

CATHERINE GAMBRELL ROGERS

Paintings Conservator

P. O. Box 1408

Charleston, SC 29401

(803)853-2953

CONDITION & TREATMENT REPORT

Dates Received: September 30, 1997

Owner/Custodian: Historic Charleston Foundation

Address: 51 Meeting Street, Charleston, SC 29401

Telephone Number: (803) 724-8481

Artist (owner's attribution): Edward Savage

Name/Title: Portrait of Nathaniel Russell

Medium/Support: Oil/Canvas

Frame: Yes

CONDITION

This oil painting is executed on a twill weave canvas which has been previously lined with a glue paste adhesive. It is attached with tacks to a four-membered stretcher with butt-end joins with two cross bars. There are nine stretcher keys present and three keys missing. Stretcher bar creases are located on the left and right sides. Paper tape has been placed on the perimeter of the painting and slightly into the image area. The paint and ground layers appear secure. There is some slight impasto most noticeable in the white highlights and the ruffles of the fabric.

There is a thick layer of varnish which has discolored and is now matte in appearance while areas of retouching remain glossy. This is especially noticeable along the left edge of the painting. Other areas of restoration are located in the red jacket of the sitter, the upper edge of the painting in the center, the lower edge of the painting, and an area in the sitter's face to the left of his nose. There appears to be old discolored varnish residue in the interstices of the fabric especially noticeable in the sitter's face. Numerous areas of minute losses are scattered throughout the painting due from abrasion from a previous cleaning.

There is debris located between the stretcher bar members and the canvas. The writing on the letter in the lower right corner is illegible. The ledger book has the date "(18)87".

There are several inscriptions and labels on the reverse of the frame which read as follows:
"No 991" on the upper edge; "9423" and "B4" carved in the wood frame along the lower edge;
"Nathaniel Russell by//Edward Savage, c. 1789//Property of HCF//58.1.26" on a typed paper label on the lower right corner; "Portrait of N. Russell//Painted by Edward// Savage//Property of HCF" on a typed paper label on the lower left corner.

TREATMENT REPORT

The painting was photographed before, during, and after treatment to document its condition with 35 mm color slides and B&W photography. The reverse of the painting was vacuumed and any debris lodged between the stretcher bars and canvas were removed. The stretcher was wiped with a damp cloth to remove dust and grime. Three missing stretcher keys were replaced and the painting was keyed out slightly to insure a uniform tension to the canvas.