

Tadeusz Andrzej Bonawentura Kościuszko

(1746–1817)

Tadeusz Andrzej Bonawentura Kościuszko, a Polish hero of the American Revolutionary War, was born near Novogrudok, in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Educated in Warsaw, Poland, he received additional military and engineering training in France. Kościuszko came to America's aid in 1776 and was commissioned a colonel of engineers in the Continental army. His strategic abilities contributed to General Horatio Gates's victory over British General John Burgoyne at Saratoga the following year. Kościuszko spent more than two years at West Point, strengthening fortifications on the Hudson River. From 1780 to 1783, after leaving West Point, he served with General Nathanael Greene. At the end of the war, Congress awarded Kościuszko the rank of brigadier general for "long, faithful and meritorious services."¹ In 1784 Kościuszko returned to Poland, where he subsequently led his compatriots in resistance against Russian domination. Appointed commander-in-chief of the Polish armed forces in 1794, Kościuszko was defeated at the Battle of Maciejowice and imprisoned in Russia. After his release, Kościuszko visited America, where he received a triumphal welcome. He died in Switzerland in 1817, still working for Polish freedom.

The sculptor of Tadeusz Kościuszko's bust for the Capitol was also born in Lithuania, then part of Russian Poland. Henry Dmochowski appended Saunders to his name upon his arrival in America about 1853. A successful portrait sculptor, he spent almost a decade in this country.

The Joint Committee on the Library acquired the marble bust of General Kościuszko in 1857 for \$500. The artist wrote Captain Montgomery C. Meigs, superintendent of the Capitol extension, that his bust of Kościuszko had been "modelled and executed in American marble by myself after the best known authorities, engravings, medals, medallions, etc., in my possession. As the General was not a handsome man, and his virtue, courage and goodness were the prominent characteristics of his physiognomy; it was a task of no common difficulty to make his likeness, and at the same time an attractive object of art."

In the previous year, Saunders had exhibited his bust of Kościuszko at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia; between 1853 and 1857, Saunders showed some 67 busts, medallions, and bas-reliefs of prominent Americans and Europeans at the academy. His works also were exhibited during that period by the Washington Art Association in Washington, D.C. In 1863, following the deaths of his twin daughters and then his wife, Saunders returned to Poland, where he died fighting for the liberation of his country. A marble bust of Revolutionary War hero Casimir Pulaski by Saunders (p. 310) was acquired by Congress in 1882, nearly two decades after the artist's death.



Engraving of Tadeusz Kościuszko by H.H. Houston, after Joseph Grassi, ca. 1796.
(National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution)

Tadeusz Kościuszko

Henry Dmochowski Saunders (1810–1863)

Marble, 1857

36³/₈ x 27⁵/₈ x 17³/₄ inches (92.4 x 70.2 x 45.1 cm)

Signed and dated (on base under subject's truncated left arm): H·D·SAUNDERS·1857

Inscribed (centered on front of base): T·KOSCIUSZKO

Purchased by the Joint Committee on the Library, 1857

Cat. no. 21.00012

