

Greene County Gleanings

by Raymond Beecher

One of the more enjoyable aspects of being Greene County historian and also serving in a volunteer capacity as the Greene County Historical Society's Vedder Memorial librarian is meeting or corresponding with a number of interesting persons. This winter I have been exchanging correspondence with four such researchers.

From Sidney F. Sabin, Campden Lodge, Kensington (England) comes letters seeking clarification of the relationship among the Bartows, Thomsons and Coles of Cedar Grove, Catskill. The latest mailing to Sabin Galleries, Limited, a company handling old master paintings and drawings, included a copy of my Society Journal article (Summer 1983) which covers this family relationship.

Then a few weeks ago, I had a telephone call from Dr. Kevin Chrisman, professor in the Nautical Archaeology Program, Dept. of Anthropology, Texas A&M University. He has a special interest in horse ferry boats which plied America's lakes and rivers in the pre-Civil War period. This call has been followed up by a mutually profitable exchange of printed material. To Texas went my journal article pertaining to three Greene County horse ferries (Catskill-Oak Hill, Athens-Hudson and Coxackie-Newton Hook). From Texas in return came Dr. Chrisman's published article which first appeared in the INA newsletter (Institute of Nautical Archaeology). That work entitled "Horsepower in the Water: the Burlington Bay Horse Ferry Project" tells the story of finding and study of the submerged Lake Champlain horse ferry boat. It makes fascinating reading, particularly since it is well-illustrated with scientific drawings of that underwater wreck.

From the West Coast, Janice

Anderson-Gram, Tiburon, California, seeks assistance for a forthcoming book relating to the early Christmas tree. She is especially interested in our Mark Carr as depicted by author Alf Evers as promoting the idea of harvesting and shipping bundles of trees to the metropolitan area for holiday sale. Mark Carr was a Catskill Mountain resident in the Hunter area.

For the past two years Swiss graduate student Martin Bruegel had been enrolled in the Cornell University American Studies program for his doctor of philosophy degree. In the process, he made extensive use of Vedder Memorial Library holdings, seeking the ongoing assistance of curator Shelby Kriele and this columnist. Now that degree has been conferred on Martin Bruegel, he currently being employed at Paris, France. To be catalogued for the Vedder Memorial Library is his dissertation: "The Rise of a Market Society in the Rural Hudson Valley, 1780-1860."

A second graduate student wrote the other day, one Stephen Wolf, Heidelberg University, Germany. He proposes to utilize some of the Vedder Library holdings in preparation for his Ph.D. dissertation. That work will be completed while he is in this country.

All of this helped me avoid "cabin fever", but more than that it illustrates the wealth and depth of Greene County's history.

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