

*Charles Willson Peale's Philadelphia Museum:
A Space of Amusement, Education, and American
Citizenship*

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Introduction

She meandered through the State House yard and saw the animals pacing in cages. Some were known to her, like the bald eagle, others were not. After marveling at the menagerie she entered through the rear doorway to the State House of Philadelphia, (known more commonly today as Independence Hall). The young man at the door charged her 25 cents, no small fee for the time period; ticket in hand she ascended the stairs, feeling the anticipation and excitement as she finally visited this famous place. She first walked through the Quadruped Room: large and small mammals – stuffed- were arranged in a variety of poses. What was most striking to her was the *realness* of these displays; the natural state of the animals astonished her. From there, she entered the Long Room, aptly named for its length. Located at the front of the State House, facing out onto Chestnut Street, this Room contained the majority of the museum's displays. Along the partition wall stood several glass cases of birds, clearly Charles Willson Peale's most widely collected subject. Above the cases were two rows of portraits: Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, and George Washington all stared down at their audience, instilling in her a sense of nationalism, even pride. Along the other wall sat a variety of cases, some with minerals and others with insects. In the far right corner of the room sat an African American man cutting out paper silhouettes for visitors. She also noticed the sound of music; someone was playing an organ.

Next, she walked into the Marine Room. Dominating the center was a large shell, the biggest one she had ever seen. After exploring displays of stuffed and mounted fish and other sea creatures, she paid the extra 50 cents to visit the displays near door in the American Philosophical Society Hall. Once inside, she encountered the largest being

known to man: the Mammoth. Excavated by Peale, the skeleton of the Mammoth stood in the center of the room with a few other animal skeletons positioned around it for scale. Our visitor was amazed that something so large once lived in America. After she perused a variety of other exhibits, such as wax models of different peoples, Native American artifacts, and weaponry, she went back to the State House to have her profile taken by the black man in the Long Room and to sit and contemplate all that she had learned during her visit to Charles Willson Peale's Philadelphia Museum.

Much work has been done on the subject of Charles Willson Peale (1741 -1827) and his Museum (Figure 1). Several scholars have analyzed the history of the space, the art contained within it, and the various exhibits. It is widely accepted by scholars of eighteenth and nineteenth century America that Peale's Museum served as a space that cultivated a sense of American identity in those who visited. Historians like Wendy Bellion and Charles Coleman Sellers, a distant relative to Peale, have written books on this very topic.¹ Others have focused their research on who was visiting Peale's Museum: David R. Brigham's work has ascertained that Peale's audience was predominately white and male, but his work also highlights the visitation of other groups such as Native Americans, women, various religious groups, and children.² Other historians have placed Peale's Museum within a context of museum development around the world: Peale's Museum, although not the first and only museum in America during this time period, was

¹ Wendy Bellion, *Citizen Spectator: Art, Illusion, and Visual Perception in Early National America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011) and Charles Coleman Sellers, *Mr. Peale's Museum: Charles Willson Peale and the First Popular Museum of Natural Science and Art* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1908).

² David R. Brigham, *Public Culture in the Early Republic: Peale's Museum and Its Audience* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995).

certainly one of the most famous and widely known. It was also the most sophisticated conceptually and physically. Rather than repeat this scholarly work, I will argue in this thesis that Peale's Museum served as a space of amusement, a space of education, and a space for the formation of American identity. Through his use of amusing and educational exhibits and displays, Peale imparted his museum guests with a lesson in American nationalism and identity creation.

In addition to being an artist, Peale was also a natural historian. He dedicated himself to the study of the field and to making that knowledge accessible to wider audiences. One of the ways in which he did this was by hosting a series of lectures, many of which are referenced in this thesis. Peale refers to the connection between the development of natural history and religion in these lectures, but just as important were his references to how natural history was what he called a "national concern." In his introduction to these series of lectures, Peale writes, "Natural history is not only interesting to the individual, it ought to become a NATIONAL CONCERN, since it is a NATIONAL GOOD, - of this, agriculture, as it is the most important occupation, affords the most striking proof."³ What might be most interesting about this part of his lecture is Peale's emphasis on the position of the farmer in America; clearly, Peale was referencing the ideas of republicanism. It was thought that for an American citizen to be truly virtuous, they had to own land: "the individual ownership of property, especially landed property, was essential for a republic, both as a source of independence and as evidence

³ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 265.

of a permanent attachment to the community.”⁴ Farmers were no longer seen as “primitive folk living on the edges of European civilization” and Peale’s lecture serves as proof to the all-pervasive nature of this new notion of citizenship.⁵ According to Peale, farmers should learn about natural history so that they could take full advantage of the natural world around them. But Peale does not stop with the farmer. He also references the merchant and the importance of a knowledge of natural history to their profession. Citing the creation of silk as an example he notes, “Had the operations of the silk worm never been examined, how could men have availed themselves of the labour of an insect that administers so profusely to our luxuries and wants?”⁶ Rather than continuing to analyze all professions that feel the impact of natural history, Peale ends with this question: “In short, what science or profession is not benefitted by a knowledge of the works of nature?”⁷ For Peale, natural history was one of the most useful sciences and one to which he dedicated his life and career.

Charles Willson Peale always felt that the United States would benefit from having a museum dedicated to the study of natural history. It was a point of pride for him that he had created such an institution on his own: “Foreigners are surprised to hear this is the work of an individual supported by public bodies! yet it is a fact, which in future will scarcely be credited, *that neither to the government of the United States, the state of Pennsylvania, nor any other state am I under the least obligation for the present*

⁴ Gordon S. Wood, *The American Revolution* (New York: Modern Library, 2003), 94.

⁵ Gordon S. Wood, *The American Revolution* (New York: Modern Library, 2003), 92-93.

⁶ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 266.

⁷ *Ibid*, 267.

appearance of the Museum.”⁸ Although it is clear that Peale was proud of the work he and his family had accomplished, he also knew that the Museum would benefit from becoming a state institution. Early on within the founding of the Museum, Peale attempted to gain funding from various state organizations, and from the federal government, but no one wanted to support the Museum financially, citing the fact that several citizens would feel angered that their money was going to support a cultural institution. Without the state funding, Peale’s Museum eventually faltered and disaggregated after Peale’s death in 1827.

At the heart of this work is an effort to explore how the Museum served as a space of amusement, a space of education, and a space that cultivated Americans’ ideas of citizenship. The Philadelphia Museum had a clear impact upon the American people: not only did it provide visitors with a larger understanding of the natural world and a sense of joy and happiness, it also provided visitors with a stronger sense of American identity. It is important to remember that although Peale’s Museum was innovative for its time, it was still a product of its period: his exhibits reflected the societal exclusion of certain groups, such as women, African Americans, and Native Americans, that existed in America. This topic will also be covered in this thesis.

While I intend on exploring the social and cultural aspects of the Museum space, I also aim to explain the physical aspects of Peale’s Museum. A central question to this section of the thesis is how did Peale’s organizational logic physically manifest itself and how did it reflect his understanding of the natural world? Peale sought to educate and amuse his visitors with his Museum. He wanted to teach them about the natural world

⁸ Ibid, 269.

and to shape their American identities during a time in which the exploration of the self was culturally predominant. As Linnaeus noted, a scholar whose work was seminal to Peale, “Man, when he enters the world, is naturally led to enquire who he is; whence he comes; whither he is going; for what purpose he is created; and by whose benevolence he is preserved.”⁹ Man is naturally curious about the self and their place within the apex of the chain of being. Peale sought to provide some answers for the American public at a time when the concept of an American public was forming. Peale’s Museum was integral to the formation of a body politic in America, particularly in Philadelphia.

Chapter One explores the city of Philadelphia during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century and the history of Peale’s Museum. In this chapter, I examine how people experienced the city and how Peale’s Museum reflected the urban framework in which it was located. Furthermore, I provide a brief history of the Museum in order to present my reader with a basis through which they can understand the space. Chapter Two is devoted to understanding Peale’s Museum as a space of amusement. In it, I explain how Peale provided his visitors with a sense of entertainment, why that was important to his Museum, and how Peale’s understanding of entertainment was affected by his understanding and accommodation of certain social groups. Chapter Three covers Peale’s Museum as a space of science and education. This chapter explains in detail the Linnaean system, Peale’s system for his Museum, the physical manifestation of that system, and the racial hierarchies that were a prevalent part of that system. Finally,

⁹ William Turton, trans., *A general system of nature: through the three grand kingdoms of animals, vegetables, and minerals, systematically divided into their several classes, orders, genera, species, and varieties by Sir Charles Linné; translated from Gremlin, Fabricius, Willdenow, with a life of Linné and a dictionary of the terms of natural history by William Turton* (London: Lackington, Allen, and Co., 1806), 20.

Chapter Four explores how the Philadelphia Museum functioned as a place that cultivated a sense of American citizenship. In this chapter, I argue that Peale's Museum was a uniquely American institution that helped shape a pious, refined, inventive, and moral American public.

The Philadelphia Museum was many things. It was a space of amusement and entertainment, a place of wonder and enlightenment, a center of art and science. The Museum was certainly a product of its time: it developed during a time of revolutionary chaos, a time in which shifting senses of self were consuming the citizen politic in America, and the Museum met those changes with solutions taken from the natural world. Peale believed, "That the world is a museum in which all men are destined to be employed and amused . . . But it is only by order and system that a general view may be had of so extensive a subject, and that the great book of nature may be opened and studied, leaf by leaf, and a knowledge gained of the character of which the great Creator has stamped on each being."¹⁰ The Museum's organizational logic provided a lens through which Peale's visitors could understand themselves, the ever changing and seemingly chaotic world around them, and how they fit within that understanding of the world. It was in this way that Peale's Museum had an everlasting impact upon the American people, long after the Museum no longer stood.

¹⁰ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 268.

Chapter One: The City of Philadelphia and Peale's Museum

Early Philadelphia was busy, full of diverse groups of people and bustling economic activity. Residents and visitors to the metropolis experienced, and contributed to, the constant hustle and bustle of movement throughout the urban spaces of the city. From 1790 to 1830, the city tripled in size, growing from a population of 44,096 to 147,877, making it one of the largest metropolis centers in America.¹¹ This increase in population also meant an increase in activity, in use of resources, and in construction. As one of the most prominent ports and urban centers in America during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Philadelphia was constantly growing.

This was Charles Willson Peale's city. In June of 1776, Peale moved with his family from Annapolis to Philadelphia. Besides being one of the most cosmopolitan cities in America, Philadelphia had enough people and wealth in order to support a portrait artist.¹² It was here that he began to connect his artistic talent with the revolutionary cause. Peale became one of the most prominent portrait artists of American Revolutionary figures, including George Washington who he painted in 1772 and again in 1775 for Congress.¹³ Peale was known in particular for his realistic depictions of his sitters; his portraits seemed to jump off the canvas.

¹¹ Dell Upton, *Another City: Urban Life and Urban Spaces in the New American Republic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 20.

¹² David C. Ward, *Charles Willson Peale: Art and Selfhood in the Early Republic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 44.

¹³ *Ibid*, 44 - 46.

It was during this time that Peale began to explore his own identity: while painting in London, Peale only signed his paintings as “Charles Peale,” but when he became a known artist in America, Peale began to include his middle name, “Wilson,” into his signatures, signing his paintings as “CWPeale.”¹⁴ Peale even added an extra “L” to his middle name, further denoting a changing sense in his own identity, a change that coincided with the change in the nation.¹⁵ Peale was not the only American creating a new identity; Americans all over the colonies found themselves in a time of cultural and national exploration of what it meant to be “American.” Peale experienced this daily in the city of Philadelphia. It was here that he decided to open his own Museum of natural history. Like the city itself, visitors to Peale’s Museum would have experienced the space through their senses and would have witnessed an Enlightened sense of order. It was through these two modes that eighteenth and nineteenth century citizens explored their identities in the Museum and in the city of Philadelphia.

History of Peale’s Museum

Before I explore certain aspects of the Museum, it is important to have a general understanding of its history (Appendix 1). Peale bought his house at Third and Lombard in 1780 after several Tories left Philadelphia.¹⁶ The two and a half story, brick home faced out onto Lombard Street and had a large backyard (Figure 2).¹⁷ Soon after acquiring it, Peale added a small painting studio room to the side of the structure and then added

¹⁴ David C. Ward, *Charles Willson Peale: Art and Selfhood in the Early Republic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 51.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Charles Coleman Sellers, *Mr. Peale’s Museum: Charles Willson Peale and the First Popular Museum of Natural Science and Art* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1908), 21.

¹⁷ Ibid.

onto the home again in the summer of 1782 when he built his sky-lighted gallery; this was the original space of the Peale Museum.¹⁸ In 1784, Peale extended the space again when he created his “moving picture room” which brought the entire length of the space to seventy-seven feet.¹⁹ This room was used to display Peale’s silhouette exhibits: he would place different cut paper silhouettes in the windows of the room, illuminating them from behind so that people walking by could view the scene. Despite his many additions, the original Museum was limited in space. The narrow, one room lodging was hardly big enough to accommodate Peale’s growing collection. Furthermore, it was built in a particular manner: it was clearly originally constructed for the display of art and paintings, not for that of natural history artifacts. Regardless, it was here that Peale began the endeavor that would continue to dominate his professional and personal life until his death in 1827.

By the spring of 1794, Charles Willson Peale had begun to think about an expansion of his museum. His own gallery space at Third and Lombard was increasingly too small to properly display his exhibits. The American Philosophical Society (APS) rented out their Hall to different tenets and around the same time that Peale began looking for a new location, the tenet of the Philosophical Hall was ending their lease. Either because Peale was a member of the Society or that many of his museum’s visitors were members of the Society, the APS offered Peale their hall as a place for his Museum.

¹⁸ Charles Coleman Sellers, *Mr. Peale’s Museum: Charles Willson Peale and the First Poplar Museum of Natural Science and Art* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1908), 21-22.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 22.

On June 20th, 1794, Peale became the assistant curator, librarian, and custodian of the Hall (Figure 3).²⁰

Peale's move into Philosophical Hall is an interesting example of how involved the city of Philadelphia was in his enterprise. Although Peale was an artist and a natural historian, he was also a businessman: he decided to make his move from Third and Lombard to the Philosophical Hall, a space which many suggested would be more advantageous to Peale's endeavor, a parade of sorts. In his autobiography, Peale recalls "he collected all the boys in the neighborhood & he began a range of then[m] at the head of which was carried on mens shoulders the American Buffalo, then followed the Panther, Tyger Catts and a long string of Animals of smaller size carried by the boys."²¹ Every article made it safely to the new location, all with the exception of a young alligator that went missing.²² Such a parade "brought all the Inhabitants to their doors and windows to see the cavalcade."²³ Not only did Philadelphians serve as actors within the parade, represented by the boys who helped Peale make the move, they also served as participants by actively *viewing* the parade take place. Imagine, looking out your window and seeing a stuffed Buffalo pass by. Peale knew how to drum up business for his new Museum location.

Philosophical Hall was located next to the State House (Independence Hall) within the State House Square. Built in 1789 upon land that the Society received from the

²⁰ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 93.

²¹ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 5, The Autobiography of Charles Willson Peale* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 224.

²² *Ibid*, 225.

²³ *Ibid*, 224.

Pennsylvania legislature of 1785, the Hall was adorned with typical Georgian details.²⁴

Although Peale was grateful for the new space, and would stay for several years, he did not credit the new location with the increase in visitation: “The removal to the Philosophical Hall has been thought to have given more importance to the Museum, and that the visitation had become greater, but it must be remembered that the continually adding of Articles to it, must necessarily excite the curiosity of the Public.”²⁵ Rather than crediting the space in which the museum was located, he credited the higher visitation rates to the work he had completed *within* the Museum. Regardless of what drew in visitors, they continued to come and look at the wonders of Peale’s Museum.

With the passing of years, Peale’s collection continued to grow and needed increasingly more space. In a letter to William Findley in February of 1800, Peale makes clear his desire for an enlargement to his Museum. In that letter, Peale outlines what he believes a proper Museum should look like. I quote it at length here because it is important to our overall discussion of the organization of the Museum:

A House sufficiently large, to contain all subjects proper for a Museum, would be a very extensive building, as such is not easily obtained, altho it need not be ornamented in the least, or have lofty ceilings, yet a great deal may be done on a smaller scale. Rooms that will hold of large & small quadrupeds rather more than 200, of Birds 2000; besides amphibious animals, Fishes, Insects, minerals, & other fossils – Shells & other marine productions – These if possible should be arranged in one suite, to shew a gradual link in the natural connecting chain. and the light ought [to] be from the north, as the best to preserve their colors, Rooms for Utensils, models, Arms & cloathing of Various Nations. a picture gallery to exhibit many things that would communicate knowledge which words feebly express. a Large Room to deliver Lectures in – And a Library to contain at least a complete collection on Natural history, none of which should be taken from the Museum

²⁴ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 93.

²⁵ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 5, The Autobiography of Charles Willson Peale* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 225.

but restored to by all that wanted information on such subjects – also an allotment for Botany, and some conveniences for keeping a few living animals.²⁶

What is most important about this part of the letter is that Peale spends the entire time talking about what he wants, not what he currently *has*. There is no general description of his Museum within the Philosophical Hall, at least not when it was solely occupied there, in this letter. This letter makes clear that the APS Hall did not allow for the exhibition of all of his specimens. A lack of space would mean that Peale could only exhibit limited specimens, therefore restricting him to demonstrating a complete “chain of being” for the public, making his collection look incomplete. The lack of space could have also induced Peale to cram specimens into his display cases, making the collection look disorganized and confusing. This may account for the anxiety expressed at the beginning of the letter to Findley about the organization of a museum: “In the first place, I declare that it is only by the arrangement and management of a Repository of Subjects of Natural History &c that can constitute its utility.”²⁷ If a collection was not “systematically arranged . . . the advantage of such a store will be of little account to the public.”²⁸ It appears that Peale may have felt that due to the lack of space in the APS Hall, his collection was not meeting its full potential and was not of any utility to the general public.

One of the needs that the APS Hall did accommodate was the containment of living animals. In 1794, Peale appealed to the legislature to allow him to construct a fence and containment area for the live animals he owned. Many times, Peale would

²⁶ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 277.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

receive live donations to the Museum and throughout the years, Peale owned a bald eagle, an elk, a lion, a tiger, a few bears, and many other animals that he kept and observed until it was time for them to become a part of the Museum: “it was a necessary appendage to the museum, as animals that had not come to their full growth are not fit subjects to be prese[r]ved, except when some of the yong are to be placed with their parents to form family groups.” (Figure 4)²⁹ Permission was granted to Peale thus changing the landscape of the “State House Garden.”³⁰ Peale constructed “a neat palisade fence, the breadth of the Philosophical Hall, and extending from the southwest end of it about half a square” and placed all his living animals within the fenced area.³¹ This became one of the first features people saw when visiting the Museum when it was located in the State House Square (1794 – 1827) (Figure 5).

Interactions with this space will be covered in further detail in the following chapters, but it is important to mention here because it informs us of the larger landscape of which Peale’s Museum was an integral part. These anecdotal stories describe the entirety of the Museum: it was not merely contained within the rooms of Philosophical Hall or Independence Hall, but was part of the streetscape that everyday Philadelphians could pass or engage. The Museum literally spilled outside of its doors and extended past the walls of the building. Furthermore, these aspects of the yard depict how the general public interacted with Peale’s Museum. One wonders: did neighbors complain about the

²⁹ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 5, The Autobiography of Charles Willson Peale* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 226.

³⁰ Charles Coleman Sellers, *Mr. Peale’s Museum: Charles Willson Peale and the First Popular Museum of Natural Science and Art* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1908), 77.

³¹ *Ibid*, 341 – 342.

noise that the animals made or were those noises covered up by the noise of the city? These questions may never be answered, due to a lack of record, but they are still important to think about when analyzing the larger context of Peale's Museum and how it fit into the urban and social landscape.

Eventually, Peale's desire for a larger space became a reality. In 1802, Peale expanded his Museum into the State House (Figure 6). From 1802 to 1811, Peale's Museum occupied both Independence Hall and the APS Hall and it was not until 1811 that the entire Museum moved into the State House. It was here that the full realization of Peale's plan for a museum was able to flourish. Much of the reasoning behind this move was of an expedient and timely nature: it was during this time that the State legislature was deciding where to make a permanent home for the State government. In February of 1802, the Senate of Pennsylvania decided "that the use of the east end of the State House, and the second story of the whole House, and the care of the whole, and State House yard, ought to be given to Mr. Peale; and that he may remove his Museum into the east end of the State House provided that he shall not make arrangements thereof in such a manner as to prevent the citizens from holding elections, according to law."³² Most sources indicate that Peale's move was based primarily on his need for space, not on his desire to occupy a space associated with the development of the American nation. Furthermore, Peale would only have to move his Museum next door rather than have another parade of objects down the street of Philadelphia (Figure 7).

³² Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 400.

By December of 1811, the Museum had moved completely into the State House and no longer occupied Philosophical Hall. A year earlier, in January, Peale had retired and turned over the management of his museum to his son Rubens.³³ This was not a permanent retirement, as Peale would return to help manage the Museum in 1822. After his death, Peale's sons attempted to keep the Museum running: in August of 1827, the Museum moved from the State House to the Philadelphia Arcade (Figure 8). It remained there until 1838. A guidebook to Philadelphia noted that the Museum continued to adhere to the Linnaean system and continued adding new specimens to the collection.³⁴ Discussion of building a brand new space for the Museum began in 1830.³⁵ The building was located on Ninth and George (now Sansom Street) and opened in 1838.³⁶ The Museum's stay in this location was short lived: in May of 1843, the Museum building was sold at a sheriff's sale, indicating the end of the Philadelphia Museum as an institution.³⁷ After a short sojourn in the Old Masonic Hall in 1845, the Peale collection was sold to P.T. Barnum.³⁸ Later, the collection was disbursed over the years, and unfortunately, parts of it were destroyed in fires.

Sensory Experience

Philadelphians, and those visiting the city, experienced the urban landscape daily, by walking around it and working in it. Historians have done an excellent job in

³³ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 1245.

³⁴ Charles Coleman Sellers, *Mr. Peale's Museum: Charles Willson Peale and the First Poplar Museum of Natural Science and Art* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1908), 263.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 270.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 274.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 302.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 312.

reconstructing the sensory features of the city, features that visitors would have experienced by walking throughout the urban landscape. One of the discerning characteristics of Philadelphia was how “walkable” it was. Most visitors’ accounts, all of which, we must understand, were written by members of the middle to upper socio-economic strata of society, express a strong desire to walk around and explore Philadelphia on foot (Figure 9).³⁹ By walking, Philadelphians and visitors immersed themselves in the culture of the city. In fact, walking around the city was seen as so integral to understanding Philadelphia that in 1830, John F. Watson described Chestnut Street, a main thoroughfare in Philadelphia, as “the pride and honour of our land.”⁴⁰ This description of a street in Philadelphia emphasizes how important the streets of the city were to the residents; first, it indicates that Philadelphians were proud of their streetscapes, and second, the streets were clearly places that Philadelphians liked to experience daily, which would have encouraged visitors of the city to do so as well.

While walking around Philadelphia, visitors and residents would have experienced an ever-shifting world through their senses. Ships sailed in and out of the port, bringing with them new people, new items, and new diseases (Figure 10). Philadelphia was frequently plagued with the yellow fever, most notably in the years of 1793 and 1798. This drove the rich out to the countryside, while the less fortunate were left within the city. Urban expansion was another constant: infrastructure was changing as buildings were being built to accommodate growing numbers of people and growing demand for space. The smell of the city was not always pleasant: as Dell Upton points

³⁹ Philip Stevick, *Imagining Philadelphia: Travelers’ Views of the City from 1800 to the Present* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 31.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 34.

out, between the “tanneries, distilleries, slaughterhouses, fat-rendering plants, and other industrial enterprises,” the stench of the city could be terrible.⁴¹ Food and human waste were two other predominant smells in the city and unfortunately, through the nineteenth century, there were no large drainage systems to rid the city of these smells.⁴² Besides the smells and sights, those in Philadelphia would have heard a variety of noises. Carriages and horse-riders clopping by, groups of people walking together, gossiping and laughing, and street vendors selling their wares were all part of the urban noises of Philadelphia. The only time in which Philadelphia was truly silent was during a moment of crisis, such as during the yellow fever epidemics.⁴³ Sight, smell, and sound were some of the predominant senses used while walking around the city of Philadelphia.

These were the same senses that visitors to Peale’s Museum used to experience the space. Just as people on the streets of Philadelphia would have experienced a “sensory overload”, Peale’s audience would have experienced something similar. The Museum was filled with a variety of different exhibits; using their eyes, the visitors would have glanced at several displays of animals, both alive and dead, seen various portraits and paintings, looked upon a large array of various corals, shells, and minerals, and watched other visitors who were visiting the space. Peale’s visitors also experienced the Museum using their hearing: anyone in the Museum would have heard the murmurs and exclamations of others who had discovered something fascinating, the laughter of those who were amused by deceptive artwork, the sound of music coming from the organ

⁴¹ Dell Upton, *Another City: Urban Life and Urban Spaces in the New American Republic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 41.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Dell Upton, *Another City: Urban Life and Urban Spaces in the New American Republic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 69.

in the Long Room, and the symphony of live animal calls coming from inside and out. Visitors may have smelled the strong odor of the chemicals Peale used to preserve the animals. They may have even touched a few exhibits, even if they were not supposed to. In the same way that many people explored the streets of Philadelphia, visitors to Peale's Museum also used their senses to become more aware of the space around them.

Enlightened Order

Philadelphians did not only explore the city with their senses: they also used reason. As a gridded city, the layout of Philadelphia reflected the enlightened and ordered mindset of those who founded it. In William Penn's instructions for planning the city, he made it quite clear that he wanted it to have a gridded pattern. Asking that the streets "may be uniform down to the water from the country bounds" and that the houses should be constructed "in a line, or upon a line," the gridded pattern of Philadelphia became clear.⁴⁴ Furthermore, the 1682 depiction of the city of Philadelphia, by Penn and Holme also demonstrated the intended gridded pattern of the city (Figure 11).⁴⁵ Although this exact plan was not definitely used as the plan for Philadelphia, the focused use of a grid is important to note and was used in the future development of the city (Figure 12). This gridded pattern had been well-established elsewhere in the colonies; Dell Upton notes, "most assumed a bell-shape draped around an inverted T-shaped armature where the waterfront intersected with a perpendicular axis defined by varying arrays of public buildings, parades, markets, and wharves."⁴⁶ Like other cities that were economic and

⁴⁴ John W. Reps, "William Penn and the Planning of Philadelphia," *The Town Planning Review* 27, no. 1 (1956): 29.

⁴⁵ Dell Upton, *Another City: Urban Life and Urban Spaces in the New American Republic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 114.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 21.

shipping centers, Philadelphia's urban growth was centrally located near the merchant areas of the city.

This use of the gridded urban system coincided with the Enlightenment desire to order and organize the world. Dell Upton explores this topic in *Another City: Urban Life and Urban Spaces in the New American Republic*. He writes, "The new spatial imagination was grounded in that late-Enlightenment habit of mind that historians of philosophy and science call the 'systematic' or 'geometrical spirit,' the 'passion to order and systematize as well as to measure and calculate.'"⁴⁷ Such a desire to organize permeated all aspects of life within Philadelphia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: these intellectual ideals were translated into the physical spaces of the city.

Charles Willson Peale's Museum was one of these spaces. With his use of the Linnaean system, named after the Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus (1707 – 1778), Peale organized his Museum into a logically systematized entity as will be covered in chapter three (Figure 13). Peale's Linnaean based organizational system was physically reminiscent of the gridded city streets in Philadelphia. Just as the founders and residents of the city were attempting to organize the complicated nature of urban life, Peale too was trying to organize the complexity of the natural world. A visitor would have seen this particularly when they entered the Long Room of the State House. Along the back side of the room, where the entryways were located, Peale had cabinets lining the walls, a physical manifestation of the repeated gridded order of Philadelphia. Just like the gridded experience outside, a visitor to Peale's Museum would have perceived the enlightened order that was at the core of the Museum's organization.

⁴⁷ Dell Upton, *Another City: Urban Life and Urban Spaces in the New American Republic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 124.

The study of natural history had become one of the more popular scientific fields, “a new science for a new era.”⁴⁸ As the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries progressed, scholars began to question their place within the world, particularly in relation with one another and religion. The Enlightenment created a marriage of understanding between science and religion: enlightened thinking encouraged people to use science as a source of evidence of God’s work on earth. Amongst most circles in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, superstitious modes of thinking no longer predominated and increasingly people began to understand their place in the world through empirical modes of thinking. These new modes of thought manifested themselves in what became known as the “chain of being.” Such a chain, which was described in several scholarly works, expressed a logical understanding of the organization of the world: God occupied the top of the chain, man came next, and all other creatures were below man. Carl Linnaeus’s work contributed to this understanding of the chain of being. Linnaeus was one of the most important men to develop the field of natural history: “His binomial nomenclature of genus and species set fixed or implied relationships and brought unity and coherence where before there had been only a perpetuating confusion.”⁴⁹ In his seminal work *Systema Naturae* (1735), Linnaeus broke down the universe into categories that were used to guide the scholar in their research of the natural world (Figure 14). The work of Linnaeus was critical to the creation of Peale’s Museum.

Not only was natural history a field that prompted discussions about man’s place in relation to the universe and to religion; it was also a field that prompted discussions

⁴⁸ Charles Coleman Sellers, *Mr. Peale’s Museum: Charles Willson Peale and the First Poplar Museum of Natural Science and Art* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1908), 15.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

about national identity. George Louis le Clerc, the Comte de Buffon (1707 – 1788), a French naturalist, claimed that American species, and therefore Americans, were degenerate when compared to species in Europe (Figure 15). He even claimed that European species brought to America became smaller.⁵⁰ Within his work *Histoire Naturelle, générale et particulière* (1749 – 1804), he wrote, “In America, . . . animated Nature is weaker, less active, and more circumscribed in the variety of her productions; for we perceive, from the enumeration of the American animals, that the number of species is not only fewer, but in general, that all the animals are much smaller than those of the Old Continent.”⁵¹ Buffon was accusing the American species, and therefore Americans, of being degenerate. Embedded within this debate on the natural sciences was another on national character: while the credibility of the American natural sciences was being questioned, so was their identity.

Thomas Jefferson was one of the leading Americans to partake in this discussion of natural history with European scholars (Figure 16). In a letter to Dr. Willard, a professor at Harvard University, Jefferson wrote, “The Botany of America is far from being exhausted, its mineralogy is untouched, and its Natural History or Zoology totally *mistaken* and *misrepresented*” (emphasis is my own).⁵² Further within the letter, Jefferson supports the efforts of students within the field and how their work could demonstrate the character of the United States: “Let them spend theirs showing that it is the great parent

⁵⁰ Charles Coleman Sellers, *Mr. Peale's Museum: Charles Willson Peale and the First Poplar Museum of Natural Science and Art* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1908), 16.

⁵¹ William Smellie, trans., *Natural History, General and Particular by the Count de Buffon* (London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell in the Strand, 1791), 115.

⁵² Sarah N. Randolph, *The Domestic Life of Thomas Jefferson: Compiled from Family Letters and Reminiscences* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1978), 145.

of *science* and of virtue, and that a nation will be great in both always in proportion as it is free.”⁵³ Throughout his lifetime, Jefferson would work to prove the value of the United States, and their specimens, as a contributor to the field of natural science. His *Notes on the State of Virginia*, one of his most important literary contributions, functioned as a work that defended the United States against degenerate claims. When he traveled to France in 1784, he brought with him a skeleton and the hide of a moose in order to prove to the French that nature in America was not degenerate and that, therefore, the American people were not degenerate either.

Like the city of Philadelphia, Peale’s Museum provided an enlightened and sensory experience; in the ideal world, both spaces were gridded and orderly, but in reality, they could both be overwhelming, loud, and smelly. Citizens navigated both with their enlightened understanding and physical senses. Besides fostering the growth of the mind and the senses, Peale’s Museum also became an active participant in fostering a republican sense of self within the citizens of America. Charles Willson Peale, as a patriot, an artist, and an Enlightenment thinker naturally gravitated towards using a museum as a mode through which to not only demonstrate his artistic abilities, but to also cultivate a sense of national identity and pride amongst the American people. With the use of his natural specimens, his lectures, and his exhibits, Peale provided an intellectual and amusing means of exploring the terms and characteristics of an American identity. Furthermore, Philadelphia was a perfect city to begin such an endeavor. The metropolis

⁵³ Sarah N. Randolph, *The Domestic Life of Thomas Jefferson: Compiled from Family Letters and Reminiscences* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1978), 145.

had become a national symbol of America: Philadelphia's streets and buildings witnessed the founding of the nation. Although it appears that fewer eighteenth century Americans attached patriotic sensibilities to Independence Hall than we do today, it is still important to note that Peale's Museum was located in one of the prominent spaces that witnessed the founding of the American nation. Using his enlightened sensibilities and understanding of the world, Peale created an organized space in which visitors could explore the natural world around them, understand their place within the world, and nurture a sense of national identity.

Chapter Two: Peale's Museum as a Space of Amusement

On July 13th, 1787, the Reverend Manasseh Cutler paid a visit to Peale's Museum on Third and Lombard Street (Figure 2). Upon arriving, he and Dr. Clarkson, a friend, were ushered into the Museum by a young boy who told them that Mr. Peale would be with them shortly. While waiting for Peale, Reverend Cutler looked around: "I observed, through a glass window at my right hand, a gentleman close to me, standing with a pencil in one hand, and a small sheet of ivory in the other, and his eyes directed to the opposite side of the room, as though he was taking some object on his ivory sheet."⁵⁴ Afraid that they had walked in on Charles Willson Peale working, they returned to the entryway only to be greeted by none other than Mr. Peale. To Dr. Clarkson and Reverend Cutler's astonishment, the first Peale they had observed was a wax-figure that Peale had made of himself: "yet I beheld two men, so perfectly alike that I could not discern the minutest difference."⁵⁵

Reverend Cutler's account emphasizes one of the foremost intentions of Peale's Museum: amusement. Peale sought to provide his visitors with "rational amusement" or the process of finding joy while learning. He knew that in order to entice visitors and keep them coming, their experience in the Museum would have to be fun as well as educational. Reverend Cutler and Dr. Clarkson were entertained and astonished by the wax figure of Peale which is evident in that it is the first thing that Reverend Cutler makes note of in the memoir; this experience made an impact upon him for the rest of his

⁵⁴ William Parker Cutler and Julia Perkins Cutler, *Life, Journals, and Correspondence of Rev. Manasseh Cutler, LL.D. by His Grandchildren William Parker Cutler and Julia Perkins Cutler* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co, 1888), 259.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 260.

life. This chapter of the thesis will address different mediums through which Peale created amusing experiences and how different audiences were amused in Peale's Museum.

Mediums of Amusement

Cutler's account is one of the first recorded encounters with Peale's wax figures and unfortunately, it is the only known reference to the wax figure of Peale. Although it is questionable that Peale did create a wax-work of himself for this reason (perhaps Cutler made up this reference to the wax figure to liven his story), Peale did exhibit other wax figures in his Museum. In Peale's 1804 *Guide to the Museum*, he noted that within his "Model Room", he displayed the following:

In cases 2 and 3, are models of wax, the size of life, of the following characters, drest in their real and peculiar habiliments, viz. – Chinese Labourer and Gentlemen; Inhabitant of Oonalaska; a Kamskadale; an African; a Sandwich Islander; an Otaheitan; a South American; and Blue-Jacket and Red-pole, celebrated Sachems of North America. These cases likewise contain a great variety of articles of Indian dress and ornament of extraordinary workmanship.⁵⁶

All of the wax figures displayed in this case, in which there is no mention of Peale's own wax figure, are of people from a diverse range of races and ethnicities, all of which were minorities within the United States. Historians have discovered that by "Kamskadale" he most likely meant "Kamchadel", a now almost extinct aboriginal group of people from Siberia.⁵⁷ Blue-Jacket and Red-Pole were Shawnee chieftains that led other northwestern tribes in the wars against the United States in the early 1790s, a war that ended in the

⁵⁶ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 765.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 766.

signing of a peace treaty in 1795.⁵⁸ These figures were not only foreigners to most Americans; they were also contemporary people.

Peale used these wax figures for two purposes: the first was to amuse his audience, and the second was to educate his visitors about the racial hierarchies inherent to their understanding of the world and society, a topic that will be covered in chapter three. What is most interesting about these figures was that they were displayed in *wax*, not in paint. Wax figures, during this period, were seen as more amusing than portraiture. As Wendy Bellion notes within her article on Patience Wright, an American wax artist who worked in England, the creation and use of wax figures was much more of a curiosity and amusement than that of painting. She writes that during the eighteenth century, wax “suffered from an aesthetic and cultural bias, denigrated as a medium more appropriate for popular fairs than artistic salons.”⁵⁹ The act of seeing a wax figure and realizing that it is not a real human being was more entertaining to the general public than looking upon a portrait in which you know the person was painted; wax was a more deceptive medium. Reverend Cutler experienced and expressed this amusement when he realized that the wax figure was not Peale in person. A similar reaction would not have occurred had Cutler seen a portrait of Peale.

Other visitors’ accounts reveal information about various exhibits Peale’s Museum used to amuse and educate his general public. In June of 1810, Catherine Fritsch, a Moravian sister, visited Peale’s Museum. Her detailed account stands as one of

⁵⁸ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museum Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 766.

⁵⁹ Wendy Bellion, “Patience Wright’s Transatlantic Bodies,” in *Shaping the Body Politic: Art and Political Formation in Early America*, ed. Maurie D. McNinnis and Louis P. Nelson (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 23.

the most important visitor descriptions of Peale's Museum during the time he occupied Philosophical Hall and the State House (Appendix 2 & 3). Catherine begins her account with a description of Peale's animal yard outside of the Museum: "An angular space formed by the main building and one of its wings, inclosed and entered through a gate, held a large collection of beautiful flowers in pots, or boxes, and also a few living animals." After looking at two bears, which "amused us exceedingly," two parrots, a bald eagle, and a monkey, Catherine went inside the Museum with her companions.⁶⁰ Upon entering she noticed a sign that read: "Whoso would learn Wisdom, let him enter here!" and then paid 25 cents for her ticket. Once they reached the second floor, they entered a "large hall which was filled entirely with animals, finely mounted and in natural positions."⁶¹ Inside that room was also Peale's "Oracle", a lion's head with a speaking tube inside it, which allowed visitors to talk through the lion's head and communicate with others located in an adjacent room.⁶² Catherine also mentions "the finely written labels", cases filled with insects and butterflies, and "scripture texts - in oval frames" hanging on the wall to remind visitors of God's work in creating the natural world.

After looking at two live snakes in glass boxes, Catherine and her friends decided to enquire about seeing the Mammoth exhibit in Philosophical Hall. Catherine wrote, "Then a gentleman who had just come from the Philosophical Hall, where the great skeleton was kept, told us that he had seen it and had to pay ½ dollar for the privilege. All

⁶⁰ A.R. Beck, "Notes of a Visit to Philadelphia, Made by a Moravian Sister in 1810." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 36, no. 3 (1912): 14.

⁶¹ Ibid, 15.

⁶² Ibid & Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 844-846.

the party, but myself, declared that the price was entirely too high – a quarter they would give willingly, but not a cent more!”⁶³ It seemed that Catherine, who had sincerely looked forward to seeing the mammoth, thought that the price was justifiable, but none of her companions felt the same. Interestingly, before deciding definitively to not see the mammoth, the group tried to negotiate the cost of entrance with the doorkeeper, presumably one of Peale’s family members, but they were rejected in their request. Instead of seeing the Mammoth in Philosophical Hall, the group had their profiles cut from the physiognotrace. Well, all except Catherine who “couldn’t think of it – with my big nose!”⁶⁴ As they left the Museum, “all our talk was of how delightful had been our visit to the Museum.”⁶⁵

Catherine’s visit highlights several important amusing elements to Peale’s Museum, all of which will be covered in the remainder of this chapter. First, her account highlights that her amusement began even before she stepped into the physical bounds of the Museum. Her first amusing experience was in Peale’s animal yard. As noted in the first chapter, Peale kept a space outside his Museum that was devoted to housing live animals. Just as Peale’s Museum spilled out of its physical bounds and interacted with the landscape of Philadelphia, the experience of amusement also extended past the Museum’s physical boundaries. Catherine described her experience in the animal yard as something that had “amused us exceeding” indicating that she had felt a strong sensation of joy in seeing animals that she had never before seen in real life. The act of seeing these unique creatures would have been entertaining for anyone in the eighteenth and nineteenth

⁶³ A.R. Beck, “Notes of a Visit to Philadelphia, Made by a Moravian Sister in 1810.” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 36, no. 3 (1912): 16.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

centuries and it is important to note that it was their first experience with Peale's Museum; it was literally the first space that people encountered before entering the State House.

Although the "zoo" was beneficial to Peale in that it provided a space for him to keep his live animals, it provided a source of joy to his visitors, and it brought business into the Museum, it also caused problems. Some people would interact with the animals in a less than civilized and joyous manner. Peale records some of these issues in his autobiography, recalling instances of when Philadelphia boys would "tease or torment" the animals. His letters reveal several other instances of trouble related to the stable area.⁶⁶ In a letter to his son Raphaele, Peale mentions the poisoning of a tigress in the stable stating "he or she who Poisoned this Tygress would very probably have done the same to a husband or wife!"⁶⁷

Besides having to deal with transgressions against his animals, Peale, due to the terms agreed to within his rent of the State House, was also responsible for the decorum of the entire State House yard. The Select Council of Philadelphia discussed Peale's lack of properly taking care of the yard in 1805, making note of the "vice & indecorum practiced in the State house & State house Yard."⁶⁸ Peale insisted in a letter to Nathan Sellers that his actions were of a responsible nature and that he had taken care of the yard to the best of his ability. In an attempt to prevent the use of the yard during the evenings

⁶⁶ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 5, The Autobiography of Charles Willson Peale* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 226 – 227.

⁶⁷ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 861.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 910.

by “Women of loose Character” and “Bawds” Peale closed the gates to the yard and opened them again during the day to allow all Philadelphians to use the park.⁶⁹ In the end, Peale only received a reprimand. Clearly, Peale had to navigate the boundaries of amusement within his yard: some people used it for amusement that was seen as appropriate, such as interacting with the animals or strolling through the yard, while others used it for inappropriate amusement, such as prostitution or the torturing and killing of animals.

Catherine’s second account of amusement was with her interaction with the Oracle, a deceptive device. She wrote that “it caused them, and us, to laugh so immoderately that they could hardly ask or reply to any questions.”⁷⁰ Catherine and her friend’s could barely use the device because they were laughing so much. Peale’s Museum was a space of several of these deceptive exhibits and artwork and, as evidenced by Catherine’s account, they entertained the visitor. He featured a few trompe l’oeil paintings, including his *Staircase Group (Portrait of Raphaele and Titian Ramsay Peale)*, a painting he created in 1795 as part of the Columbianum Exhibition and one of his most famous paintings (Figure 17). It features a realistic looking staircase. Peale’s son Raphaele climbs the stairs, holding a collection of artistic utensils, while Peale’s son Titian comes down the stairs and looks around the frame of the entryway. At the bottom of the stairs sits a lost ticket to Peale’s Museum (Figure 18). Most importantly, Peale chose to exhibit this work within a real doorframe to contribute to the reality of the

⁶⁹ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 914.

⁷⁰ A.R. Beck, “Notes of a Visit to Philadelphia, Made by a Moravian Sister in 1810.” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 36, no. 3 (1912): 15.

illusion. He even added a step to the bottom in order to make the staircase appear realistic. The painting was so lifelike that a story began to circulate, but has never been confirmed, that when George Washington visited the Museum, he tipped his hat at the two boys on the stairs because he thought they were real. Many historians have analyzed this painting over the years, attempting to unpack the symbolism found within the positioning of Peale's sons and the utensils Raphaelle is carrying, but they have also used it as a means of exploring the development of national identity through artwork, a topic for the last chapter of this thesis.⁷¹ Here, the painting serves as an example of an amusing activity Peale's visitors took part in; just as Catherine and her friends were entertained by the discovery of the Oracle, several other visitors would have been delighted to realize that the painting was an illusion.

Catherine's third account of amusement is the cutting of silhouettes. Like Peale's wax figures, his physiognotrace was a source of entertainment as well as education because it taught Peale's audience about their sense of self. Peale's physiognotrace, a machine that could trace the profile of a visitors' face, was certainly one of the most popular attractions of Peale's Museum (Figure 19). John Isaac Hawkins (1772 – 1855) was the first to invent the machine in England; he developed it from a pantograph

⁷¹ Wendy Bellion, *Citizen Spectator: Art, Illusion, and Visual Perception in Early National America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 63, 111, Charles Coleman Sellers, *Mr. Peale's Museum: Charles Willson Peale and the First Popular Museum of Natural Science and Art* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1908), 83 & 94, and David Steinberg, "Educating for Distinction? Art, Hierarchy, and Charles Willson Peale's *Staircase Group*," in *Seeing High & Low: Representing Social Conflict in American Visual Culture*, ed. Patricia Johnston (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 25 – 41.

machine and worked closely with Peale, his friend, to perfect the instrument.⁷² In a newspaper advertisement, Peale announced the debut of the instrument in his Museum in December of 1802 stating that it could be used for “visitors who may desire to take the likeness of themselves or friends.”⁷³ Soon thereafter, the machine’s use took off in the museum: Peale estimated that within the first full year of its use, 8,880 silhouettes were cut.⁷⁴ As Brigham notes, if, as scholars have estimated, 11,620 people visited the Museum in 1800 and 16,862 visited in 1805, then a significant portion of those who visited would have also had their profiles cut (Figure 20).⁷⁵ In order to have your profile cut, you could pay one cent to cover the cost of the paper and cut your profile yourself or you could pay six cents to have Moses, Peale’s former slave, cut your profile for you.⁷⁶ Peale gave Moses his freedom in 1802, the same year in which he began exhibiting the physiognotrace, and permitted Moses to work the machine. Brigham notes that this was most likely not accidental: like many other slaveholders in America, Peale took on a paternal role with regards to his relationship with Moses, making sure to provide his slave with a source of income after he freed him.⁷⁷ Even ten years after being freed, Moses still worked as a silhouette cutter for Peale’s Museum.⁷⁸ Not only does this

⁷² Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 475.

⁷³ Ibid, 478.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 310.

⁷⁵ David R. Brigham, *Public Culture in the Early Republic: Peale’s Museum and Its Audience* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 70.

⁷⁶ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 5, The Autobiography of Charles Willson Peale* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 310.

⁷⁷ David R. Brigham, *Public Culture in the Early Republic: Peale’s Museum and Its Audience* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 71.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

provide scholars with further information about the racial lines of the Museum, it also indicates that enough people were willing to pay Moses to cut their profiles in order to provide him with a decent enough income to support himself.

Amused Audiences

Interestingly, Peale initially advertised, in the Philadelphia newspapers, the use of the physiognotrace as primarily for women: “while ladies are getting their charming faces delineated, gentlemen may be amused in examining the Birds.”⁷⁹ Furthermore, in a letter to his sons in 1803, Peale notes how well the physiognotrace was doing in the Museum for “such is the love we have of our pretty faces.”⁸⁰ This would indicate that Peale felt there was a certain vanity attached to the popularity of the physiognotrace, but it also indicates that he attached that vanity to women. Just as Brigham notes, “Peale located women’s interests in a museum attraction that he elsewhere described as a reflection of vanity, whereas he reserved for men the more elevated, intellectual domain of natural history.”⁸¹ Although Peale noted the high level of participation of women, the number of surviving profiles indicates that men had the most profiles cut, therefore suggesting that men too were interested in exploring their own identities through the use of the profile cutter. This also further emphasizes Peale’s belief that the physiognotrace was a machine

⁷⁹ David R. Brigham, *Public Culture in the Early Republic: Peale’s Museum and Its Audience* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 71.

⁸⁰ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 517.

⁸¹ David R. Brigham, *Public Culture in the Early Republic: Peale’s Museum and Its Audience* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 72.

that contributed to the vain actions of women: his conviction in such a belief blinded him to who was truly using the machine in his Museum.

While the discussion of the use of this machine to explore one's identity and sense of self will be covered in the final chapter, the gendered boundaries of the physiognotrace will be discussed here. Although most visitors to Peale's Museum were certainly white males, some of Peale's main intended audience groups were women and children. There are several resources, like Catherine's account, that describe women and children interacting in the Museum. In 1792, a group of women published their account of their visit to the Museum in the *General Advertiser*. After seeing the great works of nature in Peale's Museum, this group of women swore off their extravagant lifestyles (Appendix 3). One woman noted, "Nor shall I ever be tempted to set off my cheeks with rouge, after having seen the crimson glow of the Humming Bird."⁸² At the end of the newspaper article, the women encouraged those with corrupted moral taste to visit the Museum and engage in "meditation on the works of your Creator, and conversation with men of sense, and with women of refined sensibility."⁸³ What is most interesting about this article is that these women are conveying their reformed sensibilities through their appearance. Not one of the women in the article mentions the reformation of her mind; the focus is entirely on the reform of her outward appearance whereas it is mentioned that men should be the ones to refine their minds. Peale himself believed in this distinction of reform: although he intended for women to be audience members, he prescribed them a particularly vain role. His belief in their predominant use of the physiognotrace serves as

⁸² "A Dialogue on Mr. Peale's Museum." *General Advertiser*, September 8th, 1792, 2.

⁸³ Ibid.

evidence to the belief that Peale shared with a majority of society in the vain nature of women.

Regardless of this emphasis on vanity, Peale wanted to extend women's role into the field of natural history. In his lectures, Peale often cited the positive outcomes that would occur if women were included within that science. In his third lecture on natural history, Peale wrote, "Women are possessed of more brilliancy of genius – greater facility of invention and are capable of perfecting whatever they ought to engage in . . . Man, after all his pride, is obliged to resort to woman's aid under the pressure of his heaviest misfortunes. He finds in her active, and ready wisdom, the most efficient support."⁸⁴ Furthermore, Peale also wanted women to attend his lectures: Peale allowed men who purchased tickets to his lectures to bring a lady with them.⁸⁵ While this certainly does not give women agency in that they were not the people purchasing the tickets, it does indicate that Peale wanted to include them as audience members.

Even Peale's famous portrait, *the Artist in His Museum*, includes women (Figure 21). The centrality of amusement as part of the experience is integral to this painting. Painted in 1822, it features Peale lifting a curtain to reveal his Museum space to the viewer, beckoning them to come inside. The curtain itself is an indicator of amusement: it has specific ties to theater spaces, a place devoted almost entirely to that of entertainment. It was also a typical motif used in the display of art during the nineteenth century; several art pieces were displayed with curtains surrounding them. In the background, Peale features a Quaker woman, who stands in shock because she has just seen, for the first

⁸⁴ C.W. Peale, "Lecture No. 3 Natural History and the Museum." American Philosophical Society, B P31, No. 7a, date unknown.

⁸⁵ David R. Brigham, *Public Culture in the Early Republic: Peale's Museum and Its Audience* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 6.

time, the Mammoth skeleton that sits behind the curtain (Figure 22). Her face expresses the divine revelation of the Mammoth, a creature that had been unknown to white Americans until recently. In stark contrast, the men in the painting do not have similar expressions: they stand stoic and poised, analyzing Peale's displays. Instead, the Quaker woman is the only one to express any emotion.⁸⁶ Again, Peale reveals that despite his desired inclusion of women in his Museum, they were prescribed an emotional and vain role as audience members.

Peale's painting also features a child. Behind the Quaker woman stands a man and a little boy, most likely his son (Figure 22). The little boy carries around a book, presumably a guide to the museum, while his father points out something on the wall. The pair is immersed in a lesson of natural history; the father was sharing his knowledge of the world with his son. Interestingly, it is not a little girl and her father or a child and their mother that Peale chooses to portray. His choice in depiction again emphasizes his belief that the field of natural history, while it could benefit from the inclusion of women, was a predominately male subject.

It is clear that Peale sought to include children within his Museum. A few children's tickets survive in collections today. By giving children a separate ticket and a lower ticket price, Peale indicated his desire to teach future generations in America of their place within the world and cultivate their American identity. In his third lecture, he notes the importance of teaching children natural history. He regards the Museum as a place where children can stay on the "path of virtue" and move away from "destructive

⁸⁶ David R. Brigham, *Public Culture in the Early Republic: Peale's Museum and Its Audience* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 65.

habits.”⁸⁷ He also writes, “To see the Parent giving instruction to his children, by pointing out interesting objects in the museum for the purpose of giving correct ideas of the harmony which prevails throughout all nature . . . always gives me the highest gratification, and consoles me for my ardent, laborious and incessant toil.”⁸⁸ Peale felt such joy in seeing children learning from their parents in his Museum that he included it within his portrait.

Further evidence of Peale’s inclusion of children in the Museum can be found on the Sellers Map, a map that will be analyzed in further detail in chapter three (Figure 23). Within the Quadruped Room, George Escol Sellers noted the existence of a “children’s case.” As scholar Shirley Teresa Wajda notes, “The placement of an exhibit directed at children in a room displaying sanctified portrayals suggests Peale designed the room in response to the popular Lockean conceptualization of the child as a *tabula rasa* upon which to inscribe proper social and religious mores. Children were believed most susceptible to the lessons taught by nature.”⁸⁹ It is unknown what was displayed within the children’s case, but the existence of such a space within the museum collection further proves that Peale thought of his museum as a family space, that children could learn how to be virtuous from natural history, and that there was a high enough volume of children as visitors for Peale to dedicate an area of the Museum solely to that visitor group.

⁸⁷ C.W. Peale, “Lecture No. 3 Natural History and the Museum.” American Philosophical Society, B P31, No. 7a, date unknown.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Shirley Teresa Wajda, “ ‘And a Little Child Shall Lead Them’: American Children’s Cabinets of Curiosity,” in *Acts of Possession: Collecting in America*, ed. by Leah Dilworth (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 43.

In Peale's efforts to reaffirm a child's character and increase their understanding of their American identity, Peale declared the Museum a temporary safe haven where lost children and orphans could stay until they were claimed.⁹⁰ This reaffirms Peale's belief in cultivating the identity and education of children: he made efforts to provide a space in which children with less stable families could gain an education. His efforts were lauded in a Philadelphia newspaper in 1807. The author wrote, "Nothing can more deserve the acknowledgements of the community than the kindness and humanity of Mr. Peale of the Museum, in affording his house as an asylum for stray children."⁹¹ Further on within the article, the author noted that he was drawn to visiting Peale's Museum *after* having heard of his efforts to help lost children: Peale's kindness and accommodation towards younger members of society positively associated his Museum in the minds of Philadelphians.⁹²

Peale's decision to allow orphans to stay at the Museum temporarily was strongly influenced by not only his desire to educate children, but also by his perception of the Museum as a family space. Peale's own family helped him constantly in the creation and up-keep of the Museum; it was a family effort. His sons and daughters helped him welcome guests, take their tickets, promote the Museum, clean the rooms, take care of the animals, and help create exhibits. Several of Peale's letters reference the efforts of his children in helping him with the daily tasks. Titian Peale, a naturalist, traveled around the world collecting specimens to add to the Museum. Peale's daughter, Sophonisba, helped him create all the gilded framing for the different displays. Furthermore, Peale's children

⁹⁰ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 1019.

⁹¹ "Lost Children." *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, December 1, 1807, 3.

⁹² *Ibid.*

were involved in promoting the Museum's legacy. Rembrandt Peale established a Museum like Peale's in Baltimore in 1814 in the first American building created programmatically for a museum, and Rubens took over as manager of the Philadelphia Museum in 1810 when Peale decided to retire.⁹³

Perhaps most interestingly though is that in a letter to Nathaniel Ramsay in 1805, Peale noted that the children begged him not to leave for a trip writing, "Sopho and Rubens in one breath said 'Oh no *Pa* we cannot part with you; indeed you must not leave us, we shall run away from the Museum if you do.'"⁹⁴ This statement indicates that the children identified the Museum as their home. Rather than saying that they would run away from their house, they said that they would run away from the Museum, a space for which they had a strong home-like association. It also indicates that the children knew how much their father depended on their efforts in the Museum: they used their work as leverage in negotiating their father's departure.

Peale clearly intended for women and children to be substantial components of his Museum's audience. He wanted to provide each audience with different mediums of amusement: for children, it was the children's case, for women, it was the physiognotrace. While it is obvious that those groups were not limited to being entertained by only those mediums, it is important to point out that Peale sought to accommodate those groups by creating ways in which he felt they could gain an

⁹³ Charles Coleman Sellers, *Mr. Peale's Museum: Charles Willson Peale and the First Poplar Museum of Natural Science and Art* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1908), 222.

⁹⁴ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 811.

education *and* be amused. Like Peale's portrait portrayed, Peale's Museum was a space in which several groups came together to be entertained and to learn. Just as Reverend Cutler and Catherine's accounts express, amusement was integral to the experience in Peale's Museum. Even when learning, Catherine "took much *pleasure* in reading whence all these curiosities came, and who had presented them: indeed, here 'the inquisitive one' was in her element; for years she had wished that she might see this museum, and always she had honored the name Mr. Charles Willson Peale" (emphasis my own).⁹⁵ It was entertaining for Catherine to learn more about the objects and the world that God had created. This was exactly what Peale wanted, regardless of gender or age: to create a rational and amusing space for the shaping of a wise and winsome American public.

⁹⁵ A.R. Beck, "Notes of a Visit to Philadelphia, Made by a Moravian Sister in 1810." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 36, no. 3 (1912): 15.

Chapter Three: Peale's Museum as a Space of Science and Education

In 1798, Peale visited Mr. Gardiner Baker's Museum in New York, one of the first museums in that city. In his diary, Peale wrote, "It is arranged without Method. Works of art with Subjects of Nature are *promiscuously jumbled* together, except at one end of the Room was placed a pretty display of a classical arrangement of Insects. . . ." (emphasis my own).⁹⁶ Further in the entry, Peale notes that Baker has pictures, prints, wax works, natural subjects, musical instruments, and an interesting "Musical Clock."⁹⁷ Peale and Baker had some similar objects, but their organization was vastly different. Unlike Baker's, which Peale clearly disdained because it appeared chaotic, Peale's Museum was structured around an Enlightened and orderly method: the Linnaean system.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore how the Museum functioned as not only a space of amusement, as was made clear in the second chapter, but also as a space of science and education. First, I will discuss general museum development and history in order to place Peale's Museum within a larger context. Then I will explain the Linnaean system and how Peale's Museum was physically arranged to express such a system. And finally, I will explore how Peale's Museum, and the Linnaean system, inherently expressed a hierarchy of race and how that hierarchy was physically demonstrated in Peale's Museum.

⁹⁶ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 221- 222.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 222.

History of Museum Development

The desire to collect and display has been an inherent part of human nature. The first museums began as private collections of more wealthy members of society. These cabinets of curiosity were haphazard collections of various specimens and objects; some were stored in several cabinets that spanned the length of the room while others were kept inside one cabinet (Figure 24). There was no linear progression throughout the room and many artifacts were fantastical in nature. Most importantly, the scope in which these cabinets were viewed was limited: only those in the elite tier of society were able to access these collections. These cabinets not only represented the intellectual capabilities of the owner, but also his socio-economic standing; to own and display an extensive collection of objects required money, time, and connections to other collectors and scientists.⁹⁸

By the mid-seventeenth century, collectors began to classify their objects into more specific groupings, a phenomena that occurred simultaneously with the physical re-ordering of the room; collectors began to change the manner in which their objects were displayed. For example, the collection of Sir Hans Sloane (1660 - 1753), which began as a cabinet of curiosity, developed into the British Museum, an institution that prided itself on its organization. With regards to its organizational development, Arthur MacGregor notes, “A deliberate attempt was made to bring some order to the natural collections,

⁹⁸ Susan M. Pearce, *On Collecting: An investigation into collecting in the European tradition* (London: Routledge, 1995) and Arthur MacGregor, *Curiosity and Enlightenment: Collectors and Collections from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

however, by reorganizing them according to the Linnaean system.”⁹⁹ It was this very same system that Peale chose to emulate and follow in his own museum.

It is evident, through Peale’s letters, that he exchanged items and ideas with European museums, institutions that became Peale’s precedent. In 1802, Peale sent an opossum and her babies to Étienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilarie of the National Museum of Paris in exchange for the birds that Saint-Hilarie had sent him (Figure 25).¹⁰⁰ Even as early as 1794, Peale had contacted Ambrose-Marie-Francois-Joseph Palisot de Beauvois (1752 – 1820), a French naturalist, about “a reciprocal exchange of Subject for subject.”¹⁰¹ This indicates that Peale was not only interested in displaying American specimens, but also in displaying specimens from around the world. Such a display would not only create an enhanced understanding of the complete natural world, but it would have also been a physical demonstration of the differences between species in the Old and New World, a debate that reflected the politics of the day.

Besides these exchanges of ideas and items, Peale’s letters also express his and others observations about European and American museums. In 1800, Philip DePeyster wrote to Peale about his visit to the “Museum of Paris” (the Muséum National d’Histoire Naturelle) stating, “the Birds are Plac’d on Shelves tollerably Crowded, with large glass doores in front wether Classically or no I Cannot say.”¹⁰² I would speculate that by “Classically or no”, DePeyster was referring to a system of organization that governed

⁹⁹ Arthur MacGregor, *Curiosity and Enlightenment: Collectors and Collections from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 124 – 125.

¹⁰⁰ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 442.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 100 – 101.

¹⁰² Ibid, 286.

the entire display of birds; because the birds were crowded on the shelves, DePeyster had no means of understanding their organizational system. He also includes in this letter descriptions of the museums in Madrid and Lisbon concluding with this thought: “As to their Arrangement there is none that Can be Compar’d to yours in Any Shape Particularly in the Birds.”¹⁰³ It is clear that none of these museums made naturalistic displays for their collections or followed a clear organizational logic as Peale did for his.¹⁰⁴

Peale was one of the first to create a popular and public museum space arranged by the Linnaean system in America. Other Americans had personal collections of objects. One of the most popular was Thomas Jefferson’s. Displayed within his entry hall and in his parlor, Jefferson’s collection subsisted of artifacts from the Lewis and Clark Expedition, portraits and paintings he purchased while he lived in Paris, mastodon bones, statues and busts, and animal skins (Figure 26). Furthermore, Jefferson’s collection was located in rooms that also exhibited his architectural inventions. The Entry Hall was where Jefferson used a “ball-pulley” system to keep track of the day and his Parlor was where he could close the doors at the same time due to a pulley system he installed under the floor-boards. I would argue that these inventions were as much a part of his collection as were the artifacts; not only did they display his intellectual prowess and inventive spirit, they also showed Jefferson’s attempt at “improving” the world. In a small way, these inventions expressed Jefferson’s exposure to Enlightened thought and how such ideals could improve the world. Peale too used inventions within his own Museum, a topic that will be covered in chapter four, as it was a uniquely American feature.

¹⁰³ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 286.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 287.

Peale and the Linnaean System

As was mentioned in the first chapter, Carl Linnaeus was a pioneer of the field of natural history. Several natural historians, collectors, and scientists relied on Linnaeus's *Systema Naturae*, which was first published in 1735. By the time Linnaeus published his first work, the distinction of species and genus was already in existence, but Linnaeus added class, order and variety to the classification. As a result, the system was divided into five branches: class, order, genus, species, and variety.¹⁰⁵ Linnaeus applied his system to the classification of plants and minerals, but for the purpose of this thesis, I will only be analyzing the animal classification. Linnaeus broke down the animal kingdom into the following classes: Quadrupedia (quadrupeds), Aves (birds), Amphibia (reptiles, snakes, and amphibians), Pisces (fish), Insecta (insects), and Vermes (worms and mollusks).¹⁰⁶ Besides his new notions of classification, Linnaeus also gained scholarly attention for the creation of his binomial system of naming taxa: he would conjoin the general name of a creature with that of its specific name, allowing for the creation of a universal language regarding the classification of the natural world.¹⁰⁷

By the publication of the tenth edition of *Systema Naturae* in 1758, the system had become more complex and more internationally accepted. Linnaeus reformed the name of Quadrupedia to Mammalia, noting that one of the key characteristics of these

¹⁰⁵ William Turton, trans., *A general system of nature: through the three grand kingdoms of animals, vegetables, and minerals, systematically divided into their several classes, orders, genera, species, and varieties by Sir Charles Linné; translated from Gremlin, Fabricius, Willdenow, with a life of Linné and a dictionary of the terms of natural history by William Turton* (London: Lackington, Allen, and Co., 1806), 22 & Stuffed, 115.

¹⁰⁶ Wilfrid Blunt, *Linnaeus: The Compleat Naturalist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 8.

¹⁰⁷ Stephen T. Asma, *Stuffed Animals & Pickled Heads: The Culture and Evolution of Natural History Museums* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 115.

animals was their use of mammary glands.¹⁰⁸ Linnaeus based most of his classification upon physical features of the animals, primarily looking at their teeth.¹⁰⁹ Below is a chart that breaks down the different categories of Linnaeus's 1758 system. Such a chart will be useful when comparing Linnaeus's system, which Peale relied upon within his own work, to the organization of Peale's Museum:

<i>Classes</i>	<i>Orders</i>
<i>I. Mammalia</i> <i>(Mammals)</i>	1. <i>Primates</i> : man, apes, monkey, femurs, bats, etc. 2. <i>Bruta</i> : elephants, manatee, anteaters, etc. 3. <i>Ferae</i> : seals, dogs, wolves, hyena, foxes, cats, bears, skunks, etc. 4. <i>Bestiae</i> : pigs, armadillos, hedgehogs, moles, etc. 5. <i>Glires</i> : rhinoceros, porcupines, hares, rabbit, beavers, mice, etc. 6. <i>Pecora</i> : camel, llama, deer, etc. 7. <i>Bellua</i> : horse, donkey, hippo, zebra, etc. 8. <i>Cetae</i> : whales, porpoise, dolphins, etc.
<i>II. Aves (Birds)</i>	1. <i>Accipters</i> : vultures, falcons, hawks, etc. 2. <i>Picae</i> : parrots, toucans, crows, etc. 3. <i>Anseres</i> : ducks, swans, geese, pelicans, etc. 4. <i>Grallae</i> : flamingo, cranes, ostrich, etc. 5. <i>Gallinae</i> : gamebirds, peacock, pheasants, etc. 6. <i>Passeres</i> : pigeons, doves, finches, etc.
<i>III. Amphibia</i> <i>(Amphibians)</i>	1. <i>Reptilia</i> : turtles, lizards, frogs, etc. 2. <i>Serpentes</i> : snakes. 3. <i>Nantes</i> : rays, sturgeon, etc.
<i>IV. Pisces (Fish)</i>	1. <i>Apodes</i> : eels, barbels, etc. 2. <i>Jugulares</i> : cod, blennies, gurnards, etc. 3. <i>Thoracici</i> : flatfish, gobies, butterfly fishes, etc. 4. <i>Abdominales</i> : catfish, salmon, trout, carp, etc. 5. <i>Branchiostegi</i> : puffer-fish, trigger-fish, etc.

¹⁰⁸ Wilfrid Blunt, *Linnaeus: The Compleat Naturalist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 8.

¹⁰⁹ William Turton, trans., *A general system of nature: through the three grand kingdoms of animals, vegetables, and minerals, systematically divided into their several classes, orders, genera, species, and varieties by Sir Charles Linné; translated from Gremlin, Fabricius, Willdenow, with a life of Linné and a dictionary of the terms of natural history by William Turton* (London: Lackington, Allen, and Co., 1806), 26.

V. <i>Insecta</i> (Insects)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Coleoptera</i>: beetles, grasshoppers, praying mantis, etc. 2. <i>Hemiptera</i>: bugs, thrips, etc. 3. <i>Lepidoptera</i>: butterflies and moths. 4. <i>Neuroptera</i>: dragonflies, mayflies, scorpionflies, etc. 5. <i>Hymenoptera</i>: ants, bees, wasps, etc. 6. <i>Diptera</i>: flies. 7. <i>Aptera</i>: silverfish, biting lice, fleas, spiders, etc.
VI. <i>Vermes</i> (Worms, Invertebrates)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Intestina</i>: earthworms, leeches, tapeworms, etc. 2. <i>Mollusca</i>: slugs, squids, starfish, octopus, etc. 3. <i>Testacea</i>: shellfish, mussels, oysters, snails, etc. 4. <i>Lithophyta</i>: millepores, corals, etc. 5. <i>Zoophyta</i>: horny corals, sea-pens, etc.¹¹⁰

There are various interesting aspects to note about the Linnaean system. First and foremost, he specifically includes man into his system. It is clear that many scientists and natural historians in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were attempting to understand man's role within the larger world, and particularly in relation to God. Man, as a living being, was naturally included in the system but, as Linnaeus makes clear, he was at the apex of the system, only inferior to God: "MAN always curious and inquisitive, and ever desirous of adding to his useful knowledge; among other sources of amusement and instruction, is naturally led to contemplate and to enquire into the works of nature. He looks with grateful reverence upon those vast families of created beings, which it has pleased the Author of all things to place *subordinate* to his wisdom and power" (emphasis my own).¹¹¹ This same understanding of man's place in the world was expressed within Peale's Museum: Peale's portraits were placed at the top of the wall

¹¹⁰ Wilfrid Blunt, *Linnaeus: The Compleat Naturalist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 248 – 249.

¹¹¹ William Turton, trans., *A general system of nature: through the three grand kingdoms of animals, vegetables, and minerals, systematically divided into their several classes, orders, genera, species, and varieties by Sir Charles Linné; translated from Gremlin, Fabricius, Willdenow, with a life of Linné and a dictionary of the terms of natural history by William Turton* (London: Lackington, Allen, and Co., 1806), 16.

within his Museum space, physically located above all other beings on display. Looking down upon the other exhibits, the portraits represented the hierarchy inherent in the Linnaean system. Furthermore, the portraits and their positioning functioned as a subtle reminder to visitors of the greatness that man could achieve: by looking upwards at the portraits, the visitor was physically subordinate. Not only could visitors witness with reverence the physical world that Peale recreated in his Museum, but they could also study the great examples of man and what they had achieved.

Imbedded within the Linnaean system was an inherent hierarchy. Mammals were superior to birds, amphibians were subordinate to birds. The ordering had nothing to do with relative size: for example, whales, some of the largest animals in the world, are part of the last order within the class of mammals, therefore making horses and camels superior to the whale. Instead, it was based largely upon complexity of system and physical characteristics, such as teeth. This hierarchy of the system was again physically represented within Peale's Museum. This is evident not only in the physical descriptions of the museum and Peale's catalogues, both of which will be explored in more detail, but also when looking at his paintings, such as *the Artist in His Museum* (Figure 21). On the left side of the painting stand several cases of birds on display. Above those cases are two rows of Peale's portraits. As I argued above, and many scholars have argued in the past, the portraits represented homo sapiens in the class of Mammals. Based on Linnaeus's system, the class of Mammals was superior to that of Aves or Birds. Therefore, by placing the portraits above his collection of birds, Peale is reflecting his understanding of the Linnaean system. Even within the cases of birds, one can see how it follows the Linnaean system: at the top of the wall sits the bald eagle, a member of the accipiters

order, while below it are displays of what look like parrots, which were members of the picae order. As this painting makes evident, as do several other sources, Peale adhered to a strict interpretation of the Linnaean system in his Philadelphia Museum.

Despite the popularity of Linnaeus's binomial nomenclature, there were a few scientists who disagreed with the work. Comte de Buffon was one such individual who disagreed with the Linnaean system; he would eventually use the system, particularly Linnaeus's names for plants, but "only to the point of writing them on the *underside* of his own labels."¹¹² Buffon's main critique of the system, and of those who used the system, was that it was merely "clean logic" and that the system did not account for the huge variety that is found between animals, stating "Nature moves through unknown gradations and consequently she cannot be a party to these divisions, because she passes from one species to another species. . ."¹¹³ Buffon was born out of an empiricist tradition: he believed that the use of his senses would provide him with the knowledge needed, but many others found fault with only trusting their senses, which at times were unreliable.¹¹⁴ For Buffon, "the true natural system of classification will be the categorization of animals and plants according to their relative utility to mankind."¹¹⁵ Only such a system would be most relevant to man according to Buffon.

In contrast to Buffon, Peale admired the Linnaean system and made it clear from the beginning of his museum career what system he would be using. In his first advertisement to the general public announcing the opening of his Museum, Peale wrote:

¹¹² Susan M. Pearce, *On Collecting: An investigation into collecting in the European tradition* (London: Routledge, 1995), 124.

¹¹³ Stephen T. Asma, *Stuffed Animals & Pickled Heads: The Culture and Evolution of Natural History Museums* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 120 -121.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 122.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 124.

“Having formed a design to establish a MUSEUM, by a Collection, Arrangement, and Preservation of the Objects of Natural History, and things useful and curious, in June 1785, he began to collect subjects, and to *preserve* and *arrange* them in the Linnaean method.”¹¹⁶ He also emphasized the use of this system in other advertisements, personal letters, and diary entries. In a broadside printed in 1792 entitled “my design in forming this Museum”, Peale outlines the Linnaean system and first describes his categorization of man: using a translation by Richard Pulteney, Peale quotes: “But man if not left by Linnaeus, to contemplate himself merely as such; but he is led to the consideration of what he ought to be, as an *intelligent and moral being*. . .”¹¹⁷ Peale then continues and says “By good and faithful paintings the likeness of man is perhaps with the greatest precision handed down to posterity; and I think myself highly favored in having the opportunity . . . in forming a collection of portraits of many of the persons who have been highly distinguished in their exertions, in the late glorious revolution, and which I am desirous further to enlarge with such characters as you, gentlemen, may deem most proper to be placed in this Museum.”¹¹⁸ This clearly indicates that Peale felt that his portraits would serve as examples of man in the Linnaean order he sought to follow (Appendix 4).

Although Peale believed that portraits could stand as examples of man in the Linnaean system, he actually wanted *real* people to represent that order. In the same broadside, Peale writes, “There are other means to preserve, and hand down to

¹¹⁶ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 9.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, 14.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*.

succeeding generations, the relicts of such great men . . . The mode I mean, is the preserving their bodies from the corruption and being the food of worms.”¹¹⁹ Peale believed that having the real remains of exemplary humans, such as Benjamin Franklin, would serve as the best example for visitors of the Museum to aspire to and that their physical presence would impact visitors the most. This serious request demonstrates that Peale, and other natural historians, believed that humans should be treated like any other species when understanding them scientifically.

The influence of the Linnaean system on Peale is also clear when you explore his catalogues and opinions about natural history. The first part of his catalogue was published in 1796 under the title *A Scientific and Descriptive Catalogue of Peale’s Museum, by C.W. Peale, Member of the American Philosophical Society* (Figure 27). It was published in both English and French, most likely in the hopes of increasing the readership abroad. Although Peale had high hopes that future catalogues would be printed, he only printed the first chapter on quadrupeds.¹²⁰ This is the first difference between Peale’s classification and Linnaeus’s: Peale continued to use the word “quadruped” rather than switch to the use of the word “mammal” that Linnaeus had made by 1758. It is unknown why Peale continued to use this word: perhaps the translation he was using did not contain this switch? Regardless, the difference is a minor one. Below is a table of Peale’s first catalogue entries, which again, only focused on quadrupeds and only list species that he had on display in the Museum:

¹¹⁹ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 15.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, 39.

<i>Order</i>	<i>Species</i>
<i>Primates</i>	Man, Monkey, Lemur, Bat
<i>Brutes</i>	Rhinoceros, Elephant, Sea Horse, Sloth, Ant-Eater, and Armadillo
<i>Wild Beasts</i>	Seal, Dog, Cat, Civet, Ferret, Bear, Opossum, Mole, Shrew, Hedge Hog ¹²¹

The catalogue unfortunately ends at the third order mentioned. It appears that his categories combine several of the orders by Linnaeus. For example, Peale's category "wild beasts" is one that is not created by Linnaeus. The animals listed under this order by Peale are from both the *ferae* and *bestiae* orders of the Linnaean system. Perhaps Peale combined them within the catalogue to save on printed pages or to create an abbreviated version for the reader. More likely, is that Peale was *physically* exhibiting these species together within his Museum. The catalogue was meant to be taken around with the visitor to help guide them through the Museum: "It has occurred to him [Peale] that this [catalogue] would not only facilitate an acquaintance with the subjects of Natural History in his repository, by putting into the hands of the visitor an accurate description of the object of his attention".¹²² But by October of 1803, the Peale family (mostly Peale's daughter Sophonisba) had completed the creation of "the Catalogue in the frames" or in other words, the labels for each item.¹²³ The creation of labels rendered a catalogue useless.

By 1804, Peale had begun printing *A Guide to the Philadelphia Museum*, a visitor's companion throughout the Museum (Figure 28). Different from a catalogue, the

¹²¹ C.W. Peale, *A Scientific and Descriptive Catalogue of Peale's Museum* (Philadelphia: Smith, 1796), iii – 44.

¹²² Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 128.

¹²³ *Ibid*, 608.

Guide gave a general description of each room with directions of where to locate certain areas of the Museum, rather than describe each acquisition of the Museum like the catalogue did. Since the catalogue accurately described the artifacts of the museum and was meant to guide the visitor around, it would make sense that an earlier organization of Peale's Museum, particularly when located in the APS Hall, displayed all the "wild beasts" together. Most likely, they were grouped together due to a lack of space for Peale's ever-expanding collection. Not only does this source provide a window into understanding Peale's organization, as based on the Linnaean system, but it also helps historians understand the physical organization of the Peale Museum. Both resources will be used extensively throughout the next section of this chapter.

The Organizational Logic of Peale's Museum

Peale's use of the Linnaean system allowed him to educate his audience in an orderly manner. The structure of Peale's Museum changed over time and was largely influenced by the spaces that he occupied; a lack of space would always affect how Peale displayed his Museum. Initially, Peale's Museum was described as being "romantic" in nature. During the same visit by Reverend Cutler, he described Peale's Museum at Third and Lombard in the following way: "constructed in a very singular manner . . . it is very long but not very wide, has no windows, nor floor over it, but it is open up to the roof, which is two or three stories, and from above the light is admitted in greater or less quantities at pleasure."¹²⁴ He noted that Portraits and paintings covered the walls, all of which Cutler admired for their accuracy, but at the end of the gallery sat Peale's "natural

¹²⁴ William Parker Cutler and Julia Perkins Cutler, *Life, Journals, and Correspondence of Rev. Manasseh Cutler, Parker Cutler and Julia Perkins Cutler* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co, 1888), 260.

curiosities arranged in a most *romantic* and *amusing* manner” (emphasis my own).¹²⁵

Peale had constructed an exhibit that was made to emulate a landscape that included vegetation and a pond. Different ores and minerals were placed on display, as were different shells, waterfowl, fish, amphibians, mammals, and various other creatures. What made it most impressive to Reverend Cutler was that all of the animals were *real*:

“admirably preserved . . . Mr. Peale’s animals reminded me of *Noah’s Ark*, into which was received every kind of beast and creeping thing in which there was life.”¹²⁶ Again, we see the emphasis on amusement in this recollection, but we also learn that Peale was exhibiting a less structured system of organization when he first opened the Museum. The space in which he opened his museum was built in a “singular” manner: it was clearly originally constructed for the display of art and paintings, not for that of natural history artifacts.

An unknown person gave another description of Peale’s Museum on Third and Lombard to their friend in Maryland in September of 1793, just six years after Reverend Cutler visited the space. They described the museum room as being “50 feet long and 20 high”: Cutler’s observation of the space being long, tall, and narrow seems to fit within this unknown visitor’s description.¹²⁷ At the entrance sat an American Buffalo and in other parts of the room “a vast variety of monsters of the earth and main, and fowls of the air are seen, in perfect preservation and in their natural shape and order . . . Over them are

¹²⁵ William Parker Cutler and Julia Perkins Cutler, *Life, Journals, and Correspondence of Rev. Manasseh Cutler, Parker Cutler and Julia Perkins Cutler* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co, 1888), 261.

¹²⁶ Ibid, 261- 262.

¹²⁷ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 68.

suspended 50 portraits, being complete likenesses of American and French patriots, Col. Smith, Capt. Barney, and many others of these are from Maryland.”¹²⁸ The description of the location of his portraits as given by the unknown visitor in 1793 is important because it demonstrates that, by the 1790s, Peale had begun to display his portraits differently: rather than displaying them separately from the rest of his natural history exhibits as Cutler described, Peale incorporated them into his physical manifestation of the “chain of being”.

The unknown visitor continues their description of their time in the Museum: “At the further extremity of this room are to be seen a great collection of the bones, jaws, and grinders of the incognitum, or non-descript animal . . . I was then conducted to the grotto, which resembles a place cut out of the solid rock . . . From this room, I was conducted to enter an apartment where rattle, black, and spotted snakes are confined in cases . . . eagles, owls, baboons, monkeys, a six footed cow, &c. &c. were seen in the yard and stable.”¹²⁹ By 1793, Peale had done away with his landscape and pond display, a display that as Cutler put it, *romantically*, not *realistically*, showed the creatures of the world. Furthermore, not only does this description demonstrate that Peale’s collection of live and dead animals had grown, but that his physical space had grown as well. The visitor describes entering two additional rooms, the grotto and room with the snakes that Cutler did not mention. Seeing as Peale had reorganized his Museum between Cutler’s visit and the unknown visitor’s, it is possible that the rooms Cutler saw were the same as those of the unknown visitor, but merely with different purposes. For example, the room with

¹²⁸ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 68.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, 68 – 69.

Peale's wax figure may have been turned into the grotto room of the 1793 visit. Physical evidence would support this claim: in 1785, Peale had purchased an adjoining lot on Third Street with a small stable in order to expand his collection.¹³⁰ Since this purchase took place just two years before Cutler's visit, it would have been there for him to see during his visit. It is also entirely likely that Cutler may have omitted certain details from his recollection of the Museum, therefore leading to the differences in the two descriptions. These accounts make it clear that Peale began to change his museum space conceptually and, therefore, physically by the 1790s.

One of the clear conceptual changes between these years is that Peale moved from having a romantically framed understanding of the physical world to that of a more scientific and Enlightened understanding. Cutler believed the Museum space to be romantic and amusing, comparing it to Noah's Ark, whereas the unknown visitor's description indicates that Peale's Museum was more clearly categorized and scientific, a development that would continue into the nineteenth century. David R. Brigham discusses this point in his book *Public Culture in the Early Republic: Peale's Museum and Its Audience*. Comparing Peale's painting *Noah and His Ark*, executed by Peale in 1819, to his painting of the *Long Room* in 1822, Brigham writes, "Rather than the Christian understanding of the collections that the painting *Noah and His Ark* offers, the *Long Room* presents the museum as a purely secular institution." (Figure 29 & 30)¹³¹ Although Peale always made sure to include the Christian faith within his Museum, a

¹³⁰ Charles Coleman Sellers, *Mr. Peale's Museum: Charles Willson Peale and the First Poplar Museum of Natural Science and Art* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1908), 22.

¹³¹ David R. Brigham, *Public Culture in the Early Republic: Peale's Museum and Its Audience* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 45.

point that will be discussed in chapter four, the Museum began to physically represent a scientific institution that no longer physically evoked ties to Noah and his Ark of animals. Although *The Long Room* is a depiction of the Museum when it was located in Independence Hall, it represents the culmination of Peale's organizational logic, which clearly had established its roots by the 1793 visit.

In 1794, Peale moved the Museum from his house at Third and Lombard, and moved into the American Philosophical Society Hall (APS Hall). Unfortunately, there are no descriptions of the Museum when it solely occupied this space, but Peale's letters make it clear that he still felt that the space was too small for his Museum. One of the areas that the APS Hall did provide for was the containment of living animals, a space that was discussed in the second chapter. In 1794, Peale appealed to the legislature to allow him to construct a fence and containment area for the live animals Peale owned. Permission was granted to Peale thus changing the landscape of the "State House Garden."¹³² Peale constructed "a neat palisade fence, the breadth of the Philosophical Hall, and extending from the southwest end of it about half a square" and placed all his living animals within the fenced area.¹³³ This became one of the first features people saw when visiting the Museum during the years of 1794 to 1827 when the Museum was located within the State House Square (Figure 5).

In 1802, Peale moved into the State House. From 1802 to 1811, the Museum occupied both Independence Hall and the APS Hall. It was not until 1811 that Peale moved the entire Museum into the State House. There are several descriptions of Peale's

¹³² Charles Coleman Sellers, *Mr. Peale's Museum: Charles Willson Peale and the First Poplar Museum of Natural Science and Art* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1908), 77.

¹³³ *Ibid*, 341 – 342.

Museum during this time period. As early as 1800, Peale began to think about how he would arrange his Museum if it were in the State House. In that same letter to William Findley mentioned above, Peale not only includes a description of the building, but also provides a drawing (Figure 31). He writes:

The front of that building up stairs was formerly in one long room & lighted by windows to the north. the divisions of Partitions according to this small viz. plan – No. 1 the long room for the disposal of Animals in classical arrangement against the Partition walls. and tables a a to exhibit Insects minerals & fossils &c and Rooms No. 2 & 3 to hold works of Art Viz. Library; Utensels Dresses &c &c. and the Room where the assembly sat below for the purpose of delivering Lectures - . . . I shall only say, a room even of the length of the long room furnished with subjects of Natural History which I already possess arranged in systematical order, would afford a most pleasing sight & delight a Philosophic mind. The corners on the ground No. 4 & 5 with cimi-circular pailings, to contain such living Animals as from time to time will come & must be maintained at least short Periods, so as to Prepare them for the Museum.¹³⁴

What is most interesting about this entry is that Peale's description of how he would use the State House matches what he described as an ideal form of his museum to Findley.

The State House would provide a place for Peale to hold all his specimens in order, display his portraits and artwork, host a series of lectures, and house all his library books. Furthermore, the State House could provide space for him to keep his live animals, a point that was analyzed in detail above. Although this was Peale's first description of how he would use the space, only certain aspects of his description correspond with other accounts given of the Museum.

In a letter to Rembrandt Peale's wife Eleanor in 1802, Peale describes the progress he had made with the Museum. He primarily discusses the creation of "frames" for all the quadrupeds and birds, which names the species and gives its order, genus, and

¹³⁴ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 279.

species in Latin, English, and French (it was this addition that rendered the use of the catalogue pointless).¹³⁵ Besides noting the creation of labels for the museum, which “gives a neatness nay elegance to the whole appearance”, Peale also mentions the purchase of a few glass chandeliers, the potential future purchase of an organ, and taking down the partition between the Long Room and other rooms and replacing it with additional glass cases to display his wax figures.¹³⁶ Peale would eventually purchase an organ for his Museum and place it in a loft in the Long Room (Figure 32). Peale’s interest in an organ indicates his growing musical interests and the growing musical interests of Americans during this time period. Peale was a member of the musical society called the *Amateur Society*: although the organization did not last long, members would come to the Museum to play on Peale’s organ in the Long Room.¹³⁷ Members were also given free access to the Museum, during open hours, to continue using the organ. The inclusion of music into the overall organization of the museum is interesting: not only does it indicate that Peale felt that music was a form of art, and therefore he placed it within the same room as his portraits, but it also changed the experience of the visitor. Museum guests were able to see new things as well as *hear* new things, adding to their overall sensory experience of the museum.

One of the most important resources when trying to understand the overall organization of Peale’s Museum during this time period is his *Guide to the Philadelphia*

¹³⁵ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 450.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 450 - 452.

¹³⁷ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 5, The Autobiography of Charles Willson Peale* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 361.

Museum, which he began publishing in 1804. The guide begins in the lobby, taking the visitor past “a large ELECTRICAL APPARATUS”; this term was used to describe a large variety of objects that produced various forms of electricity and it is not entirely clear which apparatus Peale owned and displayed.¹³⁸ From there, the visitor is guided into the Quadruped Room. Described as 40 feet long and containing more than 190 quadrupeds, the larger specimens are described as being displayed “on pedestals behind wire-netting” while the smaller ones are contained in glass cases on the opposite side of the wall. After the Quadruped Room, museum patrons move into the Long Room: containing all of Peale’s birds, his most extensive collection, they were displayed in “glass cases, the insides of which are painted to represent appropriate scenery; Mountains, Plains, or Waters.” The cases line the entirety of the room, about 100 feet, and stand roughly 12 feet from the ground. Above each of these cases hung Peale’s many portraits.¹³⁹

On the west end of the Long Room, Peale placed his insect collection in cases between the windows (Figure 33). Any species, which were too small to be seen with the naked eye, were placed under a microscope for patrons to examine them better. On the east end of the room, Peale displayed his mineral and fossil collection, arranged according to Richard Kirwan (1733 – 1812). In the center of the Long Room, between the windows facing Chestnut Street, was Peale’s organ “for the use of such Visitors as are

¹³⁸ Michael Brian Schiffer. *Draw the Lightning Down: Benjamin Franklin and Electrical Technology in the Age of Enlightenment*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 12.

¹³⁹ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 761 – 762.

acquainted with Musick.”¹⁴⁰ In another part of the room, visitors could have their profiles taken by Moses, Peale’s former slave, and the physiognotrace. From the Long Room, visitors were guided to the Marine Room. In the center of the room sat the Chama, an enormous shell of 185 lbs. At each end of the room, behind railings, Peale displayed his collection of marine wildlife. In four cases between the windows of the room, projecting six feet out from the wall, Peale displayed the classification of his shells and corals.¹⁴¹

After exploring all of the Museum in the State House, the visitor was invited to continue to learn about natural history in Philosophical Hall. It was there that Peale had his mammoth skeleton on display. Discovered in 1801, Peale’s effort and research on the mammoth was of national importance and curiosity and has been covered in detail within other scholarly works (Figure 34). In order to assist the visitor in their understanding of the mammoth’s size, Peale placed “various small skeletons such as the Monkey, Greyhound, Parrot, Ibis, ground hog, &c. and that of an ordinary Mouse, as an object of contrast with that of the Mammoth.”¹⁴² In front of the windows of this room were cases that contained 1400 casts from antique gems and a variety of other antique items. Also within the room was Peale’s collection of foreign and domestic machinery (such as a Chinese plow), “Indian curiosities”(such as bows and arrows), more paintings, and in

¹⁴⁰ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 763.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 764.

cases, his wax figures. In another part of Philosophical Hall, Peale had an Antique Room where visitors could see his casts of antique sculpture.¹⁴³

The descriptions of the Museum from the *Guide* are one of the most accurate sources. Seeing as they helped visitors move around and interpret Peale's Museum, they would have to accurately describe where certain items were located. Furthermore, it was written by Peale himself and is not subject to the memory of a visitor as a visitor's account and description would be. Interestingly, the way that Peale wrote the *Guide* is similar to the Linnaean system, but in some senses it is also different. For example, Peale has the visitor walk through the Quadruped Room first, the highest class of the Linnaean system. Next the visitor is meant to walk through the Bird Room, the second class in the system and then next through the Marine Room, which contained members of the Amphibian and Fish classes. But some discrepancies in the order remain: for example, why are the portraits on display in the Long Room, which is primarily devoted to birds, and not in the Quadruped Room? As members of the Quadruped class, it would make more sense for them to be displayed there. Furthermore, insects, members of one of the lowest classes in the system, are displayed in the Long Room as well, alongside the birds. The answer, I would argue, for this seeming lack of adherence to the Linnaean system is a *lack of space*. Peale simply did not have enough room to follow the Linnaean system in its exact order. The Long Room, being the biggest room in the State House, made the most sense logistically for housing Peale's extensive collection of portraits. The Quadruped Room, although the rightful place for the portraits, simply did not have

¹⁴³ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 765 – 766.

enough wall space to accommodate them, particularly seeing as the room had to display large mammals like the buffalo. As with any museum space today, practical matters took precedent over other factors.

By December of 1811, the Museum had moved completely into the State House and no longer occupied Philosophical Hall. According to Charles Coleman Sellers, “The Marine Room became the Mammoth Room, with other fossils and the anthropology from the Hall, and a new Marine Room of sorts was created in the tower, up a narrow flight of stairs from the lobby.”¹⁴⁴ The reorganization of Peale’s Museum is reflected on a floor plan of the Museum found within Sellers book and often cited by other scholars as an understanding of Peale’s organizational logic (Figure 23). David R. Brigham also uses this plan within his own work (Figure 35). He notes underneath the plan “Floor plan of Peale’s Museum, ca. 1820, based on the recollections of George Escol Sellers.”¹⁴⁵ In my research, I was unable to find this recollection: was it an oral recollection or a written one? How did Charles Coleman Sellers obtain such a resource? Understanding the origins of this plan would be beneficial, because it could be used to compare with the drawn plan, but not having this information does not impede an analysis of the plan in this thesis.

The plan, which will be referred to as the Sellers’s Plan for the remainder of this chapter, starts on the Ground Floor. At the entrance on the South side of the State House, Peale had his ticket office and preserving room. The ground floor also had the stairs that

¹⁴⁴ Charles Coleman Sellers, *Mr. Peale’s Museum: Charles Willson Peale and the First Poplar Museum of Natural Science and Art* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1908), 216.

¹⁴⁵ David R. Brigham, *Public Culture in the Early Republic: Peale’s Museum and Its Audience* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 108.

led up to the Marine Room, newly located within the tower of the State House. The main stairway would take you up to the main rooms of the Museum. The first room one entered after climbing the stairs was the Hall Lecture Room: this included raised seats, seats overtop of the doorway to the Quadruped Room, an experimental table, and a laboratory. After seeing the Lecture Hall, the visitor could walk through the Quadruped Room, located on the western side of the State House. It was in here that Peale had his larger animals on display. From there, the visitor would walk through the doorway and enter the Long Room on the western side. All along the main wall stood Peale's cases of birds with his portraits hanging overtop of them. According to the plan, the cases of minerals and fossils were located on the northwestern end of the Long Room and the insects were located on the northeastern side. The organ stood in the middle, set into a loft with a flight of stairs. Profiles could be taken in the back corner on the western side of the Long Room. On the eastern side of the Long Room, was the doorway to enter the Mammoth Room. Inside the room, Peale also had on display his Lewis and Clark Exhibit and his aboriginal costume collection.

According to the Sellers's plan, you would have to move back through the rooms you came from already in order to leave the Museum. You would also have to go back downstairs to get into the Marine Room or you would have to go to the Marine Room first. The way in which access was controlled in the Museum would then control how you experienced it. Visitors were guided to enter the Quadruped Room first, the first class in the Linnaean system, and then see the second class, the Birds. There is no evidence that the portraits of Peale's Museum ever moved from their space above the cases of birds in the Long Room. Again, this is a reminder of the issue of space. Peale was not able to

place the Marine Room within a specific order of observation because of a want of space. Instead, the Marine Room was located upstairs, physically separated from the rest of the collection.

When comparing the Sellers's plan to Peale's *Guide* of the Museum from 1806, most of the descriptions are the same. Although the *Guide* describes the Museum roughly fourteen years before the description in the Sellers's plan, a majority of the descriptions are unchanged. The Quadruped Room contained the same animals, with a few additions, but the electric machine, which had been located in the Lobby in 1806 had been moved into the Quadruped Room. The Long Room contains his birds as well as his portraits. The main difference between 1806 and 1820 was the location of the minerals and insects. In 1806 Peale writes, "between the windows at the west end of the room, is a classification of 4000 insects in gilt frames. . . Projecting between the windows at the east end of the room, are Glass Cases containing Minerals and Fossils."¹⁴⁶ The 1820 Sellers's plan depicts the minerals at the west end of the Long Room and the Insects at the east end. It is entirely possible that the location of these cases moved during the time in between 1806 to 1820, but Peale's watercolor painting of the Long Room in 1822 is further proof that the minerals were on the east side of the Long Room. In the far right side of the watercolor appear to be cases of minerals and fossils, *not* insects. Due to the fact that the painting was made in 1822, a date that is close to the date of the plan, this would indicate that the location of the minerals and insects was incorrect on the Sellers's plan. It is entirely possible that the location of the minerals and insects switched to different ends of the room and back again between 1806 and 1822, but more than likely, George Escol

¹⁴⁶ C.W. Peale, *Guide to the Philadelphia Museum*. American Philosophical Society, 1806.

Sellers forgot which end of the room contained what when he recalled what his grandfather's museum looked like inside.

A plan of the State House from 1824 further proves the new organization of Peale's Museum (Figure 36). Although it is much less detailed than the Seller's plan, the 1824 plan demonstrates that the Lecture Room was in the center and that the Quadruped Room and Mammoth Room were located on either side. The Long Room had two entrances, one from the Mammoth Room and one from the Quadruped Room, as specified on the Sellers's plan. The 1824 plan also notes that there were stairs to the Marine Room, indicating that it was up in the tower. Surrounding the main rooms of the Museum were several rooms and spaces dedicated to the local politics of Philadelphia, demonstrating the diminishing importance of Peale's Museum.

These descriptions make it evident that Peale had a particular programmatic manner in which he desired his audience members to engage with and use while walking around his Museum. He sought to educate them overtly and subliminally by using an organizational logic that was structured on the Linnaean system. Visitors to his Museum would learn about the system, the chain of being, and their place within that chain by walking around the Museum and by viewing the various exhibitions. Peale's organizational system was meant to govern the Museum, in both how it was physically displayed and in what information visitors received. Although Peale certainly wanted his audience members to be entertained while learning, he put serious thought into how he presented his exhibits on natural history in order for them to impact the education of his audience. While it is not completely known whether Peale was the first to use this Linnaean system in America, his use of the system expressed his adherence and belief in

the Enlightened ideals that so many other Americans and Europeans during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries lived their lives by. Peale used his Museum, and its organizational logic, as a means through which to spread those ideals to a larger public.

Racial Hierarchies of the System

As noted above, the Linnaean system had an inherent hierarchy embedded within the system. Implanted within the Linnaean understanding of the world was also a functioning racial hierarchy. Peale physically represented the hierarchy of the material world in his Museum, and he also expressed his understanding of a racial hierarchy. Not only would the Museum's visitors walk away with a broader understanding of the chain of being and natural world around them, but they would also leave the Philadelphia Museum understanding their place in that chain of being *in relation to* other human beings. Peale's portraits and wax figures were both mediums through which Peale expressed the racial hierarchy of the world in the early nineteenth century.

Peale's audience was predominately white. Besides the presence of Moses, Peale's slave until 1802, there are few accounts of an African American presence in the Museum. Furthermore, there exists only one account of a group of Native American visitors; disappointingly, the account is written about by Charles Willson Peale himself, and not by the visitors. It is important to note the scarcity, at least the scarcity in the written record, of visitation by people of different races. Perhaps Peale's Museum was predominately viewed as a white space by people of non-white backgrounds? Would an African American or Native American have felt comfortable visiting the Museum? Like many other natural historians at the time, Peale was interested in different races and skin conditions. The exhibits in Peale's Museum serve as evidence of the larger culture of

exclusion that existed at this time period. This culture supposed that the traits of virtue and refinement belonged to white members of society and therefore left those of other races on the margins.

Out of Peale's several portraits, there were only a few that were of African or Native Americans or women. According to his catalogue of 1795, Peale had eighty-seven paintings within his collection.¹⁴⁷ A majority of those paintings were portraits of public officials and leaders within the American Revolution. By 1813, Peale had increased his collection of portraits by over a hundred: he now recorded, within his catalogue, that he owned two hundred and one paintings.¹⁴⁸ Again a majority of those portraits were American leaders and politicians, but Peale also included scientists, philosophers, military leaders, and men of religion. Within his collection, Peale also had a few landscape paintings and history paintings, such as his *Exhuming the Mastodon*, but his primary collection centered on portraiture (Figure 34). Only three women were listed in his collection of portraits within those two catalogues: one woman was Martha Washington, painted no doubt for her association with General Washington and the fact that she served as First Lady. It appears that one of the only portraits of a Native American was Joseph Brant, otherwise known as Thayendanegea, who Peale painted in 1797 (Figure 37). Peale also painted Yarrow Mamout in 1819, a free black man who had lived his life as a slave and was famous for living until he was well over a hundred years

¹⁴⁷ C.W. Peale, *An Historical Catalogue of Peale's Collection of Paintings*. Philadelphia: Folwell, 1795.

¹⁴⁸ C.W. Peale, "Historical Catalogue of the Paintings in the Philadelphia Museum, Consisting Chiefly of Portraits of Revolutionary Patriots and other Distinguished Characters." American Philosophical Society, 1813.

old (Figure 38).¹⁴⁹ Peale's portraits focused upon the more elite members of society, the one's that Peale's visitors could look up to, both physically and metaphorically.

As noted above, Peale used his portraits to represent man within the Linnaean system. The manner in which he displayed these portraits was important. The literal depictions of the person within the portrait were not the only aspect of the painting that cultivated a sense of respect for the nation: the manner in which these portraits were displayed was also important. The visitor had to physically look up at a person that was of a higher status both literally and figuratively because of their location in the Museum. The visitor was placed within an interaction that underscored the importance of the man in the portrait and the importance of paying respect to that man who was of a higher station than them: just as when a person visits church, they reverently look upwards at the preacher in the pulpit. In this case, the visitor would look reverently upwards at those who helped create their nation.

Unlike those that Peale exhibited for their national spirit and characteristics that were worthy of emulation, Peale's portraits of other races were depicted for their differences. Besides the two portraits noted above, Peale also painted a man named James who had a rare skin condition called vitiligo. Unfortunately the painting's location is unknown, but as David R. Brigham notes in his work, other portraits of this condition existed, indicating an interest in this skin condition. One such painting is the *Portrait of Mary Sabina* in which a little slave girl with vitiligo is depicted (Figure 39). Peale published a description of James within the *General Advertiser* in 1791 stating that after his skin changed from black to white, "his skin is of a clear wholesome white, fair, and

¹⁴⁹ David R. Brigham, *Public Culture in the Early Republic: Peale's Museum and Its Audience* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 137.

what would be called a better skin than any of the number of white people who were present at different times when I saw him.”¹⁵⁰ Such a description indicates the anxiety and curiosity that surrounded skin conditions, including albinism. Peale demonstrated his anxiety over a man whose skin changed from black to a “better skin” color of white; such a condition hid and confused others from knowing James’s “true” race. It is entirely possible that Peale exhibited this portrait of James in his Museum, but it is not certainly known, as “James” seems to be missing from his catalogue listings. A portrait of an albino woman, Miss Harvey, was added to the Museum in 1818, again demonstrating the pervasiveness of the curiosity over skin and racial transformations.¹⁵¹ The portraits of James, Miss Harvey, Yarrow Mamout, and Joseph Brant were added to the Museum not to demonstrate their character in the same way as Peale’s other portraits but instead were there to serve as examples of those on the borders of civilization. Their presence reaffirmed Peale’s understanding, and therefore his exhibited understanding, of a racial and societal hierarchy.

Peale also exhibited this racial hierarchy in his wax figures. As noted in the second chapter, the majority of Peale’s wax figures, as recorded in his 1804 *Guide to the Museum*, were of non-white members of society. What is important to understand is that these people were not painted, they were made in wax. Wax was a medium used to amuse viewers, not to create images for posterity. Peale’s choice in medium goes far past his desire to amuse his viewer; it actually expresses his understanding of racial hierarchies. Only those members of society who were known for their unique characteristics, such as

¹⁵⁰ C.W. Peale, “Account of a person born a Negro, or a dark Mulattoe, who afterwards became white.” *General Advertiser* (Philadelphia, PA), November 1st, 1791, 3.

¹⁵¹ David R. Brigham, *Public Culture in the Early Republic: Peale’s Museum and Its Audience* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 134.

Yarrow who lived to be over a hundred years old or James who had his skin condition, or those known for their virtuous personalities, such as Benjamin Franklin or George Washington, were meant to be painted. People “types” were largely represented in wax.

Eventually, Peale added a wax figure of Captain Meriwether Lewis to this collection. In a letter of 1808 to Thomas Jefferson, a man who would have been well acquainted with Lewis, Peale wrote a description of the wax model:

A few weeks past I compleated a Wax figure of Captn Lewis & placed it in the Museum, my object of this work is to give a lesson to the Indians who may visit the Museum, and also to shew my sentiments respecting Wars. The Figure being dressed in an Indian Dress presented to Captn Lewis by Comeahwait Chief of Shoshone Nation, who was suspitious that Captn Lewis ment to lead him into an ambuscade with his Enemies. The figure has its right hand on its breast & the left holds the *Calmut* which was given me by Captn Lewis.¹⁵²

He continues in the letter to note that next to the model, Peale wrote a description of “the Story” and Lewis’s outfit, which was made of “140 Ermine Skins.”¹⁵³ The story that Peale was referring to was his encounter with the Shoshone chief Cameahwait, who Lewis met with in 1805. As a token of Cameahwait’s friendship, Lewis was presented with the ermine cloak, called a tippet, which Peale described as part of Lewis’s outfit; a depiction of the tippet can be seen in a portrait of Lewis by C.B.J. F  vret de Saint-M  min (Figure 40). Unfortunately, none of these wax figures survive today.¹⁵⁴

Captain Lewis would have been the only white man, if we assume that the Peale wax figure was not included in this collection, on display with the other wax figures. The

¹⁵² Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 1056.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Wendy Bellion, “Patience Wright’s Transatlantic Bodies,” in *Shaping the Body Politic: Art and Political Formation in Early America*, ed. Maurie D. McNinnis and Louis P. Nelson (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 23.

rest, as noted in chapter two, represented minorities in America. In total, they all represent “otherness”: they all display the exotic nature, dress, and customs of these various people. The Lewis wax figure did not represent Lewis “the man”, but rather the stories of his journey west, his meetings with Native American tribes, and his exploration of new American territory were on display. The exhibition of clothing stressed the foreignness of these wax figures and the places they represented: by dressing them within their own clothes, and even exhibiting clothing on its own within the cabinet, Peale was emphasizing the perceived exoticization of those people. Captain Lewis was dressed in an ermine tippet, not his usual attire. Such a display of clothing and foreign outfits further emphasized the visual difference between the visitors of Peale’s Museum and those he had on display: besides seeing that they were distinctive because of their skin tone, visitors also noted the wax figures’ singularity as marked by the clothing.

But it was not only the medium of these figures or what they were wearing that demonstrated their differentness: it was also in *how* they were displayed. The wax figures were further divided from the viewer by being placed in glass cases: most likely this was done to protect the figures from being touched and handled by the visitor, but the significance of being closed off from the audience further emphasized their distinctiveness. The wax figures were also placed at eye level with the viewer: they were not placed above the visitor like the portraits. The purpose of the wax figure was not to instill nationalistic duty and reverence within the viewer; they were instead meant to teach the viewer their place within America’s social and racial hierarchy.

Linnaeus expressed such a social hierarchy within his system, a system that Peale clearly adhered to strictly within the creation of his Museum. Linnaeus notes the

following groups within the primate order: 1. Homo, 2. Wild Men, 3. American, 4. European, 5. Asiatic, 6. African.¹⁵⁵ His descriptions of each group demonstrate his feelings towards each race. He describes an European as “gentle, acute, inventive” but describes an Asian as “severe, haughty, covetous” and an African as “crafty, indolent, negligent.”¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, he believed Europeans to be “Governed by laws” and Africans as “Governed by caprice.”¹⁵⁷ In Peale’s study of Linnaeus, he would have been exposed to this expression of racial hierarchy. His display of wax figures further underscores his belief in this system.

Peale did not use wax figures only to teach these lessons. He also displayed bones, skin, and a few portraits to teach the distinctions between races. In his 1796 Catalogue, Peale notes the display of the “Skeletons of an Indian man and woman of the Wabath Nation” and the “Skin of the thigh, and part of the leg, of an Indian.”¹⁵⁸ Peale did not shy away from the idea of exhibiting body parts: as noted above, he wanted to exhibit the bodies of great Americans within the Museum so as to teach his visitors about their lives and instill a sense of nationalism within his audience.¹⁵⁹ It seems that Peale only intended on preserving the bodies of great American men, particularly white men, in this

¹⁵⁵ William Turton, trans., *A general system of nature: through the three grand kingdoms of animals, vegetables, and minerals, systematically divided into their several classes, orders, genera, species, and varieties by Sir Charles Linné; translated from Gremlin, Fabricius, Willdenow, with a life of Linné and a dictionary of the terms of natural history by William Turton* (London: Lackington, Allen, and Co., 1806), 28.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ C.W. Peale, *A Scientific and Descriptive Catalogue of Peale’s Museum* (Philadelphia: Smith, 1796), 3.

¹⁵⁹ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 14 – 15.

manner, but this idea never came to fruition. Despite the fact that this did not occur, it indicates that Peale felt that the presence of real bodies in the Museum would only benefit it, not detract from its purpose. Bones, portraits, and wax figures were instead the mediums he had to utilize, but instead of exhibiting the virtues of the person, as he had intended a real body would, these exhibits demonstrated the *differences* from white bodies.

Peale's visitors would therefore have learned more about their own identities and stations in society after interacting with the wax figures and portraits. If you were a white visitor, particularly a man, the exhibit would have reaffirmed your belief of superiority over other races. The connection of the wax figures to that of amusement would have taught white visitors that those races were of less importance than those exhibited in the portraits placed above in the Long Gallery. If you were a Native American visitor, you would have seen your customs, traditions, and bones put on display in an exotic manner, to teach others of your differentness. If you were an African American visitor, you would have seen a wax figure and, potentially, two portraits of African American men, one on display because he lived to be a hundred and thirty four, the other because of their rare skin condition. In all, Peale's Museum reaffirmed and explored the racial topics and hierarchies of the day: such exhibits taught his audience about their place in the chain of being in relation to other people within that chain. Despite the shared commonality of being homo sapiens, Peale's exhibits demonstrated that there were still racial hierarchies within that category. It was in this way that Peale's visitors explored their racially "scientific" understanding of the world.

Peale's Museum served as both a space of amusement and scientific education. He sought to entertain his audience while he was teaching them about the natural world around them. In order to do this, Peale utilized the organization and structure of his Museum to convey a Linnaean understanding of the world. He also used various exhibits, such as portraits and wax figures, in order to teach his visitors about the racial hierarchy that was inherently a part of the Linnaean system and an eighteenth and nineteenth century conception of the world. His scientific, and therefore seemingly more credible, outlook and exploration of the natural world contributed significantly to the education of several Americans who visited his Museum. Functioning as a fascinating combination of art and science, amusement and learning, the Philadelphia Museum not only contributed to the amusement and education of the visitor; it also sought to provide them a sense of nationalism and understanding of their American identity, a topic for the next and final chapter.

Chapter Four: Peale's Museum as a Space for the Formation of American Citizenship

In 1796, two groups of Native American chiefs visited Peale's Museum. Enemies to each other, they did not know that the other group was visiting. Peale recorded the meeting and highlighted it in one of his lectures stating: "they regarded each other with considerable emotion, which in some degree subsided when, by their interpreters, they were informed, that each party, . . . , had come merely to view the Museum. . . Now, for the first time, finding themselves in peace, surrounded by a scene calculated to inspire the most perfect harmony, the first suggestion was, - that as men of the same species they were not enemies of nature; but ought forever to bury the hatchet of war."¹⁶⁰ Peale then claimed that after leaving the Museum, the tribes created a treaty of peace.¹⁶¹

While the telling of this story by Peale certainly highlights his belief in the uniting power of the natural world and the harmony of his own Museum, it also reveals a different interpretation of the scene. Peale stated that his Museum allowed for both parties to leave their uncivilized fighting behind and, more importantly, become *part of civilized America* together. After leaving their political differences aside, these two groups joined forces and created a treaty and began acting in what Peale perceived to be a civilized manner. Peale believed that the space of the Museum brought these warring groups together, provided them with an education, and allowed for them to become one unit of people, part of the collective civilization of America.

¹⁶⁰ C.W. Peale, *Discourse, Introductory to a Course of Lectures on the Science of Nature with Original Music Composed for, and Sung on, the Occasion* (Philadelphia: Poulson, 1800), 39 – 40.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*, 40.

Peale's belief in the power of his Museum to cultivate a national identity was not limited to Native Americans: he believed that all who entered the Museum would learn more about their place in the world as an American citizen. This final chapter aims to explore how Peale's Museum was a uniquely American space and how it functioned as a catalyst for the development of American citizenship. The Philadelphia Museum was a place where visitors could learn how to become refined, moral, and inventive citizens, all traits that were crucial to the American spirit. To be an American citizen, particularly an American citizen of the upper echelon of society, meant that you were refined, pious, and inventive by nature. Peale's Museum became a space in which a larger public could gain a greater understanding of those traits and what made them uniquely American.

Refinement

In my research, it became increasingly clear that the Museum was associated with the refinement of Philadelphia. In one guidebook, the author noted that "The doors of the Museum have been ever closed against the profligate and the indecent; it has been preserved, with scrupulous fidelity, as a place where the virtuous and refined in society could meet, to enjoy such pleasures as can be tasted by the virtuous and refined alone."¹⁶² In a newspaper article of 1807, the author noted that the Museum was "ornamented with a most numerous assemblage of Ladies and Gentlemen . . . And what added greatly to his enjoyment, was to observe that the most numerous of the elegance in the habits and garbs of a society, whose presence more than anything else sanctified the rational amusements

¹⁶² David R. Brigham, *Public Culture in the Early Republic: Peale's Museum and Its Audience* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 62.

of the museum, which has become a fashionable resort. . .”¹⁶³ As both of these accounts demonstrate, Peale’s Museum had become a space of the refined in Philadelphia.

Peale himself even emphasized the refinement of his Museum when he published in the *Aurora. General Advertiser* an encounter he had with a woman at his Museum entrance. While hosting an event in which all ticket proceeds would go to Savannah, which had just suffered a terrible fire, “A middle aged woman, with modest address, approached the *Museum* door; her dress bespoke that her wants were supplied by industry . . . then most courteously demanded, what was the price for entrance? . . . There, says she, holding out her hand, with two quarters, *it is my mite*, and was turning away. But Madam, won’t you walk into the *Museum*? Not now, she replied.”¹⁶⁴ While Peale was certainly advertising his willingness to allow any member of society, who was presentable, to enter his Museum, he was also inherently commenting upon the socio-economic connections of the space. By describing a woman “of modest address” and “her dress bespoke that her wants were supplied by industry”, Peale was clearly describing a woman of a middling or lower social order. It is clear that the woman *had* the money to enter the Museum, in fact she gave two times the amount to the benefit, but by leaving and not entering the Museum, she indicated that she did not feel that she was refined enough to be included in such a community and that that she did not have the leisure time to do so, therefore indicating a general understanding of the Museum as a genteel place.

American society was undergoing a cultural change. As demonstrated by Richard L. Bushman, from 1700 to 1850, American culture revealed increasing concern for

¹⁶³ “Lost Children.” *Poulson’s American Daily Advertiser*, December 1, 1807, 3.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 14 & C.W. Peale, “Museum,” *Aurora General Advertiser* (Philadelphia, PA), January 6th, 1797, 3.

refinement of dress and manner. Members of the upper and middle classes began to express their social status, sense of taste, and genteel manners in everyday articles like their homes, clothing, and household accouterments. Even churches began to reflect the push towards refinement in America. These forms of expression, as Richard L. Bushman notes in *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities*, were not merely ways to demonstrate a level of wealth and status. They were also ways of indicating self-improvement and the development of a sense of taste. Americans of the upper and middles classes began to intertwine their understanding of refinement with that of republicanism: Bushman argues that the acculturation of refinement with republicanism worked for a few reasons. The first was that capitalism helped increase the refinement of the middle classes. Access to certain goods, such as genteel objects, allowed for members of the middle class to elevate their status; refinement relied heavily upon consumption. Capitalism also led to a higher rate of industrialization in America: artisans and businessmen could all promote their own economic interests by promoting genteel goods. The second is that democracy and the development of the middle class came out of the same revolution: rather than directly associate the development of refinement with its aristocratic origins, Americans saw “genteel consumerism” as “a form of cultural revolution.”¹⁶⁵ Furthermore, they saw their refined actions, the same actions of those of the more powerful classes in Europe, as “ratify[ing] their new authority” in America.¹⁶⁶

Just as this refinement manifested itself in houses and churches across America, it too can be seen in the social landscapes of Peale’s Museum. Clearly, there are two

¹⁶⁵ Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), 410.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 413.

transformations that take place with refinement: that of the people and that of their spaces. As chapter three enumerated, Peale constantly sought to create a logically organized and rational space for his audience to experience. Besides transforming the physical space of his Museum, Peale also sought to transform the people who entered. Peale knew that the majority of his patrons were from the upper and middle classes of Philadelphia. Peale also knew that “a polished environment was as much the essence of gentility as polished manners.”¹⁶⁷ Part of creating a polished environment was controlling whom, or in this case *how*, people in the environment acted. Peale tried to do this by creating a set of rules for his patrons to adhere to while walking around in the Museum. Catherine even noted this list of rules when she wrote about her visit to the Museum: “On the door leading up to the organ were the affixed rules of behavior for visitors.”¹⁶⁸ While it is unknown what exactly these rules were, their existence indicates two things: the first, is that there were people who entered the Museum who did not act in a refined manner, therefore necessitating the creation of the rules, and the second is that Peale felt that he could aid the visitor in educating individuals towards refinement by visiting the Museum.

In a letter to Thomas Jefferson in 1802, Peale wrote:

Such a Museum, easy of access, must tend to make all Classes of People, in some degree, learned in the science of Nature, without even the trouble of study. Whether a diffused knowledge of this kind, may tend to mend their Morrals, is a question of some import. – furnishing the Idle and disapated with a great and new source of amusement, ought to divert them from frivolous and pernicious Entertainments – It is fully demonstrated that viewing the wonderful structure of a great number of *beings best formed for their respective stations*, elevates the mind to an Admiration and adoration of

¹⁶⁷ Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), xviii.

¹⁶⁸ A.R. Beck, “Notes of a Visit to Philadelphia, Made by a Moravian Sister in 1810.” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 36, no. 3 (1912): 16.

the Great Author! – I have seen folly stoped in its carier, by the sight of a few articles in this Repository.¹⁶⁹

Peale believed that his Museum served a dual purpose in educating the general public and shaping the moral sense of individuals. He understood the role of his Museum to be beneficial to his audience in both of these ways. What is most interesting about this quote however is his use of “all Classes of People.” In reality, it appears that the majority of those who visited the museum were from the upper and middle classes. But this letter to Jefferson indicates that Peale did not view his Museum as solely a space for those classes: his mission was to improve all members of society by exposing them to the genteel manners and morals of the upper classes in Philadelphia. By allowing all access to the Museum, well all of those who could pay his ticket price, Peale was encouraging them to enter a space of improvement, a place where the refinement of other visitors and of the physical space itself could transform the visitor into a refined member of society.

It would appear that this happened in reality. Peale himself noted that he had seen “folly stoped in its carier” by looking at a few articles in his Museum. This indicates that people lacking in genteel manners did in fact come to the Museum. Again, the posting of his rules reinforces this point. Furthermore, Peale even complains throughout his lifetime of the non-refined actions of those who entered the Museum. In a letter to Thomas Paine in 1803, Peale describes the location of certain objects so that “they will be secure, as intirely out of the reach of all the Bears that may visit the Museum.”¹⁷⁰ Clearly the bears were not the grizzlies, but the unruly visitors of his Museum. In another, he mentions that

¹⁶⁹ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 431.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 592.

he does not allow people “with perceivable intoxication” to enter the Museum.¹⁷¹ In one long complaint to Rembrandt in 1809, Peale writes:

You know how much we have [been] pestered by persons going down from the Museum in ringing the bells, it is completely cured by my writing in large letters, facing them in their decent. ‘None but the Rude and uncultivated ring the Bells going down.’ I wish I could also prevent visitors from putting their fingers on the Glasses and frames in the different parts of the Museum, they dirty the glass’s and destroy the brillency of the gilding. The standin[g] on our covered benches is another dirty custom, could I be often in the museum I should prevent it as I sometimes do taking out my Handkerchieff and wiping & brushing after them, without uttering a syllable.¹⁷²

In the remainder of the letter, he complains of visitors carving their names in the Chama, a large shell that is found mostly in the West Pacific, and ruining the casts of ancient statutes. He ends the rant by saying “it must be obvious to every *thinking being* that these rules are necessary to preserve the articles of a Museum formed for the instruction and amusement of the present as well as future generations” (emphasis my own).¹⁷³

It is obvious from these complaints that Peale was annoyed with those visitors who lacked refined manners. Defacing his exhibits, standing on benches to see objects that were higher up, ringing bells, and touching his various labels and glass cases were all actions that Peale perceived as lacking in refinement. This account to Rembrandt also tells us that Peale’s methods of controlling actions in the Museum were generally silent in nature: his rules and prominently displayed signs spoke for him and his manner of wiping off the seats after people was also a silent action. In fact he notes this himself by saying that he corrected them “without uttering a syllable.” He knew that the social pressures created by his actions and his signs, particularly when they accused people of not acting

¹⁷¹ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 1229.

¹⁷² Ibid, 1237.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

with refinement in a refined space, would embarrass those visitors into acting properly because of the larger social pressures those people felt outside of the walls of the Museum. American citizens, of all socio-economic backgrounds, felt the intense cultural pressure to refine themselves and become genteel in nature. Peale's clear adherence to this cultural revolution of gentility is evident in his attempts to educate visitors not only in the workings of natural history, but also in their social manners. Finally, Peale felt that anyone with sense, or as he noted a "thinking being", would be able to discern polite actions from impolite ones. It was a challenge to teach people refinement within a refined space as Peale made evident in his personal letters, but more importantly, these letters tell us that non-genteel people visited the Museum.

Although the record indicates that a majority of the refined and elite members of Philadelphia society were patrons to Peale's Museum, the record is not completely devoid of evidence that visitors from other socio-economic and cultural backgrounds visited. Primary sources demonstrate that people from a variety of economic classes visited, that women and children came, and that people of various ethnicities and races visited too. While they were certainly not the majority, it is important to note that they had a presence, however temporary, within the Museum space. Peale grappled with allowing the Museum to be open to all and dealt with the repercussions of those actions: by permitting the impolite to enter, he had to deal with actions that he viewed as non-genteel. Besides the obvious annoyance Peale dealt with, it is also evident that Peale felt that his Museum could act as an agent in the cultural refinement revolution. His space functioned as a laboratory for refinement: physically it represented refinement, as visitors noted and praised it for, but it was also a place where you could learn refined manners

through your adherence to the rules and through your interaction with his exhibits and objects. Part of learning how to be refined, as noted above, was learning how to be member of a democracy and how to act like a republican citizen. These lessons were also imparted to Peale's visitors through his exhibitions. Peale's objects taught visitors how to act with polite manners, how those manners permitted you to act like a republican citizen, and therefore, how that republicanism allowed you to be an American citizen.

Morality

While Peale's Museum certainly functioned as a center of refinement, it was also a space that provided moral lessons to those who entered. As several visitors' accounts suggest, Peale's Museum laced science with religion. Enlightened individuals viewed the world through a religious lens; they used science as a means of further understanding God and his world. Science provided evidence of God's existence and creative power; He remained at the apex of the chain of being and all men were subject to His will. Religion was a central part of everyday life in early American society. Several parts of America were founded due to religious prosecution and American civic identity was founded on its religious conviction. While certain areas of America were more religiously diverse than others, the American government functioned on the idea of religious freedom and separation of church and state.

Peale's Museum was a space that reified piety and morality. For some visitors, these virtues were part of the main lessons they learned while in the Museum. Catherine Fritsch, a member of the Moravian community, took note of many of the pious lessons she learned while visiting the Museum in 1810. While her account was mostly used in this thesis to demonstrate the amusement she felt while visiting the Museum, her account

also demonstrates the effect of the Museum on her piety. Catherine took note of the oval frames with verses from the Bible written in them, viewing them as a reminder of God's role within the creation of the physical world that Peale tried to recreate within his museum. She wrote that these texts stood "as silent reminders to the unthinking that there is a God who has created all things."¹⁷⁴ Clearly for Catherine, the world that Peale recreated in his Museum was a world that was created through God's eyes.

Peale himself was aware of the important relationship between religion and science. In several of his letters and lectures, Peale referenced the greatness of God and how such a Museum and collection would exhibit his almighty power. In his "Introduction to a Course of Lectures" in 1799, Peale ends the lecture by emphasizing God's role in the creation of nature stating, "Let the contemplation confirm your faith in his being and providence, exalt your conceptions of his nature, and lead you to look up to him without superstitious terror."¹⁷⁵ Peale also noted in the introduction, "Whom nature's works can charm, with God himself Hold converse; grow familiar, day by day, With his conceptions, act upon his plan; And form to his the relish of their souls."¹⁷⁶ Like other enlightened thinkers, Peale encouraged his audience to approach God as a rational being, not as a superstitious one, and to understand that "religion commands our attention to the practice of moral duties."¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ A.R. Beck, "Notes of a Visit to Philadelphia, Made by a Moravian Sister in 1810." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 36, no. 3 (1912): 16.

¹⁷⁵ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 271.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 263.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid*.

While Peale's God was certainly a Christian God, he sought to accommodate diverse strains of Christianity in his Museum. In a letter to Andrew Ellicott in 1802 he wrote the following:

Since our conversation on the additional title to be given to the name Museum to which I meditated adding on *Temple of Wisdom* I have considered that although the display of the wonderful works of Creation in which the Wisdom of the Creator is made manifest in so many examples, would justify the epithet, yet the fear of intruding on the office of Religion altho' I like the word Temple I must give it up for some name more humble and appropriate; since collections of the subjects of nature may aid religion, but cannot offend the most rigid of any Sect.¹⁷⁸

This letter reveals two main points. The first is that Peale was aware of the connectivity of his Museum with religion. By taking on the name of a "temple", a word that may have been perceived as too secular or Greco-Roman in nature, Peale might have offended several members of various religious communities. Certainly one of his main concerns for not wanting to offend those groups was strategic: Peale would lose a segment of his visiting audience and therefore the ticket money that came along with them. This brings us to the second point that proves that Peale was aware of the influence his institution had on religion in Philadelphia and on the development of morality. Due to the deep connectivity of the Museum with various religious groups, Peale was aware that his Museum functioned as a space of moral refinement; otherwise those religious groups would not patronize his institution.

While morality was certainly related to religious development, those traits also contributed to the political development of individuals. To be a moral and pious person made you a Republican citizen in America; it was your moral duty to serve as a vigilant

¹⁷⁸ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 411.

and informed citizen. In order to strengthen one's moral character, one had to stay forever vigilant against vice and deception, whether that was religious or political. Several parts of Peale's Museum taught his visitors how to refine themselves as morally vigilant citizens. First and foremost, Peale wanted to only display portraits of those he felt were examples of a strong moral character. Peale's choice of portrait selections was calculated. In a letter to John Isaac Hawkins in 1807, Peale expressed his relief in never having completed a portrait for a public official who ended up disgracing themselves. While referencing Aaron Burr, Peale writes, "It is a curious circumstance that I have never desired to paint those characters for my Museum, although I have had acquaintance with many of them in the time of their highest career, that have afterwards been brought into disgrace . . . I hope I shall continue to be equally fortunate in my choice of men."¹⁷⁹ Peale expresses, in this letter, both a relief and an anxiety: relief that he has protected the reputation of his work and his museum, and anxiety over the potential that he could select a person who could fall into disrepute. Furthermore, this tells historians that Peale wanted his Museum's audience to learn from the great characters of the men he was featuring within his portrait section of the Museum. It also tells us that his audience clearly paid attention to whom he was featuring within the Museum; Peale's visitors were using the characters Peale displayed as guides to a virtuous and moral life.

Americans during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries recognized the important cultural role that portraits played in society. Margaretta M. Lovell points out in her book *Art in a Season of Revolution: Painters, Artisans, and Patrons in Early*

¹⁷⁹ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 1010.

America, that Americans focused most of their artistic patronage on portraits of individuals, couples, and families, not on landscape paintings or history paintings.¹⁸⁰ Besides expressing a person's wealth and station in life, portraits also expressed, and created, a sense of national and familial duty. Lovell writes that a portrait, "excites the bonds of affection but also, more importantly, those of duty. It functions, even in the physical absence of the imagined personage, to cement the social hierarchy and to remind family members of the facts of familial duty . . ."¹⁸¹ While Lovell's argument focuses mostly upon the functioning of the portrait within a family space, she does recognize the importance of public portraits as well, such as Peale's within his Museum. She emphasizes that these portraits too create a sense of respect and admiration within the viewer, but more importantly, it also creates a sense of national duty.¹⁸²

Peale's portraits extended past this realm of family duty, but instead became more of a national matter. The location of Peale's portraits, within his Museum, of course were there to advertise his skills as an artist, but they were also there to demonstrate to the greater public a message of nationalism. Peale's portraits functioned in a similar way as a portrait would within a private family parlor: they served as physical examples of the legacy of the "family", or in this case, citizens of America. Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, and George Washington all sat like silent reminders to Peale's visitors of the hard work they put into the creation of the United States. They instilled upon the viewer respect for their contribution to the country and, most

¹⁸⁰ Margaretta M. Lovell, *Art in a Season of Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 8.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*, 11.

¹⁸² *Ibid*.

importantly, inspired the viewer to respect that contribution and make their own as a moral citizen of the nation.

Portraits could do more than simply inspire you to follow the examples of great leaders. They could also train your eye and make you more aware of political deception. Wendy Bellion discusses the role that deceptive portraiture occupied in Peale's Museum. In *Citizen Spectator*, Bellion argues that art became a medium through which citizens could improve upon the act of seeing and perceiving deception. She writes, "During an era in which the senses were politicized as agents of knowledge and action, public exhibitions of illusions challenged Americans to demonstrate their perceptual aptitude. Thresholds for the practice and performance of discernment, deceptions made exhibition rooms into spaces of citizen formation."¹⁸³ Americans were encouraged to use their senses, in particular sight, to find deception within their political system. The creation of these deceptive paintings and other art exhibits were meant, as Bellion argues, to sharpen the skills of the American in detecting the deception. This not only increased the national sentiments of the visitor, but also increased the awareness of their participation, both as a citizen and as a viewer of art.

Bellion uses the *Staircase Group* in particular to prove this point (Figure 17). This painting, exhibited in 1795, was put on display during a time of nationally perceived political secrecy surrounding the terms of Jay's Treaty and the Whiskey Rebellion, which therefore increased the pressure felt by citizens to remain vigilant to the potentially

¹⁸³ Wendy Bellion, *Citizen Spectator: Art, Illusion, and Visual Perception in Early National America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 5.

deceptive actions of their government.¹⁸⁴ Visitors of the exhibition could learn to hone their skills as a viewer and as a citizen when interacting with Peale's painting which aimed to deceive the public just as some members of society believed the federal government was trying to deceive them. Unfortunately, it is unknown how Peale exhibited this painting after the Columbinaum Exhibition ended in July of 1795. The painting joined the rest of his collections in Philosophical Hall and, most likely, made its way to the State House when Peale moved into that space in 1802. The only source that indicates further interaction with the painting is Rembrandt's recounting of Washington seeing the painting in the late 1790s in Philosophical Hall. Whether or not this story is true of Washington being deceived, it indicates that the painting was on display for Peale's Museum visitors to see and interact with daily.

While I agree with Bellion that these trompe l'oeil paintings helped cultivate a sense of civic engagement within the larger public, it is unclear within her work how truly accessible this type of thinking was to the greater public. Did all members of society make a connection between being deceived by a painting and being deceived by the government? I would posit that all members of society did not make this association; it would have been most accessible to those of the upper classes, which were, as suggested above, a large portion of Peale's audience. Regardless, it is clear that Peale's work in portraiture and paintings helped cultivate a sense of morality and national duty. Whether it was by looking up at the American citizens who had led the nation through the revolution, or in developing civic skills by detecting deceptions in Peale's paintings,

¹⁸⁴ Wendy Bellion, *Citizen Spectator: Art, Illusion, and Visual Perception in Early National America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 79.

Peale's audience learned about the importance of morality as a tenant of American identity.

Invention

While the Philadelphia Museum expressed, and cultivated, a sense of refinement and morality, it also conveyed a spirit of inventiveness. Like Thomas Jefferson's Entry Hall and Parlor, Peale's Museum also exhibited various inventions. Several American citizens prided themselves on their inventive and progressive spirits: people like Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson worked daily on perfecting various tools that made life easier or more amusing. They lived during a time period that sought to improve living conditions with the use of science. Charles Willson Peale was an inventor too. He created a new model for bridges in America writing about it within his *An Essay on Building Wooden Bridges* in March of 1797 (Figure 41). Peale also worked on creating a new stove system that would prevent a room from filling with smoke. Most importantly, however, Peale worked closely with Jefferson and Hawkins on perfecting the physiognotrace, as mentioned in chapter two, a device that was critical to the everyday lives of both Peale and Jefferson (Figure 19). Jefferson used one to make the many copies of his extensive correspondence, while Peale's slave, Moses, used it to make profile drawings for visitors to the Museum, one of its most popular attractions. Although Peale's Museum catered to a larger audience, in that his Museum had labels and guides to help visitors explore the space, than Jefferson's home did, it becomes clear that their

personal inventions were just as much a part of that space, and the space's dialogue, as the artifacts.¹⁸⁵

The physiognotrace was one of the more unique ways of exploring “the self” in Peale’s Museum and it was certainly one of his most well known inventions. Although I have already covered the gendered boundaries of the machine in the second chapter, I am going to discuss its contribution to the expression of Peale’s inventive spirit and its use in the exploration of the self in this final chapter. As the numbers indicate, the use of the physiognotrace and the creation of silhouettes were popular in Peale’s Museum. But why would this be the case? Why would someone want to have a profile of themselves? It is the same reason people today have caricatures made: it is an exploration of the self. Just as a portrait explored your social and economic status within the eighteenth century, the silhouette did the same, but in a simpler manner. A silhouette, by nature, was less complex than a portrait: it did not include the color or details of the sitter’s clothing or manner of dress. It did not include a background of symbolic objects. And while you could have your silhouette cut with a group of people and displayed side by side, which was how many couples displayed their profiles, the silhouette was more individualistic in nature. The focus is on the one profile, not its interaction with others. The individualism of the silhouette corresponded with the theories of Johann Caspar Lavater (1741 – 1801), a Swiss clergyman who thought that a person’s characteristics could be determined from the physical characteristics exhibited in one’s profile (Figure 42). Peale was interested in Lavater’s theories, as were many other American and European citizens during this time

¹⁸⁵ Roger B. Stein, “Mr. Jefferson as Museum Maker,” in *Shaping the Body Politic: Art and Political Formation in Early America*, ed. Maurie D. McInnis and Louis P. Nelson (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 218.

period, and many expressed their curiosity over the study of physiognomy by having their profiles taken at the Museum.

As Joan K. Stemmler notes in her article entitled “The Physiognomical Portraits of Johann Caspar Lavater,” Lavater was a man who believed that the face was “a presentation of moral and spiritual truth, expressing distance from or closeness to the divine ideal.”¹⁸⁶ He believed that the physical form of man was connected to the “spiritual essence of God” and the divine: understanding the external physical characteristics of a person could help one understand their true internal character.¹⁸⁷ Essential to Lavater’s theory was the measurement of the skull as it was the main physical characteristic to understanding a person; he did not focus upon the facial characteristics of a person.¹⁸⁸ While Lavater’s theories were popular, other scholars found fault within them stating that they could encourage people to judge others unjustly or promote vanity among those with strong physical characteristics.¹⁸⁹ For example, when Catherine visited the Museum, she refused to have her profile taken because of her “big nose”; this indicates a self-consciousness about what the size of her nose would have said to a larger public about her character. Despite the criticism, Lavater’s theories demonstrate a way in which a growing enlightened public attempted to understand themselves and those around them in a seemingly scientific manner. Peale was so interested in these theories that he even

¹⁸⁶ Joan K. Stemmler, “The Physiognomical Portraits of Johann Caspar Lavater,” *Art Bulletin* 75, no. 1 (1993): 153.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ Joan K. Stemmler, “The Physiognomical Portraits of Johann Caspar Lavater,” *Art Bulletin* 75, no. 1 (1993): 156.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 160.

began to create his own collection of profiles to study, which he incorporated into a project called his *Profile Book*.¹⁹⁰

Peale's physiognotrace was used by a predominately white audience. A few profiles survive of other races: a profile of "Mr. Shaw's blackman" and a collection of profiles from a visiting Native American delegation, which Peale sent to Thomas Jefferson in a letter.¹⁹¹ The silhouette of "Mr. Shaw's blackman", a title that indicates that the man's identity was based upon his master's name and his skin color, but not his own individuality, is the only record of an African American visitor to the Museum (Figure 43)¹⁹². As mentioned above, besides the presence of Moses, there were seemingly few African Americans who visited the Museum. Such a lack of visitation by that part of society reflects the racial and social boundaries imposed upon different groups in Philadelphia during this time period. It also explains why there were fewer profiles of those racial groups. Furthermore, this may indicate a slight anxiety by these groups to have their profiles analyzed and on display: clearly the study of physiognomy had racial roots, roots that these groups may have been aware existed. Despite these reasons, the creation of these profiles indicate that African Americans and Native Americans were also interested in exploring their own identities through physical representations just as much as white members of society were. The exploration of self and creation of identity was not solely limited to white members of society; it merely expressed itself through different mediums because of economic differences and societal groups.

¹⁹⁰ David R. Brigham, *Public Culture in the Early Republic: Peale's Museum and Its Audience* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 74.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid*, 72 – 73.

¹⁹² *Ibid*, 71.

Although profiles were a much “simpler” means to explore one’s identity, and therefore may have been more accessible to those who could not afford a portrait, there were still similarities with the use of profiles and portraits. The cut silhouettes could either be displayed in an album or in a frame. Just as portraits did, profiles could preserve and promote familial duty. On a few occasions, couples would have their profiles taken together or children with their parents had theirs created. While this preserved the sense of family for the present, it also preserved that family in the future: some families used profiles to create a photo genealogy.¹⁹³ In many ways, the creation of these albums served as a structuring and ordering of the family, and as Brigham puts it, it demonstrates “the need to order the human world” just as Peale had ordered the natural world in his Museum.¹⁹⁴ Furthermore, the high number of profiles that were created indicates an interest by the larger public to explore their identities through the medium of the profile cutter. Museum visitors began to understand themselves through a newly incorporated understanding of their physical characteristics.

The invention that Peale helped perfect served as a central part in how his Museum visitors explored their own identities as expressed by their physical characteristics. Furthermore, this machine was connected to the understanding of the physical self as a moral being: as Lavater wrote, the profile of a sitter articulated their moral and spiritual traits. The creation of the silhouette allowed for the sitter to understand their own identity, but it also allowed for others to see and compare their own identities. Furthermore, these profiles cut on the physiognotrace contributed to a racial

¹⁹³ David R. Brigham, *Public Culture in the Early Republic: Peale’s Museum and Its Audience* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 81.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 82.

understanding of the world: just as Peale's wax figures and portraits expressed a racial hierarchy, the physiognotrace allowed for racial boundaries, communicated through physical means, to be expressed. However, the existence of profiles of African Americans and Native Americans indicates that the exploration of self and use of the physiognotrace was not solely reserved to the white visitors in Peale's Museum. The inventive spirit of Peale, and other American inventors, allowed Americans to explore physical and artistic explorations of the self.

In Charles Willson Peale's autobiography, he notes the importance of the Museum to the public:

That he conceived his plan would have secured to the City of Philadelphia an institution of immense value to the Citizens in a *Political, moral, and religious* point of view. Not only contributing to the general Wealth, by its inducements of Strangers to visit and stay with us, but also by enlarging the Public mind, in arts and science by various Lectures on Subjects furnished by the Museum. – by harmonising jarring Sentiments in assembling company promiscuously together viewing the immense varieties of the works of an allwise Creator. – And in the cheapest mode to amuse at the same moment to instruct in a forcible manner, the vain, the Idle, and the profligate, to *win* them from haunts of Vice and disipation.¹⁹⁵

Peale clearly felt that his Museum was an active agent shaping an American citizenship in that he provided a space to learn one's political and moral obligations to the nation.

The Philadelphia Museum was a refined place in which people could learn how to become polite members of society, where people could learn about God and his creation of the natural world, where people could understand how to serve as moral and virtuous

¹⁹⁵ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 5, The Autobiography of Charles Willson Peale* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 397.

members of a community, where people could use inventions to explore their sense of self, and, most importantly, where people could become American citizens.

Conclusion

The Marquis de Lafayette returned to America in 1824, taking a tour of the entire country. He attended several receptions and events across the United States. Charles Willson Peale, receptive of the momentous occasion that was Lafayette visiting the city of Philadelphia prepared the Museum for his visit. He noted in his autobiography, “and the Museum being in the statehouse, it would be expected that he would make public demonstrations of the respect due to so distinguished a visitor, as he had on every other former occasion made a display of transparencies on memorable events. He made 9 Pictures to fill the 9 windows in the front of the Museum The center one the bust of Fayette with the civic crown over his head . . .”¹⁹⁶ Peale also invited Lafayette to visit the Museum, which he did during his stay in the city. Peale noted that Lafayette “expressed great satisfaction while viewing the Portraits of his associates in Arms.”¹⁹⁷

It was in this way that Peale positioned his Museum, in its (and his) later years, within a nationalistic movement in America. Lafayette’s return to the U.S. marked a momentous occasion for American citizens: it forced them to recall and remember the Revolutionary War and the efforts of their great nation to gain independence. It also allowed American citizens to think of their future; where would the nation go in its forthcoming years? Peale wanted his Museum to actively take a part in this process and his desire to participate indicates his notion of the importance of his Museum as an American public institution. Peale truly felt that his Museum had contributed to the cultivation of the American nation and citizenry. Lafayette’s visit to the Museum marked

¹⁹⁶ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 5, The Autobiography of Charles Willson Peale* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 480.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 481.

the culmination of Peale's work in the field of natural history and his cultural contribution to the nation.

What is also interesting about Peale's insistence on having a reception in the Museum for Lafayette was his emphasis on its location: in the State House. By the mid 1820s, the State House had been renamed "Independence Hall" marking a new American and patriotic association with the building that had not existed before; prior to this period, Americans had merely associated the building with its old colonial ties, but with the increase in nationalistic development, the American people began to express a sense of reverence for the spaces in which their nation was created.¹⁹⁸ Peale was receptive to the change and wanted to capitalize on it; after all, he felt that his Museum had played an active role in the creation of an American identity. But the city officials felt differently and no longer supported the use of this new "Revolutionary shrine" as a Museum space.¹⁹⁹ In the year of Peale's death, the Museum was moved to its new location in the Philadelphia Arcade, a space dedicated to the commercial advances of the prospering nation. Although Peale had served the nation, the Museum's time was up and it no longer fit within the larger scheme of national development as it had at its inception and sequential years.

Although the program of Peale's Museum was no longer viewed as compatible with the new nationalistic purpose of the building during the mid-1820s, the Museum had functioned as a space that provided the American people with a place to explore their own national and personal identities in relation to the greater and chaotic world around

¹⁹⁸ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 5, The Autobiography of Charles Willson Peale* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 488.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 489.

them. As the preceding chapters indicated, Peale's Museum was one of the central places in Philadelphia in which people explored their sense of self, entertained themselves, and learned about the natural world. Using a variety of exhibits, such as the portraits or wax figures, visitors to Peale's Museum were given tools through which to explore their place within the world all while finding joy through the process of learning. Peale's main expressed purpose of the Museum was to educate, to not only make an understanding of the field of natural history accessible, but to also cultivate a larger comprehension of a person's place within the world. Peale's organizational logic, as expressed through the physical manifestation of the Linnaean system, provided a logical framework through which to gain this comprehension of the world and the American's place within it.

It is important to remember with Peale's Museum that despite its seemingly logical organization, the boundaries and complications of the social realm extended into the Museum space. Even though Peale expressed *his* understanding of the world, this did not mean that it was everyone's understanding. Women and other minority groups were vastly under-represented, or only represented in certain forms and mediums, in the Museum: such a hole did not reflect a realistic society; the city of Philadelphia was immensely more diverse than Peale's Museum. Even though Peale expressed a certain understanding of those groups' places in society, it did not mean that it was accurate, but it was certainly held by the majority of elite and middle class American citizens. Furthermore, certain ways of *looking* were not accessible to all: when interacting with the *Stairway Group*, most visitors would have walked away feeling amused rather than enlightened after exposing the deception in the painting. Only some visitors would have

connected the deception of the painting to the potential deception of governmental bodies.

Clearly, the Museum's logical organization had its complications and its holes; society was not as vastly transparent and linear as Enlightened ideals attempted to portray it. But the Museum was innovative in that it *tried* to portray it. Peale attempted to create a world in miniature, a realistic world (as seen through his eyes) that would educate and amuse the general public. It was an American institution, one that was revolutionary at its roots, just as the country was in which it was created. Peale's Museum provided a lens to the American people through which they could understand the seemingly chaotic world around them and understand their place in that world. While it is clear that Peale's lens had a limited scope, or one that was a product of his time period and station in life, it was still a lens through which many Americans found a new way of looking at themselves and at their American identity. Using the structure that Peale provided with the organization of his Museum, Peale created amused, enlightened, moral, refined, and inventive American citizens.

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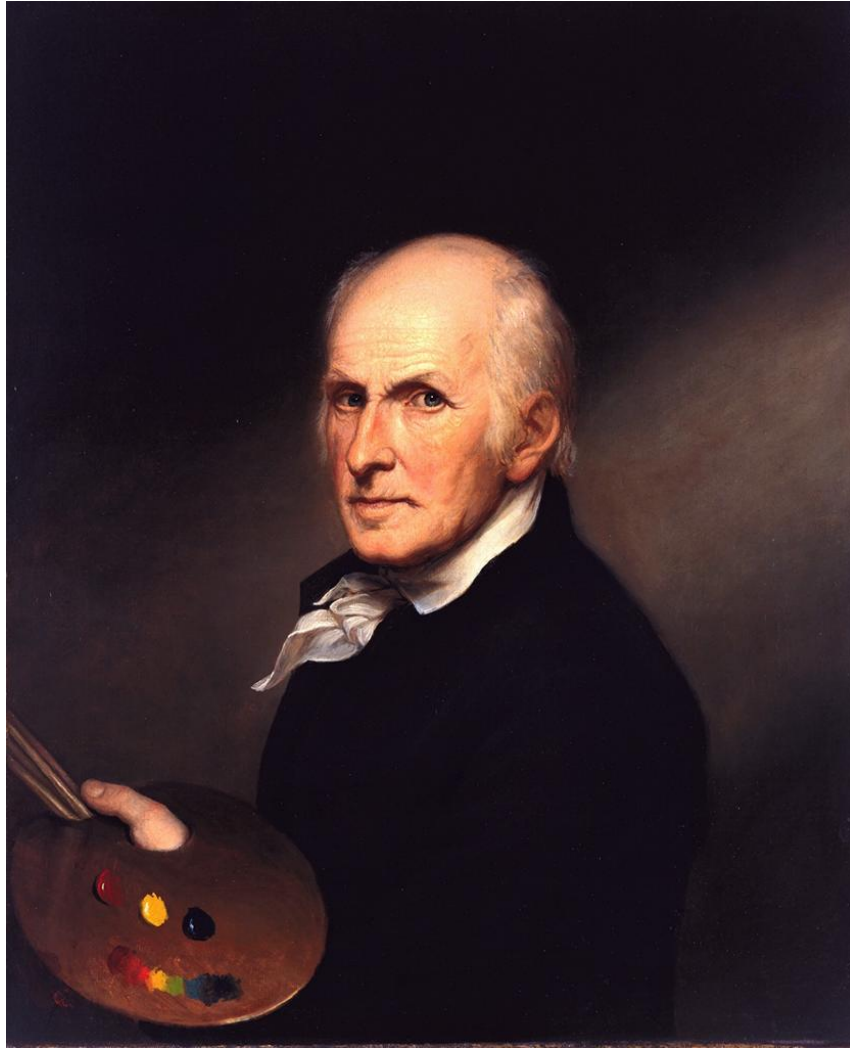


Figure 1 | Charles Willson Peale, *Self-Portrait*, 1821 - 1822

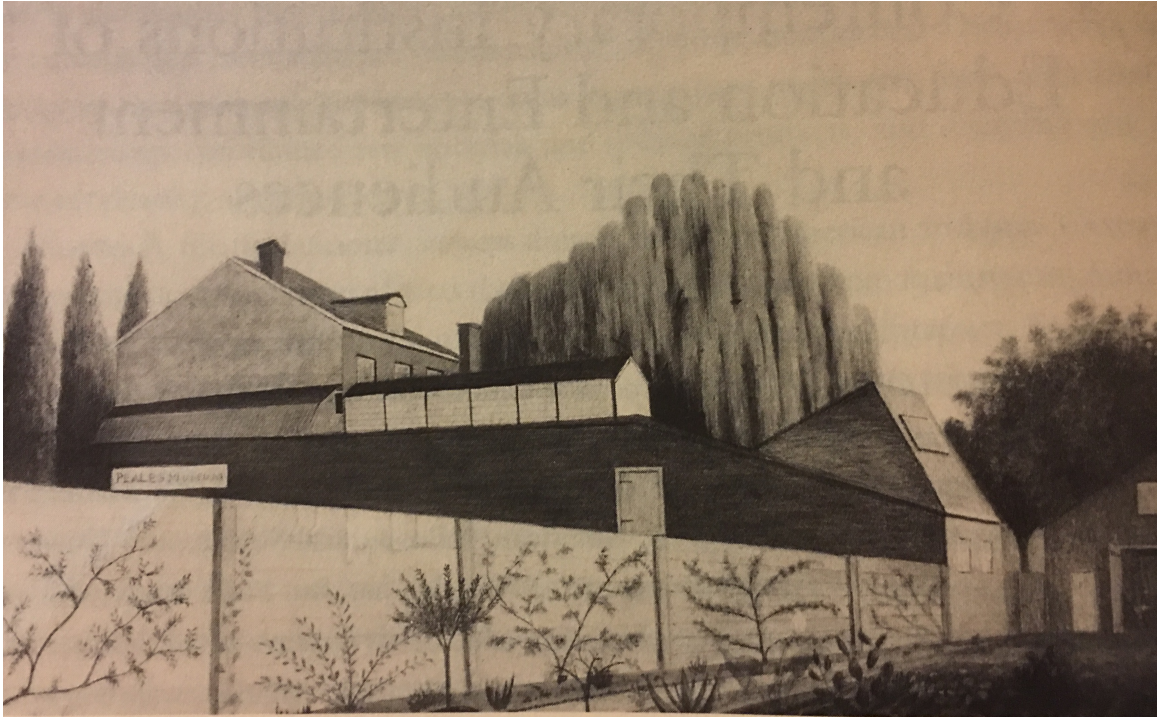


Figure 2 | Rubens Peale, *The Old Museum*, 1858 - 1860



Figure 3 | American Philosophical Society (APS) Hall, Philadelphia, 1785 – 1789



Figure 4 | Bald Eagle, from “People of Independence” exhibit, Second Bank of the United States, National Park Service

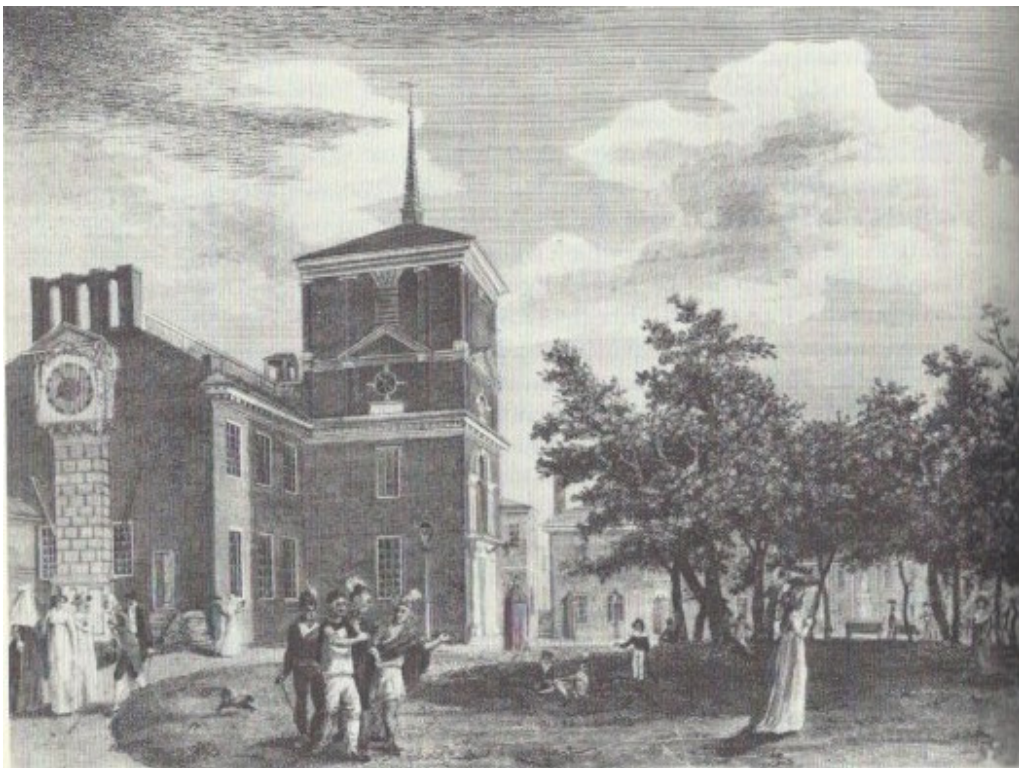


Figure 5 | *Back of the State-House, Philadelphia, 1799*



Figure 6 | Pennsylvania State House or Independence Hall, Philadelphia

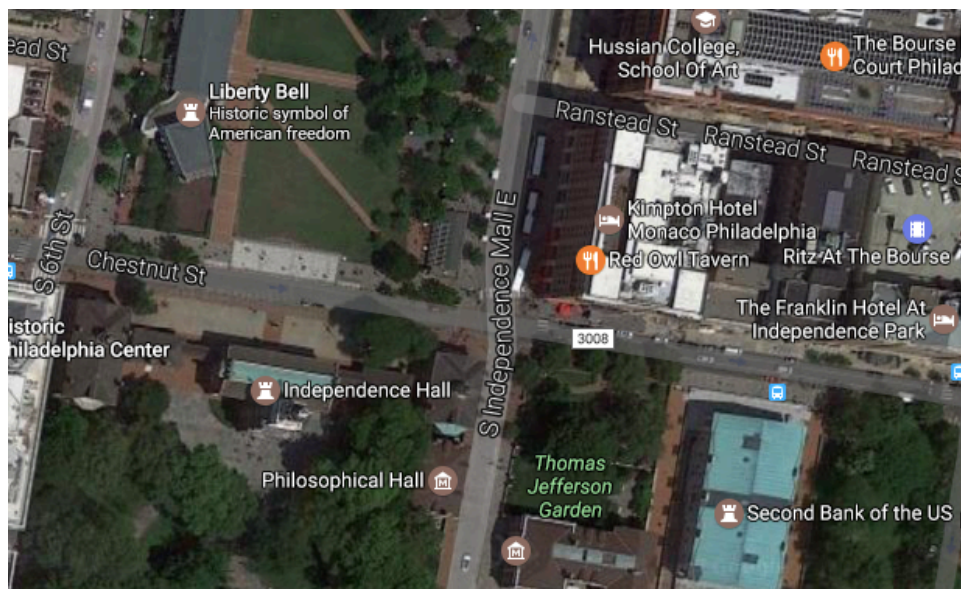


Figure 7 | Location of Independence Hall and Philosophical Hall



Figure 8 | Charles Burton, The Philadelphia Arcade

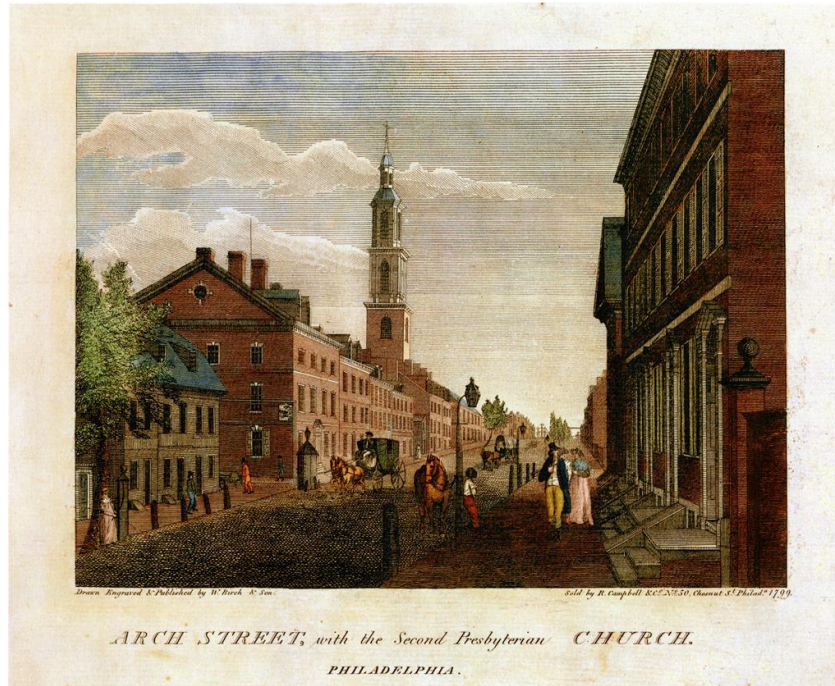


Figure 9 | William & Thomas Birch, Arch Street in Philadelphia, 1800

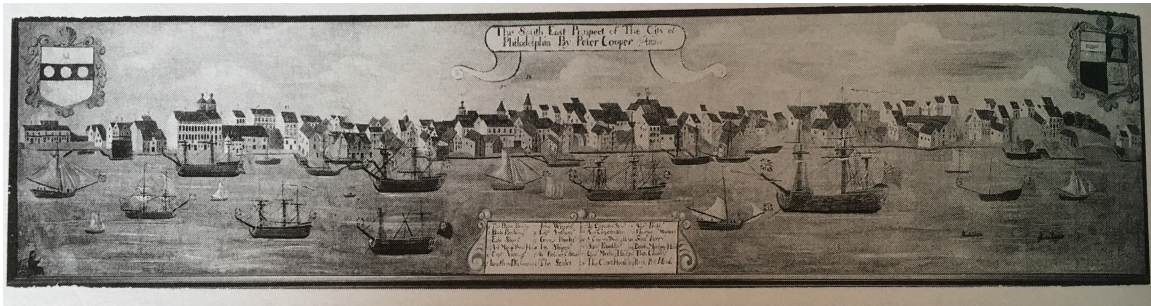


Figure 10 | Peter Cooper, The South East Prospect of the City of Philadelphia, c. 1720

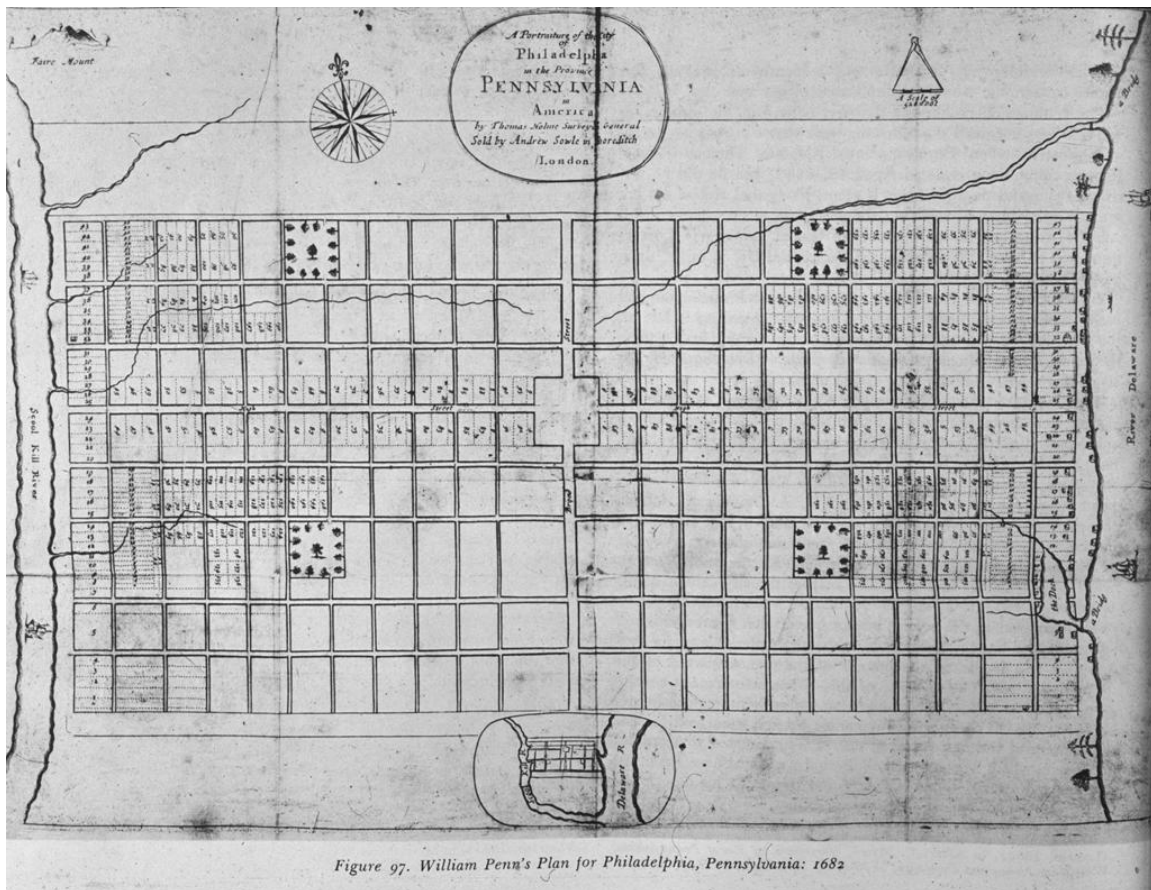


Figure 97. William Penn's Plan for Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: 1682

Figure 11 | Thomas Holme, Plan of Philadelphia, 1682

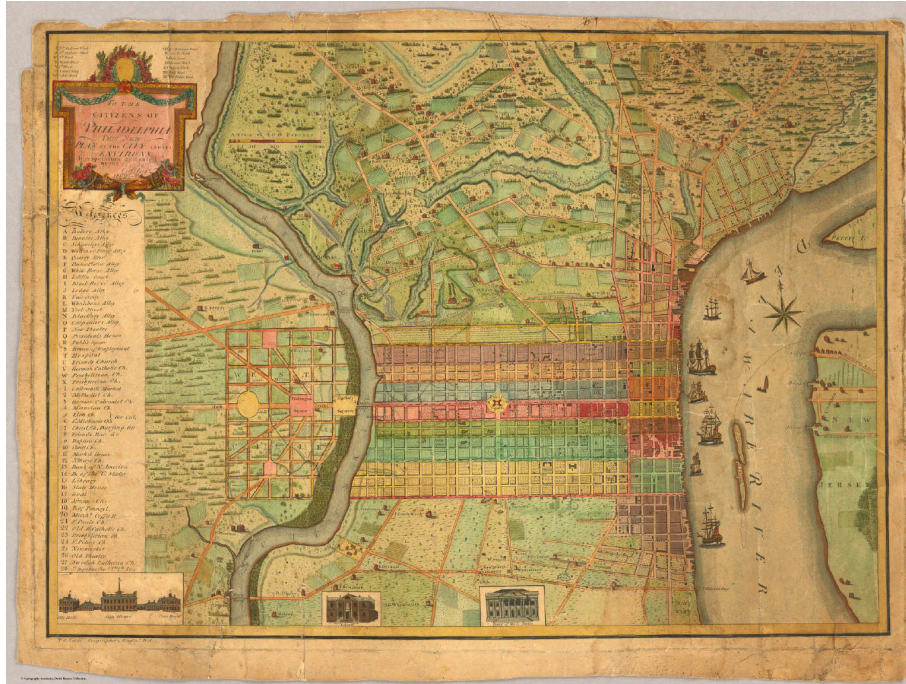


Figure 12 | Charles P. Varle, Map of Philadelphia, 1802

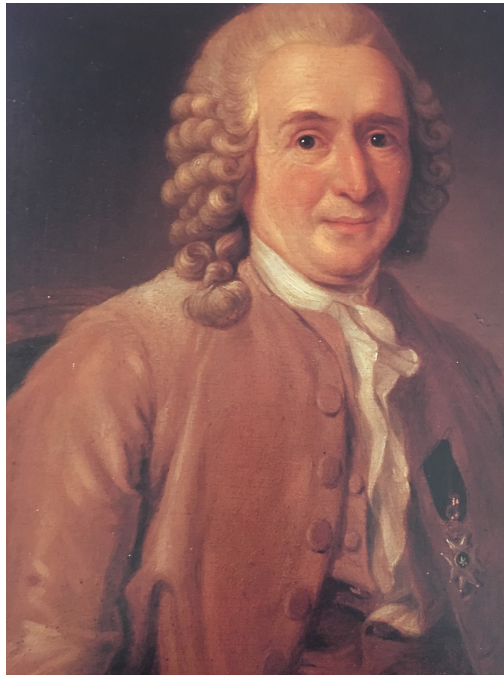


Figure 13 | A. Roslin, Carl Linnaeus, 1775

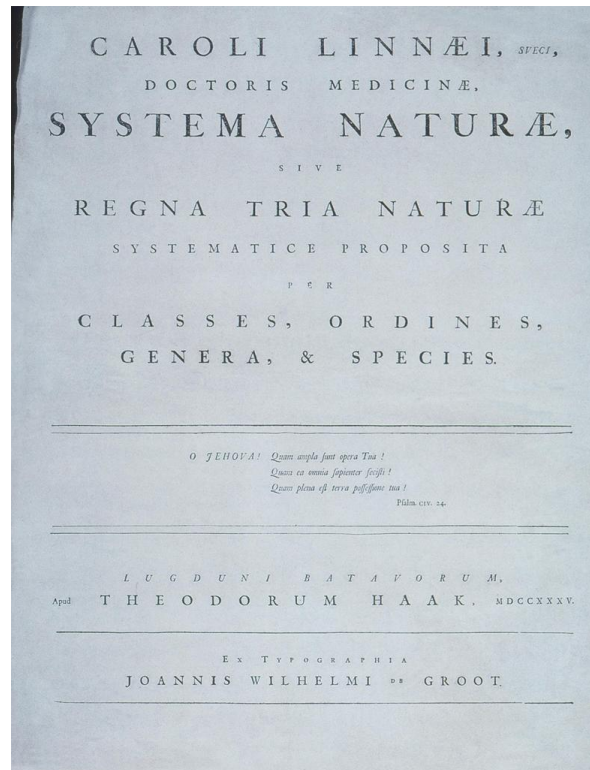


Figure 14 | Carl Linnaeus, Front page of *Systema Naturae*, 1735



Figure 15 | Francois Hubert Drouais, Comte de Buffon, 18th century

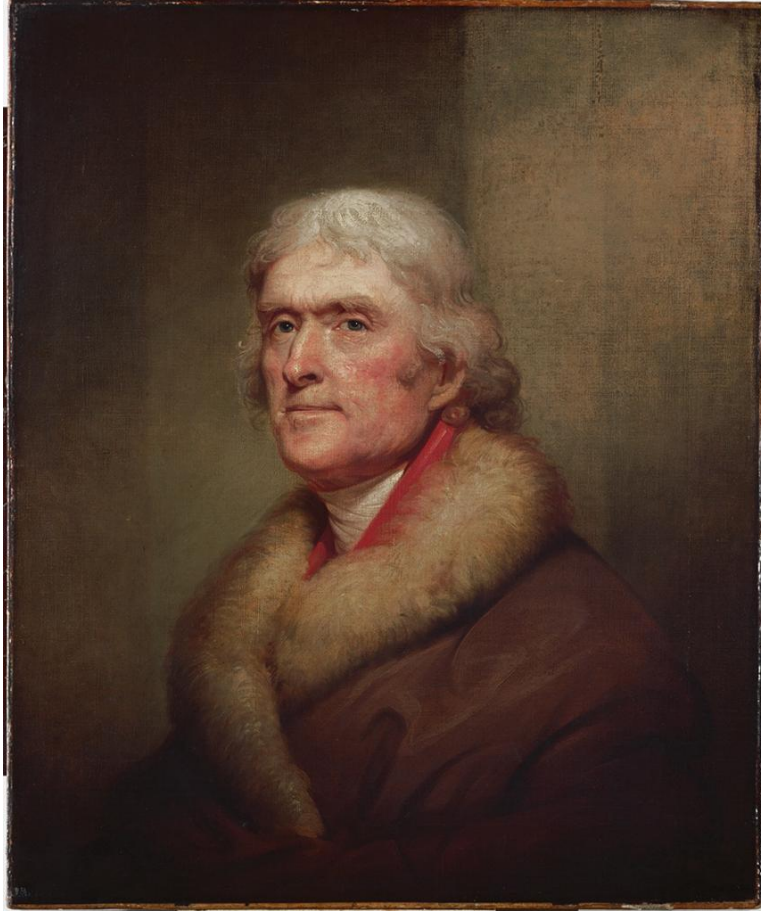


Figure 16 | Rembrandt Peale, Thomas Jefferson, 1805

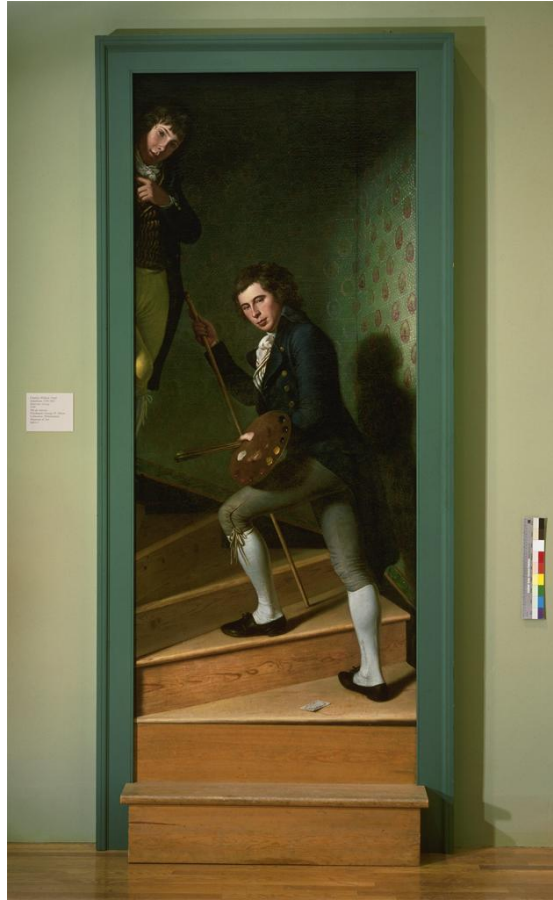


Figure 17 | Charles Willson Peale, *Staircase Group (Portrait of Raphaelle Peale and Titian Ramsey Peale)*, 1795



Figure 18 | Museum Ticket, *Staircase Group (Portrait of Raphaelle Peale and Titian Ramsey Peale)*, 1795

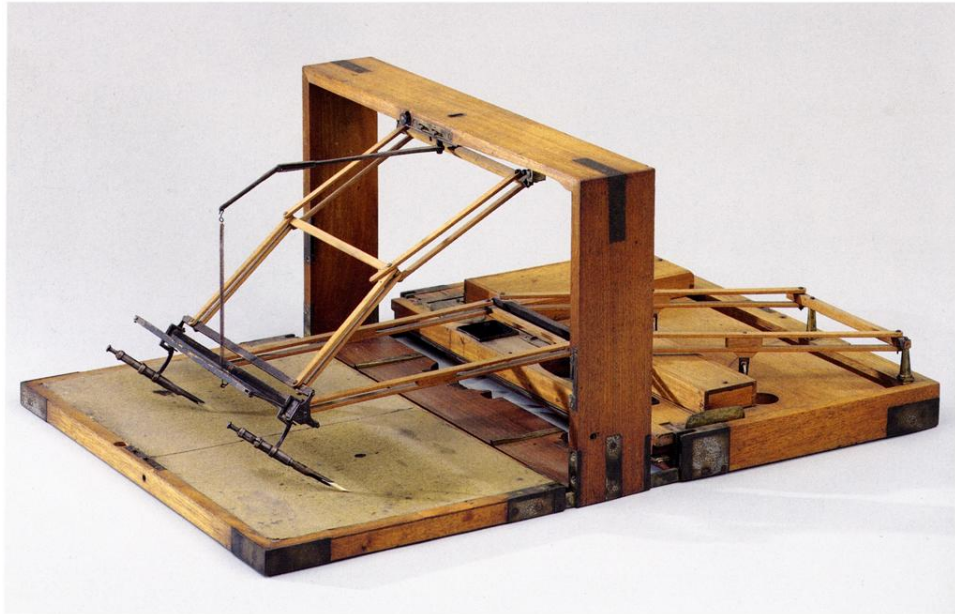


Figure 19 | Peale & Hawkins, Polygraph Machine, 1806

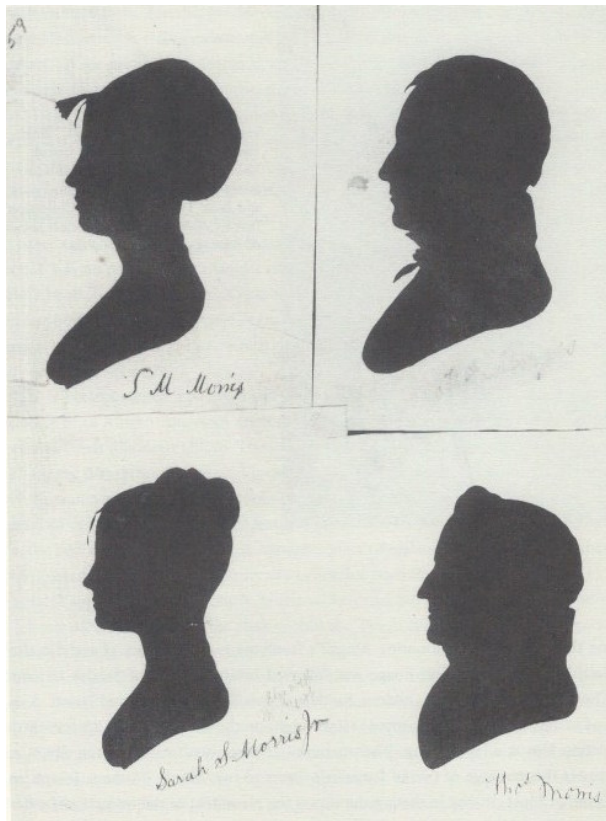


Figure 20 | Moses Williams & Unidentified Artist, Morris Family Silhouettes, 1814 – 1819



Figure 21 | Charles Willson Peale, *The artist in his museum*, 1822

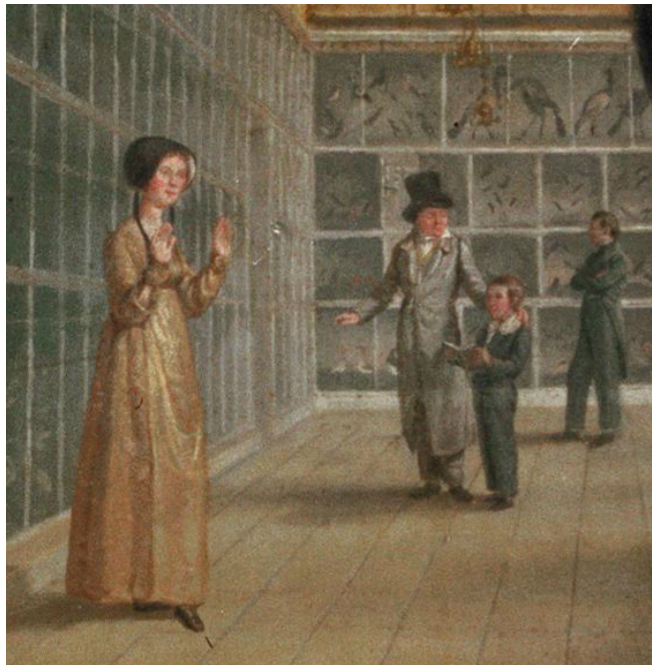


Figure 22 | Quaker Woman & Father and Son in Peale's *The artist in his Museum*, 1822

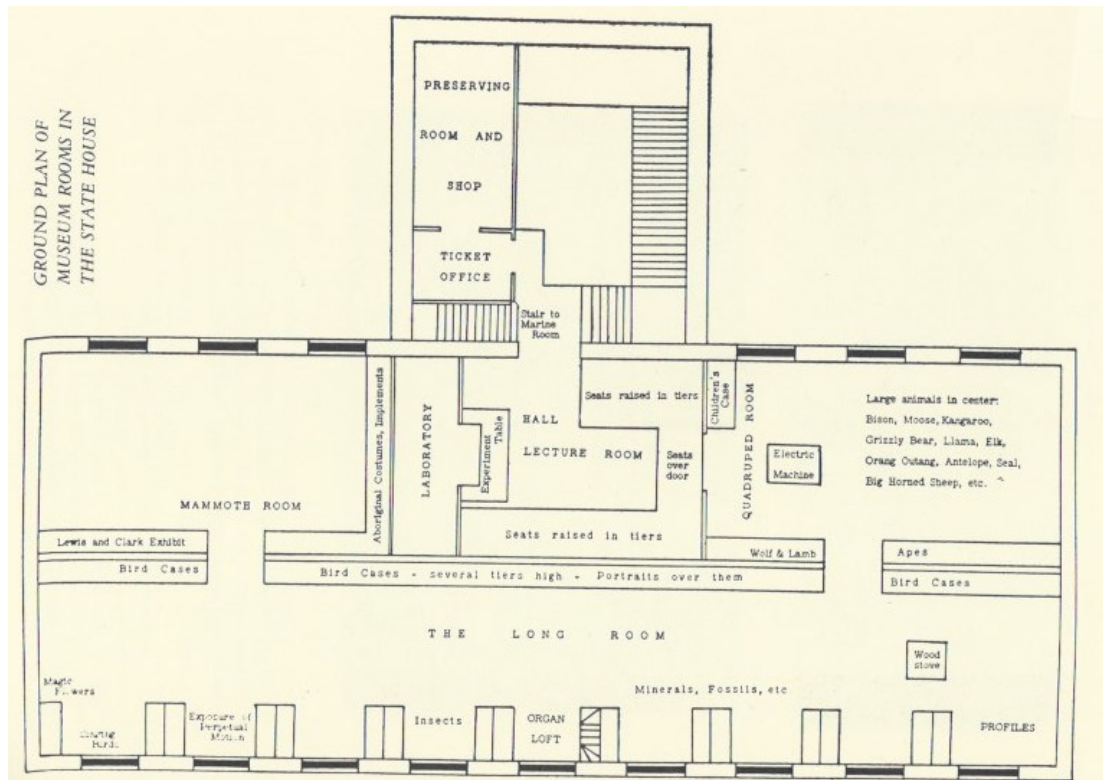


Figure 23 | Floor Plan and Description of the Museum, Charles Coleman Sellers, *Mr. Peale's Museum*

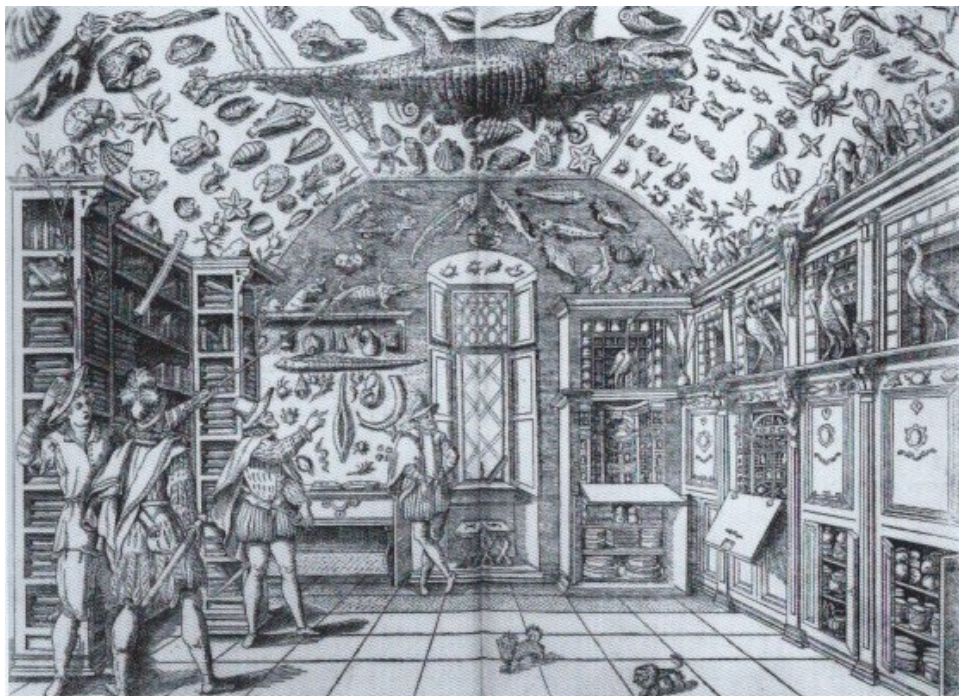


Figure 24 | Cabinet of Curiosity, 'Ritratto del Museo di Ferrante Imperato' from Imperato's *Historia Naturalis*, 1599

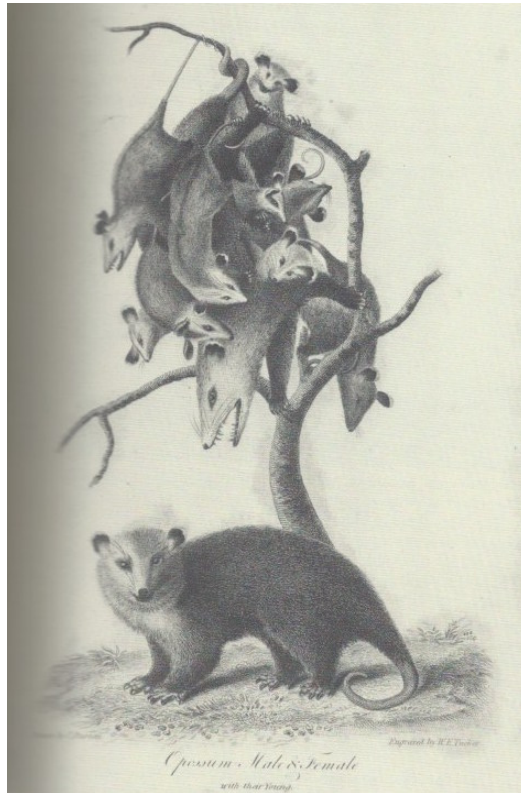


Figure 25 | J.D. Godman's engraving of "opossum with nine young ones", *American Natural History*, 1826

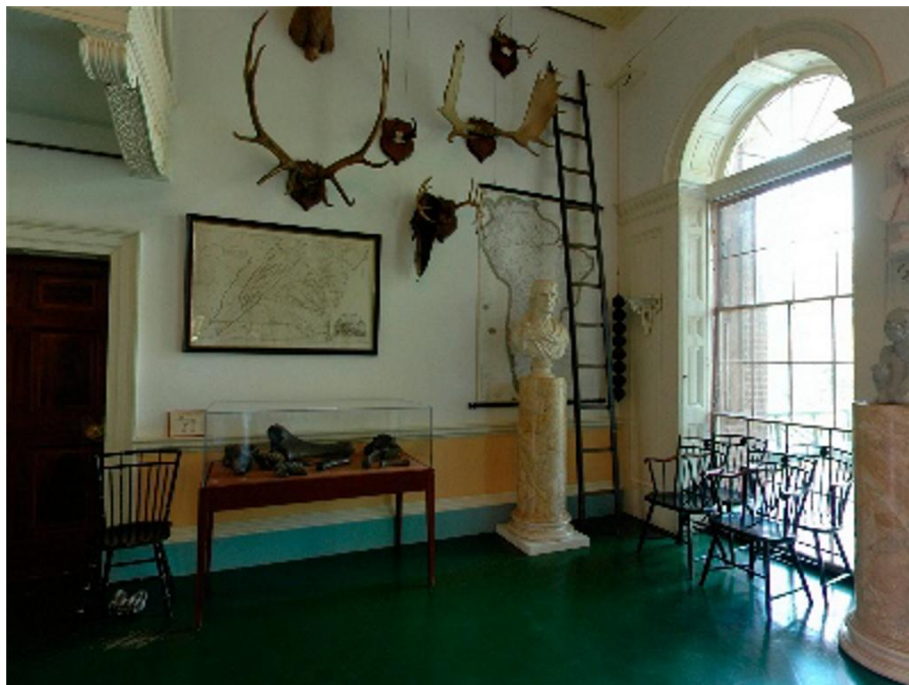


Figure 26 | Thomas Jefferson, Entrance Hall to Monticello

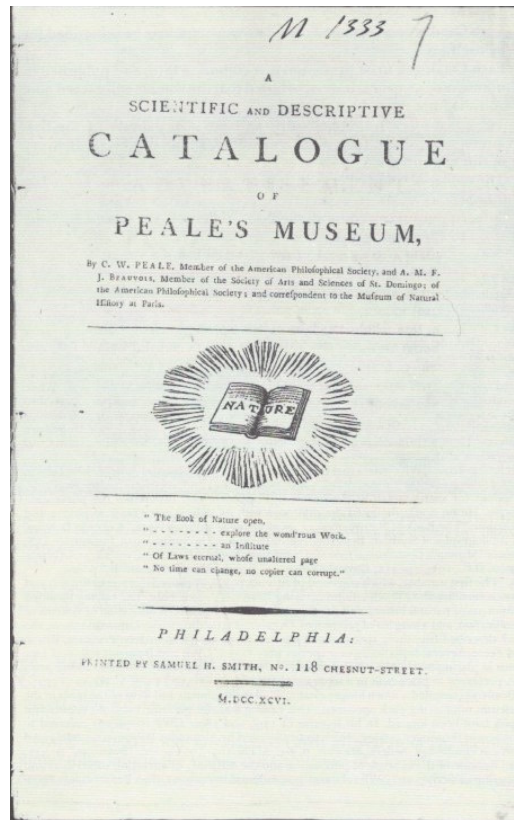


Figure 27 | Charles Willson Peale, Cover Page to Catalogue, 1796

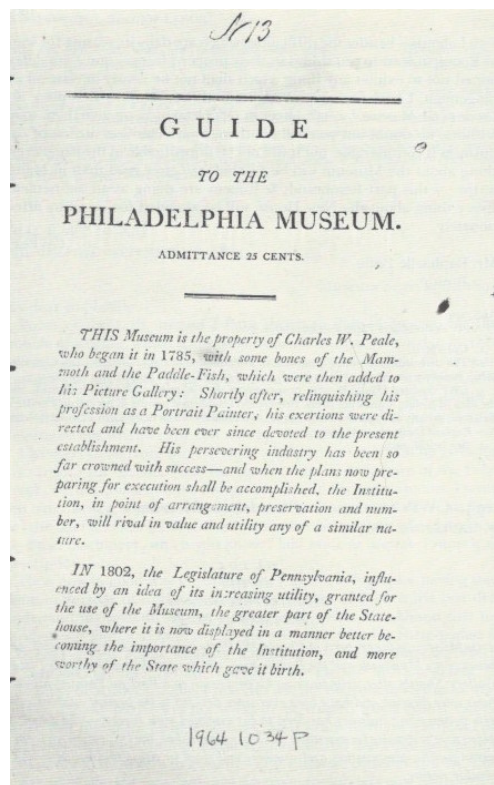


Figure 28 | Charles Willson Peale, Guide to the Philadelphia Museum



Figure 29 | Charles Willson Peale, *The Long Room*, 1822



Figure 30 | Charles Willson Peale, *Noah and His Ark*, 1819

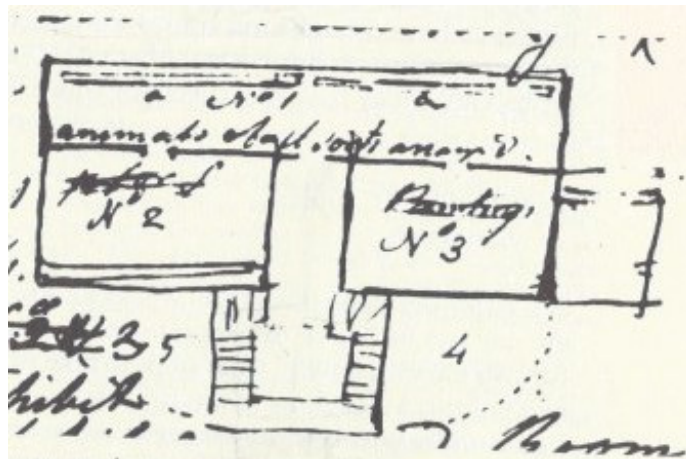


Figure 31 | Charles Willson Peale, Sketch of Independence Hall to William Findley, February 18, 1800



Figure 32 | Organ Space (with the red curtains), depicted in Peale's painting *The Long Room*, 1822



Figure 33 | The Long Room of Independence Hall, October 2016



Figure 34 | Charles Willson Peale, *Exhuming the Mastodon*, 1806

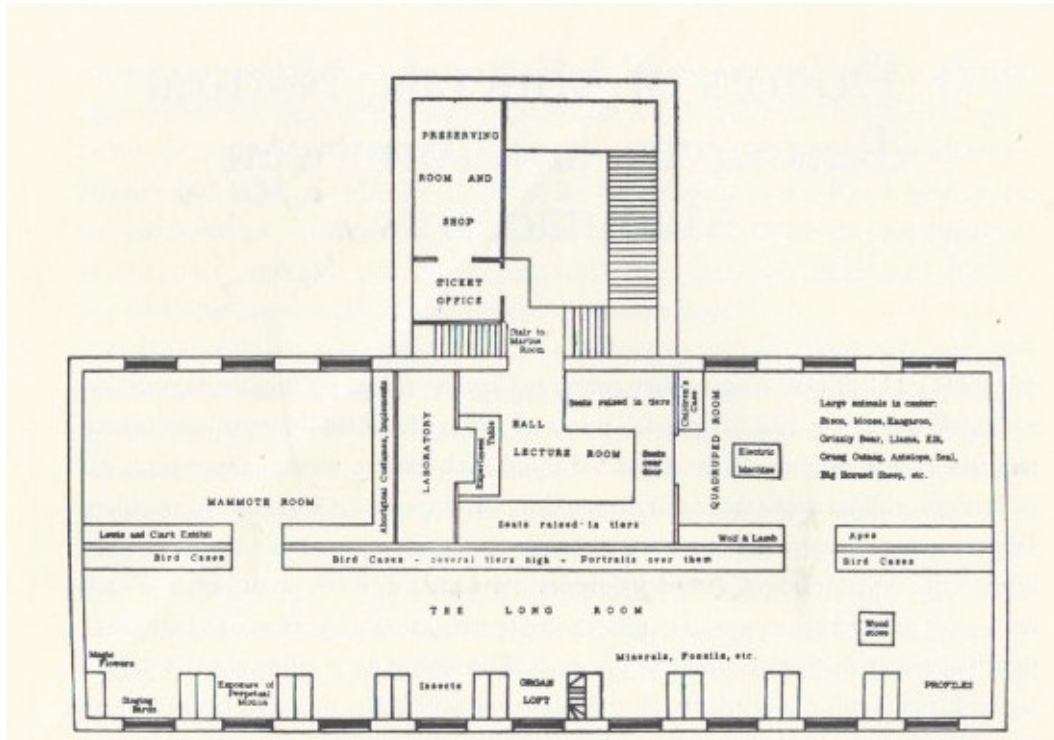


Figure 35 | Floor Plan and Description of the Museum, David R. Brigham, *Public Culture in the Early Republic*

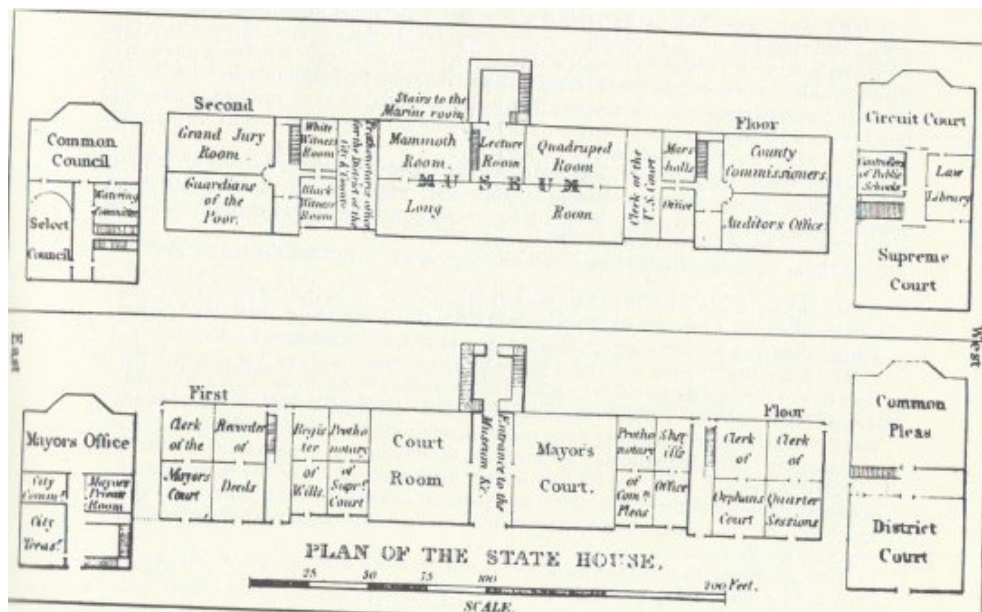


Figure 36 | "Plan of the State House", from *Philadelphia in 1824*, 1824



Figure 37 | Charles Willson Peale, *Joseph Brant*, 1797



Figure 38 | Charles Willson Peale, *Yarrow Mount*, 1819



Figure 39 | Unidentified Artist, *Portrait of Mary Sabina*, 1740 – 1745



Figure 40 | C.B.J. F  vret de Saint-M  min, *Captain Meriwether Lewis*, 1807



Figure 41 | C.W. Peale, “Patent Bridges”, 1796

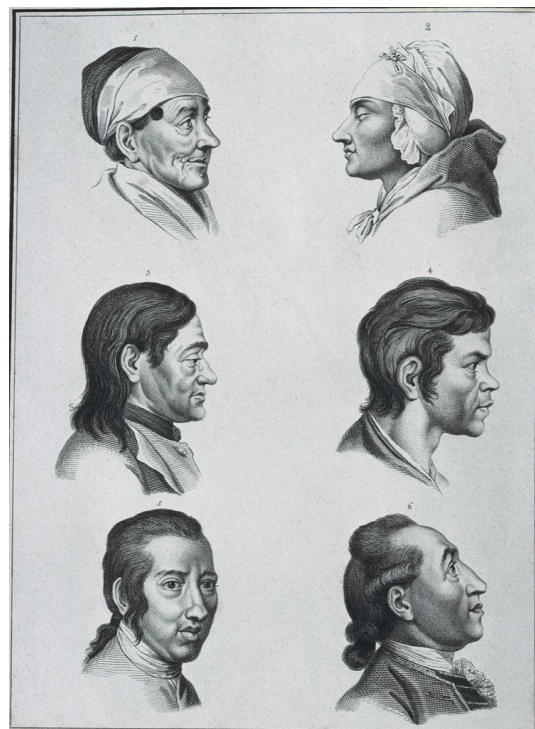


Figure 42 | Johaan Caspar Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy*, 1789 - 1798

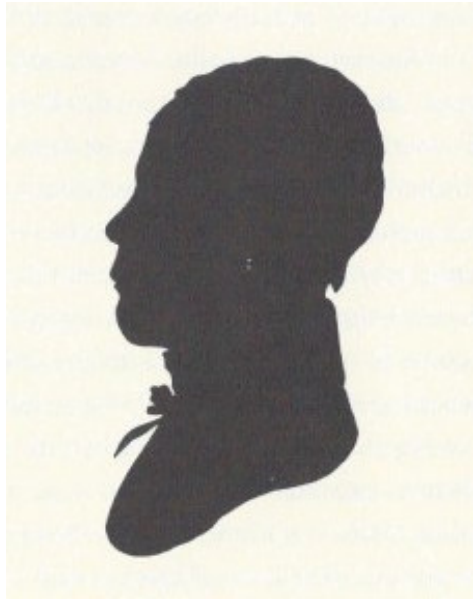


Figure 43 | Moses Williams, *Mr. Shaw's blackman*, after 1802

Appendix

1. Timeline and Location of Peale's Philadelphia Museum

<i>Charles Willson Peale's Philadelphia Museum Locations & Timeline</i>

1786 - 1794	Peale Household on Third and Lombard Streets
1794 - 1811	American Philosophical Society (APS) Hall
1811 - 1827	State House or Independence Hall
1821	The Peale Museum was Incorporated and the Philadelphia Museum Company was founded.
1802 - 1811	From 1802 to 1810, the Museum was located in both the APS Hall and in the upper floors of the State House. It was not until 1810 that the entire Museum moved to Independence Hall.
1827 - 1838	Upper Floors of the Philadelphia Arcade
1838 - 1843	Creation of a "New Museum Space"
1845 - 1849	Edmund Peale runs the Museum from the Old Masonic Hall in Philadelphia
1849/1850	P.T. Barnum & Moses Kimball purchase the Peale Collection ²⁰⁰
1851	Fire within P.T. Barnum's Philadelphia Museum (the Swaim Building)

2. Catherine Fritsch's Full Account from Visit to the Philadelphia Museum in 1810:

"Then we went down Chestnut Street to visit what of all city sights I most wished to see: namely Peale's Museum. The heat on the streets was most oppressive: so Mr. Steinman kindly took us into a tavern garden, and ordered beer for the whole party, which we found very refreshing.

Having come to the State House where the museum is located, we passed through it and into a fine square. Many people were there, either strolling in the walks or lounging on the benches. An angular space formed by the main building and one of its wings,

²⁰⁰ It is still unclear what of Peale's collection went to Barnum (and was split between his museum in Philadelphia and his museum in New York, which also burnt down in 1865) and what went with Moses Kimball.

inclosed and entered through a gate, held a large collection of beautiful flowers in pots, or boxes, and also a few living animals. Two great bears amused us exceedingly by their clumsy play, or as they drew from the recesses of their den vegetables – mostly asparagus – and eat them.

On top of the bears' house two parrots, apparently quite contented, chatted together; in the next cage an eagle sat right majestically on his perch – above his head a placard with this petition on it: 'Feed me daily for 100 years'; and next to it there was a monkey, who kindly showed us his whole assortment of funny capers and wonderful springs.

Over the lower door leading to the museum we observed this good advice: *Whoso would learn Wisdom, let him enter here!* At the foot of the stairway each of us paid ¼ dollar, and on the second floor we were shown into a large hall which was filled entirely with animals, finely mounted and in natural positions. In this room was located the *Oracle* – a lion's head: had I talked into it I should have fancied myself a priestess of a heathen temple; but we knew not where the sound outlet was, and it was only after we had gone through the three rooms that I discovered it. Then Mr. Steinman at the lion's head and Christel at the other end of the tube, quite a distance apart, talked together; but the novelty of it caused them, and us, to laugh so immoderately that they could hardly ask or reply to any questions.

I went about the rooms with my spectacles on under my bonnet, so that I could read the finely written labels; and in that way whenever I found anything remarkable I would call my companions to come and see it. Here we could observe abundant instance of the wisdom of God in His creation, as we viewed, with astonishment, the many

different animals, birds, and fish, and the infinite variety of exquisite butterflies and insects. The latter two exhibits in large, but shallow, glazed cases, were preserved from the effects of light by covers of heavy, marbled pasteboard, hinged at the top, over each pane of glass: lift up a cover and you see the butterflies!

I took much pleasure in reading whence all these curiosities came, and who had presented them: indeed, here ‘the inquisitive one’ was in her element; for years she had wished that she might see this museum, and always she had honored the name Mr. Charles Willson Peale: but now more than ever – since he has hung on the walls scripture texts – in oval frames - beautifully engrossed – as silent reminders to the unthinking that there is a God who has created all things. On the door leading up to the organ were the affixed rules of behavior for visitors.

Two live snakes in a large receptacle having sides and top of glass, and filling a window recess, attracted our interested attention. The large one lay coiled fast asleep; the smaller one was gliding through the green grass growing on the bottom of the box. Above them a little yellow bird hopped from perch to perch singing cheerfully all the while. Poor, innocent thing, thought I, you are happy despite your imprisonment with the most disagreeable of creatures!

How glad “Mama” B. and I were to rest sometimes on the comfortably upholstered settees provided for just such tired ones as we were!

All this time I was looking forward to seeing the mammoth, and now I proposed that we inquire for it. Then a gentleman who had just come from the Philosophical Hall, where the great skeleton was kept, told us that he had seen it and had to pay ½ dollar for the privilege. All the party, but myself, declared that the price was entirely too high – a

quarter they would give willingly, but not a cent more! I was keenly disappointed, yet did not wish to go alone and be there among the strangers. Just to content me, Christel went to the doorkeeper and asked him whether, as we were a large company, there might be a reduction in the charge for us – but he would not grant it; only he led us to some old bones that we had already seen!

In one of the rooms a man was making silhouettes. Polly coaxed me to have mine cut for her, but I couldn't think of it – with my big nose! Only Mr. Steinman and his daughter has theirs made. Here, too, were the Magic Mirrors, which afforded us much amusement – you might take your choice of a giant face, or a dwarf's, or have seven heads!

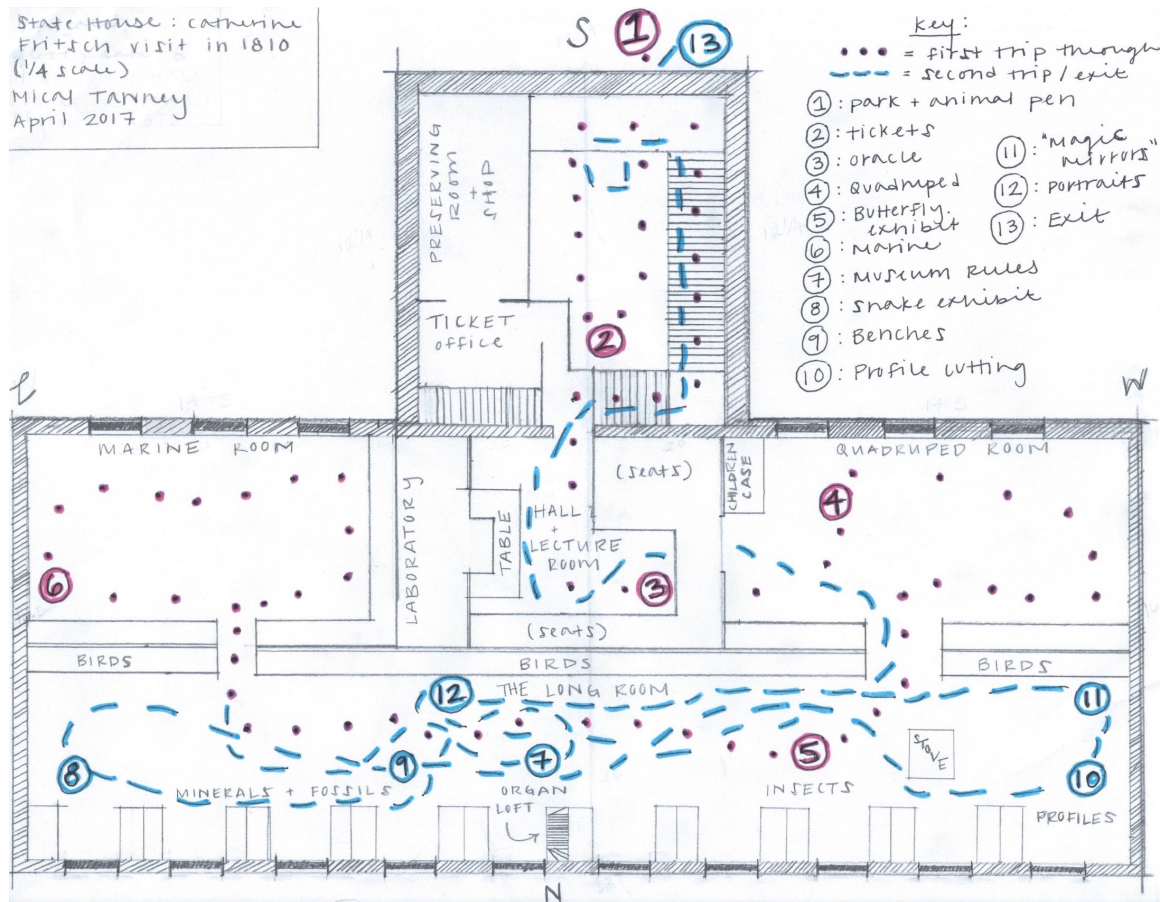
I read thoughtfully both of the Oaths that Talyrand made before magistrate in Boston and Philadelphia respectively. How he is bound by them, thought I, our poor sea-captains and merchants have daily experience in fullest measure! The Oaths are hung here, framed.

On the walls were finely painted portraits of distinguished men, and all of our presidents – besides other paintings. Which picture it was that Benjamin West honored the museum with, I wished to know; but whom should I ask? The walls could give no answer: and I had not the happiness to meet Mr. Peale. Don't laugh! There's no danger – I shall not set my cap for him, even if he is a widower!

As we left the State House all our talk was of how delightful had been our visit to the Museum. Had our time permitted it, I could have spent a whole day there. It was almost one o'clock when we got back to our inn.”²⁰¹

²⁰¹ A.R. Beck, “Notes of a Visit to Philadelphia, Made by a Moravian Sister in 1810.” *The*

3. Analysis of Catherine Fritsch's Movement in the Museum:



Understanding Catherine Fritsch's movement through the Museum during her 1810 visit can be difficult to analyze by reading it only. This is the primary reason for this diagram. Using the Sellers Map as my model, I created this floor plan of the Museum when it was located in both the State House and APS Hall. The pink numbers and pink dots indicate Catherine's first walk through the entire Museum. The blue numbers and blue dash marks indicate her second time through certain Museum spaces as indicated in her description. All the numbers mark areas or exhibits within the Museum that Catherine took note of her in her account. Primarily, her description demonstrates her focus on

these areas; her remembrance of the space is marked by her recollection of certain objects, not by her movement through specific rooms. She never calls the rooms she walks through by their names, i.e. “Marine Room” or “Long Room.”

First, Catherine walked through the State House Square and interacted with the animal pen outside of Peale’s Museum (number 1). Then she entered the museum and purchased a ticket (number 2). After she climbed the stairs to the second floor, Catherine pauses to look at the “Oracle.” It is unclear as to where the Oracle was located exactly (number 3). She describes the first space she enters as “a large hall which was filled entirely with animals, finely mounted and in natural positions. In this room was located the *Oracle* – a lion’s head: had I talked into it I should have fancied myself a priestess of a heathen temple; but we knew not where the sound outlet was, and it was only after we had gone through the three rooms that I discovered it.”²⁰² The hall marked on the Sellers Map was used as Peale’s lecture hall, but it is unknown if the room had the same use during the Museum’s occupation in both the State House and APS Hall. She notes that the Oracle sound outlet was three rooms away: this would indicate that the outlet could have been located inside the Marine Room as it was the third room away from the Hall with the Quadruped Room and Long Room in between. Catherine does not mention anything specific in either the Quadruped Room or the Marine Room, but I marked them on the floor plan anyways (numbers 4 and 6). It would have been unlikely that she would not enter or explore the exhibits in those rooms as she walked through the Museum.

²⁰² A.R. Beck, “Notes of a Visit to Philadelphia, Made by a Moravian Sister in 1810.” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 36, no. 3 (1912): 15.

As one can see from the floor plan diagram, Catherine spent the majority of her time in the Long Room. On her first walk through the room, she mentions the butterfly exhibit (number 5). When she left the Marine Room, she began her second walk through the Long Room. The first thing she notices are the Museum rules affixed near the Organ Loft (number 7). She then walks over to the “snake exhibit”; it is not entirely clear if the snakes were kept in the far eastern corner of the room, but she makes note of other exhibits in the western corner, leaving me to deduce that Peale would not have placed that many exhibits in one section of the room (number 8).

After looking at the snakes, Catherine and one of her companions rest (number 9). If one takes a closer look at Peale’s painting of *the Artist in His Museum*, one can see the benches Peale provided his visitors, painted close to his right hip and directly across from the Quaker woman (Figure 21). This is the primary resource I used when I thought of where to place number 9. Rather than pay the extra cost to enter APS Hall, Catherine and her companions have their profiles taken with the physiognotrace (number 10). They then looked at themselves in the “magic mirrors” she mentions; these were most likely mirrors that distorted your body image like the mirrors used at carnivals today (number 11). Before leaving, Catherine takes note of the portraits in the Long Room (number 12). She then turns around, walks back through the Quadruped Room and Hall, down the stairs and out the South entrance of the State House, the same door she used to enter the Museum (number 13).

It is not unusual that Catherine spent the majority of her time in the Long Room: it was the largest space of the Museum and therefore most likely contained the largest amount of objects and exhibits. It is also highly likely that this was the room that

captured her attention the most; Catherine makes note of the objects in this room throughout a majority of her written account, indicating its prominence in her remembrance of her visit. Every visitor to Peale's Museum would have experienced the space differently and would therefore, have a different physical mapping of their time in the Museum, but Catherine's account is an exceptional visitor account of the space. By mapping it out, we can see how she may have physically moved and experienced Peale's Museum and therefore, think about how other visitors would have moved around in Peale's Museum.

4. "A Dialogue on Mr. Peale's Museum." *General Advertiser*, September 8th, 1792, section 2.²⁰³

"For the GENERAL ADVERTISER, A Dialogue on Mr. PEALE's MUSEUM.

Charlotte: It is very surprising that we should not before today have enjoyed the rational entertainment of Mr. Peale's Museum, though we have frequently seen it mentioned in the gazettes: How many innocent and improving pleasures do we lose by mere indolence!

Maria: Say rather, my dear, our frivolity: for we young ladies are more inquisitive after the gay toys of the shops, than the beautiful wonders of nature.

Celia: True enough. I am ashamed of our silly taste: but hereafter I shall prefer the crest of the *Cocatos*, to the loftiest cap, and respectfully lower my cushion before the *Wiffier*.

²⁰³ "A Dialogue on Mr. Peale's Museum." *General Advertiser*, September 8th, 1792, 2.

Charlotte: And I shall never again sigh for jewels, because the costliest of them would never make me a rival of the *Diamond Beetle*.

Maria: Nor shall I ever be tempted to set of my cheeks with *rogue*, after having seen the crimson glow of the *Humming-Bird*.

Strephon: These reflections do you honor. Your sex has a right to enhance native graces by artificial embellishments; but great solicitude for decoration is blamable, and still more the spoiling of natural charms by ridiculous modes. In this respect the Museum will also be a useful sehbol to our American fops – Buttons, buckles, ruffles, and whatever fripperies of male vanity, must fall abashed before the magnificent attire of the Peacock, the Swan, and Powees.

Alexis: The moral economy of many animals presents examples of virtue which mankind should strive at least to equal if not to excel – How many unnatural children leave their old parents to distressing want, when the dutiful crane bears the decrepid Site on his wings, and procures him food at the hazard of life! – How many dames of high quality send their infants to mercenary nurses, when the partridge covers her young against the shattering hail-storm and the deadly hunter!

Sophronia: Those unnatural mothers are as yet happily very few among us, though I feat their numbers will increase with the growth of what is absurdly stiled *High Life*. Your parallels are just – I assure you, with a maiden simplicity, that my greatest ambition and

pleasure shall be to resemble those *snowy white doves* in conjugal tenderness, if ever Heaven joins me to a worthy partner in *holy bands of wedlock*.

Theocles: You may without a blush express this pure sentiment; and happiest of mortals are those men who find such partners for life.

Anacreon: I expected that all these sentimental delicacies would lead to love – hah! Hah! For my part I prefer any bonny lass, blonde or brunette, with paste or rogue, with bishops and cushions, or in naked simplicity, to all the gimmacks of Peale; and a bottle of Madeira or sound Port, to all the moral sentiments you can extract from his bears, apes, snakes, fishes, birds, flies, and beetles.

Theocles: You will sooner or latter feel the evil consequences of a vitiated moral taste; try therefore to correct it betimes; let me recommend as a salutary medicine, a frequent meditation on the works of your Creator, and conversation with men of sense, and with women of refined sensibility: by this you will deserve an amiable wife, and by her be radically cured of any remaining corruption.”

5. Charles Willson Peale’s Broadside “my design in forming this Museum.” (Philadelphia, 1792)

“Gentlemen, I thank you for the honor you do me in the favor of this visit; and I will endeavor to explain to you in as few words as possible, my design in forming this Museum, and the motive which induced me to request you, gentlemen, to take on yourselves the trouble of becoming Visitors and Directors of it.

To collect and preserve all the variety of animals and fossils that could be acquired, and exhibit these publicly, was the first general intention of erecting this Museum; and it was not without the hope of rendering it worth the attention of the world, to the degree of enabling me to enlarge and improve it further and yet further, and that in the end it might become the basis of a great national magazine of those subjects in nature. Altho' all that I hoped for has not been obtained, yet it has so increased as to have become too weighty for me alone to arrange and govern it; and my circumstances are too confined to admit of the requisite advances towards enlarging it. If it has produced to me some income, yet this is but partial and has become disproportioned to the increase of labour and the calls for rooms requisite for the further extension of the design. These difficulties, together with the desire to have your countenance and assistance as Visitors and Directors, with the hope that it may induce a more public and general notice of it, are the motive for requesting your friendly services.

I am fully sensible that I cannot say any thing which, to you, can be new in natural history: yet for the sake of method in the subjects I am now about to speak of, permit me to follow the order in which that great man, Linnaeus, has given, in his classing the objects of natural history.

In the animal kingdom, man is placed in first class and first order, called *primates*. In a translation and abridgement of the writings of Linnaeus by Mr. Pultney, he says, 'However the pride of man may be offended at the idea of being ranked with the beasts that perish, he nevertheless stands as *an animal*, in the system of nature, at the head of this order; and as such is here described with his several varieties observable in the different quarters of the globe, in a manner, and with an accuracy, peculiar to our author,

and which we venture to say is no where else to be met with. But man is not left by Linnaeus, to contemplate himself merely as such; but he is led to the consideration of what he ought to be, as an *intelligent and moral being*, in a comment on the Grecian sage's dictate KNOW THYSELF; by the true application of which, he cannot but be sufficiently elevated above every humiliating idea which can otherwise arise from such an association.'

By good and faithful paintings the likeness of man is perhaps with the greatest precision handed down to posterity; and I think myself highly favored in having the opportunity, and being able to make the progress I have done, in forming a collection of portraits of many of the persons who have been highly distinguished in their exertions, in the late glorious revolution, and which I am desirous further to enlarge with such characters as you, gentlemen, may deem most proper to be placed in this Museum. Hitherto I had confined myself, in my choice, to a certain line, which I had conceived would be as much as I could spare time for, independent of my other necessary labours to support my family. The portraits of the Presidents of Congress, the Presidents of the state of Pennsylvania, the ministers of high departments, officers in high command, and such other persons who had distinguished themselves in a particular manner; I have taken and preserved, and have done as much as I have been able to afford in this line of the design. But I am sorry that my circumstances or opportunities have not permitted me to add to this collection a number of portraits of other gentlemen of known merit.

There are other means to preserve, and hand down to succeeding generations, the relicks of such great men, whose labours have been crowned with success in the most distinguished benefits to mankind. The mode I mean, is the preserving their bodies from

corruption and being the food of worms: this is by the use of powerful anticepticks. Altho' perhaps it is not in the power of art, to preserve these bodies in that high perfection of form, which the well executed painting in portrait, and sculpture can produce; yet the *actual remains* of such men as I have just described, must be highly regarded by those, who reverence the memory of such luminaries as but seldom appear. The means of these preservations I have considered; and at some future meeting, I hope to be able to lay before you, gentleman, some specimens for your inspection.

Sorry I am, that I did not propose the means of such preservation to that distinguished patriot and worthy philosopher, Doctor Franklin, whose liberality of soul was such, that it is not improbably that by the interest which I might have made with his friends, he could have been prevailed on, to suffer the remains of his body to be now in our view.

I have already collected some other objects belonging to this class, and have in prospect the obtaining others, either in whole or in parts, that will be a notable part of this Museum, which I might mention: yet that I may not take up too much of your time, I will pass them over, and speak of the next class, that of brutes.

Here the wilds of America will furnish a very considerable variety; of which as yet I have not been able to enrich the Museum with more than a small collection. I have however the fullest confidence that I know the means of preserving them in their almost perfect forms, that I possess the ardour necessary to go through the labour of preserving our largest animals in a manner that they will keep for ages with little trouble to the master of the Museum.

The giving the proper attitudes (as well as the form) in order to shew their manners and dispositions, I consider as essential to give a tolerable knowledge of the animal. Mere stuffed skins are but a poor resemblance, but they may be kept where nothing better can be had.

The sight, alone, of our large animals, collected together in good preservation, surely would be pleasing if not also instructive: the elk, the moose deer, the buffaloe, the white bear, the sea-cow, the tygers, and many others perhaps unknown (at present) to us: as we may reasonably conclude, since we have seen bones of an enormous size, which have been found in divers parts of America, and which no tolerable idea at present can be formed of what kind of beast they were. But if such a number of those bones were collected together, and made into a complete skeleton, it would lead to an illustration of the animal of analogy: a work that I believe may yet be executed – but if not undertaken soon, the remaining bones will be so scattered over the whole globe, as to render it scarcely possible to get them together again.

The collection of quadrupeds, of which I have only slightly mentioned a very small number, is a work of great magnitude, and the room necessary to contain these alone, would be so costly that to think of it makes me (like some small animals I have seen) shrink back into my shell, until much greater encouragement than I have yet experienced shall enable me to build one.

I will pass on to the second class, that of birds, a very beautiful class of animated nature. According to Linnaeus, it contains 930 species; and I am very confident that we possess in America, many which have not yet been known in Europe. Of the rapacious, the first that presents itself to my view, is the American called the bald eagle. I have a

fine one, which I have kept alive these four years; it is now five years old; and what is remarkable, it did not shew its white head and tail, until the last past summer; before that period it had the appearance of the other grey eagles, that are preserved in the room; not only the colour of the features is changed (which is common to many birds annually) but also its bill and eyes, from a grey brown colour to a yellow of some brightness. The grey-coloured and the bald eagle have been often observed to use the same nest; but it has not been generally known that they were the same bird, but of a different ages.

We possess a pretty variety of hawks, but the variety of our owls is much greater. In our thick forests I find birds that perhaps are never seen on the cleared fields, and every succeeding year our country furnishes me with some new species which I had not before. I have not yet been able to procure any specimens of the paroquets which are in our western country, and whether they are like those obtained in the southern parts of America, I do not know.

The birds which inhabit the southern coasts of America, have of late years been found to come in flights more and more northerly: I have a pelican which was shot from a flock of those birds at the entrance of Chester river, in the Chesapeake bay; one other of the same kinds of birds, I have heard, was taken at Albany, on the Hudson. Many of our birds are found to change the places of their abode in the different seasons of their visits to us, by reason of the failure of their accustomed food.

The manners of the several species of birds, as well as that of some beasts, wherein any thing curious may appear, ought to be shewn in a descriptive catalogue of this Museum. And for the further illustration, if such birds as the public are not certain of what becomes of them, through the variety of our seasons, were kept alive in a warm

room, thus experimentally to know whether they go into a torpid state. Last summer in my journey into Maryland, I caught a pair of humming birds, which I intended for such an essay; but my stay in that state was longer than I expected, and the cold weather commenced, and both of these birds I recovered twice from a lifeless appearance, by animal heat, into such animation as to feed freely; the cold weather increasing, and their falling again into stillness, I put them into cotton in a small box, and I have not found any putrid smell from them, in a variety of weather since.

The increasing my number of glass cases will, for some time to come, be an increasing expence, although made in the cheapest manner, and which, from experience, I find is the best mode to keep all the small birds. But the birds of the largest size, such as the ostrich, the cassawar, the albatross, and some other very large birds, may, in the method which I must use for preserving large animals, be kept without glass covers, their strength and form being superior to slight injuries.

I will not take up more of your time, Gentlemen, with this beautiful class, than only to mention that I mean to be attentive to preserve not only each specie I can produce, but all its varieties, which in proportion to my success therein, much entertainment will be given to the inquisitive mind.

In the third class, amphibious, Linnaeus has placed many subjects, which strickly speaking, cannot live in either air or water, but principally from their power of suspending or performing the function of respiration in a more arbitrary manner than other animals. Therefore he has placed in this class the sharks, lampreys, sturgeons, and several other kinds of fishes.

The greatest variety in this class is in the second order *serpents*, the greater number of which may be kept in spirits, but the largest kinds, such as inhabit South America, must be skinned and stuffed.

The fourth class, fishes, have in their class a variety of our coasts, which have not, I believe, been yet collected in any Museum: and the mode of preserving those which are not very large, may be done in this manner – take one side of the fish, and preparing a form of wood, then placing the fish on it with the fins extended, and fix the whole on a board, and cover them with glass to keep them clean. This manner would form a pleasing exhibition of this kind at a moderate expence.

I will not, Gentlemen, descend into the inferior parts of the animal kingdom: the fifth class *insects*, a very numerous class, and not destitute of beauty in the eyes of many. I have made some progress in the collection and preservation of those which American affords, and have found but little difficulty, except in the seventh order of this class, *spiders*, where those beautiful colours which I have seen in the living, are totally lost when they become dried. The progress of the worm into its chrysalis form, some left hanging in the open air, others covering themselves in various substances, and some other buried in the earth, and even passing thro' stagnated waters, to wait the return of another summer's sun to bring them forth flies, in all their beauteous feathered wings, those stages of the different kinds shewn would be proper.

The sixth class, *worms*, is also a very numerous class, when the corals and carollines are included in it, which, in the latest discoveries, are proved to be composite animals, and opportunities of seeing those various tribes alive and in motion, must be a high feast to the admirer of the wonderful works of creation.

The keeping of many subjects of this class, must be in spirits; but the corals, sea-fans, and feathers, &c. require only care to prevent them from being broke by violence. Gentlemen, having thus slightly touched on each of the classes of animated nature, and the means to exhibit them in a collected view, I presume a tolerable display of them would have its value, in the pleasure and instruction in natural history, which it would effect, and for the accomplishment whereof no powers of mine shall be wanted.

The further to illustrate the construction of the various bodies contained in these classes, I wish to prepare such a number of skeletons as may shew a due variety of their forms, the smallest of which, of either birds or beasts, must be put into glass cases. I crave your patience, Gentlemen, while I mentioned a few other subjects belonging to my undertaking in the designing of this Museum. Of the fossil kingdom, comprehending the earths, minerals, and other fossil matters, which include also petrefactions, it is my wish to make such a display of the various appearances of them, with the results of essays, as shall be generally entertaining and instructive.

The vegetable kingdom also claims our attention in forming a Museum; but it contains such a variety, that I have been fearful to engage in it, as it would add too greatly to my labor and cost. However, some well chosen collections of neatly preserved plants would be highly valued; and the Museum is not totally deficient in this branch. The articles of *lusus natura* claim a place in the Museum; but as such subjects are not always agreeable to the sight, they will necessarily be received with caution, and the subjects will be but few, until a room can be obtained for that use.

A collection of the arms, dresses, tools and utensils of the aborigines of divers countries, may also fill a considerable space.

Gentlemen, I have not the same sentiments I had when I addressed the public two years past. 'That at all events I intend to prosecute the design with such means as are in my power. Should it happily receive the smiles of public, the progress will be proportionally great, whereas, if it is to depend only upon my solitary efforts, the progress must be so slow, that the whole may fall through.

It is my ardent wish to bring this Museum into such consideration, as to make it worthy the public protection; and at the same time, that my family may not lose the benefits of my assiduous labors of years past, and to enable my children to contribute their future aid to this my favorite undertaking, I am teaching them the methods I use to preserve subjects, and when they are a little better prepared and matured in years, it is my intention to send one of them to collect articles for the Museum from that wonderful store, South America.

I cannot conclude, Gentlemen, without again returning you my very hearty thanks for your goodness, in countenancing the Museum with your approbation of it, and for the aid you are so cheerfully disposed to give to the design, by your consenting to become its visitors, and friends to the further improvement of it – in which your advice and directions will be always thankfully received, and with gratitude ever remembered, by, Your obedient and Very humble servant, Charles Willson Peale.”²⁰⁴

²⁰⁴ Lillian B. Miller, eds. *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family. Volume 2, Part 1 & Part 2, Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museums Keeper, 1791- 1810*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 12 – 19.