

Excerpts from *Watkins Glen: Water's Sculpture in Stone*

photos and story by Tony Ingraham

A “book of nature” is how local journalist and promoter Morvalden Ells described Watkins Glen in the 1860s, and travel writer Tip Roseberry wrote in 1982, “A tour through Watkins Glen is a visit to an art gallery of nature, each picture to be savored individually before moving on to the next.”

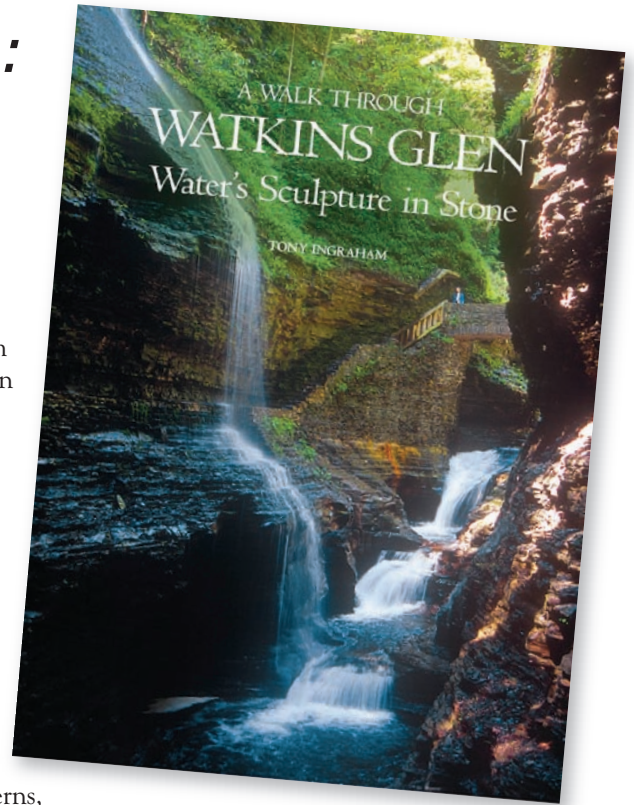
Water created Watkins Glen – water as a stream that eroded the gorge, water as Ice Age glaciers that bored the Seneca Lake valley and changed the course of Glen Creek, and water in an ancient sea where sand and mud settled on the bottom, eventually to harden and become the very rocks the gorge is cut into.

The main entrance to the park is where you make your transition from the busy, noisy world of the 21st century to a quiet natural world where time

does not seem to matter. From here on, nature follows its own rhythms.

At the end of Sentry Bridge, Glen Alpha opens up to you. You peer up the stream as it runs toward you through a twisting, narrow, smoothed channel of rock, to crash below you as Entrance Cascade. Beyond, high walls of stone enclose a huge, cool cavity in the earth threaded by the stream and waterfalls. Lush ferns, mosses, wildflowers and small trees soften the dark, grey stone.

Cavern Cascade is at the head of a little section of gorge. Indeed, most sections of the glen have waterfalls at their upper ends, because waterfalls have cut them in the first place. You might think



of the entire glen as a giant staircase of waterfalls, each waterfall a step.

Beyond, you can see potholes in the Glen of Pools. The falls on the upstream edge of each pool are so short they hardly deserve to be called waterfalls, but the pools are magnificent with their charming round contours and green depths as they tumble from one into the next.

On the approach to Rainbow Falls, a ribbon of water streams down out of the forest on a green slide of rock. It then leaps over the trail and into Glen Creek, which has just jumped down Triple Cascade. The scene is so lovely and unusual that the view of Rainbow Falls and Triple Cascade may be the most photographed spot in Watkins Glen.

A Walk through Watkins Glen: Water's Sculpture in Stone by photographer and park naturalist Tony Ingraham is available at gift shops in the state park, at Storylines Bookstore, Capt. Bill's Seneca Lake Cruises, and in bookstores and gift shops in the region. For more information and online ordering, visit www.owlgorge.com. 