

A HISTORY OF THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF  
**THE ARTS OF DESIGN**  
IN THE UNITED STATES

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and yet their art consisted in copying, in a dry, stiff manner with the graver, the plates for the Encyclopedia, all their attempts at etching having miscarried. The rest of their time, and that of all others at this period, was employed to engrave card plates, with a festoon of wretched flowers and bad writing — then there was engraving on type metal — silver plate — watches — door plates — dog collars and silver buttons, with an attempt at seal cutting. Such was the state of engraving in 1794.”

In conversation Mr. Lawson said that while he worked with Thackara and Vallance he improved himself by studying drawing. He afterwards worked for Dobson, and engraved the plates for the supplement of the Encyclopedia.

He likewise worked for Barralet, the painter and designer, and afterwards formed a kind of co-partnership with him, but was obliged to quarrel with the eccentric Irishman before he could get any share of profits. Mr. Lawson is a tall, thin man, of large frame, and athletic; full of animation, and inclined to be satirical, but, as I judge, full of good feeling and the love of truth. Krimmell and Wilson he speaks of in rapturous terms of commendation, both as to talents and moral worth. Murray, on the contrary, with great asperity.

Mr. Lawson engraved the Rev. John Blair Linn's plates for his poems, the designs by Barralet. He likewise engraved the plates (and beautiful they are) for the nine volumes of Wilson's Ornithology, and Charles Lucien Bonaparte's four additional volumes. He is one of the many examples of a native of Britain coming to America and making himself an artist.

#### JENNINGS.

Of this painter all I know is, that he was in London practising *art* about this period. Colonel Sargent in a letter to me, says, “There was a Mr. Jennings, from Philadelphia, in London, to whom I had a letter from Colonel Trumbull. I know not what has become of him, though I had a letter from him some time ago informing me of his success in ‘*manufacturing*



*old pictures for the knowing ones,*' and that it was very curious to hear their observations upon the merits of these works of the old masters." Of course he was an impostor, leading a life of falsehood and deception; and probably ended it at Botany Bay, unless his meritorious knavery exalted him to a higher situation in the country of his adoption.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Jennings, a native of Philadelphia, painted a large and imposing allegorical picture in the year 1792, which he presented to the Philadelphia Library. It is called "The Genius of America Encouraging the Emancipation of the Blacks." It is not a work of great merit.