

Nineteenth Century
Painting of the
New Jersey
Landscape



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William Paterson College
Wayne, New Jersey 07470

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Ben Shahn Center for the Visual Arts
William Paterson College
Wayne, New Jersey 07470

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Introduction

The Ben Shahn Galleries of the department of art of the William Paterson College of New Jersey are pleased to present this exhibit of landscape paintings of nineteenth century New Jersey. It is our hope that this exhibit and catalog will help to establish New Jersey's role in the Hudson River School and will encourage further research in this area.

We are grateful to the lenders to the exhibit, to the New Jersey State Museum, the New Jersey Historical Society, the Passaic County Historical Society, Ringwood Manor State Park, and to the private collectors who wish to remain anonymous.

Special thanks are due Alan Fraser, New Jersey Historical Society Curator; Elbertus Prod, Ringwood Manor Curator; Margaret Coleman, Catherine Doty and Carol Patonzealla, Ben Shahn Galleries Assistants. Thanks also to the students from the W.P.C. gallery and museum studies program.

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Nancy Einsiedhofer, Director
Ben Shahn Galleries

Nineteenth Century Painting of the New Jersey¹ Landscape

Susan Eisenbichler

At the beginning of the nineteenth century American painting began to expand to include landscape scenes. Prior to this portraiture and an occasional history painting were the only concerns. Now, with the coming of independence and economic growth, there developed an educated, wealthy class interested in a uniquely American culture and capable of supporting those artists who expressed it. This new leisure class purchased and commissioned paintings of the American landscape. They provided artists, already enthused with national pride and an appreciation for the pristine beauty of the American landscape, the opportunity to celebrate their surroundings.

New Jersey, located between the two most important artistic centers of the nineteenth century, was traversed by many artists. New Jersey also served as a vacation spot for artists and patrons alike. Rightly called the Garden State, it offered an escape from the big cities of New York and Philadelphia, while the beauty of its lakes, mountains, meadows and beaches inspired landscapes.

There was no specific regional style within the state boundaries but rather, New Jersey participated in every major artistic development of the nineteenth century. New Jersey's art may be viewed as a microcosm of the art of the entire nation and for this reason alone is worth investigation. Our state played host to artists of great talent, historic interest and artistic significance and was an important resource for the painters touched by the romanticism of the Hudson River School.

The first American landscapes were painted by a loosely connected group of artists which came to be known as the Hudson River School. This label has been somewhat misleading since it implies that these artists painted only the Hudson River Valley, when in fact they traveled widely throughout the North East, the South and the West. These painters were inspired by the wild, primal look of the New World and were heavily influenced by European Romanticism.

European Romanticism held that the contemplation and appreciation of nature could uplift the soul and provide inspiration. Americans were clearly inspired by these paintings, proud of our untapped resources and confident of our great destiny. But in the landscape as symbol there lay a paradox. We held a great pride in our wilderness, but with that pride there existed also an understanding that our destiny would be fulfilled by the cultivation, development and ultimately, the destruction of the Garden. This contradiction was revealed through landscape painting for landscape painting was strongly nationalistic and tied up with our self image. The changes that occurred in our self perceptions were mirrored on the surface of the canvas and New Jersey, perhaps more than any other state, experienced rampant development.

The New Jersey painting of the Great Falls of the Passaic River in Paterson (Illustration #1) is a fine example of these incompatible notions finding expression in Romanticism. Although the identity of the artist has been lost, he was obviously an academically trained, accomplished professional dedicated to romanticized landscapes. The compositional format of a romantic painting usually revealed a distant vista of mountains and waterfall bracketed by large-scale foreground elements such as the twisted and gnarled tree and the jagged rocks. In typical romantic fashion the artist represented the sublime and the idyllic in nature through the drama of the falls and the reflection of the sunset in the river. Often there would be tiny foreground figures gazing in wonderment at the virgin landscape. Although the compositions were in the European tradition of Romanticism, the American nationalistic pride in the greatness of our new land was the inspiration and this pride would not allow the artist to depict the marks of civilization. At this time there was a bridge over the falls and various structures built in the vicinity but they were omitted from the painting in the name of poetic license.

A similar composition (perhaps a copy) by Jesse Talbot (Illustration #2) includes a solitary Indian, the noble savage of James Fenimore Cooper, in commerce with nature. Talbot lived in Paterson from 1848 to 1860 and this painting is dated 1845. There were, of course, no Indians in Paterson at this time, but the Romantic imagination was stirred by the exotic natives, the primeval landscape, the drama of the unknown, lending epic dimensions to all depictions. It should be noted here, in reference to the paradox, that there existed at this time a common belief that America's natural riches were God's blessing on the white race and that the Red Man had lost the land because he had not utilized it. The Talbot painting indicates a kind of nostalgia for the past which was widespread among Hudson River School painters. An 1847 review of Hudson River School paintings in the "Literary World" laments: "What were once the wild and picturesque haunts of the Red Man, and where deer roamed in freedom, are becoming the abodes of commerce and the seats of manufactures. It behooves our artists to rescue the little that is left, before it is too late." What could not be rescued was invented by the romantic imagination of the Hudson River artists.

1. Anonymous
Great Falls, Paterson mid-nineteenth
century



2. Jesse Talbot
Great Falls 1845



The most prestigious landscapist to live in New Jersey was Martin Heade. Heade was born in Bucks County, Pennsylvania in 1819. His mother was a native of New Jersey and Heade lived in Trenton in 1844 and again from 1866 to 1880. Even when not in residence here, he returned to the Garden State time and again to paint New Jersey's meadows and marshlands. His painting of the Ringwood meadows (Illustration "G") or "Sally's Meadow" was, according to Elbertus Pood, Ringwood Manor Curator, commissioned by the Hewitt family. The vantage point was the bluff on which the present manor sits, looking south, southwest, an area that has since been flooded, creating a beautiful lake view from the manor house. The painting contains those luminist qualities for which Heade was known but that golden light suggests a poetic vision that might be explained as evidence of a sense of resignation to the growing industrialization. Martin Heade traveled widely and continuously across the United States, to Europe and several times to South America. It has been suggested that his conscious wanderings may have been in pursuit of a virgin landscape and away from the burgeoning industrial centers of the Eastern United States.

5. Otto Sommer

Passaic River 1890



G. Martin Hoade
Ringwood Meadow 1859



The United States emerged as a major industrial nation by the close of the Civil War (1865). There was by this time a growing awareness that the wave of civilization was destroying the land that had remained untouched for millennia. There was also a disillusionment with America's self-image. Torn apart for four disastrous years, the nation became disinterested in scenes of pastoral calm and national optimism.

Landscape painting again reflected the changing attitudes in the American culture. Some landscapists diverged from tight realism and turned toward a looser, more opulent use of paint. They would find in the landscape an expression of individual emotions and perhaps an escape from life's realities. The American culture which had been so closely connected to the land now revealed in its paintings of that land, not a clear, structured vision, but a blurred and moody interpretation. Were we using the canvas again as a mirror, this time reflecting a tarnished self-image?

The most important and influential artist of this period was George Inness and his influence was especially strong among New Jersey artists since he was a resident of the state. Inness was born in Newburgh, New York but the family moved to Newark when the future artist was just four years old. A great deal of his adult life was spent in Morristown, New Jersey where he estab-

lished a studio in 1878 after three years in an artists' colony in Englewood, New Jersey. He would reside in Morristown until his death in 1894.

Inness began his career in the style of the Hudson River School at mid-century but later moved from the particularization of nature to an interest in the moods of season and time of day. Inness was influenced by the Barbizon painters and shows a relationship, although tangential, to the Impressionists. "Early Autumn, Morristown" (Illustration *7) is an excellent example of Inness' concerns indicated by the title as well as by the work itself.

George Inness was both friend and mentor to Charles Warren Eaton, a talented, intelligent painter and resident of Bloomfield, New Jersey. In his 1887 painting of *Wassessing Park, Bloomfield*, (Illustration *8) we see the fluid, broadened brushstrokes of the artist asserting himself as an individual. Eaton's paintings are subjective and expressive and establish strongly the identity of the creator. The execution of moody, misty landscapes satisfied the need for more personal expression and established the voice of the artist as individual rather than spokesperson for an entire nation.

7. George Inness
Early Autumn, Morristown 1886
Collection of the Morristown Art Museum



Estor's paintings indicate also an interest in the paint itself and an obvious pleasure in its application—new art ideas imported from Europe.

Whatever the European influence, and certainly European art was at least a basis for comparison, American artists continued to find the inspiration for their work in the American landscape.

This preoccupation with the American landscape, the New Jersey landscape, is understandable when one considers the young nation trying to establish its identity. The land was the essence of the country's soul, the hope for the future, the substance of the new nation's identity and therefore the inspiration for the artists' vision.

New Jersey's geographical position between the art capitals of New York City and Philadelphia and the magnificent subjects it held within its borders combined to make New Jersey a primary player in the artistic saga of the nineteenth century.

8. Charles Warren Estor
Watsessing Park, Bloomfield 1887



Of further interest...

James Peale

Delaware Water Gap 1819

James Peale (1749-1831) can be studied as an interesting link between the two schools of eighteenth century naturalism and nineteenth century romanticism. He was most celebrated as a painter of still-life compositions but also painted portraits (including George Washington), miniatures, heroic battles and, later in life, landscapes. Peale enjoyed a long life of eighty-two years and most of his landscapes were painted after the age of seventy. The somber, sometimes haunting attitude displayed here may be the early romantic influences, or may be attributed to the artist's failing eye sight.

Nancy Reinshofer
William Paterson College



James Hamilton Kefauver, New Jersey 1844

James Hamilton (1819-1879) born near Bedford, Ireland, he came to Philadelphia in 1834. His first important works date from the 1840s. Around 1852 he fell under the influence of English painter James Turner with whom he subsequently studied in 1854-55. Like Turner, Hamilton preferred to interpret, rather than to describe, nature, stating that he "never attempted to catalogue Nature." Known for his seaside paintings and his illustrations for John Frost's "The Pictorial History of the American Navy" (1843) and Dr. Elisha Kent Kane's "Arctic Explorations" (1856), Hamilton was considered among the ablest American marine painters during the later years of his career. His turbulent marine scenes as well as his twilight scenes of reverie were especially appreciated.

—Matthew Baigell, Professor of Art History
Rutgers University, New Brunswick



Hamburg Turnpike, Wayne Attributed to Mrs. Eycerson

Pompton Falls Early 1800's, attributed to Mrs. Eycerson, depicts the area where Route 202 and Hamburg Turnpike intersect at the Pompton Falls. Present day communities are shown as follows: Pompton Falls on the left, Wayne on the right, and Oakland is in the background. Today, the furnace is in ruins and the site is occupied by the pumping station, a wider Hamburg Turnpike, Maroon Postiac and the Telephone Company.

Elbertus Peil, Curator
Ringwood Manor



Ringwood Manor in 1867. Attributed to Mrs. Ryerson.

This painting depicts Ringwood Iron Works at about the time Martin J. Ryerson purchased it. Items of note in this painting include the village, a large building near the Furnace, the historic road laid down by Major General Green from West Point to Morristown through Ringwood, under orders of General Washington, and the ten room Federal Style house to which the Hewitts added, creating a mansion 226 feet long which contains 81 rooms.

*Elbertus Pool, Curator
Ringwood Manor*



The Great Falls of the Passaic River, Paterson

The Great Falls were possibly the most important subject during the nineteenth century and one can trace artistic developments through the paintings of the Falls alone. They inspired many Romantic artists with their power and turbulence, and of course their location made them accessible.

The painting of the Great Falls by Thomas Whitley was executed the same year as the painting by Jesse Talbot. One can see that although still Romantic, this interpretation is a more factual and somewhat intimate view. Whitley was born in England and settled in Paterson in 1835. By 1849 he had moved to Hoboken and, in addition to his career as a painter, he served as the editor of the Hoboken Gazette. He also worked as an art and drama critic for the New York Herald. William Cullen Bryant was his friend and his paintings reflect the poet's lyrical appreciation of nature.

Nancy Eisenhofer
William Paterson College

Thomas Whitley, *Great Falls, Autumn, 1854*





Johann Hermann Carmelsche,
Great Falls with Bridge, c1881



Elizabeth Rodgers,
First Bridge Over Falls, 1827



Second Bridge Over Falls,
Artist Unknown, 1827

Garfield, Outwater Lane and
River Road 1815

Artist Unknown

This very early depiction of Garfield is a fine example of naive painting. This unknown artist possessed a sensitivity to the landscape that is evident in the personalized interpretation. New Jersey had many naive painters and their work often showed a concern for the decorative qualities of picture-making. Since they were not academically trained, they did not reflect a cohesive group style or fit comfortably into a defined "school," but remained strongly individual.

Nancy Eisenhofer
William Paterson College



John Hagy

Delaware Watergap 1867

John Hagy (1808-1876) was known primarily for his portraits of New Jersey's leaders. He was born in Germany but lived most of his life in Newark, New Jersey. His painting of the Delaware Watergap illustrates the trend of both romanticism and realism by combining the great mountains in the distance with the railroad tracks in the foreground. Romanticism and realism were parallel influences by the second half of the century and are presented as such in Hagy's work.

Nancy Hirtreiterhofer
William Paterson College



William C.A. Frericks *Little Falls of the Passaic*

William C.A. Frericks' *Little Falls of the Passaic River, Little Falls 1889*. Mr. Frericks' biographer considered *Little Falls* to be Frericks' master piece. This site is presently occupied by the Seattle Bag Mill on Union Blvd. in Little Falls. It exhibits very effectively, Mr. Frericks' ability to depict nature in a realistic way. This painting was given a place of honor at the Frericks Show of the North Carolina Museum of Art in 1974.

Elbertus Fred, Curator
Ringwood Manor



Joseph Tabbly *A View Toward Brookdale 1891*

This oil painting of northern Bloomfield depicts the spire of the Reformed Church nestled among a ridge of dark trees. Joseph Tabbly was at this time a member of the most important "art colony" in the state. Centered in Montclair, Tabbly was closely associated with the artists George Inness and Thomas Morley.

Nancy Eisenhofer
William Paterson College



Arthur Fitzwilliam Tait

Noonday in June
Englewood, N.J.
1873

Arthur Fitzwilliam Tait (1819-1905) was born in England and spent part of his childhood on a farm in Manchester which might account in part for his fascination with the wonders of nature. He was a self-taught artist influenced by two of England's best known animal painters, Landseer and Ambell.

Tait immigrated to America in 1850 at the age of thirty-one. Tait's specialty was the outdoor life of hunting, fishing, and trapping. The world of domestic animals especially fascinated him. His paintings are faithful to every detail, and give importance to the ordinary by meticulously rendering each blade of grass, each little chick's feathers.

Nancy Eisenhofer
William Paterson College



WORKS INCLUDED IN THE EXHIBITION

- A. Andrews**
Great Falls, Paterson, 1890
oil on canvas 20" x 25"
Passaic County Historical Society
Paterson, New Jersey
- Anonymous**
Great Falls, Paterson, mid-nineteenth century
oil on canvas 24" x 20"
Passaic County Historical Society
Paterson, New Jersey
- Anonymous**
View of Paterson and Claver Mountains
From ancient site of Sun. Pat. Cal. 1860
oil on canvas 28" x 28"
Passaic County Historical Society
Paterson, New Jersey
- Anonymous**
Delaware Lake at the Passaic River, Garfield 1813
watercolor 25" x 21"
Private collection
- Anonymous**
Corner of Hamburg Turnpike and Route 202, Wayne c. 1810
oil on canvas 28" x 22"
State of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Parks and Forestry
Ringwood Manor
Ringwood, New Jersey
- Anonymous**
Ringwood 1867
oil on canvas 28" x 21"
State of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Parks and Forestry
Ringwood Manor
Ringwood, New Jersey
- Anonymous**
Second Bridge over Falls, 1827
oil on board 18" x 21"
Passaic County Historical Society
Paterson, New Jersey
- Anonymous**
Third Bridge over Falls, 1854
pastel/gouache 19" x 20"
Passaic County Historical Society
Paterson, New Jersey
- J. Aronch**
Hickmanack 1854
oil on canvas 24" x 21 1/2"
New Jersey Historical Society
Newark, New Jersey
- Edward Beyer**
Shooting on the Passaic River 1858
oil on canvas 29" x 27 1/2"
New Jersey Historical Society
Newark, New Jersey
Gift of Clement F. Lemaire
- John Hermann Cassinick**
Great Falls with Bridge c. 1884
oil on canvas 24" x 24"
Passaic County Historical Society
Paterson, New Jersey
- Thomas Cole**
Kinnago Lake early nineteenth century
oil on canvas 24" x 14 1/2"
State of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Parks and Forestry
Ringwood Manor
Ringwood, New Jersey
- Joseph Casper**
Greenwood Lake 1870
oil on canvas 28" x 20"
State of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Parks and Forestry
Ringwood Manor
Ringwood, New Jersey
- J. Dawson**
Dutch Reformed Church, Belleville
watercolor 17" x 21"
Private Collection
- Charles Harvey Eaton**
Warehousing Park, Bloomfield 1867
oil on canvas 18" x 21 1/2"
New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Polkinghore
- W.C.A. Fawcett**
Little Falls of the Passaic River, Little Falls 1869
oil on canvas 29" x 23 1/2"
State of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Parks and Forestry
Ringwood Manor
Ringwood, New Jersey
- GG (signed)**
Kinnago System of the Falls 1841
watercolor 24" x 24 1/2"
Passaic County Historical Society
Paterson, New Jersey
- John Hagar**
Delaware Watergap 1892
oil on canvas 28 1/2" x 29"
New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey
Request of Frederick A. Garfield
- James Hamilton**
Red Bank, New Jersey 1844
watercolor 24" x 28 1/2"
New Jersey State Museum
Trenton, New Jersey



20. Martin Hoade
 Ringwood Millrace 1839
 oil on canvas 30 x 22 1/2"
 State of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
 Division of Parks and Forestry
 Ringwood Manor
 Ringwood, New Jersey
21. Walter M. Gibbs
 Chimney Rock, Somerset County 1847
 oil on canvas 25 1/2 x 32"
 New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey
 Estate of Miss Sarah Cannon
22. James Peck
 Delaware Water Gap 1839
 oil on wood panel 21 1/2 x 32"
 State of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
 Division of Parks and Forestry
 Ringwood Manor
 Ringwood, New Jersey
23. Elizabeth Rodgers
 Pine Bridge Over Falls 1827
 panel on board 22 1/2 x 24 1/2"
 Passaic County Historical Society
 Paterson, New Jersey
24. Elizabeth Rodgers
 Passaic River With Sailboats mid-nineteenth century
 panel on paper 18 1/2 x 22"
 Passaic County Historical Society
 Paterson, New Jersey
25. Otto Sommer
 Passaic River 1890
 oil on canvas 22 1/2 x 29 1/2"
 New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey
 Gift of Clarence E. Linnemann
26. Arthur Fossilham Tait
 Englewood Nursery in June 1872
 oil on canvas 22 1/2 x 42 1/2"
 New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey
 Bequest of Virginia Tait Houston Perkins
27. Jesse Talbot (attributed to)
 Great Falls 1848
 oil on canvas 45 x 42"
 New Jersey Historical Society
 Newark, New Jersey
28. Joseph Tully
 A View Toward Brookfield 1850
 oil on canvas 12 1/2 x 16 1/2"
 New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey
 Gift of Miss Gertrude O. Tully, daughter of the artist
29. Thomas Whitney
 Old Mill Factory c. 1840-50
 oil on canvas 22 1/2 x 31 1/2"
 Passaic County Historical Society
 Paterson, New Jersey
30. Thomas Whitney
 Great Falls, Autumn 1854
 oil on wood 22 1/2 x 42 1/2"
 New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey
 Gift of Dr. W.B. Green

