



For most artists there are defining influences—the work of other artists, period conventions, and historical and personal circumstances—that determine the content and provide a structural framework for their work. For Ammi Phillips there must also have been a “defining moment,” when he first executed a painting in which he reused elements from an earlier work of his own. Thereafter, although his work clearly evolved through a series of major stylistic changes, he followed this pattern, reusing and reformulating certain aspects of his prior works. The result was a working process that was both efficient and creative.

In 1976 the folk art scholar Mary C. Black described *Lady in White* (frontispiece) as one of Phillips’s great “formula paintings,”<sup>1</sup> using as a compliment a term more often art historically associated with an implied negative assessment. The painting was recognized at the time as part of a small group of the artist’s works showing sitters wearing white dresses and almost reverently referred to as his women in white.<sup>2</sup> Our research has identified

Fig. 1. *Ruth Haynes Page Palmer*, by Ammi Phillips (1788–1865), c. 1818. Oil on canvas, 36 by 30 inches. Private collection; photograph by courtesy of Sotheby’s, New York.

Fig. 2. *Betsy Brownell Gilbert* [1796–1825], by Phillips, c. 1820. Oil on canvas, 34 by 28 inches. Whereabouts unknown; Sotheby’s photograph.

Fig. 3. *Jane A. Fort Van Rensselaer* [1797–1869], by Phillips, c. 1820. Oil on canvas, 29 7/8 by 23 3/4 inches. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Museum, Williamsburg, Virginia.

## Ammi Phillips's *A brilliant formula* women in white



By Joan R. Brownstein and Bobbi Terkowitz



more than a dozen additional examples, and we have been able to divide the entire group into three smaller ones (early, transitional, and later) and to establish a probable chronological order for the likenesses. Fully half of our women in white fall into the latest group and are virtually unknown to most Phillips admirers, collectors, and scholars.

Somewhat eclipsed by the monumental *Lady in White*, the women in white have not previously been examined within a context that allowed them to be compared to each other, much less to other groups within the larger context of the artist's fifty-year career. They were introduced late in what is called his border period (1812–1819), probably around 1818, and the latest examples appear to date from the mid-1820s, during what is called his realist period (1820–1828).

Our chronology is based on a consideration of stylistic elements derived from comparisons to other paintings by Phillips that can be specifically dated and share features but do not show the sitter dressed in white; an examination of costume design, including variations in the white

**Fig. 4.** *Young Lady in White*, by Phillips, c. 1820. Oil on canvas, 30 ¼ by 24 ½ inches. Reproduced from *Nineteenth-Century Folk Painting: Our Spirit-ed National Heritage: Works of Art from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Tillou* (William Benton Museum of Art, University of Connecticut, Storrs, 1973), Pl. 36. *Whereabouts unknown.*

**Fig. 5.** *Eliza DuBois [later Mrs. Peter Van Benschoten Fowler; 1801–1866]*, by Phillips, c. 1820–1822. Oil on canvas, 30 by 24 inches. *Whereabouts unknown; photograph by courtesy of Samuel Herrup Antiques, Sheffield, Massachusetts.*



dresses themselves; updated genealogical information; and other date-specific details, such as a framer's label. This analysis, in turn, has led to a broader consideration of Phillips's working methods and of the effect of cultural and historical factors on his work. What is of most interest here is the development of his formulaic working methods and his apparent insight into what made his work visually successful.

**P**hillips employed several formulaic strategies. Like that of many folk artists, his work displays a certain stylization, or "urge toward clarity of the known and bounded,"<sup>3</sup> concepts at odds with a realistic treatment of volume or an emphasis on surface texture through the use of light or brushwork. In addition, he developed somewhat standard poses within his groups, which allowed him to make good compositional use of his spatial formats; he employed a repertoire of objects or props that added visual interest to his pictures; and he often utilized the same color palettes, particularly with accents of reds and green. All of these practices allowed him to quickly and efficiently work on the background and costumes of his sitters and limited his need to constantly reinvent pleasing combinations for these elements. This, in turn, allowed him to concentrate on each sitter's individual personality and appearance and to visually establish a sense of rapport with them. This said, however, he seems to have been aware that a powerful working formula needed to be considered a variable as opposed to a fixed program, and it is this awareness that made his formulaic work some of his best.

Starting in his border period, Phillips's



primary color accents were red and green—occasionally blue and yellow. However, because the overall palette of these works is generally soft and pastel-toned, the effect of the areas of intense color makes them appear quite abstract. Frederick Gale's red-lined top hat and red shoes, for example, startle the viewer (Fig. 7).<sup>4</sup> They stand alone and do not merge with the surrounding colors. In Phillips's realist period, during which most of his women in white were painted, color becomes a more balanced element of his compositions. The largely red swagged draperies and primarily red or pink shawls are no longer treated as monolithic forms or small color accents, but thread their way through the composition and direct the eye to take in the entire image before focusing on the sitter's face.

**Fig. 6.** *Catherine Douw Hoffman Philip [1797–1866]*, by Phillips, c. 1820–1822. Oil on canvas, 30 ¼ by 24 ½ inches. Reproduced from Barbara and Lawrence B. Holdridge, "Ammi Phillips, 1788–1865," *Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin*, vol. 30, no. 4 (October 1965), p. 135. *Whereabouts unknown.*

**Fig. 7.** *Frederick A. Gale [1810–1880]* by Phillips, 1815. Oil on canvas, 44 by 24 ¼ inches. *Private collection; photograph by courtesy of Peter Tillou, Litchfield, Connecticut.*



Even so, color remains dramatically employed, contrasting sharply with the white dresses and relatively dark backgrounds.

All the women in white are seated and portrayed in three-quarter length. The earliest, we believe, is *Ruth Haynes Page Palmer*, which has the only blue drapery (Fig. 1). The subject is seated in a red paint-decorated armchair and does not have a shawl. Next is *Jane A. Fort Van Rensselaer* (Fig. 3), where the subject sits next to a swagged red drapery, the color of the drapery in all subsequent examples, and wears a floral-edged green shawl. In *Young Lady in White* (Fig. 4) and *Betsy Brownell Gilbert* (Fig. 2) both women have floral-edged red shawls that cover their chairs. These four young women all wear dresses that employ a drawstring and bow to define the bustline

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Fig. 8. *Julia Reynolds [Mrs. Hiram Willson; 1803–c. 1823]*, by Phillips, c. 1822–1823. Oil on canvas. Whereabouts unknown; photograph by courtesy of Howard Fertig.

Fig. 9. *Elizabeth Smith Hunter [Mrs. David Hunter; 1788–1854]*, by Phillips, c. 1824–1825. Oil on canvas, 30 by 24 inches. Private collection; photograph by courtesy of Godel and Company, New York City.

Fig. 10. *Ann Eliza Sloan Dorrance*, by Phillips, c. 1824–1825. Oil on canvas, 30 by 24 inches. Collection of Dr. and Mrs. Robert Booth; photograph by Don Roman.

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Fig. 11. *Catharina van Keuren*, by Phillips, c. 1824–1825. Oil on canvas, 29 ¼ by 23 ½ inches. Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel D. McCullough.

and have what appear to be long, attached, cuffed sleeves. We believe they were painted between 1818 and 1820, based on both our stylistic analysis and the costume details.

Around 1820 the drawstring was replaced by an inset band just beneath the bust,<sup>5</sup> as is seen in the dresses worn by the next group of women in white—*Barenholtz Woman in White*,<sup>6</sup> *Catherine Douw Hoffman Philip* (Fig. 6), *Eliza DuBois* (Fig. 5), *Lady in White* (frontispiece), and *Julia Reynolds* (Fig. 8)<sup>7</sup>—as well as by all the later sitters. Phillips portrayed Catherine Douw Hoffman Philip, Eliza DuBois, and Julia Reynolds with a swagged red drapery. *Barenholtz Woman in White* does not include a drapery and is the earliest of the group without one. *Lady in White* has a red shawl with a lovely paisley edge, and she is the first sitter shown seated on a black horsehair sofa edged with brass tacks. Of the five sitters in this group, only Catherine Philip does not have a shawl. Julia Reynolds



marks a transition to the latest group, as she is the last (in our chronology) to have a sleeve gathered at the wrist, and the first to have a trimmed puff at the shoulder (suggesting that the sleeve is detachable below the puff) and a dress made of a patterned fabric.

The latest group includes at least nine young women wearing similar white dresses of patterned fabrics with the tabbed-puff upper sleeve detail, but their sleeves end with a cuff of eyelet lace that is not gathered. We believe *Elizabeth Smith Hunter* (Fig. 9) and *Ann Eliza Sloan Dorrance* (Fig. 10), in which the sleeves are opaquely painted, preceded the portraits of the women dressed similarly except that their sleeves appear transparent (see Figs. 11–16). Like the *Lady in White* of the previous group, most

of the young women here are seated on a black fabric-covered Federal sofa edged with brass upholstery tacks, although in *Kate Elting* (Fig. 12), *Sarah Maria DuBois* (Fig. 13), and *Maria Eliza Hasbrouck* (Fig. 14), each woman is seated in a green paint-decorated Windsor side chair and rests an arm on a Federal server that has mahogany crossbanding and a ring drawer pull with a floral backplate.

All the women wear their hair up. *Lady in White* is the only one with an elaborate turban; all the others have a large tortoiseshell comb in their hair and small combs holding the curls at the sides of their face. The dresses they wear are remarkably similar compared with fashions before and after the proposed timeframe of the portraits; they all share the shape of a chemise dress, a neoclassical style that harkens back to ancient Greece.<sup>8</sup> Starting in the early 1790s, following the American Revolution, elaborate gowns with full skirts and stomachers supported by cone-shaped corsets were replaced by this simpler style. Our women are at the middle to end of this period of chemise dresses, as evidenced by the gradual appearance of puff sleeves and lowering waistlines. All predate 1825, by which time puffs had begun to change into huge leg o' mutton sleeves, waists had returned to the natural waistline, and skirts had become fuller. They are day dresses, not evening gowns, and are made of the lightweight fabrics and in the pale colors that were the style in the first decades of the nineteenth century. The fabrics were most likely imported, as they appear to be finer than those made in the United States in this period. The dresses are not overly ornate, although they do exhibit some return to orna-



mentation in the tabs, lace collars and ruffs, and embroidered bands, all of which reflect the Renaissance influence in costume.

In addition to the style of their dresses, an important factor in determining a chronology for the portraits was the sitter's posture. In the Palmer, Van Rensselaer, and *Young Lady in White*

(Fig. 2), the last sitter with this loose definition of central body anatomy, is seated in the more upright position that comes to dominate the later paintings. This posture probably not only reflects a change in Phillips's technique that allowed him to draw his figures with crisper outlines, but it was also a physical result of the

fabrics; many are sitting on horsehair sofas over which their dresses slide gracefully, and many hold the ends of their shawls to show off the fine fabric. Shawls were both practical in the days before central heating (especially when wearing lightweight dresses such as these) and a display of fashion and wealth. Although the plain ones, and even those with a patterned border, were less costly versions of the all-over patterned paisley shawls worn in the city, they were made of cashmere and were expensive. As a result, they were *the* gift for a father or husband to give a woman, and would be highly prized and displayed as an important possession.<sup>10</sup>

It became interesting to us to speculate about whether there were actual connections between Phillips's sitters since the paintings themselves seemed to fall naturally into stylistic and chronological groups.<sup>11</sup> Within what we believe to be the earliest group, we found that Ruth Haynes (later Palmer) and Jane Fort (late Van Rensselaer) were both from Hoosick, in Rensselaer County, New York, and both their families were active in local affairs and state politics, so it is hard to imagine they did not know each other.<sup>12</sup> Jane Fort and Betsy Brownell (later Gilbert) both married men from Columbia County, the county just south of Rensselaer. While nothing is known of the identity of *Young Lady in White* (Fig. 4), she wears a distinctive black necklace that is strikingly like the one worn by Betsy Brownell (Fig. 2), suggesting a possible tie between the two.<sup>13</sup>

**T**he next group of Phillips's women in white, speaking stylistically and chronologically, came from an area slightly south of the region represented in the earliest group. Of the known sitters in this group, Catherine Douw Hoffman Philip was from Claverack, in Columbia County, the same town as Henry Van Rensselaer; Jane Van Rensselaer's husband. Catherine and her husband were both painted by Phillips, making it unlikely that her likeness was done much before her marriage in May 1821. Eliza DuBois grew up in Dutchess County, south of Columbia County, and married Peter van Benschoten Fowler (1800–1875) in 1826, probably several years after her portrait was painted.<sup>14</sup> The sitter identified as Julia Reynolds was probably painted at the same time as her brother Walter (1801–1844),<sup>15</sup> and certainly prior to 1824, when her widowed husband Hiram Willson (b. 1799) married her younger sister Eliza (c. 1805–1892). The iconic *Lady in White* (frontispiece) is the most mysterious sitter in this

portraits (Figs. 1, 3, and 4), each sitter displays what Barbara and Lawrence B. Holdridge have described as Phillips's "sliding pond lap."<sup>9</sup> These women appear to slump slightly in their chairs and the trunks of their bodies are undefined beneath the bustline. *Betsy Brownell Gilbert*

corset worn under the dresses, which returned to a stiffer and more constructed shape after about 1820.

In all cases, the sitters appear to be proud of their appearance, and even seem to derive great pleasure from the tactile sensation of the

**Fig. 12. *Kate Elting*, by Phillips, probably 1824. Oil on canvas, 29 ¾ by 24 inches. Private collection; photograph by Thomas Eaton.**

group. Nothing is known of her identity or origins, but her dress has an eyelet band under the bust similar to that of Eliza DuBois (Fig. 5), and none of the other portraits has this detail. Stylistically, we believe she belongs late in our transitional group; the inset band and the squared neckline suggest a date of about 1822, when bodices were "cut square behind and before, and they had a double tucker.... A great deal of trouble was apparently taken to produce new effects in the trimming of white dresses."<sup>16</sup>

The final, and largest, group of women-in-

as residents of Mamakating in the federal census of 1820.<sup>18</sup> Sullivan County is southwest of Ulster County, and like Ulster is on the west bank of the Hudson River. On the same page of the census—implying a residence in very close proximity—was David Hunter (1786–1830), the husband of Elizabeth Smith Hunter (Fig. 9). David Hunter and Benjamin Dorrance were both prominent members of the community. Hunter attended the meeting at which De Witt Clinton (1769–1828) was first nominated for governor of New York State, which was presided over by Dorrance's brother John.<sup>19</sup>

Crawford in Orange County, and in the area around Kingston in Ulster County.<sup>20</sup>

There is another geographical cluster within this late group that is of particular interest. Sarah Maria DuBois (Fig. 13), Maria Eliza Hasbrouck (Fig. 14),<sup>21</sup> and Kate Elting (Fig. 12) are all portrayed seated in the same yellow-striped green-painted Windsor side chair and all three lean on the same Federal server with a ringed drawer pull.<sup>22</sup> The server and the portraits of Maria and Sarah are today at Locust Lawn in New Paltz, a house once owned by Sarah's uncle Levi Hasbrouck (1791–1861) and his wife,



white portraits is also the one in which the strongest connections between the sitters can be seen. It was actually here, researching *Kate Elting* (Fig. 12), that our sleuthing began, and here that we stumbled across connections that led to more questions, more portraits—and a spreadsheet to keep track of all the details they had in common or that set them apart from each other.<sup>17</sup> As is so often the case in any genealogical project, luck played a major role early in our inquiry. In the process of seeking details about Ann Eliza, or Elizabeth Ann, Sloan Dorrance (Fig. 10), we were researching her husband, Dr. Benjamin Brewster Dorrance (d. 1828). The Dorrances were married in 1819 in Mamakating, Sullivan County, and appear

Catharina van Keuren (Fig. 11) is seated on a sofa identical to the one on which Elizabeth Hunter and Ann Eliza Dorrance are seated, suggesting a possible connection between the three women, although not a definite one because sofas of this sort were fairly common at the time. We have not been able to identify Catharina, but there is a Van Keuren cemetery in Sullivan County, in an area known as Van Keuren Corners, which suggests that a significant branch of the family resided in the area. And there are several (variously spelled) Catharina van Keurens born between 1798 and 1802 (a likely time period based on the apparent age of the sitter and the likely date of the portrait), in the Mamakating area, in the area around

Hylah Bevier Hasbrouck (1795–1874), and now part of the Huguenot Historical Society of New Paltz. We believe that the three young women, cousins and friends, all sat for their portraits by Phillips in that house during the same brief period in 1824 or 1825.<sup>23</sup> The date is suggested by the fact that Kate's portrait retains its origi-

**Fig. 13. *Sarah Maria DuBois* [Mrs. John Easton; 1806–1869], by Phillips, probably 1824. Oil on canvas, 29 ½ by 23 ½ inches. Huguenot Historical Society, New Paltz, New York; photograph by Michael Gold.**

**Fig. 14. *Maria Eliza Hasbrouck* [Mrs. Christopher Reeves; 1798–1857], by Phillips, probably 1824. Oil on canvas, 29 ½ by 23 ½ inches. Huguenot Historical Society; Gold photograph.**

nal frame, which bears a label stating: “Barnard/Carver, Gilder, and Looking-Glass Manufacturer/102 Warren-Street. Pictures, Prints, Drawings, & Needlework, neatly framed, and glazed or varnished. Bronzing, in a superior style. J.W. Palmer & Co. Print. Corner Wall & Broad-sts.” Richard T. Barnard is listed at this New York City address only in the directory of 1824 to 1825.<sup>24</sup>

The remaining two portraits in this later group are an unidentified sitter (Fig. 15), about whom nothing is known, other than that she is the companion portrait to an unidentified gentleman, and *Letitia Sloane* (Fig. 16) of Wallkill, Orange County. Letitia is also one of a pair; her brother, Samuel, was painted at the same time. Wallkill is just across the county line from Mamakating, and is on the route from Sullivan County’s lumber and tanning industries to the Hudson River. Both these women are seated on a sofa identical to the one in the Sullivan County cluster of paintings (of Ann Eliza Dorrance, Elizabeth Hunter, and Catharina van Keuren); perhaps there is some family or social connection, but it remains elusive.

The women depicted in white dresses, like many of Phillips’s sitters, were the daughters, wives, and mothers of important men in their rural communities. Many of the families were of Dutch descent, or at least members of the Dutch Reformed Church—which was very helpful in researching their genealogy since the Dutch churches were quite diligent in recording marriages, births and deaths.<sup>25</sup> Other families, most notably those of the New Paltz cluster, were descendants of the French Protestant Huguenots who were the original patentees of New Paltz.<sup>26</sup>

As noted above, Benjamin Dorrance and David Hunter were supporters of De Witt Clinton and participated in his nomination for governor. In his portrait, David Hunter holds a booklet entitled “Speech of His Excellency De Witt Clinton to the Legislature of New York,” which we believe refers to the state of the state speech Clinton gave in January 1825, providing additional support for dating his portrait and that of his wife, Ann Eliza Sloan Dorrance, to that year. Benjamin, who is shown holding the book “*Opfilia on Poisons*,” was a doctor and an assistant to Dr. Valentine Mott (1785–1865), developer of anesthetic surgery in the United States.<sup>27</sup>

Many of the women in these portraits were probably educated. A number of them are shown holding a book, and not solely for the

splash of red color it brought to a portrait. Letitia Sloane holds “Milton’s Works,” hardly light reading even for educated women today. In addition, around 1800 seven Bevier aunts of the New Paltz contingent attended the Litchfield Female Academy in Connecticut, run by Sarah Pierce (1767–1852), which offered a rigorous intellectual curriculum in addition to the so-called “ornamental curriculum” of needlework, art, and music deemed necessary for genteel women.<sup>28</sup> Maria Eliza Hasbrouck is painted holding a copy of *Lady of the Lake* by Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832), the source for the needlework picture entitled *Blanche and*



Eliza Hasbrouck married Christopher Reeve (or Reeves; 1798–1865), whose uncle, Tapping Reeve (Tappan Erastus Reeve; 1745–1823) had founded the Litchfield Law School in 1784. So it may be that Sarah Pierce’s school is a source of previously unknown connections among sitters for Phillips portraits.

Altogether, our examination of the women in white took us away from the Connecticut-New York border counties believed to be Phillips’s usual geographical range, and brought us further south and west for the later groups. All but one of the identified sitters (Julia Reynolds) lived west of the Hudson River. Not surprisingly, many of their families had some connection to the local rivers and canal routes that made trade with the city more possible.

Women in white have a certain mystique. White is fragile, impractical, an extravagance. For a brief period in the early nineteenth century, it was the ultimate fashion statement. White as pigment is the absence of color. White as light is the combination of all the colors of the spectrum. Incident light dissolves the edges of forms and breaks up surfaces. But Phillips had a different vision. He ignored these optical effects. Light was deactivated. Outlines prevailed. Internally, he embellished areas of white with fabric designs and lace patterns by adding black dots or mixing black with white to make gray; and he thinned or layered white to show transparency. White was used in opposition to bright colors or against a darker background, but always maintained its chromatic purity.

The earlier portraits in this study still have elements of Phillips’s border period style. The sitters’ softly sloping contours and rounded forms came to be supplanted by figures with more assured outlines, flatter bodies, and greater refinement of drawing in their faces. The latest women prefigure the solutions of visual problems that Phillips explored in his so-called Kent period (1829–1839):<sup>31</sup> the black sofa behind a white dress anticipates white lace collars and beribboned bonnets painted against black back-

**This page: Fig. 15. Unidentified Woman in White, Holding a Book, by Phillips, c. 1824–1825. Oil on canvas, 30 by 24 inches. Whereabouts unknown; Sotheby’s photograph.**

**Facing page: Fig. 16. Letitia Sloane [Mrs. William Chapman; b. 1804], by Phillips, c. 1825. Oil on canvas, 30 by 24 inches. Private collection; photograph by courtesy of Marguerite Riordan.**

grounds; when the red shawl was no longer a favorite fashion accessory, the red drapery reappears or even a red dress, providing the necessary color accent.<sup>32</sup>

Phillips’s success is an art historical anomaly. For most artists repetition becomes a downward spiral. But Phillips used his formulaic method as a conceptual aid: by constantly experimenting, reconfiguring, and reformulating his pictures, he created some of his greatest works. The woman in white was a brilliant formula.

<sup>1</sup> Mary Black, *Ammi Phillips*, pamphlet for an exhibition held at Washburn Gallery in New York City, 1976, n.p.

<sup>2</sup> Besides *Lady in White*, the others previously recognized as part of the group are *Ruth Haynes Page Palmer*, *Jane A. Fort Van Rensselaer*, *Young Lady in White*, *Catherine Douw Hoffman Philip*, and *Eliza DuBois*.

<sup>3</sup> Barbara Novak, *American Painting of the Nineteenth Century: Realism, Idealism, and the American Experience* (Praeger Publishers, New York, 1969), p. 23.

<sup>4</sup> Also see a related portrait, *Boy with Orange Shoes* (Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, Virginia). Examples from other formulaic groups by Phillips include his likenesses of Harriet Campbell (Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts) and Harriet Leavens (Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts).

<sup>5</sup> This may indicate these dresses were remade to reflect the most recent fashion, with the waists slightly lowered by means of the inset band, according to costume historians Colleen Callahan and Newbold Richardson of Costume and Textile Specialists of Alexandria and Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>6</sup> So-called because the portrait was once in the collection of Bernard Barenholtz but is now unlocated. For an illustration see *American Furniture and Accessories...of Bernard M. Barenholtz*, Northeast Auctions, Manchester, New Hampshire, November 12, 1989, cover.

<sup>7</sup> According to Stacy C. Hollander and Howard P. Fertig, *Revisiting Ammi Phillips: Fifty Years of American Portraiture* (Museum of American Folk Art, New York, 1994), p. 71, the sitter identified as Julia Reynolds was “probably daughter of Israel Reynolds and Deborah Dorr Reynolds” of Dutchess County, New York. This identification is borne out by records found at [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org).

<sup>8</sup> The costume and corset information in this and the following paragraph is from personal communication between the authors and Samantha H. Dorsey, Lois F. McNeil Fellow, Winterthur Program in Early American Culture.

<sup>9</sup> Barbara and Lawrence B. Holdridge, “Ammi Phillips, 1788–1865,” *Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin*, vol. 30, no. 4 (October 1965), p. 103.

<sup>10</sup> The information on shawls is from Callahan and Richardson.

<sup>11</sup> According to Neil G. Larson, “The Politics of Style: Rural Portraiture in the Hudson Valley during the Second Quarter of the Nineteenth Century” (master’s thesis, University of Delaware, 1980), p. 1, “Phillips...[did not] travel door-to-door choosing his subjects indiscriminately at random. The artist’s visit was well planned, and he painted a whole series of portraits during his visit.” Thus it is not surprising that we found geographical clusters among our sitters.

<sup>12</sup> Both women were married before or around the time we believe their portraits were painted; the Palmers married in March 1816 and the Van Rensselaers prior to 1818. Jane Fort’s husband, Henry Peter Van Rensselaer (1794–1874), was the son of Maria Ten Broeck (1761–1869), which leads to some interesting speculation about ties to later Phillips paintings of the Ten Broeck family.

<sup>13</sup> A similar necklace on a black dress is worn by *Lady with a Rose* of c. 1822 (whereabouts unknown); see Barbara C. and Lawrence B. Holdridge, *Ammi Phillips: Portrait Painter, 1788–1865* (Clarkson N. Potter, New York, 1969), p. 31, No. 72.

<sup>14</sup> Eliza’s parents and brother Charles were also painted by Phillips, the latter c. 1823, which coincides with our dating of Eliza’s portrait. See Hollander and Fertig, *Revisiting Ammi Phillips*, p. 65.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.



<sup>16</sup> Elisabeth McClellan, *History of American Costume 1607–1870* (Tudor Publishing, New York, 1937), p. 388.

<sup>17</sup> For the spreadsheet, see [www.themagazineantiques.com](http://www.themagazineantiques.com).

<sup>18</sup> Fourth United States Census, 1820, Sullivan County, New York, roll 71, book 1, p. 172.

<sup>19</sup> James Eldridge Quinlan, *History of Sullivan County* (1873; reprint on CD-ROM, Between the Lakes Group, 2004), p. 429.

<sup>20</sup> Names were very inconsistently recorded and spelled in the early 1800s. Catharina could equally be Catherine or Katherine; van Keuren is also spelled Vankeuren, van Cueren, van Curan, and even van Keulen.

<sup>21</sup> The identity of Maria Eliza Hasbrouck is somewhat problematic, as she would have been twenty-six in 1824, and the woman in the portrait appears much younger. Lacking any information to identify her otherwise, and knowing that she must have been closely connected to the Hasbrouck family to have been painted leaning on their server and sitting in their chair; however, we will continue to consider the sitter to be Maria.

<sup>22</sup> We are very grateful to Leslie Le Fevre-Stratton of the Huguenot Historical Society of New Paltz for calling our attention to these two portraits, and to her and Susan Stessin for their assistance in our research.

<sup>23</sup> There are a number of other Phillips portraits of the aunts and uncles of these young women—slightly older women in black dresses of the same style as the ones in white and their husbands—also at Locust Lawn. The portrait of Philip Hasbrouck (1783–1841) is dated 1824, a date entirely consistent with our approximate dating of the New Paltz women in white based on stylistic and costume cues, as well as the label on the frame of *Kate Elting*. Kate Elting’s precise relationship to these families is unknown.

<sup>24</sup> Alexander W. Katlan, *American Artists’ Materials Suppliers Directory: Nineteenth Century: New York 1810–1899, Boston 1823–1887* (Noyes Press, Park Ridge, New Jersey, 1987), p. 42.

<sup>25</sup> The Van Rensselaers’ children were baptized in the Dutch Reformed Church of Claverack, and Jane and Henry are buried in the cemetery of that church; the Philippses were married in the Reformed Church in Ghent, New York.

<sup>26</sup> In 1677 twelve Huguenot refugees purchased a patent for land along the Wallkill River from the American Indians, and settled in what they named New Paltz, after the German Pfalz, or Palatinate, region where they had briefly made their home. The patentees included the family names Hasbrouck, DuBois, Bevier, Deyo—all names that appear with some frequency (often as middle names, rather than surnames) in lists of Phillips portraits.

<sup>27</sup> Hollander and Fertig, *Revisiting Ammi Phillips*, p. 65.

<sup>28</sup> Theodore R. and Nancy Sizer et al., *To Ornament Their Minds: Sarah Pierce’s Litchfield Female Academy 1792–1833* (Litchfield Historical Society, Litchfield, Connecticut, 1993). A listing of students known to have attended the academy is on pp. 114–131.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126. However, the dates of attendance given are clearly incorrect in some cases, so we cannot entirely rule out our Julia. Hylah Bevier, for example, is shown in attendance only for the year 1811 (p. 115), yet her signed needlework from the school carries dates of 1808 and 1813 (p. 90).

<sup>31</sup> *Portrait of M. A. Barker Aged 3 years 1816*, a border period work depicting a young girl in white (private collection), stylistically prefigures the later women in white; see Sandra Brant and Elissa Cullman, *Small Folk: A Celebration of Childhood in America* (E. P. Dutton in association with the Museum of American Folk Art, New York, 1980), p. 20, Fig. 20. A childhood portrait of Mary

Elizabeth Smith from 1827 (Terra Foundation for American Art, Chicago: [www.terraamericanart.org](http://www.terraamericanart.org)) more fully demonstrates than do our latest women how certain elements of Phillips’s style would be transformed in his Kent period.

<sup>32</sup> An example of a later work in which the red drapery reappears is *Helen Cornell Manney [1811–1843]* of c. 1833 (Dutchess County Historical Society, Poughkeepsie, New York); see Hollander and Fertig, *Revisiting Ammi Phillips*, p. 42, Pl. XXXIX.

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