

**LITHOGRAPHIC
PORTRAITS OF
ALBERT NEWSAM**

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Lithographic Portraits of Albert Newsam by D. McN. Stauffer

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D. MCN. STAUFFER

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Yours very truly
A. Newsam

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BY
D. McN. STAUFFER

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PHILADELPHIA
1901

LITHOGRAPHIC PORTRAITS OF ALBERT NEWSAM

LITHOGRAPHY, or the art of drawing upon and printing from a peculiar limestone, chiefly found in Solenhofen, Bavaria, was discovered by Aloys Senefelder about 1796. It was commercially introduced into Rome and London about 1809, into Paris in 1814, and was apparently first experimented with in the United States in 1819. In any event, we find in the *Analectic Magazine*, published in Philadelphia in 1819, two examples of lithographic work by the portrait-painter, Bass Otis. The text tells us that the stone used was brought from Munich, and the examples referred to are really etchings upon stone, though one of them, signed "Bass Otis, lithographie," plainly shows the lithographic grain in the shadows.

As to the time and place of the commercial introduction of lithography into the United States there is considerable dispute, Philadelphia, Boston, and New York each claiming that honor. As near as can be now learned the race was very close between the two latter cities. The *Boston Magazine* for December, 1825, contains an account of Senefelder's discovery, and then remarks that "nothing has been done to introduce lithography into this country, unless a few attempts in New York can be verified, until within a few months, when John Pendleton commenced an establishment for lithography in this city." This John Pendleton was born in New York State; visited Paris, and there becoming interested in lithography, he studied the art under the French masters, and brought back with him to America the stones and other materials necessary. He established himself in business in Boston along with his brother, a copper-plate printer. The magazine referred to contains some examples of the work of his press, the drawings on stone being chiefly

made by Thomas Edwards. Among the early Boston lithographers, or at least those who drew upon stone, may be mentioned the artists F. Alexander, D. O. Johnston, William Hoagland, and J. R. Penniman, besides Mr. Edwards mentioned above.

The claim of New York rests upon the lithographic establishment started in that city by A. Imbert, who was certainly publishing prints of this character as early as 1826. He thus illustrated the "Account of the Grand Canal Celebration," and published music and miscellaneous lithographic prints. The names appended to this work are those of foreigners,—F. Duponchel, Bauncon, and Canova,—and Mr. Imbert doubtless imported his draughtsmen along with his plant. It is interesting to note, however, that the vignette on the title-page of the "Account" is seemingly drawn upon the stone by the artist Archibald Robertson; and another lithograph, published by Mr. Imbert in 1826, is signed as "Drawn upon stone by a young lady." Some time previous to 1830 Peter Maverick, of New York, added lithography to his business of copper-plate engraving and printing. In Philadelphia the dates are somewhat uncertain, but about 1829–30 Cephas G. Childs did the same thing there that Maverick did in New York, and produced the best lithographic work seen in the United States up to that date. Other early Philadelphia lithographers were Childs & Inman, Kennedy & Lucas, Lehman & Duval, and Pendleton, Kearny & Childs.

Lithography was peculiarly adapted to the reproduction of portraits; and the first man in the United States to achieve any considerable reputation as a delineator of portraits upon stone was Albert Newsam, the subject of the present sketch. His work was characterized by an absolute faithfulness of likeness and by an artistic finish peculiarly its own; and his portraits have an added historical value in being, in many cases, the only published portraits of persons prominent in the political, professional, social, and business life of the first half of the last century.

In tardy justice to the man and the artist, and in the interest of those to whom his portraits have value, a beginning is here made in what it is hoped may some time result in a complete and systematic record of the lithographic work of Albert Newsam. The list given includes only such examples as have actually been examined by the compiler, and he is well aware of its incompleteness. The larger portion of the unlettered impressions noted were found in a collection which at one time belonged to Mr. Newsam himself, and was then presented to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania by the late John A. McAllister. The full titles to these may be supplied from lettered prints when these are found. A large number of portraits made by Mr. Newsam were also intended for private use only; for distribution in the family and among friends. As these were issued in very limited editions, a number of them may well have escaped record.

The life of Albert Newsam had a somewhat romantic and interesting beginning, and the following brief sketch is largely taken from a memoir, published in 1868, by Mr. Joseph D. Pyott, one time an instructor in the Pennsylvania Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, where Newsam received his early training.

Albert Newsam, the son of a boatman on the Ohio River and a deaf-mute from birth, was born in Steubenville, Ohio, on May 20, 1809. His father, William Newsam, was accidentally drowned while Albert was still very young, and William Hamilton, an innkeeper of the town, assumed charge of the orphan. Deprived of both hearing and speech, the boy began early to express his wants and his ideas by rudely tracing the outlines of objects; and local tradition has it that by the time he was ten years of age these drawings of his were so remarkable for their accuracy of form and proportion that they attracted much attention.

About this time there appeared at Steubenville one William P. Davis, also a deaf-mute, who lodged with Mr. Hamilton. Davis noted the budding talent of young Newsam,

and he determined to utilize it for his own profit, and to this end he professed to take great interest in the orphan on the ground of their common affliction. He finally succeeded in obtaining possession of the boy by promising to have him educated and permanently cared for, and he started eastward with his prize.

As soon as he had left Steubenville Davis began to develop his scheme by using the boy to attract attention and charity. He made Albert exhibit his skill in drawing, and then intimated to his audience that he was collecting money for the purpose of having his "little brother" educated at a school recently founded for the training of the deaf and dumb. He collected considerable money in this way, and early in 1820 the pair reached Philadelphia, and it was while young Newsam was making a drawing with chalk upon the side of one of the old city watch-boxes that he attracted the attention of Bishop William White, the first president of the newly founded Institution for the Deaf and Dumb in Philadelphia.

Bishop White called the attention of the managers of the institution to the presence in the city of two deaf-mutes who were seemingly in need of assistance, and William Meredith, Esq., one of the managers, sought out and found Davis and his *protégé*. The older man told a pathetic tale of the various misfortunes that had brought himself and "his brother" to their then condition, and he stated that they were on their way to Richmond, Virginia, in search of assistance from relations. His story was believed, and money was given him for his journey; but he was finally persuaded to leave the boy at the institution until he returned.

For reasons which can be guessed at, Davis failed to reappear, and the records of the institution show that Albert Newsam, or Davis, as he was then called, was regularly admitted as a State pupil on May 15, 1820. The managers soon discovered that he was no relation of Davis, but his true name was only found out by accident several years after his admission. It then happened that a Mr. Wright, of