

# Greene County Gleanings

by Raymond Beecher

Those of us who have viewed that section of the Metropolitan Museum of Art known as the American Wing may have seen the classical period room just beyond the Vanderlyn panoramic view of Versailles. On either side of the fireplace hang the portraits of Luman Reed and his wife Polly Barker, once residents of Cox-sackie. The name Reed's Landing comes from the previous generation of this family who promoted the middle landing after the Revolutionary War. And it was here that Luman Reed married Polly Barker, the couple setting up housekeeping near the river. Until his removal to New York City after the War of 1812, this Reed was a partner in the well-known shipping firm of Barker & Reed. Reed, in the latter years of

his life, was also known for his patronage of the struggling first generation of the so-called Hudson River School of Art, including Thomas Cole. Reed's Greenwich Street mansion, with its third floor art gallery, attracted many visitors. After his death and the dispersal of his real and personal property, many of the paintings eventually came to the New York Historical Society but much went to the several heirs.

Individuals reading this past winter's Sunday *New York Times* and/or Christie's Auction House bulletin, may have noted the name of Luman Reed once again. Mention was being made of the forthcoming sale at Christie's of the classical American furniture collection of Ronald S. Kane. This individual was among the early serious collectors of the work of Duncan Phyfe and other American cabinet-makers, a period of time when prices were still low. How does all of this connect with Luman Reed? In 1967 the estate of Miss Mary Mulford, granddaughter of Luman and Polly Reed, was being adver-

tised for auction. Collector Kane's sister alerted her brother to the forthcoming vendue near Rhinebeck in the summer of that year. He put in an appearance, and against limited competition successfully bid in Asher B. Durand's portrait of Reed, as well as the latter's French-style armchair bedstead and clothes press. Kane's bill came to \$2,500; the portrait was soon resold to replenish his checkbook.

On January 22 of this year the extensive classical period collection acquired by Ronald Kane, including the Luman Reed furniture, came up for sale. Rita Reif in her *Times* article of January 16 stressed the quality of the more than 80 pieces of Americana in the Kane sale. She summarized the story of a collector who was ahead of his time, who recognized quality and value over others.

Luman Reed (1787-1836) thus continues to surface for one reason or another, either as a patron of the arts, as a collector of note, or simply as an interesting personality.

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