

NEWS RELEASE

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART
Washington, D. C. (25)

Republic 7-4215, extension 246

FOR RELEASE: Sunday, July 25th, 1954

PORTRAITS OF JOHN ADAMS AND MRS. JOHN ADAMS
BY GILBERT STUART
GIVEN TO THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

WASHINGTON, July 24th: David E. Finley, Director, announced today that two important portraits by the American artist Gilbert Stuart (1755-1828) have been given to the National Gallery of Art by Mrs. Robert Homans of Boston, Massachusetts. They portray John Adams, 2nd President of the United States from 1797 to 1801, and his wife Mrs. John (Abigail) Adams. The portraits have been placed on exhibition in Gallery 65.

The portrait of John Adams was painted in Philadelphia in 1798 at the request of the Massachusetts Legislature. He is shown three-quarters left, with his eyes directed at the spectator. His powdered hair is tied with a black string tie, and he wears a black velvet coat with white lace at the wrists, a white neck-cloth and lace jabot. His left arm rests on the arm of a gilded Empire chair upholstered in red. The background is a warm brown tonality.

National Gallery of Art

Like the portrait of John Adams, that of his wife, Abigail, has always remained in the Adams family, the donor, Mrs. Homans (Abigail Adams), being a direct descendent of the sitters. The portrait of Mrs. John Adams was painted in Boston, probably about 1812 judging from her apparent age and dress. The stately First Lady of the Land, was the first wife of a President to occupy the White House, a "castle of a House", as she wrote her sister shortly after arriving in Washington, "built for ages to come", though "the country around is . . . a wilderness at present." She is shown facing right, seated in an Empire chair, with her brown eyes gazing directly from the canvas. A few ringlets of brown hair show on her forehead beneath the white lace of her cap. Her dress is of mulberry-colored silk with a white muslin yoke, and long sleeves with lace at the wrists. Around her neck is a white lace collar in two folds. A thin lace shawl covers her shoulders. The background is of warm grays and browns.

These splendid portraits, of the greatest historical interest, are important additions to the Gallery's collection of American paintings.

† END