

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**PORTRAIT COMMISSIONED BY ANDALUSIA’S OWNERS,**

**JANE AND NICOLAS BIDDLE,**

**ACQUIRED FOR ITS PERMANENT COLLECTION FROM**

**THE INDEPENDENCE SEAPORT MUSEUM**

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Bensalem, PA (July 8, 2024)—An oil on canvas by Philadelphia artist Bass Otis (1784-1861), *Portrait of Miss* *Adèle Sigoigne* (1815), which has been on view at Andalusia Historic House, Gardens & Arboretum (Andalusia) in Bensalem, PA, since 2014 as a long-term loan from the Independence Seaport Museum (ISM) in Philadelphia, now joins its permanent collection in an act of collegial partnership. Adèle Sigoigne was a good friend of Jane Craig Biddle (1793-1856) who lived at Andalusia with her husband, Nicholas Biddle (1786-1844). ISM has deaccessioned the painting and transferred its ownership to Andalusia.

“We are overjoyed to have Adèle’s portrait now part of our permanent collection,” said Andalusia’s Executive Director John Vick. “Every piece of art in the historic house has a unique story to tell about the property and the people who lived here or visited. Adèle was practically family to the Biddles, making this a fitting home for her portrait. We are grateful to our partners at Independence Seaport Museum for recognizing what the painting means to Andalusia and for making this momentous transfer possible.”

“Our staff and Board were unanimous in wanting to transfer this painting permanently to Andalusia,” said Peter S. Seibert, ISM’s president and chief executive officer. “Its history and associations with the Biddle family are significant, and thus the painting is imminently relevant to their mission. For us, the transfer is a visible reminder of how two museums can come together to ensure that the history and heritage of our community is preserved in public trust for future generations.”

Although it is unclear how or when Jane and Adèle met, their lasting friendship is certain. Close in age and of similar social standing, the two women came from very different backgrounds, however. Jane was a Philadelphian by birth, the only daughter of John and Margaret Craig, the couple who first established Andalusia as a country estate in 1795. Adèle, by contrast, was French-born and had lived in Haiti. After the Haitian Revolution began in 1791, she moved to Philadelphia with her mother, Aimée Sigoigne, who started a school for young women at 128 Pine Street. Adèle was one of a few guests who attended Jane’s wedding to Nicholas Biddle, held at Andalusia on October 3, 1811. The Biddles’ three daughters would later attend Madame Sigoigne’s school, including Adèle who was named for her mother’s dear friend. (The name Adèle remained popular for several generations of Biddle descendants.)

Although the portrait is unsigned, its attribution is firm; it is nearly certain that the Biddles commissioned Bass Otis to paint Adèle’s portrait as he also painted Jane’s portrait around 1815. (This painting is in the collection of the Second Bank of the United States Portrait Gallery in Philadelphia.) Both women are shown in fashionable, Empire-style dresses with luxurious fabrics draped over their shoulders: Jane’s is white and sheer while Adèle’s is a vibrant red. Their hair is also similarly styled in an updo with ringlets framing their faces. Nicholas Biddle conveyed his appreciation of Adèle’s portrait to Otis in a letter, which remains with and will be transferred with the painting from ISM.

Since *Portrait of Miss Adèle Sigoigne* has been on loan at Andalusia, it has been on view in the historic house’s library, which was part of the 1830s addition designed by architect Thomas Walter. Now in Andalusia’s permanent collection, it will be moved to what is known as the Painted Floor Bedroom. This room is part of the original 1797 construction and could have been where Adèle stayed when she visited Jane around the time that the portrait was made.

The Biddles’ patronage of Bass Otis continued for many years. In 1827, Nicholas Biddle commissioned the artist to paint a copy of Jacques-Louis David’s famous scene *Napolean Crossing the Alps* (1801). The oil on canvas copy, which is also on view at Andalusia, was owned by Napoleon’s brother Joseph Bonaparte, who knew the Biddles, lived near them in Philadelphia and owned a country estate (Point Breeze) near Andalusia. By the 1820s, however, the Biddles began to favor another Philadelphia artist, Thomas Sully, who painted the couple’s portraits in 1826, both of which ae on view at Andalusia. In 1829 the Biddles commissioned him to paint another portrait of Adèle Sigoigne, which is in the collection of The Huntington Library, Art Museum and Botanical Gardens in San Marino, California.

Visitors to Andalusia can see these paintings on a tour of the Historic House. Guided tours are available Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays, as well as during select Saturdays from April to November. Tours are $30 per person (free for members and children 12 and under), which includes access to Andalusia’s gardens and arboretum, and can be reserved at [www.andalusiapa.org](file:///C:\Users\afurlong\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\QH5GEOH9\www.andalusiapa.org).

***About Andalusia***

*Andalusia Historic House, Gardens & Arboretum is a non-profit organization and a scenic 50-acre property overlooking the Delaware River in Bensalem, Pennsylvania. Established more than 225 years ago, the site is a natural paradise of preserved native woodlands and spectacular gardens, as well as museum with an exceptional collection of paintings, sculptures, decorative art, and rare books and manuscripts.*

*The mansion at Andalusia, built in 1797 and later expanded, is a National Historic Landmark and one of the finest examples of Greek Revival architecture in the United States. Opened to the public in 1980, thousands of visitors explore its stunning rooms each year during tours and events, discovering an unparalleled look into the nation’s past through the eyes of the influential Biddle family that lived there.*

*Andalusia features formal and informal gardens, plus and accredited arboretum with over 250 unique species and cultivars. Focused on creating beautiful spaces for the enjoyment of visitors, Andalusia’s aesthetic grew out of the English landscape tradition and has evolved to reflect the contributions of various residents over the past two centuries.*

*Learn more and plan your visit at* [*www.andalusiapa.org*](file:///C:\Users\afurlong\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\QH5GEOH9\www.andalusiapa.org)*.*

***About Independence Seaport Museum***

*The Independence Seaport Museum (ISM), founded in 1960 as the Philadelphia Maritime Museum, encourages visitors to discover Philadelphia's river of history and world of connections. Stewards of the Olympia, a nineteenth-century cruiser, and the Becuna, a World War II-era submarine, ISM is home to interactive and award-winning exhibitions, one of the largest collections of historic maritime artifacts in the world and a boatbuilding workshop. Accredited by the American Association of Museums since the 1970s, it is a premier, year-round destination adjacent to Spruce Street Harbor Park on Penn’s Landing. Visit daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and see our full schedule of programs and events at phillyseaport.org.  Visit* [*https://www.phillyseaport.org/admissons-hours-of-operation/*](https://www.phillyseaport.org/admissons-hours-of-operation/) *to learn about ticket packages and guided tour options.*

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Image caption *Portrait of Miss Adèle Sigoine*, 1815, Bass Otis (1784-1861), oil on canvas, collection of The Andalusia Foundation.

Media Contacts: John Vick for Andalusia Historic House, Gardens & Arboretum

609.929.0594 or [jvick@andalusiapa.org](mailto:jvick@andalusiapa.org)

Bill D’Agostino for Andalusia Historic House, Gardens & Arboretum

215.245.5479 or [bdagostino@andalusiapa.org](mailto:bdagostino@andalusiapa.org)

Robyn Liverant for Independence Seaport Museum

212.472.6947 or [robyn@robynliverant.com](mailto:robyn@robynliverant.com)

Alexis Furlong for Independence Seaport Museum

610.513.5749 or [afurlong@phillyseaport.org](mailto:afurlong@phillyseaport.org)