

"William Henry Rinehart"

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By Jay A. Graybeal

Only a handful of nineteenth century Countians achieved fame beyond our region. One who did was sculptor William Henry Rinehart, a Union Bridge native, born in 1825, who spent his most of his working career in Italy. Rinehart began his working career as a stonecutter in Baltimore but he had a strong desire to sculpt. His artistic ability was recognized by William T. Walters who financed a trip to Florence, Italy for the young sculptor in 1855. Upon returning from abroad, Rinehart attempted to open a studio in Baltimore but found insufficient interests in the arts. He returned to Italy and in 1858 and established his studio in Rome where he worked until his death in 1874.

An early review of the sculptor's work appeared in the Baltimore Gazette and was reprinted in the 12 July 1866 issue of the Westminster Democratic Advocate newspaper; interestingly enough, both papers misspelled his name:

"Reinhardt, the Sculptor

The friends of Reinhardt, the sculptor-and we are glad to know they are many-will be gratified to learn that he arrived in this country by the steamship Arago on Monday last, after an absence of eight years. During that interval, by unwearied industry and the force of native genius, he has won for himself from those who are best capable of judging of the merit of his works, the reputation of being one of the foremost sculptors of his time. To such as remember his earlier efforts, promising, as they undoubtedly were, the perfection he has since reached is the best justification of the judicious encouragement he then received, and the best reward for the assistance which was so generously accorded him at the outset of his career in Italy. In this respect Reinhardt, whilst struggling to achieve that recognition in the domain of art to which he has since attained, was more favorably situated than many others. He had at least one friend whose purse was open to him at all times, and he was thus secured against much of that harassment which besets the path of a young and unknown beginner. It may be recorded to his honor that in no instance did he abuse the privilege, but continued to observe the same close economy and to work with the same assiduity of purpose that distinguished him whilst in this city. Under such circumstances his improvement was so rapid that when Crawford died, Reinhardt was chosen to complete the commissions of Crawford for the United States Government. Those commissions have been ably executed, and now seeking some relaxation, he has returned on a visit to his parents in Carroll county, and will not again go back to Italy until he has completed some busts which he was invited to uncover and execute.

It is pleasant to chronicle the fact that it was in this city that Reinhardt's unquestionable talent as a sculptor was first appreciated, and that some of the finest of his later works have here found purchasers. One of these, and the most accessible to the public, is an exquisite monumental group in Loudoun Park Cemetery. It is composed of two figures-Our Saviour and the Angel of Resurrection-and of two vases sculptured in bass-relief, illustrating scriptural subjects. He has also executed for one of his earliest friends two pieces of statuary, which are masterly, both in point of design and in the skillful arrangement of details. One is styled the Woman of Samaria, a noble figure, bearing a water jar, and every line of whose drapery is a perfect study. The other is the monumental figure of a woman, closely and severely draped, dropping flowers over a grave. It is at once simple and touching. In addition to these, we may mention a monumental group of sleeping children, admirably wrought, and a manly

figure of that Leander who swam the Hellespont. Of the commissions which Reinhardt has executed for others, we know nothing more than that he has been kept constantly employed."

Unfortunately, Rinehart had less than a decade to live and he died in Rome in 1874. He left his artwork and papers to his patron William T. Walters of Baltimore. The collection is now owned by the Walters Art Gallery and represents the largest body of work by Rinehart. Rinehart's legacy also includes scholarships to the Rinehart School of Sculpture at the Maryland Institute of Art in Baltimore.

Photo caption: My Mother (left) was sculpted by William Henry Rinehart shortly after his mother, Mary Snader Rinehart, died in 1868. Mrs. Mygatt (1860) is representative of Rinehart's marble portrait busts many of which were commissioned by wealthy Americans traveling abroad. Historical Society of Carroll County collection, gifts of Mrs. Harry D. Williar, Jr., 1962 and Miss Susan Kellogg, 1964. Courtesy of Porterfield's Photography.