



# Lessons in Likeness: Portrait Painters in Kentucky and the Ohio River Valley, 1802-1920

*Estill Pennington*

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From 1802, when the young artist William Edward West began painting portraits on a downriver trip to New Orleans, to 1918, when John Alberts, the last of Frank Duveneck's students, worked in Louisville, a wide variety of portrait artists were active in Kentucky and the Ohio River Valley. *Lessons in Likeness: Portrait Painters in Kentucky and the Ohio River Valley, 1802–1920* charts the course of those artists as they painted the mighty and the lowly, statesmen and business magnates as well as country folk living far from urban centers. Paintings by each artist are illustrated, when possible, from The Filson Historical Society collection of some 400 portraits representing one of the most extensive holdings available for study in the region.

This volume begins with a cultural chronology—a backdrop of critical events that shaped the taste and times of both artist and sitter. The chronology is followed by brief biographies of the artists, both legends and recent discoveries, illustrated by their work. Matthew Harris Jouett, who studied with Gilbert Stuart, William Edward West, who painted Lord Byron, and Frank Duveneck are well-known; far less so are James T. Poindexter, who painted charming children's portraits in western Kentucky, Reason Croft, a recently discovered itinerant in the Louisville area, and Oliver Frazer, the last resident portrait artist in Lexington during the romantic era. Pennington's study offers a captivating history of portraiture not only as a cherished possession but also representing a period of cultural and artistic transitions in the history of the Ohio River Valley region.

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