Tacony was not an English estate, and that their Philadelphia townhouse was not a Bristol merchant's counting house. Colonists celebrated their empire, but because of the things that shaped their quotidian reality, they held a distinct place within it. And at least some of them knew that. In the next chapter, we see this knowledge at work when we move Anne Shippen Willing's portrait out of its Philadelphia drawing room and into the Pennsylvania frontier.

11. Emulating Colonists

Scandal, Regality, and Sister Portraits

Anne Shippen Willing's 1746 portrait furthered its dynastic associations when it was replicated in a portrait of her brother Edward's second wife, Mary Gray Newland Shippen.[1] Edward Shippen was an important man in colonial Pennsylvania. Among other things, he was mayor of Philadelphia (1744–45) and a member of the Board of Trustees of the College of New Jersey (later Princeton) and a number of Philadelphia's important cultural institutions like the Library Company. He also was a successful merchant who was first apprentice and later business partner of Quaker James Logan. After the death of his first wife, Shippen married Mary Gray Newland in 1747. Mary Newland's first husband, John, had gone to Barbados years before. He made no contact for so long that eventually he was assumed dead. But soon after Anne's brother married his widow, word came from Barbados that Newland was, contrary to assumption, still very much alive. This situation became a matter of gossip in Philadelphia. Edward Shippen wrote to James Logan, in a letter he asked him to "keep all to your self," that "we have solemnly agreed to separate Beds, and to cohabit no more together, unless that P[er]son at B[arbado]s should really be gone."[2] To help appearances, Mary went to live with her parents.

Despite their lack of cohabitation, the Shippens faced legal pressures. Edward Shippen's brother-in-law Charles Willing was by then mayor of Philadelphia. Willing barred Newland from entering Philadelphia, but he could not prevent a grand jury from indicting the couple in 1750. Punishment

for bigamy included thirty-nine lashes and life imprisonment. James Hamilton, still governor of Pennsylvania, proved that Anne Shippen Willing's gracious gesture dancing with him at the ball was neither forgotten nor misplaced. He pardoned the couple and saved them from punishment. The scandal dissolved

Artist Unknown, *Portrait of Mrs. Edward Shippen II (Mary Gray Newland Shippen)*, c. 1750, oil on canvas, 50 in. × 40 in. The Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey. Purchase 1969 Charles Engelhard Foundation Fund, Collection of the Newark Museum 69.115. Photograph © The Newark Museum.

when Charles Willing's Barbados factor wrote with proof that Newland had—at last and conveniently—just died there. A marriage celebrated and then gone awry thus forms the larger historical context in which we must understand this copycat portrait of Mary Newland Shippen.[3]

Likely commissioned to celebrate the Shippens' engagement or marriage, as portraits often were, the existence of this painting would be nothing unusual were it not for the fact that it portrays Edward Shippen's new wife as a near replica of his sister. Visual evidence makes it clear that Robert Feke did not paint the portrait. Comparison with his other portraits makes it likely that the artist instead was John Hesselius, Gustavus Hesselius's son, who copied Feke's work more than once. The two portraits differ slightly in their backgrounds though both women stand outdoors against trees and mountains. The figures themselves are almost identical. The exceptions are that Mary Shippen's bodice ribbon is yellow rather than pale red, and her chemise and cap have no Mechlin lace. Shippen also wears a pearl choker, which adds a distinct—and perhaps, given the circumstances—pointed iconographical element as pearls symbolized purity.[4] It is evident that the artist who painted Shippen's portrait copied Feke's painting. But it is also clear that he painted Shippen from life. Shippen did not just seek a copy of Anne Willing's portrait; she actually wears her sister-in-law's dress. The dress drapes differently on the two figures, and the folds in the silk are in different places. Had the second artist simply copied the portrait, the draping, shadows, and folds would be more closely aligned. In other words, Anne Willing gave her dress as well as her portrait to her sister-in-law. This intimate exchange of clothing was a gift marking the relationship between the two women.

It could, of course, be argued that the gift of the dress and permission to copy the portrait were gestures emphasizing the personal connection between the two women's husbands.[5] It could be argued, along these lines, that Charles Willing bought the silk for his wife and insisted she wear it for her portrait, and that Edward Shippen insisted his new bride do the same. Although Mary Shippen's taste in fabric is unknown, we know from Anne's portraits that she liked flowered silk. Her husband might well have too, and might have encouraged his wife to wear it, and even to gift her damask dress to her new sister-in-law. But Anne's habit of memorializing her preference for floral patterns is undeniable and argues to the contrary.

The gifting of a silk dress—an intimate act made highly public and permanently memorialized in the gifting of a copycat portrait—reminds us

of the emotive meanings behind use of commodities like Spitalfields silk. Scholars argue that American colonists embraced the products of the British consumer revolution as a tangible means to emulate new British fashions and as visible criteria for judging gentility.[6] Spitalfields silks were undeniably part of this fashionable consumption. Yet their use in America belies the idea that Americans followed the British fashionable example like lemmings. Inherently expensive textiles, these silks were luxuries. Cherished objects, their relative scarcity and economic value lent them special significance as conveyors of meaning and power. Objects of both emotional and economic worth, silks survive today in museums, passed down through generations, and altered for repeated wearing. New Yorker Christina Ten Broeck Livingston, for example, owned a silk brocaded taffeta woven to a 1742 Garthwaite design that was refashioned and worn by her descendants into the nineteenth century.[7] Christina Ten Broeck was born into a wealthy, fur-trading Dutch family from Albany. In 1740, she married Philip Livingston, who, like Charles Willing, traded textiles among other things. In the 1750s, Livingston used his ready access to London textiles to purchase three bolts of Spitalfields silk, one blue, one yellow, and one pink, to be saved and made into wedding gowns for his three daughters. Nine years later, in 1764, the Livingstons' daughter, Catherine wore a dress fashioned from the yellow silk for her wedding to a Van Rensselaer. In Ireland, another woman wore silk woven to the same pattern in a different color, while in England, a woman owned it in pink.[8] But colonial Americans used their silks differently than their counterparts in Europe. Such a choice—to wear silk nearly a decade old—was not one a wealthy London bride would have made. By contrast, when old Spitalfields silks were altered for wear and use in Great Britain, they were hardly worn to important social events. Rather, they were sometimes given to servants.[9] No elite merchant's wife in Britain would pose for a portrait wearing, as Mary Shippen did, what was by then four- or five-year-old silk, just as no elite British landowner's daughter would have worn, as New Yorker Catherine Livingston did, ten-year-old silk to her wedding.

The meaning of an object shifts as it passes through different hands, as it goes through distributors from makers to buyers to users. The travels of Willing's Spitalfields silk, from a metropolitan luxury good bought for money to a dress sewn in colonial America and worn for a portrait, to a dress gifted to a new family member for another portrait, encapsulate how

the exchange of goods in the Atlantic World encompassed a wide range of motivations, from the purely commercial and profit driven to the non-commercial. Shippen's portrait exemplified how non-commercial exchanges of objects can encompass both gift-exchange to establish social links and redistribution to gain or maintain power. It raises interesting questions too of why we are less willing to impart meanings beyond capitalist exchange to colonists' consumption of goods like textiles than, for example, when we consider the role of textiles in Native American diplomacy and gift culture.[10]

As silk designed by Anna Maria Garthwaite passed from makers in Spitalfields to colonial buyers like the Willings and then from user to user in America, its meanings shifted. As colonial Americans used these aesthetic commodities over time, the emotive, ideological motivations that lay behind the buying and use of such goods—the implications beyond economic behaviorism or emulative refinement—emerge. Most Americans who owned Garthwaite-designed silk did have mercantile connections and purchased such silk as a luxury good. It is not surprising that some American families who owned Garthwaite-designed silk shared a transatlantic mercantile connection that revolved around clothing and fashion. Philip Livingston and Edward Shippen, for example, both worked with Samuel Storke, who operated one of the largest transatlantic London mercantile houses and did business with other leading merchants in Boston, Philadelphia, and New York. Using family connections, Storke developed trading ties with the colonies, where he focused on the fur trade, shipping textiles for the Indian trade and selling furs sent to London in return. Livingston and Shippen worked closely with Storke on the New York and Pennsylvania fur trades, respectively. Shippen's connections to Native American fur trade networks provide another important context for understanding his wife's copycat portrait of his sister wearing Spitalfields silk.[11]

The meanings captured within Spitalfields silk, cherished and recycled through multiple family members, went beyond its role as an economic object of transatlantic mercantile exchange. More than at its moment of purchase, the use of Spitalfields silk offers clues to its meanings in America. As with portraits, after initial purchase, non-monetary exchange (whether gifts or legacies) dominated its use. Both object types were material culture used to present an image of the self for an audience. Both also had lifecycles in which emotive worth outweighed initial monetary value. Looking beyond

the point of initial purchase at the full biographies of Spitalfields silk and colonial portraits tell stories of use patterns beyond emulative gentility. These objects most often passed from user to user not as purchases but rather as gifts.

Eighteenth-century families—particularly the women in them—often used gifts to cement kinship ties among networks of living kin and across generations. Bequeathed objects can connect the dead to the living. As gifts are such commonplace occurrences, the exchange of which we take for granted, it bears emphasizing the importance of the social and psychological functions of gifts, as a ritual exchange of objects that establish shared identities.[12] In slightly different fashion, portraits too passed within families and between generations. Portraits were both emotive gifts and familial capital—material records of the interpersonal transfer of wealth and family identity.[13]

Clothing, so intimately associated with the individual body, holds particular resonance in emotive exchange. With its ability to evoke the sensory and visual memory of the person who wore it, from the person's size and shape to the scent the fabric might fleetingly retain, clothing holds unique indexical and highly personal signification. Gifting of flowered silk was part of the Enlightenment tradition of scholars and collectors exchanging objects around the Atlantic World.[14] But again, the realities of colonial North American life dictated that the exchange of flowered silk there would have distinctive meanings. It was simultaneously part of the commodification of the colonial landscape and an example of the gift cultures colonists and Native Americans retained in tandem with capitalist exchange.[15]

The portrait of Mary Shippen did more than reflect her likeness, tout the Shippens' status, or show her as a fashionable matron knowledgeable about transatlantic comportment and dress. It follows patterns in British portraiture but does not emphasize her identity as an English woman of wealth and fashion. Instead, it advertises her standing as a member of two powerful colonial families. In Mary Shippen's world, it was more important to refer to Anne Shippen Willing than any fashionable English lady. By copying her sister-in-law's portrait, Shippen reminded all who viewed this painting of her membership in a colonial family with generations of clout. Her portrait is an Anglicized image, but it is an Anglicization filtered through a colonial lens. She emulates, but what she emulates is another colonist, and a creole colonist at that, for her picture is a visual quotation of her colonial-born sister-in-law.[16]

The spatial surroundings of paintings are important. Their location in a house and on a wall, and their relationship to other objects in the same space affect how viewers see them.[17] Long after the scandal of their unknowing bigamy dissipated, Mary Shippen's portrait hung in the Shippens' Lancaster home, while Anne Shippen Willing's portrait hung in the Willings' Philadelphia townhouse. With its Spitalfields silk dress, Shippen's portrait—like Willing's—advertised the transatlantic textile exchange that drove both families' mercantile commerce. Together, the copycatted portraits evoked the presence of multiple trade networks, from that of Native Americans who supplied deerskin to the urban artisans who made Spitalfields silk; from Philadelphia merchants to their factors in the Caribbean; from London mercers to the backcountry traders of western Pennsylvania. Tracing the movement of Feke's portrait of Anne Shippen Willing from the Philadelphia drawing room to the Pennsylvania frontier, we see that colonial merchants used imported luxury goods to engage simultaneously in gift cultures, commodification, and capitalist trade. They used all three as they conducted their trade in fur and slaves, and reshaped and renamed the American landscape.

In the Shippens' Lancaster home, the portrait of Mary Shippen wearing her sister-in-law's Garthwaite-designed silk witnessed the comings and goings of men on business for the fur trade. It watched meetings of men involved in Edward Shippen's plans for the new settlement of Shippensburg on Pennsylvania's western frontier. Later, it hung on the walls as men came in and out of the house working with Shippen to organize wagon supply trains during the Seven Years' War. In this spatial setting, the copycat portrait was a visual reminder of both London and Philadelphia that went with the Shippens as they embarked on their own colonizing travels. The spatial distribution of this piece of Garthwaite's silk created an Atlantic World landscape that stretched in overlapping, circulating networks, across the Atlantic from Spitalfields to Philadelphia, westward into what the Shippens called the "wilderness" of their Lancaster home, and back again.[18]

Following the paths this portrait took beyond its initial moment of production and consumption, we see how colonists employed goods like portraits and silk to travel the cultural and physical landscapes of America both imaginatively and physically. When the Shippens moved to Lancaster in 1752, it was still on the provincial frontier. Lancaster itself was very much seen as vulnerable to Indian attacks.[19] The Shippens owned vast amounts of land in Pennsylvania, and had a particular interest in Indian

affairs and territorial expansion as well as the fur trade. When the copycat portraits of Willing and Shippen were painted, Indian raids in backcountry Pennsylvania were a very real terror to European settlers. Violent frontier encounters with Native Americans shaped the politics of Philadelphians. Both Charles Willing and Edward Shippen were part of the group that vilified the Quaker-dominated assembly for leaving the Pennsylvania frontier undefended. When the Shippens brought Mary's copycat portrait of Anne Willing wearing Spitalfields silk with them, they brought a superficially genteel object into an area dominated by violent concerns inconceivable in London. They also moved imperial iconography deeper into the American wilderness.

This was because Anne Shippen Willing's portrait was, itself, a copycat. Feke modeled his painting after a mezzotint of Caroline of Brandenburg-Ansbach (1683–1737), the German-born wife of British King George II (1683–1760).[20] The similarities between the British original and the American copy are striking, creating a visual quotation that associates Anne Willing with Queen Caroline. But the difference between the two women is important. Everything about Caroline's portrait marks her as a European queen. Willing's, by contrast, announces her status as a member of the colonial merchant elite. Willing wears no jewelry while Caroline drips with pearls and gems; Willing holds a fan and points toward a simple plinth and Feke's signature while Caroline gestures toward her crown; Willing stands against a sublime, wild backdrop while Caroline stands in an imposing neoclassical interior. Willing's fan takes the iconographic place of Queen Caroline's crown in the portrait. This fan, evocative of sociable performance, announces Willing's gentility. The fact that Willing holds a fan is a highly unusual prop choice among Feke paintings, which most commonly showed women holding flowers. In fact, his surviving portraits show only one other woman holding a fan (and probably this was the work of the nineteenth-century artist who finished that portrait rather than of Feke himself). Although initially used by both sexes, by the eighteenth century fans were almost entirely female accessories in Europe that connoted sexualized femininity, used as communicative accessories at events like balls.[21] The night of the dancing assembly, Anne Shippen Willing wielded her fan as a scepter when she asserted her power to rescue Governor Hamilton from public snubbing.

Willing's social performance at the dancing assembly—her highly visible act of offering herself as partner to Hamilton—saved him from

Joseph Highmore, *Caroline Wilhelmina of Brandenburg-Ansbach*, 1727 or after, mezzotint on paper, 11 1/4 in. × 8 1/8 in. D7913. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

embarrassment, but it also made her reigning queen of the ball. Balls progressed with rigidly defined dance sets, each determined by the "lead woman." The first dance, usually a minuet like that Hamilton danced with Willing, held particular importance in the order of things. Dancing manuals that described the etiquette of the dance often detailed the grandest of those affairs, the royal balls, as examples to which "all private balls ought to be conformable." In those royal balls, dancers were placed in order of social hierarchy, with the king performing the first dance with the queen.[22]

Willing was not the only colonial woman to use the ball as a stage for performing ritualized maneuverings for power. Balls like those held by the Philadelphia Dancing Assembly were more than simply entertainment. They were also social contests in which women especially used comportment and fashion to compete for public recognition as superior in beauty, grace, and refinement. Dances like the one Willing performed with Hamilton

emphasized refined grace, and the first dance of the night established the dancers' standing and skill. This skill (or lack of it) became the subject of immediate gossip among the audience. Once the ball ended, letters like Richard Peters's to Thomas Penn, diary entries, and more gossip made such chatter into reputation.[23] In leading the first dance in such a "Genteel Manner," Willing established her standing as the lead woman, or the queen, of the ball. The regal iconography referenced in Willing's performance at the ball was a pervasive feature of colonial American culture.[24]

The life of colonist Hannah Garrett Lewis offers dramatic insight into how deeply such regal iconography—about women in the royal family like Queen Caroline and her daughters rather than simply the king—could penetrate the colonial imagination. In 1746, the same year Feke painted Anne Shippen Willing's portrait, the Quakers of the Shippens' meetinghouse, the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, recorded that one of their members, Hannah Garrett Lewis, "hath been for sometime past under Great Indisposition of Mind."[25] This indisposition manifested itself in Lewis's steadfast assertion that "she was the eldest daughter of George the Second King of England, and Heir to his Throne."[26]

Lewis became a notorious feature of the Philadelphia landscape. On one occasion, she served two unsuspecting women visitors cat for lunch. She often walked the streets, striding "valiantly with her broad sword, a silver cane which she would brandish against the trade boys, who often attacked her." Eventually, Lewis was committed to Pennsylvania Hospital, "which she called her Palace," and where she lived, she claimed, on "Tribute money" given her in London by "the King her father." Careful of her regal splendor, at the hospital she abandoned her snuff addiction in favor of ground ginger, which would not stain her "cloaths." From her "throne, which was an old Arm Chair, she would superintend the family at dinner" and berate those who took "undue liberties in the presence of the Princess." Her typical rantings included references to this royal identity, like the following accusations:

> You, stole my silver tankard.
> You, robb'd me of a bushel of gold. . . .
> You, pulled down the walls of my Palace,
> and raised buildings for which I gave you no right. . . .
> For all these crimes committed against me and my government I will have
> You tried at my next high court of Indicature and hanged.[27]

At her death in 1799, the hospital staff found that her chest of belongings contained "her cloaths carefully put up, a few pieces of glass and pebbles, which she valued as jewels, and a bottle full of the heads and wings of mosquitoes or Flies, which she, at sundry times, had beheaded for their presumption, in daring to bite the King's daughter." Her steadfast belief in her regal identity apparently never wavered.[28]

Before being committed to Pennsylvania Hospital, Lewis lived in "a small tenement." This tenement, a stone cottage that Lewis called her "castle," was most probably one of eight cottages the Quaker Almshouse used for housing needy Friends.[29] Lewis's castle was in the courtyard behind the almshouse. This courtyard extended back to Willing's Alley, the narrow alley that ran alongside the Willings' Third Street townhouse. The Willing home, thus, was within view of Hannah Lewis's single-story, twelve-foot-square home, in her line of sight when she emerged to brandish her silver cane in defense of her castle. Anne Shippen Willing surely knew of Hannah Lewis and her belief—notorious in Philadelphia—that she was the daughter of King George II.

Whether Willing pitied or feared Lewis, we do not know. But she might have found her fixation on the family of King George II of particular interest. The Willings too had constant reminders of King George II and his queen in the Third Street townhouse that was so close to Lewis's cottage "castle." Both Anne Shippen Willing's portrait and her sister-in-law's copycat of it were themselves copycats of images of King George II's queen, Caroline. Images and stories of Queen Caroline captured the public imagination in the colonies as well as in England. Queen from 1727 to 1737, Caroline was accomplished, intelligent, and powerful.[30] When portraits of George II and Caroline were sent to be displayed in the Boston Council Chamber in 1730, a notice of the event appeared in a Philadelphia newspaper.[31] In 1737, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* printed a poem written for Queen Caroline titled "Woman's Prerogative: A Poem." It used George II's wife as its muse:

> And You, GREAT CAROLINE! Invok'd, descend,
> To justify the Truths I dare defend:
> Imperial Proof of all that's Fair and Wise,
> Who carry Demonstration in your Eyes!
> Who, form'd for Empire, had, where-ever seen,
> Without the Rights of Law, been felt a Queen![32]

Caroline furthered empire—and Protestant empire at that—in part by bearing children; she had seven who survived to adulthood. In this feat, she was a notable contrast to the failed dynastic example of Stuart Queen Anne. Caroline's successful fertility enhanced the symbolic role she held around the empire as queen and matriarch of the new Hanoverian dynasty. Willing's 1746 portrait by Feke, with its lush botanicals and landscape and her notably large breasts, celebrated her as an American matriarch of a merchant family's dynasty. Fertile matriarch Anne Shippen Willing, born into one politically powerful transatlantic merchant family and married into another, might be said—like Caroline—to be "form'd for Empire." Her power to rescue Hamilton at the dancing assembly illustrated that she, like Caroline, "had, where-ever seen, / Without the Rights of Law, been felt a Queen."

Like Hannah Lewis, Anne Shippen Willing owned a silver tankard.[33] And it, like her portrait by Feke, linked her image to that of Queen Caroline. Given to her around the time she married Charles Willing, the tankard was engraved by a Philadelphia silversmith with her maiden name, her family's coat of arms, the portrait of a courting couple (meant to represent Anne and Charles), royal crowns and lions, and medallion portraits of the king and queen.[34] Like the portrait of her painted in Philadelphia by native-born Feke using a metropolitan print, the tankard was a hybrid. In this respect these objects were like longtime inhabitants of the colonial world, much like Anne Shippen Willing's husband, Charles. Unlike his wife and children, Charles Willing was not born in the colonies and therefore was not a creole in the eighteenth-century sense. He certainly, however, crafted a hybrid identity that negotiated between the metropolitan and the local, influenced by his daily reality of living in a colonial place while retaining his ties to family and place in England.[35] With a form cast in London and ornamentation done in Philadelphia, his wife Anne's tankard and portrait did much the same thing. The tankard simultaneously announced the names of the London-trained engraver who signed it, Richard Meyrick (fl. America ca. 1725–29), and its American-born owner. And like Feke's portrait, although the tankard replicates print sources, it departs from them in noticeable ways. Meyrick copied the European print series *The Four Elements*, engravings by Dutch artist Frederick Bloemaert (c.1616–90) based on paintings by Dutch artist Abraham Bloemaert (c. 1564–1651), to decorate the tankard. But in duplicating the print "Aqua" representing the element of water, he enlarged the ship from the original, a nod to the Shippen family's

mercantile trade. Meyrick also inaccurately depicted the Shippen coat of arms, emphasizing that this was a colonial family by engraving American holly leaves in place of the English oak leaves on the Shippen crest.[36]

Political allegiance to the royal family manifested itself in things as disparate as portraits, tavern signs, and tankards. The Shippen and Willing portraits, like Willing's tankard, operated within this much larger milieu. These objects speak both to the importance such iconography had throughout the British Empire and the different forms it took as it migrated around the empire. Colonists willingly took part in celebrating royal families like the Hanovers. But, as with so much else in colonial society, their embrace of regal iconography sometimes took distinctively colonial forms, as when a Philadelphia family transformed an English oak into an American holly on a silver tankard. We now travel from Pennsylvania to look at an American-born artist who was, like the silversmith Meyrick, skilled at transforming European originals into distinctively American objects. We turn our attention north, to Long Island Sound and the mysterious painter Robert Feke.