

From Corridor to Metaphor: Images of the Valley Road 1860-1930

**An Exhibition of Art and Material Culture Centered on the Valley Turnpike of Virginia,
Curated by Geraldine W. Kiefer, Assistant Professor of Art History
June 4-July 25, 2004**

**The Knowledge Point, Shenandoah University's Historical and Tourism Center
20 South Cameron Street, Winchester, Virginia 22601**

This exhibition gelled during the planning stages for the Shenandoah University conference "The Valley Road of Virginia: History and Landscape, 1700-2000." I began to think of how a visual component might be expanded from the presentations and conference literature into the heart of the conference itself. As one of my "charges" and challenges at the Historical and Tourism Center was to research and orient visitors about Shenandoah Valley imagery, I also felt that an exhibition of Valley Road pictures would go a long way towards fulfilling these challenges, as well as set a "mile-post" for my first-year faculty goals. What I didn't realize was how involved such a process could ultimately become, and how fascinating. The narrative that follows is only the beginning of what is hoped to become a major exhibition, catalog, and monograph on the art and imagery of the Shenandoah Valley from 1840 to 1940.

Comprising the core group of images in the exhibition are Civil War drawings and engravings, many of which have been digitized for Fair Use by the Library of Congress and *HarpWeek*. Radiating from this core are the image "turnpikes" which lead, by various paths, to fertile territories of interpretation and exploration. I am particularly grateful to the "gate-keepers" of these images who have so graciously permitted me to borrow from their archives: Rebecca Ebert, Archivist of The Handley Regional Library, Winchester, Virginia; Nancye L. Bowman, President of the Shenandoah County Historical Society, Woodstock, Virginia; Barbara Adamson, Archivist of the Morrison Studio Photographic Collection, Shenandoah County Historical Society; Joseph Snyder, collector and bibliophile, Alexandria, Virginia; and the U. S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle, Pennsylvania. I am equally grateful to my husband, Bruce Kiefer, who has not only spent hours photographing and scanning images, but has supported our collection of a small collection of Shenandoah Valley imagery, which we donate with many thanks to The Knowledge Point's archives and library.

Overarching this exhibition and its contributors is the incredible support of Diane Melby, Bill Austin, and Pat Zontine of the Knowledge Point, and Warren Hofstra of the SU Department of History. Not only have I been allotted much leeway in purchasing books, pamphlets, and images for our image base and library, but I have been given the time to consider how this image base can become an intellectual base, fostering not only my own but also student research, and ultimately feeding into a knowledge stream that connects Shenandoah University with a broader scholarly community in the fields of regional studies, material culture, and art history. Having such a support base that brings with it a spiritual connection as well—one that values the person who does the research as much as and even more than the work produced—is a scholar's dream. I am honored to be the recipient of such largesse.

**Geraldine Wojno Kiefer
Assistant Professor of Art History, Shenandoah University
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