



Title: Henry Walton : an Early Artist
Author: Rehner, Leigh.
Call number: LH 974.771
Publisher: Ithaca, NY : DeWitt Historical Society of
of Tompkins County, 1969.,

Owner: Ithaca - Tompkins County Public Library
Assigned Branch: Ithaca - Tompkins County Public Library (TCPL)
Collection: Local History (LH)

Material type: Book
Number of pages: 19 pages

Note: The History Center in Tompkins County, who owns the
copyright, gave TCPL permission to digitize this book,
October 2009.

LH

c.2

974.771

Rehner, Leigh

Henry Walton.

LH

c.2

974.771

Rehner, Leigh

Henry Walton.

AL430J 446586

DO NOT TAKE
CARDS FROM POCKET
TOMPKINS COUNTY PUBLIC
LIBRARY

Ithaca, N.Y.

Henry Walton

An Early Artist

By Leigh Rehner

Historical Settings of Ithaca Paintings

By John G. Brooks



1969

DEWITT

HISTORICAL SOCIETY of TOMPKINS COUNTY, *Inc.*

ITHACA, NEW YORK 14850

Preface

Reawakened interest in Henry Walton, Ithaca's early artist, aroused by the 1968 exhibit of his work by the Ithaca College Museum of Art, has prompted the printing of this pamphlet. Its object is to bring together much new material unearthed in the research of Leigh Rehner of the college staff and that collected earlier by John G. Brooks.

With permission, Mrs. Rehner's article is reprinted from the catalog she prepared for the exhibit. It is regretted that pictures referred to by numbers in her text cannot be reproduced because of the mechanical inadequancies of the Society's printing department. So that their importance may not be wholly denied readers, however, a copy of the original catalog is on file in the DeWitt Museum Library for consultation.

Brooks' manuscript is so filed; it has value for local identification of features characterizing the Ithaca paintings.

Mrs. Rehner's is the most thorough research ever done on the artist himself. No doubt it will come as a surprise to have her inform us that Walton was born in New York, an event which deprives him of the earlier classification as an "English portraitist," so generally applied. Nor any less a surprise is the information that he married Jane B. Orr, who survived him a quarter century and died in 1890; that both died in Cassopolis, Michigan, where they are buried; and that he willed all his personal property to his wife, with no mention of any art works.

"Perhaps," hopefully remarks the author, "there are Waltons yet to be discovered in New York, California and Michigan." Actually, while the pamphlet was in preparation two more of his paintings were located.

In making the research of these diligent workers conveniently available to the public, as well as adding to its preservability, the Society feels it has fulfilled a responsibility incumbent upon it. Neglected for more than a century and a quarter after Walton's activities in Ithaca, the compilation comes "better late than never."

Walton's portrait of Mrs. Day in the Society's collection has been described as the best of his known work. Another item possessed by the Society is a meticulously executed drawing of the Schuyler mercantile building on North Aurora Street which burned in 1968.

Figures enclosed thus (7) refer to Mrs. Rehner's sources listed on page 19.

WILLIAM HEIDT, JR.

DeWitt Historical Museum
May 1, 1969.

Henry Walton, Early Artist

By LEIGH REHNER

Any attempt to track down facts about relatively unknown 19th-century painters can prove to be an unrewarding task. One always hopes that a journal or at least a self-portrait will be found. If artist Henry Walton left such records behind, they are still to be discovered. We will therefore have to be content with a few bare facts, and even these must be presented with a degree of tentativeness; for those who wish to try it, fleshing out the man himself can be an exercise of the imagination.

Mr. Rockwell Gardiner of Stamford, Connecticut, long interested in Walton, has proposed that the artist was the son of Judge Henry Walton (1768-1844) of New York City, Ballston Spa, and Saratoga Springs, New York. Mr. Gardiner's educated hunch is based chiefly on the facts that Judge Walton did have a son named Henry, born of his second marriage in 1804, and that among our painter's earliest known works, a large number depict buildings in Saratoga Springs. Judge Walton, an elegant man it is said (he was educated in England and studied law with Aaron Burr), owned most of Saratoga Springs at one time, having inherited it in 1816 from his father and his uncle Gerard. The Judge ". . . excavated and tubed many of Saratoga's numerous and noted mineral springs, and created a Chinese pagoda over one of them, the '*Flat Rock Spring*.' The several residences he built, as well as the Pavilion Hotel, show that he inherited his uncle's architectual tastes." (1) Lithographs of the *Flat Rock Spring*, including the pagoda (fig. 1) and of the *Pavilion Hotel* (fig. 2), both early Walton works, together with the following clues, would seem to add up to more than coincidence. What is known of Henry Sr. supports the view that his children would receive educations, possibly in England as their father had. It would further seem—and this is pure speculation based upon what can be observed by looking at all of Walton's early work for New York publish-

ing firms, and at the town-views that were to come later—that he had training in architectural draftsmanship, possibly encouraged by his great uncle Gerard. Perhaps young Henry did not take to the profession of architecture, although the effect of early training remained with him; but whatever the reason, he chose instead to become an artist.

By 1836 he had settled in the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York (crossing the border into Pennsylvania on occasion) and there produced a number of town-views and portraits. “Walton is believed to have found employment with the firm of Stone and Clark, who were republishing Burr’s atlas of New York State and whose advertisements in the *Ithaca Chronicle* of September 11, 1839, states that they ‘execute job work of any description, steel, copper-plate and wood-engraving, letter press printing and book binding.’ An artist of Walton’s skill and versatility would have been valuable to such an enterprise. The meticulous lettering of his paintings is the work of a man who might very well have lettered the beautifully hand-rendered maps of the period. Walton’s work was warmly appreciated by the local press; the editor of the *Ithaca Journal* of May 23, 1838 wrote:

Perhaps it is not generally known to the citizens of Ithaca and its vicinity, that we have residing in our village an *artist*, who though unpretending, is a proficient in the use of the pencil. We speak of *Mr. Henry Walton*, who for several months past has been engaged in his professional business in this place, and we understand that if sufficient encouragement is given, he intends to locate himself permanently in this village. We feel proud to number among our citizens a young man whose talents as an artist bid fair to raise him to eminence.

We called on Mr. W. a few days since, and were shown some of his pictures, and in our humble opinion, their design and execution displayed genius and skill worthy of liberal patronage. Among them were two portraits, of which the beauty of design was only equalled by the neatness and elegance of execution. We saw a number of *miniatures*, which were also equally well executed. We were shown several other pictures of different descriptions, drawn and pencilled in a superior taste and style.

In a word his specimens speak for themselves, and they plainly show that he is master of his profession, and we unhesitatingly say, that Mr. Walton ought to be patronized by every lover and patron of the fine arts. All who wish to get portrait, miniature, landscape or other paintings, executed in oil or water colors, can have it done in a superior style by Mr. Walton. His room is at Mr. R. P. Clark's East Hill, Ithaca." (2)

During the years Walton was in Ithaca the country suffered a financial panic of severe proportions. J. N. Bogert, the publisher of *Walton's View of Geneva*, felt it might be wise to postpone the printing date for fear that it would not sell, and wrote of his alarm to his uncle in 1837. The national political scene was also in a state of upheaval strongly felt in Ithaca. The two prevailing newspapers, the *Journal* and the *Chronicle*, had editors who were on the opposite side of the fence on every matter, relishing their rivalry, and adding fuel at every opportunity. Walton, not immune to the imbroglio, ". . . was employed to do portraits of political figures. In 1844 his 'splendid full length portrait of Henry Clay' was presented to the Ithaca Clay Club by a member, Norman Crittenden, through David D. Spencer, editor of the Ithaca *Chronicle*. Earlier, in 1840, he had gotten into the middle of a political storm with a 'transparency,' a portrait of Harrison. Furious charges in the opposition paper, the once-friendly *Journal*, claimed he had taken an old transparent portrait of General Jackson and written General Harrison's name over it. The *Chronicle* took up the cudgels:

The *Journal* persists in its injustice to Mr. Walton in relation to this execution of the picture of Harrison for the Whigs, though conceding 'his merit as an artist.' We are authorized to say that no picture of General Jackson was brought to Mr. Walton, with a request to place upon it the head and name of General Harrison, as the *Journal* alleges. The entire painting of Harrison was executed by Walton—and the hostility which it has enkindled in the breasts of the federal loco focus is the best evidence of its fidelity and merit." (3)

Indications are that Walton spent the last five years of his

sojourn in upstate New York in the area southwest of Ithaca. An 1847 copy of the *Jeffersonian* (the town of Jefferson is now named Watkins Glen) reports:

“*Lithographic View of Jefferson.* We are happy to announce to such of our citizens as are unacquainted with the fact, that Mr. H. Walton, the celebrated artist who has been engaged in this place during a part of the past year, has returned from the city of New York, with a splendid colored engraving of this village. This view was first drawn from nature by Mr. W., who at the solicitation of a large number of our citizens, retired to the city for the purpose of drawing the same on stone, that all might be supplied at a trifling expense, with so interesting a view. In this undertaking, we are assured that Mr. W. has fully met the expectations of his subscribers. The picture is finely colored and of ample size, including every part of the village, with a fine view of the famous Seneca, and her variegated banks. We sincerely hope that our citizens will examine this work, and we are confident that the labors of this happy artist will be fully appreciated.” (4)

During this period work was produced in Elmira, Big Flats, Addison, and Painted Post. In 1850 Walton produced a full town view of *Addison* in oil (see cover detail and fig. 62) and in 1851, after completing a canvas of *Painted Post* (fig. 65) he left the Finger Lakes area for good. From here he journeyed to California—lured by gold or new scenes to paint?—joining a gold rush party that included the grandfather of Joseph S. Barr of Ithaca. (Mr. Barr has made a specialty of collecting Waltons since the 1920’s and was the first local person to become interested in the artist.) The California State Library informs us that H. Walton appears on the passenger list (6) of the steamer *Oregon*, which arrived in San Francisco on September 18, 1851. To date only two California works have been found—disasters wiped out a high proportion of its pictorial records, which certainly may be the reason—but they are among Walton’s finest.

Two Walton family genealogies (6), (7) can be found in The New-York Historical Society’s genealogical records room, and these reveal that Henry Walton had a wife Jane B. Orr.

Attempts to find more information about her have so far been disappointing. She was not on the *Oregon* when it disembarked in San Francisco. The genealogies report "no issue" of the marriage, and further state that the couple died in Cassopolis, Michigan—Henry in 1865 and Jane in 1890. Both are reported buried in Prospect Cemetery there. (8)

Thus far the most convincing piece of evidence bringing the string of clues full circle is a last will and testament (9) bearing the familiar signature of the artist Henry Walton. Excerpts follow: ". . . I give to my Brother William H. Walton (note him on the genealogy) of Saratoga Springs, State of New York, my Gold Watch, chain, seal and key which were willed to me by my Father at his decease. . . . Further, I give and bequeath to my wife Jane B. an annual income of Two Hundred Dollars, from my estate in Saratoga Springs . . . in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Fifty Seven, Henry Walton." In 1857 he painted Grass Valley, California, and it would appear that he left for Michigan that same year to live out eight more years in retirement. The will also gives Jane Walton "all my personal property" but there is no mention of art work. Perhaps there are Waltons yet to be discovered in New York, California and Michigan.

Walton's surviving early pictures are small illustrations from books of the 1820's and early 1830's. The following comments and quotations are intended to help the viewer understand the puzzling inscriptions on these early illustrations, and on the lithographed town-views that were to come later. It had best be said at the outset that a good deal of inconsistency existed. "The printmakers all begged, borrowed, bought and stole from each other. . . ." (10) which only adds to the confusion. Walton's name appears with *Pinxt* (*pinxit*: 'has painted it'), *Del. or delt* (*delineavit*: 'has drawn it'). This usually means, 'has drawn it on stone', or sometimes not at all (compare fig. 6 A. and B.). A pair of similar views of Saratoga Springs (fig. 5A. and B.) taken from two copies of the same book, published in the same year, demonstrate the variation on a lithographic print. A. is much superior to B. Walton probably drew A. onto the stone himself, and a lesser artist drew the *copy* (B.). In addition the vagaries of the way an artist is credited can be noted.

'Drawn on Stone', which will be seen frequently on Walton's town-views, means transfer of the drawing by turning it face down and tracing it on a special stone. This applies to lithography only, and *Sc.* (*'sculpsit'*: has engraved it), a term reserved for engraving, denotes the person who actually prepares the metal plate, a process Walton himself did not carry out. The lithographic process in brief: "The drawing is usually made in reverse directly on a slab of stone with a lithographic crayon or ink that contains soap or grease. The fatty acid of this material forms an insoluble soap on the surface, which will accept the greasy printing ink and reject water. Next, the design is fixed against spreading by treatment with a gum arabic and nitric acid solution. The drawing is washed off with turpentine and water and (the stone) is then ready to be inked with a roller and printed." (11)

A few of Walton's illustrations are mezzotints rather than lithographs. The mezzotint process, based on gradations of tone, is especially suitable for reproducing paintings and is essentially a form of engraving. The process of printing from a metal plate in brief: "The design is incised below the plane surface of . . . (the) plate by means of an engraving tool or acid. A stiff ink is forced into the furrowed lines, and the rest of the plate is wiped clean. A dampened sheet of paper is laid over the plate, and the two are run through a roller press under high pressure. The resulting print is called an engraving or an etching." (12)

The first section of the catalogue illustrates all of the small lithographs and engravings that can be found, although others are known to exist. The striking feature about all of these is the strong architectural approach.

Between 1825 and 1875 views of towns and cities became enormously popular with the general public. Lithography, first successfully established in this country around 1824 by the Pendleton Brothers in Boston and New York, for whom Walton had produced drawings in the 1820's made possible the mass production of larger, less expensive prints. These were frequently colored by hand with the aid of stencils and had a most attractive appearance. "Some print connoisseurs believe that it was only with the advent of the full-blown city-view lithograph that American printmaking reached its first plateau

of originality, making a historical contribution to the graphic arts. They cite the differences between the European city-view print and the expansive American version that reflects a new land and a new attitude toward the land". (13) As a depicitor of the town-view Walton was to make a distinct contribution to American art.

When Walton appeared in the Finger Lakes region, where from 1836 to 1851 he left behind the largest portion of his known works, he was doubtless armed with professional experience with Pendleton's and Rawdon Wright's (and Rawdon Clark's) lithography firms in the East. The area proved most suitable for his talents. Settling in Ithaca for around twelve years, and in the vicinity for several more, he produced a number of town-views. The multiple lithographed copies are most successful when Walton did the drawing on stone himself. Less often, but with equal success, he painted meticulous versions in oil and water color, the first of them in 1840, a striking *Firemen's Parade Banner* (fig. 54) which took three men to carry it.

A blending of the appearance of neat upstate houses and buildings with a stunning environment of hills and lakes resulted in town-views of lasting interest and beauty. Architecturally correct, minutely detailed in their linear treatment of buildings, and topographically accurate, city planners and historians of today find them useful and informative; the private owner relishes them for their interest and great charm. Unfortunately, these views are extremely rare today, although once there must have been many of these lithographs. The constancy of approach carried through to California with the watercolor *View of Grass Valley*, a mining village of the Gold Rush era. It is so intricate that only close scrutiny distinguishes it from a lithograph. An enlarged section of this work (fig. 67 detail) clearly shows Walton's minute brushwork.

To achieve pictorial balance as well as a compact and pleasing design, Walton often added a large tree to the side-foreground of his picture—a device he had mastered early. For added interest carriages, pedestrians (sometimes well known citizens whose inclusion perhaps made the prints more salable), and animals, especially dogs and horses, were painted in. A favorite cow, which can be observed in several upstate

New York pictures, reappears undisturbed in *Grass Valley, California*. These additions do not always match the perfect size relationships of the buildings and scenery; one noble if out-sized dog (fig. 61 detail) is a striking example, adding a primitive touch to an otherwise professional painting.

Whether by choice or persuasion, from financial necessity or a desire to express his artistry in another form, Walton embarked upon the venture of portrait painting. Though coming to the Finger Lakes region well-equipped to deal with the natural environment and man-made towns as he found them, it seems less likely that he brought also professional training in portraiture. Apparently neither a complete amateur nor academy-trained, in his small water color portraits (which are essentially miniatures with body and background added) he shares with the primitive or naive portrait painter some of the pitfalls (or charms, depending on the present-day taste of the viewer) of inaccurate perspective, in contrast with the control of perspective in his town-views. One result of this "failure," the lengthening and flattening of the figure, consciously pursued by artists of other periods, occurs frequently in primitive painting. At times, the opposite can be noted; torsos and arms appear foreshortened, and size relationships may be somewhat erroneous (this can be seen in the rather large heads of some of the children he painted). Although, these distortions were never extreme in Walton's work, he nevertheless shows increasing mastery over these tendencies; we may perhaps assume that he was aware of these problems (Compare fig. 24 with fig. 53 painted seventeen years apart). He further shares with the primitive portraitist a lovely quality of abstraction, quite pronounced in his early water colors as well as in his first oil.

For a number of years he painted exclusively with water color, though he was said to "paint in any medium" by the *Ithaca Journal* of 1837. No surviving oil is dated before 1839, however. Although he is included in folk-art collections, the larger portion of his work evidences tonal contrasts and modelled effects (as opposed to flat planes and lack of shading in folk-art portraits) resulting in a convincing three-dimensionality; it is here that he differs sharply from the primitive painter. Walton's formula in water color portraiture employed

the devices of occupied hands and of poses that do not vary greatly, together with a relatively sophisticated painting technique. Some resemblance to English, miniature painting may also be detected, not surprising since art books and collections were available in the East to anyone interested in studying them. There always remains too the possibility that he had received *some* instruction in portrait techniques. Scrupulous attention is paid to faces, hands, and hair. "The careful handling of carpets and wall designs is also characteristic of his interiors. These patterns were copied from actual sources as evidenced by a wall paper appearing in one of his pictures (fig. 37) painted in 1836, which was still on the walls of the house in Ithaca, New York, in 1922." (14) Precise rendering of clothing and background furnishings provides an index to the small-town and rural tastes of the period. Exacting detail, painterly excellence, and a truly creative color palette have resulted in portraits of honest expressiveness that bear a vital relationship to their time. To view them a hundred and thirty or so years later is an unexpectedly refreshing experience, and it is indeed fortunate that thirty-six known water color portraits are extant. Most of them are now in private and public art collections, but several are still owned and treasured by descendants of the sitters.

By 1839 a demand for portraits in oil vied for Walton's time. Only nine are still in existence (there undoubtedly were far fewer in oil than in water color); they were painted over a ten-year period, and one of them (fig. 73) is atypical—all of which makes it difficult to suggest generalizations or note stylistic development. Some observations can be made, however. The first oil portrait (fig. 68), of a child out of doors wearing a luscious shade of soft brick red, clutching a bright blue morning glory in one hand and an incredible cat in the other, illustrates the formula for painting children which Walton so thoroughly practiced in water color portraiture. The next oil, painted in 1842, shows another child (fig. 69) in identical pose, but there is evidence of change. The work may signify a transition from rural to urban, or the imminence of Victorian esthetic taste. In any case, a new spirit of elegance pervades the painting. The carpet, tablecloth and

wall decoration are more ornately combined and a large drapery fills the left side of the picture.

Five portraits done in the 1840's have somber backgrounds and most of them also show red velvet draperies and dark wood panelling, thus being quite unlike Walton's colorful backgrounds in water color. "This characteristic mid-century hardness of treatment did not derive from the daguerreotype and its mechanical successors even though its results are characterized as photographic; it was a continuation in a modified technique of the fondness for the definite which has been one of the steadiest traits in the American taste." (15) Mr. Barker's statement is meant to apply to American painters with training, but the same observation is doubtless valid for Walton, who in his oils surely emulated the studio professionals of the period; at the same time the influence of daguerreian photography cannot be completely ruled out. Careful, thin application of paint is characteristic of all of the oils. When viewed together they form a strong, dispassionate statement of a way of life in upstate New York of the 1840's.

For the last known portrait, dated 1853, of William D. Peck, a Forty-Niner from a town called Rough and Ready, California, Walton returns to water color (fig. 53). The artist met the challenge of Mr. Peck, a marvelous character with a wary expression on his face who appears to wear two left boots, and who is Walton's only less than impeccable subject. The painting's fully detailed background, showing the interior of a cabin with the equipment necessary to sustain a miner, is a fitting finale to Walton's career as a portraitist. Its value for depicting a whole era in American History has already been recognized by its publication in a children's history book, *The California Gold Rush*, (16) and in one for all age groups, *Seventy-five Years in California*. (17)

Historical Settings of Ithaca Paintings

Adapted from John G. Brooks' 1942 manuscript

Before the advent of modern photography about 1850 and coincident with discovery of the collodion process of preparing plates, portraits and landscapes had been the work of local and itinerant artists who relied largely upon their natural abilities. That Ithaca, in the period between 1820 to about 1840, had its quota of such artists is quite evident from a perusal of the advertising columns of the local newspapers of that early day.

Some of the works of these craftsmen have come down to us in the form of prints made from woodcuts, copper or steel etchings, or perhaps drawn on stone by the lithographer's process. Many such specimens are cherished by local collectors. Of the numerous views of early Ithaca, made by the various processes, probably the best known are the three beautiful pictures of Ithaca "drawn from nature and on stones by a promising young local artist," named Henry Walton.

The views are three in number, being from East Hill, South Hill and West Hill, respectively, and sketched by the artist in the order named. Beautiful framed copies of all three are owned by the Tompkins County Trust Co., Cayuga Chapter D.A.R., and are also the prized possession of certain Ithaca families long associated with the community. Others have journeyed far from their original home as owners migrated to points often distant from Ithaca. The DeWitt Historical Society has three complete sets and one or two extras, plus a sketch of the George W. Schuyler mercantile building that stood at 109 North Aurora Street until it burned January 3, 1968.

There are other collection and separate pieces held within the city. Some remain in the black-and-white originals but others have been colored by the artist himself. This natural coloration gives us a splendid idea of the beauties of early Ithaca with its marvelous setting of forested hills and valleys

and the distant blue of Cayuga's waters. Thus Walton makes it clear that Ithaca deserved its early title of "The Forest City."

The view from East Hill, made in 1835, is taken from the junction of Seneca and Eddy Streets and looks westward down Seneca. The second was made from South Hill in 1838 from a point looking northward that was then open ground "between the Owego turnpike and the old road." This view embraces the village, its surrounding hills and Cayuga Lake in the distance. The third in the series was made in 1839 from a point on the Trumansburg highway about a mile up from the Inlet and opposite the old "Stone House," which has stood since 1820.

At request of one owner of these beautiful prints, I have taken some pains to research their history, which is revealed to some extent in the contemporary *Ithaca Journal* files and in other local publications which have long since ceased to exist. Some local residents were able to give substantial help as they recalled conversations regarding the Walton prints with Ithacans of an earlier generation who were personally acquainted with the artist. Other sources of information are acknowledged later in this article.

Let us take up each Walter picture separately, beginning with the one from South Hill, the second sketched, and published in 1838. We find an advertisement in one of the local newspapers of 1838 in which these copies "handsomely colored by the artist" were offered to the public at \$3.50 each. In connection with this particular picture, I was fortunate to find in the files of the *Ithaca Journal* (then called the *Ithaca Journal and General Advertiser*) of 1838 a very complete description of the view, which I will summarize quite fully as it expresses the appreciation of the contemporary artist.

Addressing the editor, the writer of the article conceals his identity under the signature "Q" but states that "a second view of our beautiful village, and the romantic scenery by which it is surrounded, has been drawn by and painted by Mr. Henry Walton, a young gentleman of superior qualifications and skill as an artist, both in portrait and landscape painting." He goes on to state that this particular view was taken from Prospect Hill, looking north toward the lake, and adds, "The whole view embraces a range of many miles and

every object within this range, to the most minute particulars, is laid down in its proper position."

The writer assures us "the artist's knowledge of perspective and the accuracy of every detail is astonishing," enabling one familiar with Ithaca to pick out many public and private edifices and landmarks with ease, although many then existing have disappeared with the march of time. "You almost fancy yourself standing on the spot from which the artist viewed the scene, about a quarter of a mile from the town." The same attention to detail and perspective is observable in Walton's other pictures.

"Q" goes on to say, "in the foreground of the picture you have, in all the rich coloring of nature, the vacant space of ground which lies a few rods south of Prospect Street, between the Owego turnpike and the old road." (This area today is largely covered with buildings). "Around this piece of Commons are the buildings, new and old, red, white and wood colored, with their yards and outhouses, etc., here a workshop and there a dwelling. The embellishments of the foreground are arranged tastefully and pleasingly." A barouche, drawn by a team of horses, stands in the roadway close to the observer, and "Q" remarks, "this establishment evidently came from Shepherd's for you know the horses." Shepherd's was, at that time, one of the leading liveries and located on South Tioga Street.

"A lady and a gentleman," "Q" notes, "are standing at a little distance below you, attentively viewing the pleasing prospect before them. A few straggling soldiers have left their comrades and are also admiring the scene; by their uniforms it is plain they are members of the Ithaca Guards, and by their attitudes, peculiar to themselves, you know their persons. Standing a little aside from this group is an individual with his arms folded across his breast—him you cannot mistake. He is their captain. He, too, seems fully and intently absorbed in one of the natural beauties before him, either the landscape or the fine-looking girl who is peeping archly from the window of a house."

"The Captain was then single." This evidently refers to Charles Woodruff, who is known to have commanded the local company of militia at about this time and who was associated

in business with Mack and Andrus, publishers. A close inspection of the knapsack on the back of one of these soldiers reveals the numerals 1828.

To return to "Q's" narrative, he continues: "Leaving the foreground, you look off upon the town springing, as it were, from a forest, so numerous are the ornamental trees with which the streets and gardens are planted. You view it in its full length, from the hill west of the Inlet on the left, to the eastern extremity, taking in Eddyville on the right."

Eddyville at the time was a flourishing little suburb with a cotton mill and other industries, which had attracted quite a colony of workers. The mills and the homes of the workers are clearly discernible along the road which is known today as Eddy Street. Probably one of these was occupied by Archibald Davidson, who became quite famous as a weaver of carpets, coverlets, etc.

In the picture, the upper reaches of Buffalo and Seneca appear to have been then mostly pasture land with only an occasional structure. Visible in both the view from East Hill and the one from South Hill is the grave of Simeon DeWitt, which was once located on the site of the present DeWitt Place. Mr. DeWitt, who made the first surveys of Ithaca, died in the Clinton House in 1834, and was buried on the site he loved so well and on which he had hoped to build his home. The grave was encircled by a white picket fence and overshadowed by a few trees. It is the picket fence which is discernible in the Walton sketches.

To again return to "Q's" narrative:

"The village, in particular, is well drawn, the buildings being so correctly taken that you are not at a loss to point out any house that comes within the view. Looking down the valley, you are struck with the beauty and accuracy of the bold and romantic scenery, which skirts it on either side, until an abrupt bend in the lake interposes to break the view and the eye wanders with delight among the cultivated fields of Lansing, Genoa and Scipio, as they lie sloping to the lake in all their rich and rural beauty. On the left you see the Inlet, as it flows along the somewhat meandering course at the base of the western hills, bearing on its bosom the lake boats, the whitened sails of which are seen gliding through the forest

trees that hem it on either side, until they issue out upon the clear, calm waters of the Cayuga, which lies in the distance, reflecting in its glassy surface the image of the rugged mountains in which it is embedded.”

A careful inspection of the picture reveals several square-rigged vessels, of a type used at that time on the Great Lakes, floating on the waters of Cayuga. An explanation of this seeming anomaly is to be found in the printed title of the picture which reads: “View of Ithaca, Tompkins County, N.Y. Taken from the South Hill in November, 1838. Vessels are introduced upon the Cayuga Lake to show the result of the Sodus Canal being completed according to plan.”

It was expected at the time that Walton made his view that, in a very few years, Ithaca would be the head of all upper lake navigation. This was to be accomplished by construction of the Sodus Bay Ship Canal, which was then arousing wide interest.

A careful study of the South Hill picture under a magnifying glass reveals, among many others, the following structures, some of which are in existence today. Prominent in the scene is the Clinton House, which was completed in 1831. It was then surmounted by a round tower, from the catwalk of which Whitlock's Brass Band once discoursed sweet music on festive occasions. From this commanding height Ithaca's first fire-bell sounded its tocsin.

Several churches are distinctly pictured and the sketch accurately portrays the architecture of these early places of worship, long since replaced by modern structures. Among these are the First Presbyterian Church of Ithaca with its pillared portico, facing the park, and, nestling beside it, the tiny Session House or Chapel in which in 1834 was held the meeting which resulted in the resolution of this church “to send and support the Oregon Mission of the Rev. Samuel Parker” who “enlisted as his later associate Marcus Whitman, M.D., the hero-martyr of Oregon.”

The first church to be erected by the Methodists is visible on the site of the present structure at the corner of Mill (now Court) and Aurora Streets. It was a wooden building with a domed cupola and faced Mill Street.

The Episcopal Church, a brick building with a square tower,

appears on the site of the present edifice which supplanted it in 1860.

The Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, built in 1830, appears on the site of the recent Congregational Church, now St. Catherine's Greek Orthodox Church.

Facing DeWitt Park on the east, on the same location as the present building, we see the first church to be built by the Baptists. In the steeple of this church we can distinguish the dials of the village clock. This structure, first occupied for worship in 1831, was 47x70 feet and was built of brick at a cost of \$7,000. This structure was destroyed by fire in 1854; a year later the Baptist Society erected another brick building on the same site which, when damaged by fire, was replaced by the present structure in 1890.

Between the Baptist and the Presbyterian Churches is visible the first Courthouse, a wooden building erected on the site of the present old Gothic Courthouse facing DeWitt Park. It was erected twenty years before the drawing was made.

Across the park on Cayuga Street is visible the large brick building which until 1966 was the home of the I.O.O.F. Lodge. It was built by Stephen B. Munn about 1820. The house just to the south was built by Jeremiah Beebe, son-in-law of Munn.

One can easily distinguish the building occupied by the old Bank of Ithaca until it closed its doors about 1850; later it was occupied by the postoffice, and still later by Atwater's grocery. It was long known as the Colonial Building.

Among the houses of prominent men of the day we can readily identify those of William Andrus, site of the G.L.F.; the house at the northwest corner of Geneva and Seneca Streets, now known as "The Pillars," built by General Hubbell about 1825 and later occupied by Capt. T. D. Wilcox, Dudley F. Finch and others, now a gas station; the old home of Dr. Lawrence on Geneva Street now the residence of Dr. Harold P. Denniston. Many other structures are recognizable including the square-frame Academy building that occupied the site of today's DeWitt Junior High School.

The picture from South Hill was printed by J. H. Bufford, Printer, Nassau Street, New York City, as is indicated by the fine print on the margin.

Now, let us turn to consideration of the view from West Hill,

which bears the title, "View of Ithaca, Tompkins County, N.Y., taken from West Hill 1839." In the finer print are the notations "Drawn from Nature and on Stone by Henry Walton, Ithaca, N.Y.," and "Printed by Daniel S. Jenkins, 136 Nassau Street (cor. Beekman), New York."

For sheer beauty of scenery the colored prints of this picture surpass, in my estimation, those from South and East Hills. The distance from the village and the wide sweep of valley and wooded hills make identifications of individual houses and public buildings more difficult, and those which can be identified are largely those described in previous pages. In the immediate foreground is an old-time sawmill fed by a square, wooden flume and, on the opposite side of the highway in front of the old Stone House, are stacked piles of lumber, indicating that the mill was in active service.

In the highway, which winds its way toward the village, appear a lady and a gentleman riding horseback, with their greyhound bounding along ahead of them. One of the older residents of Ithaca informs us that the artist took for his models Mr. and Mrs. John Hawkins while enjoying their daily horseback ride, and that the dog was their Italian greyhound.

In front of the Stone House a woman is bending over a long wooden bench on which are arranged tubs and pans, while a man relaxes in the doorway with a dog reclining at his feet. This building was erected about 1820 by Nathaniel Davenport. It was conducted as a tavern in the early days.

We see, part way down the highway toward Ithaca, a thorough-brace stagecoach drawn by four horses, hurrying its load of passengers toward the village, which nestles in the valley beyond. The thorough-brace was a long leather thong that took the place of a spring in a carriage, bodies of the coaches being suspended from stout leather straps to ease the jolting of the rough roads.

One rare feature of this print is the picture of the inclined plane which once was the route of cars of the Ithaca-Owego Railroad up to the top of South Hill. From that point the cars were horse-drawn 29 miles to Owego. We are fortunate to have this picture of the structure preserved, probably the only picture of it in existence. Photography was then in its infancy and only the chance preservation of sketches such as this

could give us a pictured idea of how this strange structure actually appeared.

Hills to the north of Fall Creek on what is now the Renwick Tract appear thickly wooded. A group of buildings close to the Ithaca Falls, then known as Olympic Falls, indicates the flourishing industrial and manufacturing community that developed there as a result of the abundant water power. Moored at the pier at the head of the lake is a steamboat, one typical of the day. Enterprising Ithacans had launched the first steamboat on Cayuga's waters only 13 years after Fulton's successful boat on the Hudson, the local craft was appropriately named the "Enterprise," and it proved to be forerunner of a line of sidewheelers that graced Cayuga's waters for nearly a century.

We have thus far attempted a study of the Walton views from South and West Hills, the former probably giving us the best general idea of the Ithaca of that early day, and the latter being the outstanding one from the standpoint of artistic beauty.

The third view of the series looks westward down Seneca Street from the corner of Eddy, but possesses the disadvantage of looking down a steep pitch in the immediate foreground to a level stretch on Seneca, and then a second steep pitch to the valley floor. Naturally, objects in the foreground are a bit difficult to identify, but within the village proper we can pick out numerous structures which still exist, and others that have disappeared or been replaced during intervening years.

References

1. Nathaniel Bartlet Sylvester, *The History of Saratoga County, New York 1609 - 1878*. P. 196.
2. Albert W. Force, "H. Walton—limner, lithographer, and map maker." *Antiques*, September, 1962. Pages 284, 285.
3. Agnes Halsey Jones, *Rediscovered Painters of Upstate New York 1700-1875*. Pages 74, 75.
4. *The Jeffersonian*. December 25, 1847.
5. Louis J. Rassmussen, *Historic Records*, 1966 vol. 2, San Francisco Passenger Lists.
6. Walton Family genealogical chart by Bentley D. Hasell, New York 1897. The New York Historical Society.
7. Walton family genealogical chart by Wharton Dickenson, New York 1903. The New York Historical Society.
8. Typewritten manuscript, Vital Record Collection of Captain Samuel Felt Chapter, D.A.R., Cass County, Michigan, vol. 1, Marriages, Soldier Burials, Cemetery Records.
9. Copy of Walton's Last Will and Testament obtained from Probate Court of Cass County, Michigan.
10. Harry T. Peters, *America on Stone*, p. 13.
11. *The Columbia-Viking Desk Encyclopedia*. Edited at Columbia University. Page 1036.
12. Carl Zigrosser and Christa M. Gaehde, *A Guide to the Collecting and Care of Original Prints*. Pages 5 and 6.
13. Donald H. Karshan, "American Printmaking, 1670-1968," *Art in America*. P. 27.
14. Nina Fletcher Little, *The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Art Collection*. (Based on information provided by Mr. Albert W. Force.) P. 64.
15. Virgil Barker, *American Painting*. P. 399.
16. *The California Gold Rush*. (By the Editors of American Heritage.) P. 72.
17. William Heath Davis, *Seventy-five Years in California*.