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Sudduth Goff, Artist: A Preliminary Record

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Kentucky artist Sudduth Goff (1887-1965) led a half-century career as a painter of society and celebrity portraits. A major general, a rear admiral, two governors, and two bishops, as well as judges, academics, prominent businessmen and professionals — and above all, their wives — sat in his studio to be made art. His portraits were frequently exhibited and illustrated, and there were several extensive showings of his work, perhaps the most inclusive being an installation at Louisville’s J. B. Speed Art Museum in 1937.

Goff portrayed prominent subjects from the beginning. His portrait of the Rt. Rev. Lewis Burton, Episcopal Bishop of the Diocese of Lexington, and several other commissions, such as an historical portrait of the sculptor Joel T. Hart, were completed prior to World War I. Following the war and his return from the navy, Goff’s career resumed quickly and prospered. He opened an art academy in Louisville in 1924; on accepting an appointment in Chicago in 1927, he sold the school to the Louisville Conservatory of Music. In 1940 Goff moved to Manhattan and opened a studio off Fifth Avenue, at 33 W. 67th Street. Although he worked far from Kentucky, he was a frequent visitor to the Bluegrass, and the preponderance of his artistic subjects were from, or were associated with, Kentucky in some way.

Sudduth Goff’s work consisted largely of portraits, a genre which typically insures a sale. Some of his portraits, commissioned for public sites, continue to enjoy public exposure; most of his work, however, remains in private hands. While Goff painted and exhibited several fine marine views, he did not avidly pursue landscapes or other genres. His favored medium for portraits was oil on canvas. From time to time, however, he executed confident likenesses in charcoal on paper. Moreover, he adhered to traditional methods and to a conservative style into the middle of the twentieth century, and he openly scorned the emergence of abstraction and modernism. For these and perhaps other reasons, his paintings have not been widely acquired for museum collections.

Sudduth Goff maintained a series of scrapbooks that outline many of the important details of his professional career. Following the artist’s death, these fell to the hands of a nephew, the late Mr. John Allen Duncan of Lexington, and they have lately come to the Department of Special Collections. Mr. Duncan was the son of Henry T. Duncan III.
and Carolyn Goff Duncan, a sister of Sudduth Goff. Carolyn Duncan was a talented pianist who played frequently at the White House during the Wilson years, a soloist at the inauguration of William Howard Taft, and performed at the opening of Constitution Hall. Another sister of the painter, Anna Chandler Goff, was founder of the Lexington College of Music, formerly at 441 W. Second Street, and also the organizer of Lexington's first local concert series; Miss Goff brought to the community, along with many others, the New York Philharmonic, the Cleveland Orchestra, Paul Whiteman, and John Philip Sousa.

The following abstract attempts to convey in summary form something of the artistic achievement of Sudduth Goff in terms of his subjects, his exhibitions, and the journalistic notice that he received. As indicated, this is a preliminary record, and the identification of additional art by Goff, the current location of his works, their provenance, their dimensions, the account of exhibitions since his death, and such market records as may prove discernable, require further investigation.

Exhibition of portraits by Sudduth Goff, J.B. Speed Museum, Louisville, 3-31 October 1937

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Sudduth Goff (1887-1965)

Personal Data
Sudduth Goff, son of Thomas and Mary (Sudduth) Goff, born 6 August 1887, Eminence, Henry County, Kentucky; died at age 77, 7 February 1965, Lexington, Fayette County, Kentucky, buried Winchester Cemetery, Clark County, Kentucky; SSN 401-48-6997; U.S. Navy, WW I; Lexington addresses at 252 N. Broadway and 417 Morrison Avenue; registered Democrat; member Christian Church, Lexington, and Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York
Education:
Morton High School, Lexington, Kentucky
Kentucky University (now Transylvania University), Lexington, Kentucky, 1905-1907
Transylvania College (now Transylvania University), Doctor of Fine Arts (honoris causa), 1948

Art Education:
Cincinnati Art Academy – scholarship, studied with Vincent Nowottny, Lewis Henry Meakin, and H. Wessell
School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 7 years scholarship; student of Frank W. Benson, Frederick Bosley, Philip Hale

Career:
1923-1925, Instructor, Associate Director, Louisville School of Art, Keith’s National Theatre Bldg.
1925-1927 Founder and Director, Louisville School of Painting and Drawing
1928-1936, Instructor, American Academy of Art, Chicago; Studio, 230 E. Ohio Street, Chicago
1933, Guest Instructor, School of Fine Arts & Design, Memphis
1940, Private Studio, 33 W. 67th Street, New York
1963-1965, Lexington

Memberships:
Alumni of the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Arts Club, Louisville
Association of Chicago Painters and Sculptors
Chicago Galleries Association
National Arts Club, New York
Rockport, Massachusetts, Art Association
Salmagundi Club, New York
Southern States Art League

Awards:
Prize, School of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, 1915
Gold Medal in Painting, Louisville Art Colony, 1923
Prizes, Chicago Galleries Association, 1930, 1931

Portrait Subjects:
Col. John R. Allen
Mrs. George P. Anstiss, Michigan
The Rt. Rev. H. P. Almon Abbott, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Lexington

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Mrs. Robert A. Babbage (daughter of Gov. Keen Johnson)
Mrs. J. Harrison Bailey, Detroit (formerly Virginia Watts, Frankfort)
Prof. David W. Batson
Mrs. Frances E. Beauchamp
George A. Berryman, Ashland, Kansas
Mrs. Charles W. Bohmer
Henry M. Bosworth
Miss Loraine Briggs (Mrs. Robert Wood Goodell, exhibited under both names)
Hon. Charles J. Bronston
Mrs. Bedford Brown, Georgetown
The Rt. Rev. Lewis W. Burton, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Lexington
Miss Joy Calkins, Memphis
Miss Cecelia Care, Chicago
Miss Chandler
Judge Rogers Clay
T. A. Coates
Mrs. H. M. Collins
Rev. Mark Collis, Lexington & Chicago
Mrs. Leslie Combs
Dean Thomas P. Cooper
Rear Adm. Walter S. Crosley
Joseph Croxton
Mrs. Joseph Croxton
Wirt E. Darrow, Hollis, Long Island
Mrs. Belle T. Davis
Frederick K. Detwiller
Maj. Gen. George Brand Duncan
Henry T. Duncan (Copy of G. P. A. Healy portrait)
Hon. Henry T. Duncan, II, Mayor of Lexington
Mrs. Henry T. Duncan, II
Henry T. Duncan, III
Mrs. Henry T. Duncan, III
Henry T. Duncan, IV
Judge Denis Dundon
Miss Cecilia Garo
J. D. Gay
Mrs. J. M. Goff
Thomas Goff ("My Father")
Mrs. Thomas Goff ("My Mother")
Mrs. Robert Wood Goodell (Miss Loraine Briggs)
Mrs. Dwight P. Green, Winetka, IL
Joel Tanner Hart

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Richard Higgins
Mrs. Richard Higgins
Mrs. H. Frank Hopkins, Chicago
Miss Jane Celeste Hughey, Memphis
Mrs. Richard Hunlong, Chicago
Gov. Keen Johnson
Mrs. Keen Johnson

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Mrs. Harry R. Kendall, Evanston, IL
Miss Frances McCabe
Gov. James B. McCreary
Prof. J. B. McElroy, M.D., Knoxville

117 Birchfield
Judge Charles A. McMillan
Mrs. Alfred Marks
Mrs. Lincoln E. Miller (Miss Lillian Cross)
Charles Buford Nelson, Chicago
Prof. John Neville
Leeper Norfleet, cellist, New York
Mrs. Leeper Norfleet, New York
Dr. E. M. Norwood
Daniel O'Rear
Judge Edward C. O'Rear
Mrs. Edward C. O'Rear
Miss Elizabeth Park ("Betty")
Miss Medora Pelouze, Chicago
Ms. Irene Purcell Ray
Mrs. J. Waller Rodes
Prof. John Shackleford
Joseph Hale Smith
Thomas Jackson Smith
Mrs. Thomas Jackson Smith
Mrs. Dinsmore Steele, Lexington
Carl J. Story, Boston
Jere A. Sullivan
Mrs. Edward Thomas
R. G. Tripett, Shreveport, LA
Mrs. R. G. Tripett, Shreveport, LA
Coleman Covington Wallace
Mrs. Rebecca F. Washburn, Paducah
Rev. Acquilla Webb
George C. Webb
Mrs. William Truman Yale, New York (Miss Patty B. Crosthwaite, Lexington)
"Young Girl in Colonial Costume"
Prof. Alfred Zembrod

Corporate and Public Holdings
Capitol, Commonwealth of Kentucky, Frankfort
Christ Church Cathedral, Lexington
Court House, Lexington, Fayette County, Kentucky
Court House, Paris, Bourbon County, Kentucky
Court House, Richmond, Madison County, Kentucky
Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond
Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort
Kentucky State Federation of Women's Clubs, Lexington
Lord, Abbett Co., New York
Public Library, Lexington, Kentucky
Salmagundi Club, New York
Standard Sanitary Manufacturing Co., Pittsburgh
University of Kentucky, Lexington
University of Tennessee, Memphis

Exhibitions:
Louisville Art Colony Exhibition, 1923 (Portrait, Gold Medal in painting)
The Louisville Art Association: Exhibition of the Work of Louisville Artists, Louisville Free Public Library, 23 November - 7 December 1924
Louisville Public Library, 20 April 1926
32nd Annual Exhibition by Artists of Chicago and Vicinity, Art Institute of Chicago, 1928 ("Frances," charcoal)
Semi-Annual Exhibition, Chicago Galleries Association, 1930 ("A Portrait")
"Contemporary American Painting," Corcoran Gallery, Washington, DC, 1931 ("Girl in Colonial Costume")
Chicago Galleries Association, 11th Semi-Annual Exhibition, 2 May - 5 June 1931 (Miss Medora Pelouze, $300 Prize)
Chicago Galleries Association, 12th Semi-Annual Exhibition, 1-31 December 1931 (Miss Loraine Briggs, $250 prize)
C. F. Brower Co. Gallery, Lexington, 31 August - 10 September 1932 (seven portraits)
American Academy, Chicago, May 1932 (Maj. Gen. George B. Duncan)
Chicago Galleries Association, September 1932 (Maj. Gen. George B. Duncan, Rev. Mark Collis)
Chicago Galleries Association, October 1932 (Rev. Mark Collis)
Chicago Galleries Association, 13th Semi-Annual Exhibition, 8-31 December 1932 (Adm. Walter S. Crosley)
Midland Club, Chicago, July 1933 (3 portraits)
Art Institute of Chicago, 1934
Brooks Memorial Art Gallery, Overton Park, Memphis, 30 January to 28 February 1934 (26 works)
Southern States Art League Exhibit, Brooks Art Gallery, Memphis, April 1934
Art Institute of Chicago, 1935
Lyme Art Association Exhibition, 13 July - 1 September 1935 (Prof. Zembrod)
Orrington Hotel, Evanston, IL, February 1936
Portraits, Tudor Gallery, Chicago Woman's Club, 1-15 March 1936
Chicago Galleries Association, 8-29 January 1937
J. B. Speed Memorial Gallery, 3-31 October 1937 (40 works)
Chicago Galleries Association, 8-29 January 1938 (portraits)
Exhibition of Portraits by Sudduth Goff, Lexington Public Library, 6-20 June 1940 (18 portraits)
Chicago Galleries Association, April 1942
Arthur U. Newton Galleries, 11 & 13 E. 57th Street, New York, NY, 12-24 February 1945 (16 works)
Salmagundi Club, 1945
National Arts Club, 1946
Salmagundi Club, 1946
Exhibition of Oil Paintings, Salmagundi Club, New York, 14 February – 5 March 1948 (“Girl in Pink Coat”) .
Boston Museum of Fine Arts, July 1951 (“Betty”)

Listings:
Who’s Who in Kentucky (Hopkinsville: Historical Records Association, n.d.), p. 132

Selected Bibliography (Chronological)
“Studio Colony Holds Exhibit,” Louisville Herald, 14 October 1923.
“New School of Art to be Opened Here,” Louisville Courier-Journal, 6 September
1925.


“Sudduth Goff to Teach in Chicago: Lexington Artist Will Become Member of Faculty of American Academy of Art,” Lexington Leader, 12 May 1927.

“Sudduth Goff,” La Revue Moderne Illustrée des Arts et de la Vie, 15 February 1928, pp. 21-23 (Hon. A. Sullivan, Mrs. Irene Purcell Ray, Charles Neagle, Lillian Cross, Corsi).


“Former Resident Gains Fame in World of Art,” Lexington Leader, 12 October 1930 (“Young Girl in Colonial Costume”).

“Two Exhibition Paintings by Mr. Goff,” Lexington Herald, 4 January 1931.

“The Painter, A Chicago Subject, and The Painting,” Society Section, Chicago Tribune, 21 June 1931 (Goff and Medora Pelouze).


“Mr. Sudduth Goff,” Highlights: Published by the Delta Beta Rho [Chicago, American Academy, 1931] (illus. Medora Pelouze, Bishop Burton).

“George Brand Duncan’ – Sudduth Goff,” Chicago Evening Post, 10 May 1932.


“Seven Notable Oil Portraits from Brush of Sudduth Goff on Display in C. F. Brower Company Gallery,” Lexington Herald, 31 August 1932.

“Goff Paintings Shown in City: Oil Portraits and Charcoal Sketches Form Notable Exhibit,” Lexington Leader, 4 September 1932.


“Portraits by Mr. Goff on Exhibition,” Lexington Leader, 20 August 1933 (Midland Club, Chicago).

“Sudduth Goff and Works Headed Here This Winter,” Memphis Commercial Appeal, 1 October 1933.

“Sudduth Goff to be Guest Instructor at School in Memphis this Winter,” Lexington Herald, 15 October 1933.


“Revel, Ball and Art on Elite Chart,” Commercial Appeal, Memphis, 28 January 1934 (private showing of exhibition at Brooks Memorial Art Gallery).


“Mae West Curves Fail to Impress Artist Goff,” Press Scimitar, Memphis, 30 January 1934.


“Goff’s Paintings are Fine Works in Friendly Style,” Press Scimitar, Memphis, 1 February 1934.

“Sudduth Goff is Feted at Luncheon, Makes Informal Address at Delphian Affair,” Commercial Appeal, Memphis, 3 February 1934.

“Artist Extends Visit: Sudduth Goff to Remain Here Another Week,” Commercial Appeal, Memphis, 4 February 1934.

“Goff’s Exhibit is Arousing Interest,” Commercial Appeal, Memphis, 4 February 1934.

“Portrait of Memphis Girl, Work of Famous Painter, to be Displayed,” Commercial Appeal, Memphis, 17 April 1934 (Jane Celeste Hughey).

“Goff Painting to be Exhibited: Artist’s Work to be Shown at Brooks Tomorrow,” Press Scimitar, Memphis, 12 May 1934 (Mrs. J. M. Goff, unrelated).

“Sudduth Goff,” La Revue Moderne Illustrée des Arts et de la Vie, 30 August 1934, p. 20 (Miss Medora Pelouze).

“Reception Planned for Sudduth Goff: School of Fine Art to Honor Chicago Artist,” Press Scimitar, Memphis, 15 October 1934.


“Goff Paints Bishop’s Portrait,” Lexington Leader, 1 March 1936 (Bishop Abbott).


“Portrait Exhibit by Goff Held in Chicago,” Lexington Herald-Leader, 14 March 1936 (Tudor Gallery, Chicago Woman’s Club).

“Portrait of McElroy is Painted by Sudduth Goff,” Lexington Herald, 25 December 1936 (Dr. James Bassett McElroy, Chief of University of Tennessee Medical School, Memphis).

“Goff Paintings on Exhibition at J. B. Speed Memorial Museum,” Louisville Courier-Journal, 3 October 1937 (40 works).


“Eminent Artist Clements’ Guest,” Salisbury (NC) Evening Post, 30 November 1937.

“Mr. And Mrs. Clement Complimented Sudduth Goff at Tea Saturday,” Salisbury (NC) Evening Post, 12 December 1937.

“Judge Clay’s Portrait is Presented to Court,” State Journal, Frankfort, KY, 14 October 1939 (Judge William Rogers Clay).

“Kentucky Society Meets at Evanston,” Lexington Herald, 24 April 1942 (“An announcement was made that a portrait of Mrs. Henry Duncan was in the current exhibit at the Chicago Galleries Association, the work of one of America’s foremost painters, Sudduth Goff, of New York and Lexington.”).


“Sudduth Goff Plans Portrait Exhibit,” The Winchester Sun, 10 February 1945.

Maude Riley, “Portraits by Goff,” Art Digest, 15 February 1945.


“Exhibit of Sudduth Goff’s Paintings Includes Portraits of General Duncan, Bishop Abbot and Other Local Figures,” Sunday Herald-Leader, Lexington, 18 February 1945.

James M. Ross, “Sudduth Goff’s Paintings are Best by Kentuckian in Gotham,” Ashland (Ky.) Daily Independent, 21 February 1945.

Hamilton Howard, “Goff’s New York Exhibition is Well Received,” Louisville Courier-Journal, 4 March 1945.

“Sudduth Goff a Great Artist; His Father, Thomas Goff, Shelby Farmer Many Years,” The Shelby Sentinel, 9 March 1945.


“Noted Artist of Eminence; Sudduth Goff, New York, Born in County, has Display,” Henry County Local, 9 March 1945.


“Artist Sudduth Goff to Get Honorary Degree from Transy,” Lexington Herald-Leader, 2 May 1948.

“Paintings by Goff Will be on Exhibit,” Sunday Herald-Leader, Lexington, 30 May 1948.

“Sudduth Goff Brings Lifelike Quality and Charm to Portraits,” Sunday Herald-Leader, Lexington, 6 June 1948.

Dorothy Mae Wallin, “Bylines,” Going Places in the Bluegrass, Vol. 1, No. 4, 18 June 1948 (on Sudduth Goff’s honorary degree from Transylvania; newsletter published by the Phoenix Hotel).


“Goff Portrait of Mrs. Babbage,” Lexington Leader, 21 August 1952.

“Goff Has Painting in Boston Exhibit,” Lexington Leader, 18 July 1951 (“Betty”).

"Artist Sudduth Goff Dies; Best Known for Portraits," *Lexington Leader*, 8 February 1965.