best Lake, superfine as it is for miniature painting.
1 sett of Grounding Tools for Metzotinto prints
3 plates of poster Size with prepared grounds for Metzotinto prints, one ream of paper for Metzotinto prints.

Whether the failure to receive the materials from France as suggested in his reference to the Confederacy’s disaster, or to other untoward circumstances, the Washington print of 1780 appears to have been Peale’s last plate prior to the revival six years later, of his project to engrave a series of vignette portraits from his paintings.

About this time, 1779–80, he removed from Market Street to a house he purchased at Third and Lombard Streets in the newly improved neighborhood adjacent to St. Peter’s Church. Here he had sufficient land on which to build a painting room and gallery, the first to be provided with a skylight. It was then also that his younger brother and former pupil James Peale, who, in 1779, resigned his captaincy in the Maryland Line, was once more a member of the household to resume the study of painting and assist in the elder Peale’s activities as he had prior to his three years of service in the army. This renewed association of the brothers was helpful to the elder especially since the public duties into which he was drawn was at no small sacrifice of his art. Besides his activities in connection with the forfeited estates of Tories, he was chairman of the Whig or Constitutional Society, and became involved in such controversies as that between Thomas Paine and Silas Deane in 1779, besides being concerned in the disturbances which brought the Militia and Continental troops in Philadelphia to the attention of Congress while a member of the “Committee of the City”. Furthermore, about this time he was chosen one of the Philadelphia representatives in the State
Assembly where under the leadership of George Bryan he was chairman or member of some thirty Committees during his term of office. Incidentally, he headed the committee in charge of repairs to the State House following the British occupation, and the alteration of the second floor to accommodate the Assembly at the eastern end over its room below which at the time was occupied by Congress. This is of passing interest since twenty years later when the Legislature granted Peale the use of the State House for his gallery and collections, he altered the building to extend the Long Room to its original dimensions, the first recorded work of restoration.

Peale recalled his political activities at the close of the War as among the unpleasant incidents in his career, and reverting to the subject in a letter to Hon. Samuel Chase of Maryland, 13 November, 1784, he writes:

Rash, Violent, and inconsiderably active I have been too often in our times of Difficulty, yet in more instances than one, have I been most shamefully misrepresented, and accused of a Conduct the very reverse of what I acted, Meeting with such vexatious misrepresentations, and finding the party disputes of the State intolerably disagreeable, four years past I have laid politicks aside and pursued the Brush, and have much more peace of mind, by so doing I have regained friends where I had lost them ... I have a Whole length of Gen' Washington for your State with Frame ready to send when I can hear from his Excellency the Governor. ... This picture was ordered in Gov'r Lee's time, and I delayed the finishing of it with view of making it an original as I wished to give my Countymen something better than a mere Coppy. I have gone further, I have added to the picture the portraits of the Marquis de la Fayette and Col' Tilghman ...

Following his prints of Franklin and Lafayette he engraved for subscribers a plate uniform in size from his portrait of the Reverend Joseph Pilmore, Rector of the churches of Trinity, St. Thomas and All Saints, as announced in the Pennsylvania Packet, May 18, 1787.
Shortly before this, while taking subscriptions for the Lafayette prints, his letter book records the following:

C. W. Peale of Philadelphia an American artist takes the Liberty of presenting some of his first essays of Portraits in Mezzotinto to the right Honorable the Marchioness de la Fayette, viz, three of the Marquis de la Fayette and one of His Excellency Benj Franklin, which the artist hopes will be acceptable, Monsr. La Caise is so obliging as to take the charge of them
Phila: April 20, 1787.

At the close of the century after he had retired from portraiture to devote himself to natural history, Peale again refers to his experiences during the Revolution in a lecture on what he describes as "the favorite pursuit of my declining years" delivered at the University of Pennsylvania in November 1799:

In speaking for a moment of myself, I hope I shall not be accused of the vanity of egotism. For a number of years I followed the profession of a portrait painter; and by the labours of my pencil alone, supported a large family, and might have acquired a fortune; but, like many others of my countrymen, was more active for the public good, than solicitous of acquiring wealth. At length I found it absolutely necessary to determine, whether to continue my political career, or leave it for the more peaceful studies of the fine arts; when the merit of each was put in the balance, the peaceful muse outweighted political war-fare—and since that period I have been scarcely so much as an observer of the political world.

Leaving the walk of public life, I soon found leisure; and began to paint a collection of the portraits of characters distinguished in the American Revolution—which may now justly be considered a valuable one . . .

After withdrawal from politics, his interest in public affairs found expression chiefly in executing allegorical paintings, and the triumphal arch decorations in celebration of the treaty of peace and on the occasion of the birthday of the King of France, as described in the newspapers of that day. It was not until the period of economic adjustment after the war and the consequent hard times so unfavorable to the portrait painters art, that Peale applied his talent and energies to enlarging
General Washington
Mezzotinto, proof before letters
Engraved by Charles Willson Peale, 1787
Owned by Metropolitan Museum
New York City
his exhibition of paintings.\textsuperscript{16} It was then also that he
was induced to make his gallery a repository for ob-
jects of natural history which awakened his interest
in the subject about the time of his election to member-
ship in the American Philosophical Society, of which
subsequently he was one of the curators for many
years. It was while engaged in these diversions that he
revived his project of engraving a series of heads in
mezzotinto based upon his portrait collection.

Among the references in his correspondence to these
later plates is a letter of February 2, 1787, addressed
to Dr. David Ramsay of Charleston, South Carolina.
"This undertaking" he writes,

will cost me much labour as I am obliged to take the plates from
the rough and doing the whole business myself, even the im-
pressing. I have just finished one of Doctr. Franklin which I
am giving out as a specimen of the size & manner I intend this
series of Prints, by the next packet I will be able to send you
some, and will esteem it a favor if you will take trouble to have
them sold for me . . .

After stating his plan for disposing of the prints
"in double oval frames—at 3 dollars each", he states
that he may invite subscriptions for an engraving of
General Greene and possibly of Dr. Ramsay’s father-
in-law "and his brave son". In concluding his refer-
ence to the subject, he adds: “By this business of
Prints I hope I shall get something in return for my
Collection of Portraits”.

On the 27th in a letter to General Washington
acknowledging the gift of a pheasant for his cabinet of
birds, he refers to his engraving and states: “from
the experience I have lately had I feel my power to
execute in this way the most faithful likenesses.”

Of his specimen plate of Dr. Franklin he adds: “yet

\textsuperscript{16} Besides the accessions to his portraits, Peale and his brother James
prepared an exhibition of perspective views with changeable lighting
effects following the similar exhibitions in London by J. Phillip de
Loutherbourg and Thomas Gainsborough, the painters, which under the
name “Eidophusikon” were attracting attention at the time.
I do myself injustice as this Print is much coarser than the others will be".

On May 26, 1787 he again writes to General Washington who was then attending the Federal Convention at Philadelphia:

May 26, 1787

Dr. Sir

With the utmost reluctance I undertake to ask you to take the trouble of sitting for another portrait. It gives me pain to make the request, but the great desire I have to make a good mezzotinto print that your numerous friends may be gratified with a faithful likeness (several of whom I find is not satisfied with any of the portraits they have seen) My particular interest alone in this business would not have induced me to be thus troublesome, but if you can indulge me so far I will do everything in my power to make it convenient & easy to you.

I am with the highest respect, your

Excellancy's most obliged

Hble Servant

To His Excell'y Genl Washington

In acknowledgement without date he wrote:

Dr. Sir,

Your obliging consent to sit is confering a most singular favor on me, for which I hope I shall always be found grateful. On the success of this undertaking depends much of my happiness if I am so fortunate as to make a good and faithful Portrait, I shall be enabled to gratify many of your warm friends by executing a good Print and the practice I lately had in this line is only bringing in my hand to execute something I hope more Excellant. My next solicitude is to make the business as convenient to you as possible. I thought of bringing my Pallet & Pensils to Mr. Morris's that you might sitt at your leisure, and if any Interruptions by Visitors or business should take place, that I would wait till convenient to you or attend any time and esteem every labour light in a work of so much consequence to your much obliged

Friend and very Humble Servt

To His Excellancy Genl Washington

His next reference to the subject, presumably after engraving this plate, is in a letter to Washington sending by post on September 27, a few prints for his acceptance, stating that he was preparing others "to be published during the ensuing fall and winter".
No. 1 print of Proposed Series of Philadelphia Street Views. Designed and etched by Charles Willson Peale, 1787. Copper-plate, 11\(\frac{3}{8}\)" by 74\(\frac{3}{8}\)". From an original print in Division of Fine Arts, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.
It is of interest to note that besides the portrait engravings in mezzotint, Peale undertook at this time a series of plates to show perspective views of the principal streets in Philadelphia according to announcement in the *Pennsylvania Packet* of November 5, 1787. Apparently he did not get beyond the first of this series, No. 1 entitled "An Accident in Lombard Street". He had already made a perspective drawing of the State House, in 1778, and later a view of Grays Ferry Bridge for the *Columbian Magazine*, besides designs for frontispiece embellishment to be engraved by others. The view of Lombard Street seems to be his first attempt to depict such subjects.

Writing to Benjamin West, November 17, 1788, referring to his "labours in the arts" which "for several years has been incessant but not always too much profit", he sends by the bearer, Mr. Clarkson "some proof prints—this", he adds, "is a work which I mean to pursue when I have no other business for the sale is not such as to induce me to pursue it otherwise".

I now find it necessary to travel to get business sufficient in the portrait line to maintain my family which is not small. I mention these things to show you that the state of the Arts in America is not very favorable at present, altho' I am so fortunate as to please all that employ me . . .

The allusions to portraits in Peale's correspondence and diaries at this time point to the revival of business in Philadelphia although he was more frequently called to Maryland and it was between such painting trips in the year 1788, that the following entries appear in his diary, his last references to the subject thus recorded, although subsequently while in Baltimore he mentions his gift to one of his patrons of "a print of Genl. Washington on white sattin to ornament a muff;"
(July) 30th xx Ground some colours & printed some plates of Genl. Washington

Aug. 1st. Wet one quire of paper for printing off some plates—Sharpened my Tools and worked on the plate of Genl. Washington to repair & make it stronger. xxx

Aug. 2—worked on the copper plate of Genl. Washington.

Aug. 3—Prints which my Brother received of Mr. Siddins—11 of Pilmore 5 of the Marquis de la Fayette & 9 of Doctr. Franklin.
Ditto received of Mr. Pointal
6 of the Marquis 11 of Doctr. Franklin and one framed.
My Brother let Mr. Pointell have 2 prints of Genl. Washington (Red)
2 Sets of Prints, that is 2 of Washington
2 of the Marquis & 2 of the Doctr.
Mr. Siddons has 2 prints of Genl. Washington, the above was the transaction of my Brother since my return from Maryland, let Mr. Siddons have 1 print of Genl. Washington.

(Augt) 5th xx then I took off 34 Prints of Genl. Washington and of Doctr Franklin

Peale’s efforts as an engraver had been prompted by the spirit and exigencies of the times and his subsequent engagements as a portrait painter and the public demands upon his talents, as in the decorative features of the Federal Procession of 1788, prevented further execution of the series of prints he had planned. Furthermore his growing interest in natural history and enthusiasm as a collector was soon to be stimulated by the removal of his collections to the hall of the American Philosophical Society; and a few years later, in his 55th year, he laid aside his brush to devote his talents and resources to founding, as he fondly hoped, a national museum of science and art. It was then also that he made his first attempt to organize an academy of fine arts, a project revived a decade later under more favorable conditions, and among these varied interests of his latter years engraving had no place.