

The NY Historical Society has the ms diary of  
Henry van der Lijn, which is prefaced by a reminiscence  
covering his years at Union.

Wayne Sowers  
9/15/94



## HENRY VAN DER LYN

Henry Van Der Lyn was born on the 24th day of April, 1784, at Kingston, New York. He was the son of Peter Van Der Lyn, a worthy and skillful surgeon during the Revolutionary war, and a nephew of John Van Der Lyn, who was considered in his day one of the world's most famous artists. After pursuing his studies in Kingston Academy, he entered Union College at the age of sixteen, graduated with honors of the valedictory in 1802, and soon thereafter commenced the study of law with the distinguished and able lawyer, Hon. Ogden Edwards in New York, in whose office he acquired those habits of close study and discrimination which distinguished him through life, and that knowledge of law which secured him an admission to the Bar in 1806.

Mr. Van Der Lyn early in life formed the habit of daily writing in a journal commentaries on the works he read, making extracts and noting down the events of his life and of society around him. We make the following extracts:

"While at college I got a coat altered and made with a single row of buttons and buttonholes in front. This harmless freak caused the nickname of Count Ramford to be fixed on me, and which has followed to this day.

"At this time barbers were in the height of their usefulness and prosperity, when curling tongs and powder were applied to the head of every fashionable, and many torturing twinges have I endured during the tedious operations of head dressing.

"In the winter of 1806 I made a visit to Albany to consult some members of the Legislature on the subject of my removal to the western part of the State, but without effect. I called on Frederic A. De Long, who was to remove in the spring to Jericho (Bainbridge), in Cheneango County, for information about the best place of my settlement, and he mentioned Oxford about fifteen miles from Jericho. I yielded to his advice and made my arrangements to bid a final adieu to my native place. In April, 1806, I went to New York to purchase the residue of my law library, which was small but large enough for me at that time. In the latter end of May I put my books, paper cases and trunk on board a wagon, and accompanied by my uncle, Philip Newkirk, began my journey to Oxford, and separated from the friends of my youth, from my mother, brothers, and relatives in search of professional fame and the means of support. I was then in my twenty-second year and felt a sensation of apprehension and distrust in going among strangers to a distant place to commence the novel business of instructing others and managing their legal concerns. My Uncle Philip and I arrived at Oxford in the afternoon of Saturday. I was somewhat disappointed on my first view of the place, it was small with only two painted houses in it and the stumps in the adjoining fields showed that it was a young settlement. We lodged at the hotel of Erastus Perkins. The next day was Sunday and the young people of the village assembled in the ball room of Mr. Perkins' to sing psalms. I took my seat in the hall to see them as they went upstairs. There was no church nor divine service in the village. I went to board with Major Dan



Throop, who had a number of boarders, Ransom Rathbone, a merchant; Roswell Randall, a student in the office of Stephen O. Runyan; John Kinsey, an old bachelor; and two Miss Bepacs from Hudson, formed the group that daily assembled at the table of Major Dan.

"The last of January, 1815, Gary went out with Daniel Perry in a sled to Kingston to remove mother to Oxford. Aunt Ann Master and Thomas G. Newkirk returned with him. Since this time I have been a housekeeper".

Mr. Van Der Lyn, finding in the place of his settlement an institution of learning, gave early attention to its welfare, and was for many years its zealous friend, trustee and supporter. He never wearied in doing well for that institution, and Oxford Academy owes to him and a few early supporters much of its high standing and usefulness. He was also a liberal contributor to St Paul's Church, and interested himself in the circulation of a subscription to procure a suitable place of worship.

Mr. Van Der Lyn died October 1, 1865, in the eighty-second year of his age, after a life of activity and labor of more than fifty-nine years, and amid scenes so changed, beholding the growth of a prosperous village and the country about him changed from a wilderness to bright fields.

The term "Count" clung to him through life from his great suavity and gentlemanly manners. He was a confirmed bachelor, possessing many genial peculiarities of character, which rendered him a great favorite in the social reunions of the bench and bar during term time. Numerous legends are current of his tact and readiness in extricating himself from occasional faux pas, induced by his excessive courtliness and desire to render himself agreeable to those with whom at the time he happened to be conversing.

The story is told that Mr. Van Der Lyn once owned a dog that robbed the meat market of a roast of beef and escaped. The proprietor reassured that if he went to the owner and told him his dog had stolen the meat, that it would be denied, so he adopted another plan, entering the "Count's" office, he told of the robbery committed and asked what he should do about it. He was advised to make out a bill and present it to the owner. The butcher promptly prepared the bill and found it amounted to five dollars, which he presented to the "Count", saying it was his dog that was the thief. "All right," was the reply, and the bill was paid. As the butcher was leaving the "Count" called and reminded him of a "strange coincidence." He said that five dollars was just the amount of his bill for advice. The butcher returned the \$5 he had just collected and retired without another word. He was rendered speechless.

FROM Annals of Oxford, N. Y. p. 393  
Henry J. Galpin  
Times Book & Job Printing House  
Oxford, N. Y. 1906.



CLASS OF 1802

HENRY VANDERLYN attended the academy about 1800; studied law here, and possibly practiced in Ulster before his removal to Chenango County, where he became prominent as a lawyer, and where he died at an advanced age.

General History of Ulster and Kingston  
Nathaniel B. Sylvester  
1880      p. 107

1802     HENRY VAN DERLYN.

Son of Peter Van Derlyn, who was the son of Peter and -----(Vas) Van Derlyn. She was the daughter of Rev. Peter Vas, of Kingston, N.Y.

Gerrit Van Derlyn was a brother of Henry and they removed to Oxford, Chenango Co., N. Y.

History of Kingston, N.Y.  
p. 491  
Marius Schoonmaker  
New York. 1888.

CLASS OF 1802

HENRY VAN DER LYN

Who was born April 21, 1784, came to Oxford (N.Y.) from the North River country in June, 1806, and practiced here till his death, October 1, 1865, though but little during the latter years of his life. He was eccentric, possessed of good talent and great acquirements. He was the best equity lawyer the village ever had, Henry R. Mygatt (Union 1830), excepted. He was known as "the Count". He was a cousin of the celebrated artist named Van Der Lyn.

FROM History of Chenango and Madison Counties p. 270.  
James H. Smith  
D. Mason & Co.  
Syracuse, N. Y. 1880

HENRY VAN DER LYNN, 1802, a resident of Newburgh, N.Y., was a member of the Philomathean Society. H

Philomathean Catalogue 1830.



Henry Van der Lyn AB 1802

Henry Van Der Lyn

A. B.  
1802