

Collection #  
P 0126

**WILLIAM CONSTABLE  
WATERCOLOR AND MAPS COLLECTION, 1807**

[Collection Information](#)

[Biographical Sketch](#)

[Scope and Content Note](#)

[Series Contents](#)

[Cataloging Information](#)

Processed by

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December 2, 2013

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## COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 OVC Graphics folder 2 Maps
COLLECTION DATES:	1807
PROVENANCE:	Gerold Wunderlich & Co. 1992
RESTRICTIONS:	None
COPYRIGHT:	
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained from the Indiana Historical Society.
ALTERNATE FORMATS:	
RELATED HOLDINGS:	<i>Citizen Daniel (1775-1835) and the call of America: early correspondence of the Constables of Horley.</i> General Collection: CT274.C642 A4 2000
ACCESSION NUMBER:	1992.0522
NOTES:	Historical Sketch researched and written by volunteer Robert W. Smith.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William Constable was born the third son in a working-class family of seven boys and two girls in Horley, Surrey (England), April 5, 1783. His father James and mother, Susanna Jordan Constable, owned and managed a watermill and flour mill alongside the River Mole, as well as wove cloth and sold goods in a “general store.” William had a limited education as he spent most of his time helping his father. At age 14 he left home to work with Henry Browne, the High Constable of Lewes south of Horley. Browne also owned and operated a drapery business, a printing press, and a chemical laboratory.

In May, 1802, William joined his older brother Daniel in a drapery shop and put into practice principles and information he had learned both at home and with Browne. But the travel bug and desire for exploration had bitten both of them, so they sold their business four years later, invested £600 with a stock broker and on May 1 sailed on the *Walter* for North America. After a two-month voyage, the Constables arrived in New York on June 29, 1806, and embarked on a two-year tour covering New England, the South, and several states east of the Mississippi River. Daniel kept a diary of their journey and William recorded the journey with his sketches and maps.

From New Orleans they returned by mule and occasionally by boat and foot back to New York City, stopping briefly in Washington, D.C. where they met President Jefferson. Finally, in July 1807, they arrived back at their port of embarkation. While the pair had tromped thru parts of New York, they still had not visited New England. This they did, in August and September 1807 walking some 600-700 miles up to Boston and its environs, then back down to their port of departure. Some 50 years later, William finished a two-volume book of the brother’s diary in the States, on each page of which he included scaled down water colors of his original paintings.

Back in England and in the family home, William, with brother Daniel set about to rebuild the family watermill. William and Charles, a younger brother, assumed the operation and managed the mill for the next half-century. From 1815–1837 William also superintended 30 miles of the Brighton and London Turnpike. In 1816 the 33-year old William married Jemima Mott, three years his junior and daughter of William and Martha Mott of Brighton. After several years of marriage, she died, leaving William a childless widower. Daniel, his brother and travel companion, never married.

In 1837 William was to be the superintendent/engineer for a proposed railroad in Jamaica. He sailed to the United States, once there and before he could leave New Orleans for Kingston, he received word that the project had collapsed. He remained in the States for a year or so, probably lodging, albeit briefly, with his sister and brother-in-law John and Mildred Purse who earlier (1819) had immigrated to Indiana (probably to Saundersville [also Sandersville], a few miles north of present-day Evansville).

Painting of landscapes while on his American tour touched a spring of response in the fifty-something William, leading the erstwhile miller to pursue yet another vocation, photography. In 1841 William paid the handsome sum of £1000 for a license to establish a daguerreotype studio in Brighton, there to take portraits. For several years he largely controlled the new photographic process for that area. The Photographic Institution put him on the cutting edge of daguerreotype photography in the southern English city and established him with affluent vacationers in Brighton. The 1851 Census lists William as a “flour manufacturer and heliographic artist,” indicating his two jobs of milling and photography.

Constable died at his home in Brighton, on Sunday morning December 22, 1861, at the age of 78. The *Herald*, following his death, described him as a “remarkable” and “excellent man.” The newspaper writer was confident that the deceased would be remembered by all who knew him. Interment was in St. Batholomew’s churchyard in Horley, next to his wife who had preceded him in death some 30 years earlier. Images taken by Constable can be seen at the web site listed below.

#### Sources:

Constable, Claire, *Constables of Horley Hill* (Surrey Mills, Tunbridge Wells North, England, 2001) /

Darbee, Leigh. 1993. Jefferson and Jeffersonville, *Traces*, Summer, 46.

Jenkins, J. Brian, *Citizen Daniel (1775-1835) and the Call of America* (Hartford, CT, 2000) | *Traces*, V (No 3), p. 46, Summer, 1993 |

[www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/Dsconstable.htm](http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/Dsconstable.htm)

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

The collection contains one watercolor sketch and two maps showing areas along the Ohio River that were executed by William Constable during his two year trek through America.

The watercolor sketch is stored in the OVC Graphics area and the maps are cataloged separately and stored with the Map Collection.

## **SERIES CONTENTS**

### **Series 1: Watercolor Drawing, 1807**

#### CONTENTS

Title: *View Up The Ohio & the Rocks of Rockincave  
11 Jany 1807*

Description: grid drawn in graphite, watercolor of  
cliffs with trees overlooking Ohio River

Size: 12 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 11 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches

#### CONTAINER

OVC Graphics:  
Folder 1

### **Series 2: Maps, 1807**

#### CONTENTS

Title: [Ohio River from Big Beaver to Kentucky  
River]

Size: 25 x 39 cm

Description: Pencil,  
shows the locations of Cincinnati, the Scioto and Ohio  
rivers and several villages bordering the latter,  
oriented with north to the upper left.

#### CONTAINER

Map Collection:  
G3707.O5 1807 .C6

Title: A Plan of Jeffersonville, at the Falls of Ohio  
Indiana

Size: 21 x 36 cm. on sheet 25 x 40 cm

Description: Pen-and-ink and watercolor,  
checkerboard map of the town, with space for  
residential movement and sunlight. It preserves a plan  
for the town that was never realized.

Map Collection:  
G4094.J45 1807 .C6

## CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog:  
<http://opac.indianahistory.org/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, P 0126).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.