

**EARLY AMERICAN PAINTERS:  
ILLUSTRATED BY EXAMPLES IN  
THE COLLECTION OF THE NEW-  
YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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Early American Painters: Illustrated by Examples in the Collection of the New-York Historical Society by John Hill Morgan

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in the Collection of  
The New-York Historical Society

BY

JOHN HILL MORGAN

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"The Work of M. Fevet de Saint-Memin,"  
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JOHN HILL MORGAN

## *Foreword*

The New-York Historical Society for one hundred and sixteen years has filled so important a place in the life of New York, it is but natural that it has been enabled by gift or purchase to assemble a notable collection of portraits of early Americans. As it is only in the last decade, however, that the importance of Colonial painting has been recognized, it follows that the Society has collected portraits of individuals rather than examples of the work of artists or periods.

To stimulate the growing interest in this subject, the writer was asked to deliver a lecture on Early American Artists as illustrated by examples in the Society's collection, and was given free hand to treat the subject in any way he might think fit. In reading the following pages it should be borne in mind that they were not written for use as a catalogue nor as a text book on American Art. They were prepared as a lecture to outline the great possibilities of the Society's collection and to compress within narrow time limits enough information to have made the study worth while, and at the same time make the material not too heavy for the attention of a general audience. The result should be considered in the light of pioneer work, indicating what can be done with the material possessed by the Society when proper arrangement and display shall be possible and when future study shall have determined some of the attributions suggested and added to our meagre store of facts. The finding of the portraits of Gerret Duyckinck and his

#### FOREWORD

wife, and the certainty with which it can be said that Mrs. Augustus Jay and Hester Leisler are by the same hand, afford a basis for future work of great importance. The Duyckincks are the most notable family of painters yet found in Colonial America and the style of Gerret, one of the four Duyckinck limners, seems to be fixed. If the attribution of the lately discovered portrait of Governor Stoughton to Evert Duyckinck 1st shall eventually prove to be correct, and further study render certain the great probability that the portraits in the Beekman family are by Evert 3rd, we will then have authentic examples of three of the four Duyckincks, concerning whose work nothing has been known before this time.

As it may be a matter of speculation why certain portraits were chosen for illustration and others rejected, it should be said that two considerations governed: the endeavor to select authentic works which could be used in fixing other attributions; and to choose those canvases which were typical of the general development of the painters' art of the period.

My thanks are due to the officials of the Society who have placed all its records at my disposal, and especially to Mr. Robert H. Kelby and Mr. Alexander J. Wall for their generous help and assistance. In addition, I am indebted to Mr. Wall for the analytical index prepared by him which is annexed.

JOHN HILL MORGAN.



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## *Early American Painters*

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The study of American portraits will be found to be fairly illustrative of the development of our country itself. To understand aright the work of our early artists, some knowledge must be possessed of the conditions under which the paintings themselves were produced. In 1600 this land was a wilderness undeveloped and uninhabited except by savages. It is true that the continent had been discovered one hundred years before, not in the endeavor to found a new empire but to meet the imperative demand to discover a shorter route to the Indies.

It was the tremendous development which came to England under the rule of Elizabeth and her masterful advisers, which started the English, born colonizers, to take possession of the newly found continent.

The tide of immigration may be divided very generally into three streams: That of the Puritan English to New England, the Dutch to New Amsterdam, and the English to the South.

The licentiousness of the nobles of the time of Elizabeth, James the First and Charles the First, had brought about the recession of thousands of separatists to Holland. Having abandoned their fatherland in protest against home conditions and in search of religious freedom, these families