

George Aloysius Lucas, 1824-1909

Nationality: American

Date of Birth: 1824

Place of Birth: Baltimore, MD?

Date of Death: 1909

Identity:

George Aloysius Lucas was an American art dealer and collector. He was the son of a publisher and book illustrator, Fielding Lucas jr (d. 1854).

Life:

Lucas graduated from West Point Military Academy in 1848 and began working as a civil engineer on the railroads in New Jersey. From 1852 to 1853 he was working with Whistler's half-brother George.

In 1857 Lucas moved to Paris, where he made his name as agent to a number of American art collectors and dealers. He helped to build up the collection of the Baltimore businessman William T. Walters, purchasing significant nineteenth century works of art by Honoré Daumier, Jean-Léon Gérôme, Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, Antoine-Louis Barye, Théodore Rousseau and Paul Delaroche.

Lucas also bought extensively for the New York art dealer Samuel P. Avery, as well as for other American patrons such as John Taylor Johnston, Cyrus J. Lawrence, William Henry Vanderbilt and Henry Field. Lucas himself owned a large number of prints including works by Eugène Delacroix, Edouard Manet, Mary Cassatt and Whistler. These he bequeathed to the Maryland Institute, College of Art in Baltimore.

Whistler painted Lucas' portrait in August 1886, *Portrait of George A. Lucas* ([YMSM 355](#)). Lucas gave it to Walters' son Henry in 1908. Lucas helped arrange a number of exhibitions of Whistler's work in Paris, and Whistler used to stay at his country house near Boissise, near Melun. The two men were in correspondence from 1862 to 1886, but around 1886 their friendship came to an end. In 1888 when Whistler married Beatrix Godwin, Lucas took the side of Maud Franklin. It was he who helped her to settle in Paris.

Bibliography:

L. M. C. Randall (ed.), *The Diary of George A. Lucas: An American Art Agent in Paris, 1857-1909*, 2 vols. (Princeton, 1979); M. Fidell-Beaufort, H. L. Kleinfeld and J. K. Welcher (eds.), *The Diaries 1871-1882 of Samuel P. Avery, Art Dealer* (New York, 1979); Young, Andrew McLaren, Margaret F. MacDonald, Robin Spencer and Hamish Miles, *The Paintings of James McNeill Whistler*, New Haven and London, 1980; Lilian M. C. Randall, 'George A. Lucas', *The Grove Dictionary of Art Online*, ed. L. Macy (Accessed 17 April 2002), <http://www.groveart.com>.