



Christopher Clarke Antiques

Dealers in Campaign Furniture
& Travel Items

Durban To Cape Railway by E. Walton

Sold



REF: 83320

Height: 18.41 cm (7.2")

Width: 24.12 cm (9.5")

Description

A watercolour on paper painting of the Durban to Cape Railway signed E. Walton and dated 1861.

The date is very early in the history of the locomotive in South Africa. The first official steam train journey in South Africa was between Durban and The Point on the 26th of June 1861. The train, named Natal had been shipped out from England. In 1859, a small steam train had also been delivered to Cape Town with a 70 km line to Wellington commissioned but this was beset with problems which included slow work and a change of contractors. The line wasn't completed until 1863.

The title 'Durban to Cape Railway' is a little misleading as there has never been a direct line between the two cities. Perhaps the talk in the early days of rail in South Africa was that the two towns who pioneered the new transport system would be linked and the artist anticipated this in their title. More likely, The Point was referred to locally as The Cape at the time.

The engine pictured in this painting crossing an iron bridge looks very similar to Natal and could reasonably be it. The driver is wearing a top hat, as are two passengers in the first carriage and there is a lady in blue.

The painting is signed E. Walton and we have two possibilities for the artist. Eliza Jane Walton, who married the Reverend W. Milward at Durban on the 24th of April 1863 and Sir E. Walton who was a member of the Cape Assembly in the early 1900s. From the dates, Eliza is the more likely, but the artist could also be a third unknown person.

The picture could well be by an amateur artist but certainly an accomplished one. It is in a maple frame and is interesting for its insight into the early history of the train in South Africa. Dated 1861.

Image size is given.