



Otis Bullard (1816-1853)  
*Horse Trade Scene, Cornish, Maine, 1853*  
 Oil on canvas  
 19 3/4h x 24w in  
 Framed: 25 3/4h x 30d in

**Description**

Bullard's "Panorama of New York City" (Created 1846-50) comes to Maine. Professor Peter West quoted in "Common Place - The Journal of Early American Life" (July, 2011): "In the months before his death, Bullard completed a painting that vividly illustrates his panorama's idiosyncratic way of



witnessing and containing the spectacle of urban life. 'Horse Trade Scene, Cornish Maine' (fig. 5) centers on a rural horse trader who has presumably just completed a transaction with a departing gentleman.

In the background, through the open side door of a tavern, the viewer can just make out a broadside advertising 'Bullard's panorama of New York City' to appear 'this day' at a local hall. The painting depicts the kind of face-to-face economic transaction that would increasingly distinguish small-town American life from the complex financial transactions and speculations of urban capitalism. Of course, as the inclusion of the panorama broadside suggests, this small-town integrity was essentially counter-urban, depending as it did upon the distant-but-visible city for its own articulation. Bullard's panorama promised its audiences precisely what it brings to 'Horse Trade Scene': a portable city framed, as it is in Bullard's late painting, by the rhetoric of honest exchange and unpretentious realism. 'Horse Trade Scene' also reflects the careful marketing of Bullard and his work as a link between small-town commerce and an urban economic landscape that loomed in the distance."

The Bangor Daily Whig and Courier of January 15, 1852 reported: "Bullard's lively and beautiful Panorama, a meritorious work of art, was exhibited here for the first time by Albert Norton, Esq. yesterday afternoon and last evening, to large and highly interested audiences, including a Rev. gentleman known in this city, is a sufficient recommendation of the excellence and attractive features of this work."

#### **Signature**

Signed lower left: "O.A. Bullard 1853". Inscribed on canvas verso in artist's hand: "Horse Trade Scene, Cornish Maine. Painted by O.A. Bullard, 1853. New York".

#### **Provenance**

Parke Bernet Galleries, NY, NY, Sale #1534, 1954, lot #35  
Private collection, Far Hills, NJ, 1954 until acquired by Caldwell Gallery.

#### **Bibliography**

"Horse Trading Scene, Cornish, Maine" is utilized as the lead visual, and discussed in detail in the July 2011 article by Professor Peter West entitled "THE CITY IN FRAMES: OTIS BULLARD'S MOVING PANORAMA OF NEW YORK" which appeared in "Common Place - The Journal of Early American Life". Link to article online: <http://commonplace.online/article/the-city-in-frames/>

#### **Condition**

Excellent. The work had a strip lining along the tacking edge with a new custom built stretcher. The original canvas back and artist's inscription are intact. There is minor in painting in upper left sky area and extreme lower left. Original period frame.

#### **Biography**

Otis Bullard was born in Steuben County, New York, in 1816. At the age of fourteen, he became apprenticed as a sign painter under wagon builder Augustus Olmstead. By 1838 he had relocated to Hartford, Connecticut, to study portrait painting with artist Philip Hewins. He established a career painting portraits for patrons in New England and upstate New York, and in 1840 traveled to Amherst, Massachusetts to execute a portrait of ten-year old Emily Dickinson alongside her two siblings.

Bullard settled in New York City, continuing his work as a portraitist and creating historical and genre paintings. His scenes of everyday life often included a strong sense of narrative. He first exhibited at the National Academy, where he continued to show work through 1853. He also exhibited at the American Art Union between 1847 and 1848.

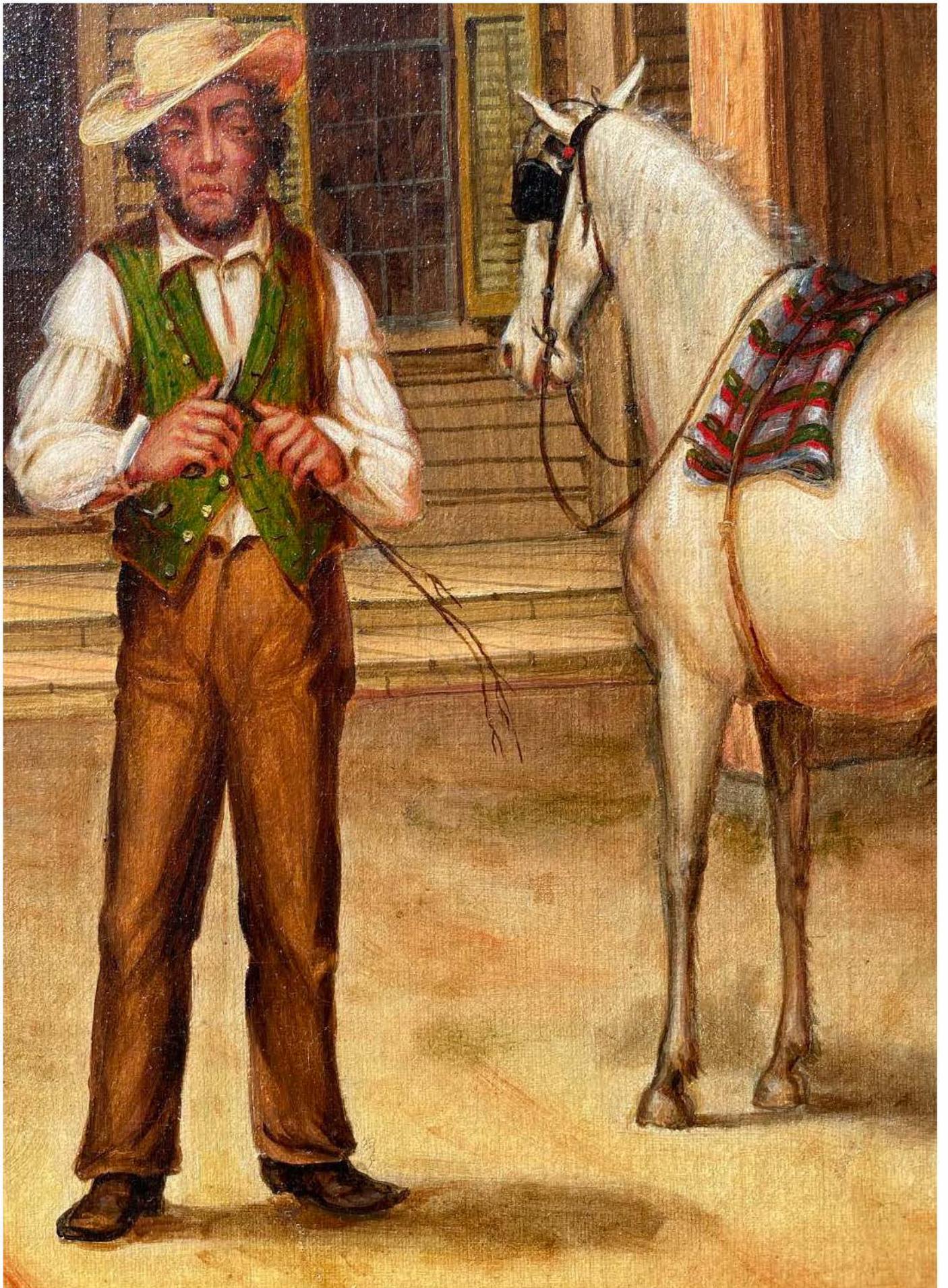
Bullard made his mark through the development of a panorama of New York City. It was a massive undertaking resulting in a six-foot high, 3,000-foot-long painting detailing images of Manhattan. Produced between 1846 and 1850 during a time of increasing industrialization, the work capturing the evolving urban setting for the eyes of far-off viewers in Baltimore, Cincinnati, and Davenport, Iowa. Audiences took in a two-hour presentation of the work, studying the city and its people as a vicarious tourist. The work was reportedly seen by hundreds of thousands of Americans, making it a significant precursor to the widespread dissemination of images through photography and film. Bullard took the helm in presenting the work, narrating presentations until the end of life in 1853.

Written by Zenobia Grant Wingate

**"Bullard's Panorama  
of New York City  
Here this Day"**

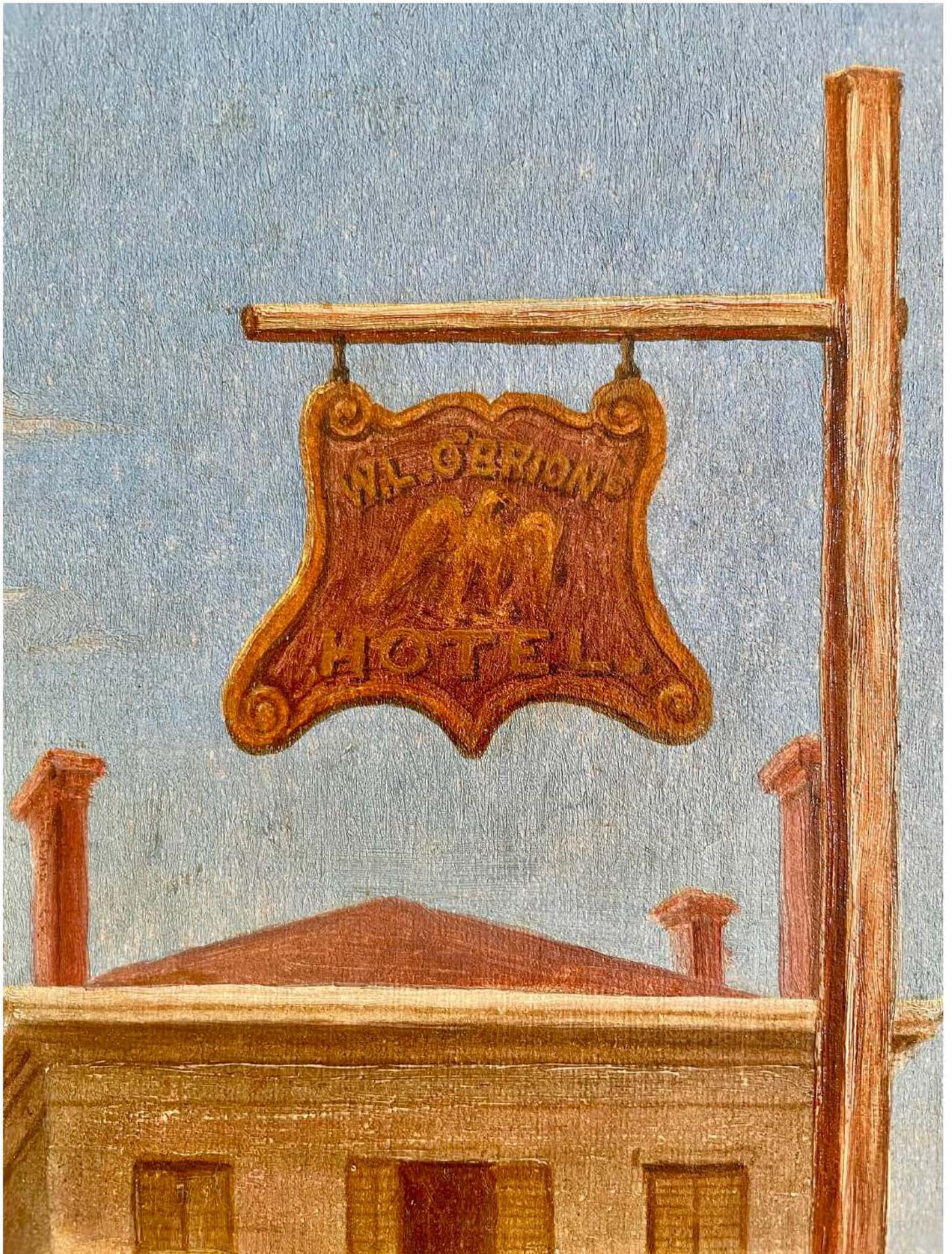
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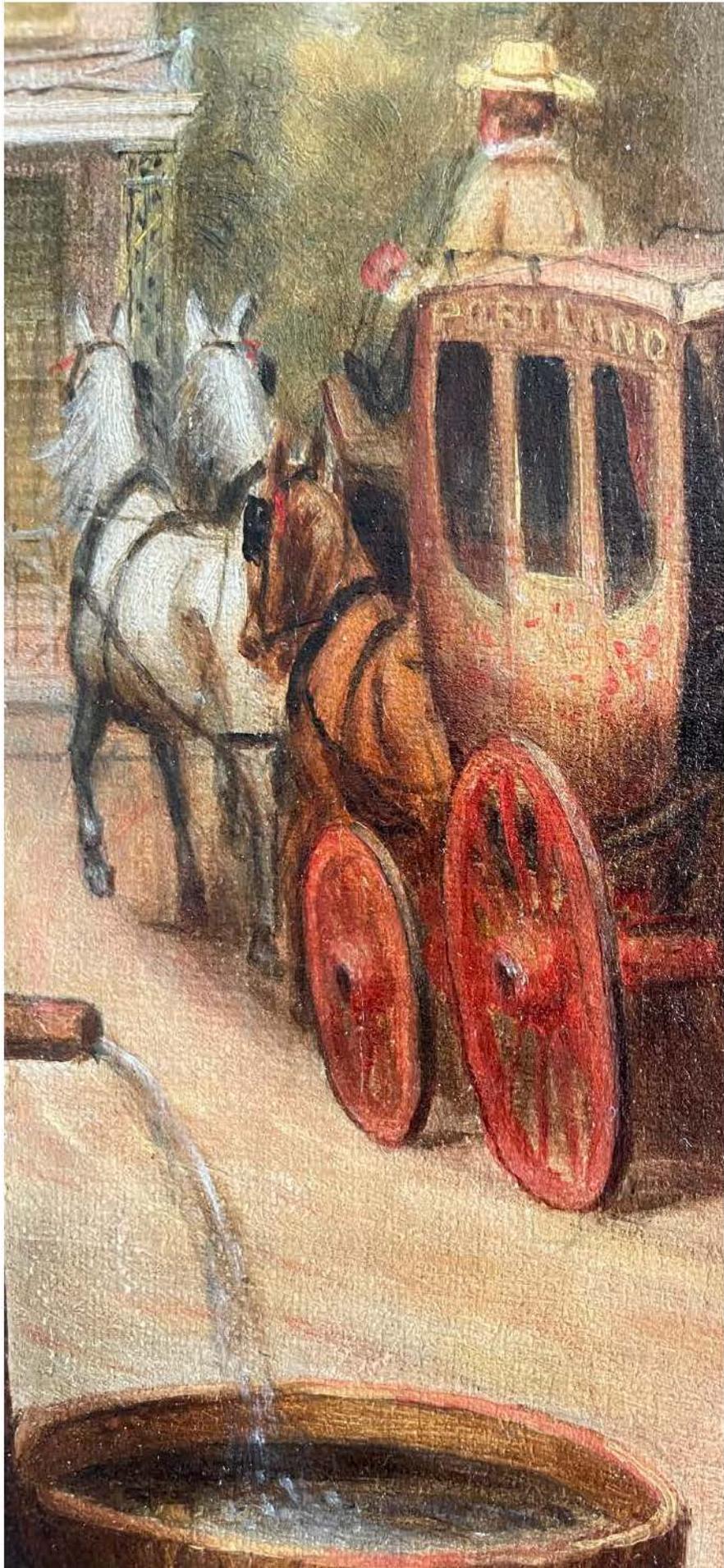


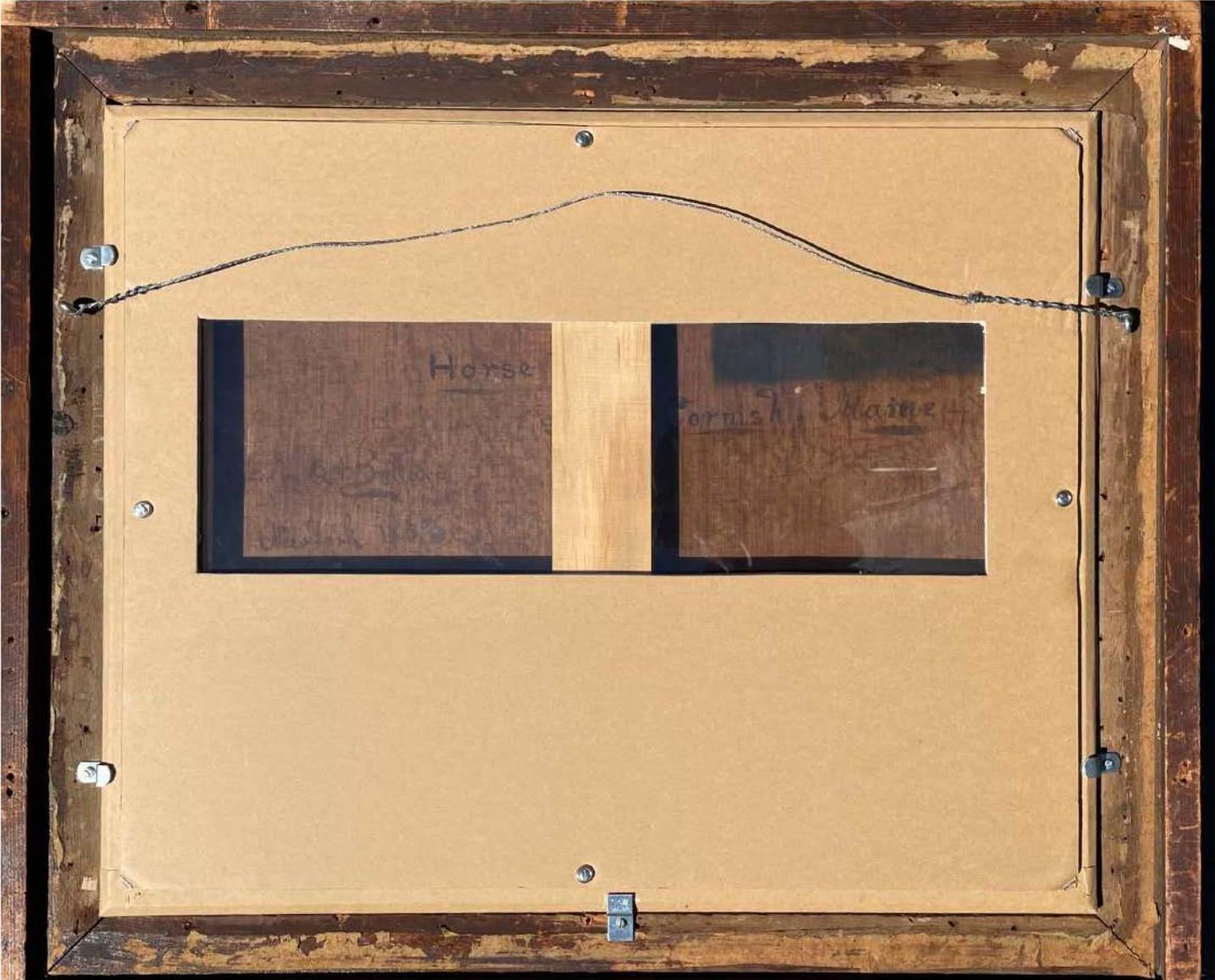














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OBJECTS

## THE CITY IN FRAMES: OTIS BULLARD'S MOVING PANORAMA OF NEW YORK

*Peter West*

*Like countless other men of his generation, Bullard began his working life as an artisan and ended it as a businessman.*

On November 15, 1850, at the American Hall in Hartford, Connecticut, Otis Bullard debuted his "Panorama of New York City," a 3,000-foot-long painting depicting the streets, residents, and sights of lower Manhattan. The exhibition's six-foot-high canvas was rolled, in several sections, onto cylinders, and then slowly unfurled before an audience who had paid twenty-five cents each for a two-hour presentation. Like other moving panoramas, Bullard's transformed its subject into a pictorial narrative: from the corner of West Street and Cortlandt Street, the panorama's virtual stroll took viewers down to the Battery, then east to Broadway, and then back uptown along the city's most famous thoroughfare to Union Square, where the exhibition concluded. Starting his panoramic tour at the island's westernmost edge, where disembarking ferry and steamboat passengers encountered the waterfront hotels of West Street, Bullard placed his viewer in the position of a visitor arriving from the mainland United States.

This was no accident, for the panorama's virtual tourism was carefully marketed to viewers in small cities and towns far enough away from New York that they would be willing to pay to "see the elephant" in painted form at their local concert hall or church. Over the course of the work's seventeen-year career, during which time it was seen by hundreds of thousands of Americans, Bullard's panorama was never exhibited anywhere in or near New York City itself. While residents of cities such as St. Louis delighted in seeing their streets and buildings represented in the many Mississippi River panoramas of the late 1840s—stories circulated of people gleefully recognizing their homes up on the canvas—the "Panorama of New York City" was made for a distinctly nonurban audience.