

# Greene County Historical Journal

A Publication of the Greene County Historical Society, Inc.

U.S. Route 9-W

Coxsackie, N.Y. 12051

Vol. 10 Issue 3

★

Fall, 1986

## AN EARLY LAND-MERCHANT OF COEYMANS

—Thomas Blaisdell

The practice of land speculation — always popular as a source of instant wealth — was never more so than at the close of the American Revolution. The Continental dollar was almost valueless, the fear of Indian raids and reprisals was at last ended, and thousands of New Englanders were panting to escape their small, unproductive farms and move westward beyond the Hudson to the fertile lands they had marched through during the War. To take full advantage of the situation required three conditions: to have been established in the area before the rush began, to have the land to sell, and finally to have some operating capital for living expenses and to buy more land. Luckily for Levi Blaisdell, he had all three.

Brought up in Amesbury, Massachusetts, during the 1750's and '60's by his father Oliver, a carpenter and shipwright, Levi enlisted at eighteen in the colonial army. Since enlistments then were for a term of months, not for the duration of the war, the end of the first found him in the vicinity of Coeymans where he spent weeks before reenlisting. According to his monument in Grove Cemetery, he was with General Gates at Saratoga for the defeat of Burgoyne and ended the war as Ensign and Orderly Sergeant — not notable, of course, but honorable all the same. His father Oliver served throughout the war and his grandfather Samuel also.

When Levi returned to Coeymans after the war, he was joined by his sisters Miriam and Dolly and his brother Joseph. In a few months Miriam married Joseph Waldron and moved to the Gayhead section of Greene County. Joseph also married and moved a mile or so south of Greenville Center, while Dolly who had been married to a Mr. Bagley before any of them, became a widow and, with several small children, turned to Levi for support.



*Levi Blaisdell's store and post office, corner Main and Westerlo Streets, Coeymans. Building enlarged by son Fletcher.*

*Photo Blaisdell Collection*

*(continued on page 22) 21*

## MY SEARCH FOR JONATHAN HOWARD

—Jack Howard Smith

As is often the case in tracing antecedents, my start in the late spring of 1984 was blessed with a minimum of information handed down from earlier generations plus a few inherited photographs — and a determination that what else might be available **would** be found. I was aware that my great grandfather, Jonathan Howard (1829-1900; born in Schoharie Cty.) had followed the blacksmith's trade at Lexington, Greene Cty., New York. At best, the genealogical information was vague and meager.



*Jonathan Howard III and wife Catherine Barhyte Howard*

Contacts with relatives and friends, particularly Minnie Howard Partridge and Purl Howard, brought in data and some clues and leads. Various state and federal census records were next. Amongst these, three contained fundamental material. In the search process, I was to learn that there were **three** Jonathan Howards in successive generations, the resulting ambiguity presenting more of a research challenge than had at first been envisioned. Once straightened out, the slightly tangled findings also gave me a greater-than-anticipated feeling of accomplishment.

First, in the 1855 state census. Here was listed a Jonathan Howard of the Township of Windham (Greene Cty.) who stated he had been born in Dutchess Cty., and that he was 65. Not the one I had sought, but certainly not to be neglected.

Working backward with convenient indices and detailed census records, I found the federal material of 1820 to be especially significant. A Jno. H., Jr., of Schoharie, between 26 and 45, was enumerated. And the very next entry was another J. H. who also stated his household was himself and his wife. These folk were both past 45. I had expected nothing like this, but now could believe from geography that these two men were my great-great and great-great-great grandfathers.

*(continued on page 24)*

## Land-Merchant *(continued from page 21)*

Not to be outdone in the marital game, Levi himself had found a wife in Arientje Verplanck Gardinier, the widow of Abraham Gardinier, whom he married in 1782. Apparently Levi had been well acquainted with Abraham and Arientje during the war, since he married her soon after being mustered out of the army. She and Levi continued to live at the Gardinier farm which lay a short distance north of modern Ravena and just east of the John Francisco establishment on 9W. This farm, which Levi refers to in his notes as the "old place," he never sold, and there is some evidence that he himself is buried nearby, although his son Fletcher had erected for him a monument later in Grove Cemetery at Coeymans.

Shakespeare might well have had Levi in mind when he wrote in *Twelfth Night*, "Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them." Arientje may have been ravishingly attractive, but even if she had been homely as sin, Levi couldn't have been more fortunate in his choice, for she was the daughter of David VerPlanck by his third wife, the first having been the celebrated Arientje Coeymans who, with her three brothers and one half sister, had inherited the Coeymans Patent from their father Barent. The death of David VerPlanck in the early 1790's led to a general division of property among all the heirs, and in 1792 Levi and Arientje received all of Lot number 2 in the seventeenth allotment and also 100 acres of Lot number 2 in the sixteenth allotment. Not having available the size of these allotments, I can't even guess at the total acreage, but it must have been a sizeable nestegg of property for sale later.

Contrary to the popular notion that one must be a hypocrite in order to seem religious, Levi appears to have been a sincere and ardent Christian. Both he and his future business partner, Lewis Civill, who lived nearby joined with other men of the area in erecting a stone church dedicated to Methodism — the building standing near the ancient highway as it descended the hill to the east. The home of Lewis Civill was less than one hundred feet away and Levi and Arientje's farm was within easy walking distance.

This stone church has the distinction of having been the first Methodist church west of the Hudson. Built in 1793 by the labor and materials supplied by its small congregation, it continued to dispense comfort and confer salvation upon all who attended for the next forty years. The construction of the brick building on Church Street in Coeymans in the late 1830's brought to an end its active life, but Levi never attended any other church in his lifetime. He and Arientje often entertained overnight the circuit riders who carried the Lord's message from church to church, and occasionally even Freeborn Garrison or Bishop Asbury would be guests at the "old place." I mention all this to dispel any notion that Levi was a cold-hearted, ruthless rent-collector. His papers

indicate that he maintained cordial relations with his brother, two sisters and their families, and that he personally paid for the education of Dolly's children after the death of their father.

From 1782 to the end of the century Levi had been actively engaged in selling or buying property, most of which he acquired as a result of his marriage with Arientje. In the late 1790's, however, he supervised the building of a small structure at the corner of modern Main and Westerlo Streets in the center of Coeymans hamlet, and in 1800 he opened a general store with his partner and fellow Methodist Lewis Civill. The little firm of Blaisdell and Civill enjoyed considerable prosperity for the next six years, selling among other things stimulants, hardware, tools, bar iron, German steel, nails and nailrod, saddles, rope, even a wagon (probably second-hand). They had a scow in great demand which they rented out by the day for eight shillings. The building still stands, although greatly enlarged and modified; and as one surveys its shabby and dismal exterior, there is little to bring back its former glory. The old account books of the firm also still exist, and they provide many contrasts with the present, especially the custom of selling merchandise with no guarantee of payment other than the word of the purchaser. Apparently, the early residents of the area were men of their word, for there are few sheriff's notices among the records.

The little store ceased to exist after 1806 not because of decreasing business but because of the poor health of Lewis Civill, who died in 1807. It is likely that Levi, who during all of this time had been actively engaged in real estate ventures, had turned most of the store duties over to Lewis. His death was a severe blow to Levi. They had been dear friends and close neighbors for many years, sharing their joys and responsibilities as clerk and sexton of the little Methodist church as well as their profits and hard work in the store.

Levi had always maintained living quarters over the store, and here he and Arientje continued to reside, except for frequent visits to the "old place," the three hundred acre farm north of modern Ravena. Here at his "homestead," as he called it, Levi received the rents on his many leasehold farms, many of them out in the Greenville area; but he missed the active and lucrative life provided by the store. In November of 1811 when the United States Postal Department decided to place an office in Coeymans, Levi applied for and received the appointment. From then until April of 1832 the little store served in that capacity and Levi or his deputy was always on hand to process and distribute the mail.

Like many Postmasters and storekeepers, Levi had by this time become a well-known public figure, not only because of his position but also through his familiarity with deeds, bonds, and other legal documents, and he often gave advice or served as a witness

*(continued on page 23)*

**Land-Merchant** (continued from page 22)

when asked. School District No. 1 of the Town of Coeymans was in operation as early as 1813, and in 1816 the trustees chose Levi to be Moderator, a post to which he was often returned. It must have been gratifying to him to be recognized as a peer among the leaders of the community – this self-educated former volunteer soldier – but if so, there is no indication of an inflated ego in any of his papers.

In 1814 the sudden and sad death of Arientje left him desolate and alone – a situation that some men, including Levi, find intolerable. For the better part of the year he suffered, then married Mary Farr Johnston, a lady at least thirty years younger than he. They continued the routine of life already established by Levi and Arientje except that three children now appeared, making Levi's problems more complex. It was now important to provide land and money for the future homes of Wesley, Fletcher, and Harriet. While retaining his position as Postmaster, Levi continued his negotiations to buy land and to secure rents in money and produce.

Below I have listed by dates and personnel the results of these negotiations beginning with 1782, the year Levi and Arientje were married, and ending in 1833, the year Levi died. Anyone who wants more detailed information on any particular item will have to arrange a date to peruse the original document.

- 1782 Mortgage, Enos Smith to Levi Blaisdell
- 1784 Deed, Levi Blaisdell and Arientje to John Roots
- 1784 Deed, Levi Blaisdell and Arientje to Issac Blakeslee
- 1784 Deed, Nathan Hurd to Levi and Arientje Blaisdell
- 1784 Deed, Edward Collins to Levi Blaisdell
- 1784 Deed, Levi and Arientje Blaisdell to Daniel Taylor
- 1784 Deed, Levi and Arientje Blaisdell to Abel Waklee
- 1784 Deed, Nathan Hurd to Levi and Arientje Blaisdell
- 1784 Deed, Timothy Judson to Levi and Arientje Blaisdell
- 1784 Deed, Levi and Arientje Blaisdell to Edward Collins
- 1786 Deed, Levi and Arientje Blaisdell to Jonah Hine
- 1790 Division of the Coeymans Patent
- 1790 Deed, David McCarty to Levi Blaisdell (33 acres near stone church)
- 1790 Deed, David McCarty to Levi Blaisdell (part of Lot #2 in the 13th Allotment)
- 1791 Mortgage, Abel Smith to Levi Blaisdell
- 1792 Lease, Joshua Baker from Levi Blaisdell
- 1792 Deed, William Radcliff to Levi Blaisdell
- 1792 Lease, Levi and Arientje Blaisdell to Henry Edget
- 1792 Deed, Levi and Arientje Blaisdell to William Jump
- 1792 Lease, Levi Blaisdell to William Jump (50 acres)
- 1792 Lease, Levi Blaisdell to Gilbert Jump (100 acres)
- 1792 Quit Claim Deed, Jacob Schemmerhorn and Stephen Haines to Levi Blaisdell
- 1793 Deed, Edward Stephens to Frederick Waterman, Waterman to Levi Blaisdell
- 1794 Deed, Isaac Huyke and Jacob Huyke to Levi Blaisdell
- 1801 Lease, Levi Blaisdell to David Secor (1 7/2 bu. of wheat)
- 1802 Lease, Peter Ten Eyck to Levi Blaisdell
- 1803 Deed, Isaac Harrington to Levi Blaisdell (63 acres)
- 1803 Division of land between heirs of Coeymans Patent and Major Prevost
- 1803 Sheriff's deed to Aaron Hall for Levi Blaisdell
- 1803 Lease, John Bulles to Levi Blaisdell (16 bu. of wheat)
- 1804 Quit Claim Deed, Abraham Ten Eyck and others to Levi Blaisdell
- 1804 Quit Claim Deed, Gertie Faulkner to Levi Blaisdell (settlement of Coeymans heirs with Augustine Prevost).
- 1805 Deed, Coenrad A. Ten Eyck to Levi Blaisdell (38 acres)
- 1806 Deed, Helemah Houck to Levi Blaisdell (28 1/2 acres in Greenfield [Greenville])
- 1807 Bond, William V. Dumond to Levi Blaisdell (\$400)
- 1807 Bond, Christopher Babcock to Levi Blaisdell (\$71.38)
- 1807 Deed, Henry Deyo, Town of Green[e], Chenango Co. to Levi Blaisdell (100 acres for \$370.00)
- 1808 Note, William V. Dumond to Levi Blaisdell (\$100)
- 1809 Bond, John M. Flanesborough to Levi Blaisdell (\$150)
- 1810 Bond, Storm D. Houghtaling to Christopher Townsend to Levi Blaisdell (Prevost-Coeymans heirs settlement)
- 1812 Bond, Levi Waldron to Levi Blaisdell (\$100)
- 1812 Note, Nathaniel Fancher to Levi Blaisdell (\$556)
- 1813 Note, Peter Brandow to Levi Blaisdell (\$260)
- 1814 Deed, John & Ann Johnson to Levi Blaisdell (36 acres at Coeymans)
- 1815 Deed, Levi Blaisdell to Jonas Bronk (5 acres in Ravena area)
- 1815 Deed, Peter McCarty to Levi Blaisdell (7 1/2 acres near stone church)
- 1815 Deed, Walter Secor to Oliver Waldron to Levi Blaisdell (15 acres in Greenville)
- 1815 Note, Samuel Speers to Levi Blaisdell (\$348)
- 1817 Quit Claim Deed, Isaac Foster to Levi Blaisdell (23 acres Greenville land)
- 1818 Quit Claim Deed, William Fraser to Levi Blaisdell (20 acres Greenville land)
- 1821 Deed, Stephen Haines to Levi Blaisdell (133 acres near stone church)
- 1822 Agreement to buy land in Greenville, 18 acres for \$200, Levi Blaisdell to Newman Smith
- 1823 Bond, Henry Clarke to Levi Blaisdell (\$180)
- 1825 Deed, Christopher Townsend to Levi Blaisdell (52 1/2 acres Greenville land for \$1400)
- 1826 Deed, Solomon & William Stevens to Levi Blaisdell (65 acres Greenville land for \$1100)
- 1827 Deed, David Schofield to Levi Blaisdell (27 acres land in Greenville)
- 1828 Lease, Levi Blaisdell to Peter Parker (land in Greenville)
- 1833 Deed, Stephen Thorn to Levi Blaisdell (48 acres Greenville land for \$1200)

(continued on page 30)



**Jno. Howard** (continued from page 21)

Then, in the 1790 index and census, the listings contained exactly one married Jno. H. in Dutchess Cty., in the Town of Washington. Family tradition had it that great-great- g-f Jno. had come from Connecticut with brothers Edward and Isaac, so the locale added credibility to the several connections I was now making. Indeed, there were **three** rather well identified Jno. H.'s in that many successive generations. Apparently it had been Jno. I, not Jno. II, who had brothers Edward and Isaac. That part of family narrative was in error by one generation — but, qualitatively, the story had been invaluable.

The Greene Cty. Court House was another source of very useful information. Just as DAR card files in the N. Y. State Library had indicated, the Court papers included the will of Jno. H. I, 1753-1833, in which his blacksmith tools were declared left to son Jno. II. The three-generation (or more?) blacksmith occupation of the Jno. H.'s has also been borne out by family tradition and photos, as well as Prout's *Old Times in Windham*.

I had surmised, from the 1830 census which listed Jno. H. of Windham to be between 70 and 80, that he had been born about 1755. Thus, when Purl and Dorothy Howard of Freehold, Greene Cty. showed me a photo they had taken in 1978 of a Jno. H. Safford Cemetery marker (1753-1834) they had located, more pieces of this family puzzle began to fall into place. This Jno. H. had of course not been enumerated in 1840, corresponding to a gap I had noticed in census data.

But, "Why had Jno. I been buried in Safford Cemetery, when he had resided in Greene Cty., not Schoharie?" More information was needed here, and my good wife's industry in locating a Safford deed provided additional data. That deed fortuitously referred to property in the Town of Broome (now in Gilboa) occupied by Jno. H. (my Jno. II). The will of 1833 and probate testimony therefor stated that Jno. I ill in 1833, had gone to his son's house in Schoharie "to be doctored", but died away from his legal residence in Greene Cty. Martha Bogan Smith's extra sleuthing, out of the bounds suggested by the name "Howard", has been a striking example of "how to find things where you might not expect them".

The testimony also stated that Jno. I left no widow, and that daughter Content Howard Reed had died. She had been the wife of David Reed, and it may have been this gentleman's property which was one boundary in the Safford deed. Jno. I's survivors were:

Ariel, the older of two sons, then in Otsego Cty. Jno., Jr.

Margaret, wife of Moses Waters of Cairo

Jerusha, wife of Roswell Stevens, Cayuga Cty.

Tammy, wife of William Stevens, Dutchess Cty.

Sally, widow of Oliver W. Winnegen (sp?),

Otsego Cty.

Phoebe (sp.?), wife of John W. Tibbitts, Town

of Windham

All these names are mentioned merely for the possibility that someone reading this article may have related information.

Phoebe was the youngest daughter, figuring prominently in the will for which the inventory of possessions ran to two and a half pages. Jno. II, who had been with his father longer than the other children, was given "the farm of land" on which his father lived, — a tract in the Batavia Patent in Mitchell Hollow. Jno. II also inherited his dad's blacksmith tools. Several other names, also to be found in *Old Times in Windham* and elsewhere, figure in witnessing the will, etc. Although Jno. II was named an executor, he formally renounced that right and Merit Osborn became sole executor. (Later deeds have shown a mysterious set of transfers of that land, out of and back into the Howard family.)

All this unexpected Howard information concerning earlier generations was interesting but it would not divert me from more inquiry about Jno. III, my great g-f mentioned first. The foregoing research and additional efforts revealed Jno. III was born January 29, 1829, near Broome Center, Schoharie, probably on the Safford farm being rented to Jno. II and his wife, Anna Wilson Howard. Of the 14 offspring born to Jno. II and Anna between 1821 and 1846, five predated Jno. III.

By the 1850's, Jno. II and his family had removed from Schoharie Cty. to nearby North Settlement, Township of Windham. Undoubtedly the father followed the blacksmith's trade and also did some farming. Unlike many of his generation, Jno. III did not migrate westward but remained at home in Greene County, helping his father at the forge and otherwise earning a limited livelihood helping his neighbors with their agricultural endeavors.

Between the late fall of 1851 and the summer of 1852, Jno. III and Catherine Baurhyte were married. Their first child, Emory, was born in 1853 at North Settlement. In the next several years, Jno. III and his family moved about the northern Catskill region, settling down by 1860 with his blacksmithing in Cairo (Acra area). During these years, daughter Sylvia was born (1855) and in 1857, son Willie. My grandmother Sylvia never lost her very, very strong attachment for the Catskill region and many relatives and friends with whom she had grown up. It is thanks to her and to my mother, Urvilla Elva (born of Ira and Sylvia McCoon in Manorville, 1884) that direct records and photographs of some of the family are still in good condition.

To Jno. III, again:

By August, 1862, with the Civil War in full swing, he enlisted with the 120th Regiment, F Co., NYS Volunteers. Brother J. Wesley had joined the 57th Regiment earlier on October 11, 1861, while brother Daniel mustered in on September 16, 1864, as a soldier in the 80th, New York. All three saw

(continued on page 25)

**Jno. Howard** (continued from page 24)

active service in military campaigns during their terms of duty. A third brother, Wiltsie (Wilsie) also served. Veterans' records indicate J. Wesley was eventually to receive a ten-dollar-the-month pension for wounds in the right leg and thigh while Jno. III was granted a more modest sum, the reasons being chronic diarrhea and rheumatism brought on by primitive conditions in camp. National Archives documents show he was ill or in hospital, wounded, for a substantial amount of time.

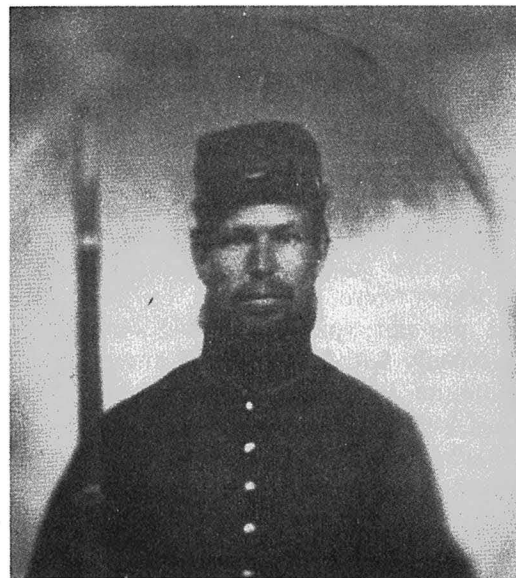
In more detail, Van Santvoord's *The One Hundred and Twentieth Regiment, New York State*, reprinted by Hope Farm Press, Cornwallville, New York (1983), lists Jonathan Howard, age 35, joining Company F, 120th NYS Volunteers, on August 8, 1862, from Jewett, N. Y. and having been discharged on June 3, 1865, present residence Lexington, Greene County, N. Y.

The last of Jno. III's moves in search of a better livelihood was to Lexington Village. Here he branched out to include the wagon-building component of the smith's trade; he is known to have had at least one helper. DeLisser's *Picturesque Catskills*, page 147, identifies the Howard property on Main Street. The house was adjacent to the Methodist Church: the shop was probably across Main Street.

Both Jno. III and his wife Catherine were firm in their religious faith and active in that Methodist Church. For at least one period, they boarded its preacher, the Reverend William Albrecht. Catherine's surviving Bible is marked in many places in such a way as to suggest that the passages noted were Albrecht's sermon topics. Jno. III's obituary notice stressed his liberal financial support for that religious congregation. A few days after his funeral in 1900, the family's "thank you" newspaper notice included special mention of the services of the Church's choir.



*The fenced home and blacksmith shop of Jonathan Howard III – Main Street, Lexington, N. Y. – from De Lisser's Picturesque Catskills, page 147.*



*Jonathan Howard, III, in Civil War Uniform*

Photo from Jack Howard Smith Collection

The paper's obituary deals kindly with Jno. III: it depicts an upright individual, a credit to his community. Among various points, it also mentions his three-year service in the Civil War, and his membership in the Grand Army of the Republic's Post at Hunter.

In their later years, Jno. III and wife Catherine had their share of domestic sorrow, yet they stood steadfast in their faith. Their married daughter (my grandmother) and her husband separated. The younger son left home never to return. Was Jonathan, in spite of these problems and his pensionable condition nonetheless a happy man? What we can see in the few surviving photographs suggests he had a peaceful countenance and was accepting life as it came.

One month before his death in November, 1900, the Lexington property was willed to his wife Catherine. From the concomitant paper work we of course know its exact location. After Catherine's death a few years later, the property was sold (at least in part) to the Truesdells. The shop may eventually have become a garage. Details relating to this, to the location of Jno. III's grave, etc. require additional follow-up efforts. But in the main, investigations begun in 1984 and very much an on-again-off-again affair have already been gratifying. They have provided not just me but other descendants, now and in the future, some systematics (by no means completely set down in these few paragraphs) of these Howards – and the knowledge that Jonathan III left a modest imprint on Greene County's history.

□ □ □ □ □

## HONORÉ CHAURAND'S FRIENDSHIP'S ASYLUM

—Raymond Beecher

"I will meet you in America by some river" wrote Madame DeStael, the French authoress known for her celebrated Parisian salon, to a friend in 1794. This was the plan of many French families fleeing the Revolutionists at the fall of the ancient regime in 1792–93. America beckoned! It was also the refuge of French colonial settlers fleeing the San Domingo slave insurrection. Some French families settled in seaboard cities such as Charleston, South Carolina, while others were influenced by Bernardin de St. Pierre's popular romantic novel *Paul and Virginia* to live closely with nature. One group moved up the Susquehanna River 200 miles to establish French Azilum (Asylum) in the wilderness, hopefully a home for the ill-fated Queen of France, Marie Antionette. Franchots came to Morris in Otsego County. Castorland, situated on the Black River in the western Adirondacks, was another French effort to resettle nobility and clergy of the ancient regime. Edith Pilcher tells their 1793-1814 story in her book *Castorland*. It was an elaborate effort promoted by a company founded in Paris in 1792 under the name La Compagnie de New York; William Constable sold that corporation 210,000 acres of land. Forty-one French shareholders in all were induced to become settlers. It too was destined to fail.

New Baltimore, in Greene County, then still part of Albany County, also received a few of these families, a part of that tide of French refugees. Three families are identified as purchasing land in what is believed to be today's Hawley Lane area, east of Route 9-W — the Chaurands, the Jaroussarys and the Lamourys. On farmland purchased in 1794 from the Vandenberges and other pre-Revolutionary established families, they sought to provide an agricultural livelihood far from their French homeland. Chaurand was to name his farmstead Friendship's Asylum.

The first document known to have survived is a letter to surveyor Leonard Bronk (later Judge Bronk), from John V. Henry, an attorney at Albany. It indicates stranger Honoré Chaurand's arrival as 1794 and reads:

December 19, 1794

Dear Sir

Messers Richard and Matthew Van Den Bergh [Vandenbergh] have sold a farm of theirs in Cocksackie [now New Baltimore] to Mr. Honore' Charand [Chaurand] & application will be made to you to survey the land — I act as counsel for Mr. Charand who is a stranger & it is at my request that the survey is to be made — I will be much obliged to you if you will run the outlines with accuracy and if possible let the proprietors of the adjacent farms assent to the boundaries and that all controversy betwext them and Mr. Charand may be avoided.

I am dear Sir

Respectfully

Your obed servt

/s/ John V. Henry

[To] Leonard Bronk Esq  
Cocksackie

The survey and map of this Van Den Bergh farm of 333 acres indicates the land was in the Coeymans Patent, fronting the public highway leading from Albany to Ulster County. Other landmarks are mentioned including the run of water "Fountain Hill-itché, the dwelling house of Richard Van Den Bergh, another run of water issuing of a spring between the houses of Peter Van Den Bergh and Philip Conine, and a place where the run of water falls into a creek known as the Diepe-Cloves Kill."

On the Van Den Bergh farm purchase by Chaurand were both a wood-framed and a stone house, two barns, barracks, cleared land and woodlots. Within a few years Honoré Chaurand had a substantial investment in land, orchards, buildings, livestock, farm tools and equipment. Helping him at Friendship's Asylum were his negro slaves Black Dan, the latter's wife and their three children.

Three years later, in 1797, we find Mr. Chaurand, now well-established in New Baltimore, writing to surveyor Leonard Bronk urging him to begin the survey of land in the Flatbush area which involved other French families, namely, the Lamourys and the Jaroussarys:

Flatbush October 1st 1797

Dear Sir

there is three weeks ago since you promise me of appointing me the day you could come to survey the land which my friend Mr. Jarossay has bought of Mr. Lamoury, and which is adjoining hisen, and though I have not heard of you since, Dear Sir, you would do me a great favour as well as my aforesaid friend if you would be kind enough to fix the day which should be the most convenient to you for that business, and provided I am informed of it twenty-four hours before, I shall be ready as well as Mr. Lamoury. I beg that favour of you and

I have the honour to be  
your Most obedient Servt  
/s/ H Chaurand

[To] Mr. Bronk

Esq. Cooxagy [Coxsackie]

The "natural man" philosophy, as these French settlers, including Chaurand, soon discovered, had numerous drawbacks. When consul Napoleon decreed that deserving emigres should be permitted to return to France, many seized the opportunity. Some simply abandoned their land, as did the group at French Azilum on the Susquehanna. Others sold or leased their farms, migrating to the seaboard cities of the United States where living was easier and where there were more of the social amenities. Farmers they were not meant to be! Chaurand and his family relocated in New York City.

On April 10, 1801, Chaurand leased his New Baltimore's Friendship's Asylum to one John Wolfe for an initial term of three years. Peter A. Van Bergen was to collect the rent for the Chaurands who became absentee landlords. Genealogical research by Mrs. Frances Dietz indicates John Wolfe was one of three brothers born to parents earlier residing on Livingston



**Chaurand** *(continued from page 26)*

Manor as one of a group of Palatines. They had little schooling as children and never learned to read or write English. The Wolfes eventually removed to Kinderhook on the east side of the Hudson River and then, at a subsequent date, the three brothers settled at New Baltimore. Tunis Wolfe, born about 1760 died in 1834; Peter, born about 1759, died in 1839. John, who appears to have been Chaurand's tenant, is believed to have been born sometime between 1772 and 1774. He and his wife, Catharine, had 13 children.

Because of this three-year lease, local historians have one of the earliest post-Revolutionary farming records to have survived. It specified that John Wolfe would have the use of one wagon, one set of harness, one plow, one wood sleigh, one harrow, one black sleigh, one iron chain, one scythe, one hoe, one axe, one fanning mill and the services of the negro slave Black Dan, the latter's wife and their three children. A team of horses, three milk cows and ten sheep would be left in Wolfe's care for their joint benefit. It was Chaurand's responsibility to provide one-third of the wheat and rye for stock feed. Strictly for his own use, John Wolfe was privileged to plant one bushel of flaxseed.

That the Chaurand's plans for relocation were still unsettled by the year 1801 is indicated by their reserving the use of one of the houses, its yard and garden, until the first day of November of that same year. If they were to remain longer, they were to have the use of the wood-framed house as well as the cellar and garret of the stone house which Wolfe was to occupy.

Other provisions in the lease specified that John Wolfe was to "stack the hay in the barracks and to keep no more than thirty cattle in pasture except for sheep." The hay barracks were of the north-European type, heavy upright poles supporting an adjustable roof to prevent the extreme deterioration of the hay. The grain was to be threshed as soon as practicable and delivered to the Coxsackie Landing "or to any other such place as the agent should direct." Any blacksmith's work was the responsibility of Wolfe as were the land taxes, food and cloth to feed and clothe the black slaves "as was customary in the town of Coxsackie."

For the use of Chaurand's real and personal property, John Wolfe was to pay agent Van Bergen one-half the wheat, rye, oats and other grains harvested, one-half the hay, one-half the turnips and corn. Young apple trees to the number of fifty were to be planted by Wolfe but were to be supplied by Chaurand's agent. There were restrictions on the cutting and use of firewood. Wolfe could not cut "green wood or timber" but was entitled to dry wood for heating purposes or for the building of fences. And to climax the agreement, if Chaurand were to sell the farm, John Wolfe agreed to remove therefrom by May 1, 1801. This 1801 date indicates Wolfe may

already have been living in the stone house on the farm. While Chaurand could spell his name, John Wolfe signed by mark, it being witnessed by Andrew N. Heermance and James Dunn.

Honoré Chaurand did not sell in the spring of 1801 but continued John Wolfe as leasee. The results of the three-year absentee landlord and tenant contract were unsatisfactory to both Chaurand and Wolfe, yet Wolfe remained for a fourth year. It led to a bitter dispute and subsequent lawsuit in the Greene County Court of Common Pleas, as well as a New York State Supreme Court term in 1806. Prominent Coxsackie attorney-at-law, Abraham Van Dyck, represented John Wolfe while Chaurand sought help from attorney John Crane. Finally, both sides agreed to arbitration. On August 29, 1806, arbitrators Philip Conine Jr., Robert Vandenberg and Conrad T. Hotaling opened the hearing at the house of John Vandenberg in Coxsackie. Witnesses for Chaurand were Lewis Raymond, Peter J. David, as well as Eugene Jaroussay. There were more for John Wolfe — Peter P. Van Slyck, Leonard Conine, Philip Wolfson, James Dunn, Henry Wolf, Christian Wolf, Peter Vandenberg, John Vandenberg and William Pearce.

Chaurand sought to establish the fact that the farm had been neglected — the buildings not maintained in good condition, the hay and grain racks allowed to deteriorate and the fences down. His one-half of the crops were never delivered. In turn John Wolfe claimed he had been deprived of Black Dan's services, had never had the use of the farm equipment, nor had he ever received any wheat or rye. He further maintained that the deterioration of the buildings, hay and grain barracks, as well as the fences, was the result of natural causes and not neglect. Neither side could agree on the cutting of timber. Chaurand claimed he suffered damages of \$500, his farm being valued at the time at \$5,000.

Eugene Jaroussary, age 15 years, was Chaurand's best witness. He stated that when Wolfe took over the farm in 1801 he, Eugene, was about the place. "The fences were all good on the farm and along the lanes — there was not a farm that had as good fences as Chaurand's. The buildings and barracks were all in good condition — the barracks covered and filled with hay — the barns in good repair. The house was generally in good condition — Mr. Wolfe lived in it for four years and never had it repaired. The gates were all standing at the time of Wolfe's takeover. He knew the one year's extension of the three-year contract was agreed to by Wolfe when the latter was requested to go to Van Bergen's place to sign. When Wolfe delivered up the premises in 1805, the hay barracks were all fallen down but the posts — many of the fences down and much out of repair — the gate between the main yard and the kitchen yard was down — the entry gate by the main road was a little out of order, Wolfe eventually putting on a wood latch instead of the iron one — manger in the little barn broken down — fireplace in the kitchen and the

**Chaurand** (continued from page 27)

bake oven out of repair – Mr. Chaurand said that he had to get them made over again. The horses were first shod but later when returned unshod. Some glass in house windows was broken. Wolfe did not give up the halter. At times saw a horse of Travis in the pasture as were creatures of Christian Wolfe. The plough share became worn out.

Supporting testimony came from Lewis Raymond who had become Chaurand's second tenant after "Wolfe was put off." He did admit Wolfe put up some fencing in the fourth year – estimated it would take six weeks to replace the fences plus 2 or 3 days teaming – had to haul in slabs – paid 1 shilling apiece for 3 loads of 30 slabs each for fencing.

The witnesses for Wolfe, some of whom worked for him on the farm, were equally emphatic that Wolfe had done his best to maintain the fences and buildings, they being in a partly deteriorated condition when Wolfe arrived, particularly the fences. Peter Vandenberg stressed the rotten condition of the plates of the hay barracks which led to their collapsing. One of the strongest points for Wolfe was presented by John Vandenberg – it was that Dan, the negro slave, had left the farm requiring Wolfe to employ extra hands. John Vandenberg came to work at that time and worked for five months repairing fences, etc. The pay was four or five shillings. William Pearce also testified that he worked for several months in the second year of Wolfe's tenancy for 25 pounds. (There is some indication Chaurand did reimburse Wolfe for the lack of Black Dan's services.)

The arbitration report was submitted to the court on the 30th of August 1806. All legal actions by both parties were to be cancelled and each was to pay half of the court costs. If there was a winner, it was John Wolfe.

In the final settlement between Wolfe and Chaurand, each side offset claims. The surviving record reads, with Wolfe's claims listed first:

To 4 young cattle sold	£14	\$ 35.00
To 1 horse do	£24	60.00
To 2 hogs do	£ 3/2	7.75
To taking care of your Cattle and Sheep one winter		11.25
To the Value of a man's Service for 4 years at \$75 pr. year, deducting the value of clothing		300.00
To 10 Bushels of Rye at 6/	£3	7.50
		<hr/> 421.50

[To Deduct]:

By Labor of Dan one week [and]	
By Labor of other hands during the said four years as Chaurand may prove he has hired & paid for	293.59½

The note given by Chaurand to Wolfe totaled \$124.82 and included interest to May 28, 1807. It may have indicated other minor adjustments.

For some unknown reason the note was not paid when due, forcing Wolfe to bring action in the New York State Supreme Court, Wolfe again being represented by attorney Abraham Van Dyck. But in a letter to attorney Van Dyck dated December 1807, Chaurand tells of meeting one Hans Wolfe on Broadway (NYC) and inviting him to his office where the payment was made. Whether John Wolfe had transferred the Chaurand note to Hans Wolfe or that Hans Wolfe was representing John Wolfe, is uncertain. In any event Chaurand acted in an honorable manner and that terminated the Wolfe-Chaurand tenancy dispute.

In the year 1816, Honoré Chaurand surfaces once again – this time providing an affidavit relating to a public right-of-way (thought to be Hawley's Lane). It casts additional insight into the history of Friendship's Asylum. Mr. Chaurand was not always exact in spelling English surnames. It is possible Mr. Wolay may have been Mr. Hawley. The affidavit reads:

"The Subscriber and former Proprietor of the farm named the Friendship's Asylum situated three miles from the village of Coxsackie, on the road to Albany, and at present belonging to Mr. Wolay who have bought it of Mr. Wm. Judson, merchant at the landing, Certify that when I purchased said Farm in 1794 of Messieurs Richard & Mathew Van Denberg, I perceived an open road, which beginning at the Albany road passed near the house of Mr. Richard [Vandenberg], one of the sellers of the farm, and terminated at the Creek which separated my property from that of P. Vansluck [Van Slyke] and others, and that desirous of having no public passage running through my farm, I inquired before the deeds were passed or rather signed, whether they were obliged to leave the above mentioned passage open to the Public, their answer was that they were not bound to it, and that nobody whatever had a right to it, that it was through good will for their neighbors that they let them go through it in the spring of the year, to go fishing or buy fish. Upon my ascertaining that fact I had posts put immediately across said road with Iron railings, which were locked up with a Padlock. The iron railings and the Padlock were removed during the night by some persons unknown, which I had replaced at 2 or 3 different times, by a fence which was as often destroyed. Perceiving then that it was necessary for me, to put the said persons out of power to trespass my Premises, I had 4 or 5 trees of the largest size cut down in my woods, the timber of which I had brought to the spot and laid across said road, one on the top of the other which act proved clearly to those people that my intention was to shut up that Passage altogether. They finally determined upon going another way. I moreover certify, that Mr. Wolay, the present owner, asked me several times whether or not I had the right of a passage through the farm on the other side of the creek, I answered him that I had none; that with the consent of my neighbour Mr. Robert Titus, I had often passed through his farm as he did pass through mine; but



## VEDDER LIBRARY NOTES

□◇ Three holograph letters dated 1786, 1817 and 1838, a Congressional Directory of the First Session of the Thirty-First Congress (1850), two newspaper tracts and a scrapbook are recent gifts of Kenneth Van Vechten Parks of Catskill. The letters connect with Samuel Van Vechten, Abraham Van Vechten and Peter H. Silvester. The directory was used by Congressman Silvester. The political tracts were published by the *Evening Journal* and the *Tribune*. One is a copy of Lincoln's famous 1858 speech at the Republican State Convention in Springfield; the other is Seward's U. S. Senate speech (February 29, 1860) summarizing the problems which arose with the admission of Kansas to the Union. The scrapbook was maintained by Nancy Strong Van Vechten, the donor's ancestor.

□◇ A Christmas check from Mrs. Polly Sherman of New Baltimore and Florida augmented by a check from William Jump of Hudson and other library users has enabled the VML to make unbudgeted purchases of historical material in dealers' listings afar from Greene County. Two letters written by James Suddery and one by Samuel Burlingham in the year 1841 relate to the tending of the New Baltimore light in the Hudson River.

□◇ A variety of historical material including newspapers, late 19th century Hunter and Windham road district communications addressed to William McLean, Gilbert Beach and Marcus Miles, as well as a Justice of the Peace complaint from the trustees of the Second Presbyterian Church of Durham against Edwin T. Hubbard, have been deposited by Douglas A. Thomsen of Oak Hill, a VML volunteer assistant and a Vice President of the GCHS.

□◇ The Sixteenth Separate Company Infantry (NYS National Guard) letterbook for the years 1879-1885 comes from Robert Stackman of Coxsackie. It includes entries covering the calling out of the troops during the short-lived railroad labor trouble just north of Coxsackie in June, 1882.

□◇ *Hiking on the Trail*, May, 1941 issue, has been catalogued courtesy of Charles E. Dornbusch of Cornwallville. The publication reveals Hikemaster Dornbusch's volunteer activities in promoting and carrying out Boy Scout hiking activities in the Hudson River Valley and Catskill Mountains area.

□◇ Harry and Betty Miller have been active supporters of the VML for many years and are constantly augmenting its holdings. From that source we now have Stephen B. Miller's *Sketches of Hudson* (1862) as well as *John Burroughs in Roxbury*. Ezra Reed, a pioneer at Reeds Landing, Coxsackie, is mentioned several times in the Hudson volume.

□◇ Photographs depicting Greene County scenes and buildings, as well as athletic teams, have been added to the photography files courtesy trustee Florence Hunter of Catskill.

□◇ The NYS Bridge Authority has made extensive use of the VML's holdings, sending up individuals for initial contact and for photographic work.

□◇ Janice C. Wheeler, a member from Tom's River, N. J., alerted us to the Seaport magazine, Winter 1986, with its illustrations from Coxsackie and Athens. A copy was ordered.

□◇ The usefulness of the Howard Waldron gift of diaries collected by his mother, Elsie Powell Waldron, has been enhanced by the research efforts of George Peters of Jacksonville, Florida. Mr. Peters has identified the diarists and many persons mentioned therein. The Greenville town clerk was also helpful.

□◇ The long term project of copying the Vital Statistics from the Catskill *Examiner* continues. Kenneth Van Vechten Parks is doing the initial copying while Dorean Meluth Day and Paul T. Zelsset are computerizing the information. Its value is further enhanced with their preparation of an index.

□◇ Via Mabel P. Smith comes the Gloria S. Wiltse gift of copies of glass plate photographs. That lot includes views of Greene County bridges and one of Martin's Hotel at Tannersville.

□◇ *Ladies' Social Union Cook Book*, Cairo, with a number of interesting early local advertisements, is on the shelves, courtesy Mrs. Richard Shoemaker, Catskill. The library holds a number of these locally compiled volumes.

□◇ A primitive pine cash drawer and Judge Bronk's great grandson's album from the Albany Law School, Class of 1871 came in May from James and Julia Carroll of Washington Avenue, Coxsackie.

□◇ Heermance Memorial Librarian David Ladanye has been most helpful in library matters at the museum.

□◇ A second copy of *Colonial Homes* with its Bronck Homestead article comes from Frances Dietz of New Baltimore.

□◇ Trudy Griffith of Port Allegany has sent up autograph and verse albums of Anna Newkirk and Gertrude Hunter as well as Hannah Ann Hunter's Bible printed in London in 1848. These are from Mrs. Griffith and her brother, Marvin M. Rapp, and are in memory of their mother, Beulah Hunter Rapp. Other aspects of this generous gift were received and acknowledged in earlier issues.

□◇ Scrapbook-Notebook 98, newly set up, holds a number of small cemetery records copied in 1985 and 1986 by Kenneth Van Vechten Parks.

□◇ Roe descendants from the Greenville area will be interested in Catharine W. Roe's record book relating to the estate of Lansing S. Roe. It contains some Roe genealogical information.

□◇ Aina L. Anderson, formerly of New Baltimore and now of Albany, has contributed extensively to publications. The VML is keeping a scrapbook of her poetry.

□ □ □ □ □

**Chaurand** (continued from page 28)

that those passages were amicably and mutually allowed, to one by the other, as is custom between friendly neighbours, but without any other right – whatever. I affirm this statement as being the whole truth and in witness thereof I have hereunto affixed my seal and signature.

New York, November 26th in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixteen—  
/s/ H Chaurand

Delivered in presence of Jos. Bouchard

That same year, during the May term of the Supreme Court, Honoré Chaurand sought to collect an overdue \$2,000 note involving William Judson and Anthony Van Bergen. This may well have been connected with the sale of Friendship's Asylum or at least its stock, crops and equipment. William Judson, at the time, was an important merchant in the village of Coxsackie, having a "finger" in many business activities.

One concludes Honoré Chaurand never returned to France but became an American citizen and died in his adopted country. His connections with the township of New Baltimore and his farm Friendship's Asylum are part of the area's local history, a part which never has seen the printed page heretofore.

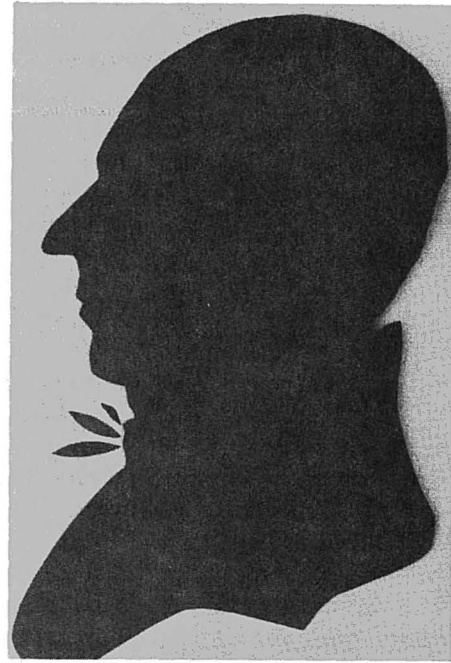
□ □ □ □ □

The Preservation League of New York State is to be complimented with the success of its promotion of Architectural Heritage Year 1986 - Three Centuries of Building in New York State. The Greene County Historical Society is one of more than 270 organizations pooling efforts to develop a better understanding of the importance of the social, economic, aesthetic, and cultural forces that have shaped the styles of building. This diversity of architecture in New York is experienced by those participants in the Tour of Homes held each year in June by the Greene County Historical Society.

□ □ □ □ □

*With the completion of his second term of office as president of the Greene County Historical Society, Valentine Kriele has declined a third term. The Trustees express their appreciation for his four years of dedicated service.*

**Land-Merchant** (continued from page 23)



Silhouette – Levi Blaisdell  
Blaisdell Family Collection

When his children were in their early and middle teens, Levi apparently realized that life was drawing to a close. He resigned his postmastership in April of 1832, returned to the "old place" now fraught with many bitter and sweet memories, and the following year died and was buried a short distance from the old home. His grave, marked only by a stone with the initials L. B. and the dates, continued to be unmolested through generations of tenants on the farm: but when World War II began and the railroad was expanding for the Voorheesville Depot, an extra spur of track was laid in that area and the stone, but not the memory, disappeared forever.

*The material for the above sketch was obtained principally from the notes of the writer's father, Robert V. B. Blaisdell and partly from those of his grandfather, Anthony H. Blaisdell. Mr. Walter Krine, Postmaster at Coeymans, very kindly supplied the dates of Levi's employment.*

□ □ □ □ □

Greene County Historical Society  
Raymond Beecher, Editor  
R.D.  
COXSACKIE, NEW YORK 12051

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
U. S. POSTAGE PAID  
CATSKILL, N. Y. 12414  
PERMIT NO. 91