

Website Art Hunt: Judge William Byer's Family

Visit Historic Arkansas Museum's online collection to find this painting and answer the following questions about it.

Who is the artist? _____

What year was the painting done? _____

ABOUT THE ARTIST AND THE ARTWORK:

In **antebellum** Arkansas, this portrait painter created a vast amount of work. He painted the families of merchants, gentlemen, and planters. Portrait paintings were created as family heirlooms or to show off the wealth of the family. Before photography was invented, portrait paintings were the way people captured the likeness of their families. Often people would pose with objects that represented who they were. A portrait can tell us about the person(s) in the artwork, their interests or their jobs.

FAST FACTS: This artist rarely signed his work and there are only two known paintings with his signature. This painting is the earliest known painted portrait image of an African-American in Arkansas.

ENGAGE: Imagine that you are going to portray a portrait of yourself in an important location. What would that location be? What would your portrait look like? What would you wear? How would you gesture and pose? What objects would you pick to represent who you are? Draw or write your ideas on the back of this page.

EXPLORE: Let's take a closer look at the painting and answer the following questions. Describe the expression on each person's face. Describe the postures of the sitters. What are the sitters looking at in the painting? _____



VOCABULARY:

antebellum- time period before the American Civil War • **sitter**- the person having their portrait painted

Frameworks: R.1.VAA.4, CN.3.VAA3

Historic Arkansas Museum is a historic site museum, interpreting the territorial and early statehood periods of Arkansas. For other educational materials, including videos, online tours and more, visit our website or our Facebook page.



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