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Spring, 1978

JOE WALTZ— BETWEEN MURDERS HE WROTE POETRY —Editor's Research

For sheer drama, few events in Greene County's history can top the apprehension, the trial and conviction, and the hanging of Joseph Waltz more than a century ago. A tragedy of major proportions, it catered to the avid interest and the insatiable curiosity of the public. Before the final act was played out, jailer Charles Ernst would die, the National Guard would be sent down from Albany to prevent a lynching, and the county newspapers would print special editions; through it all Joe Waltz would write his poetry, fantasizing his leaving this world and traveling to outer space for a permanent residence.

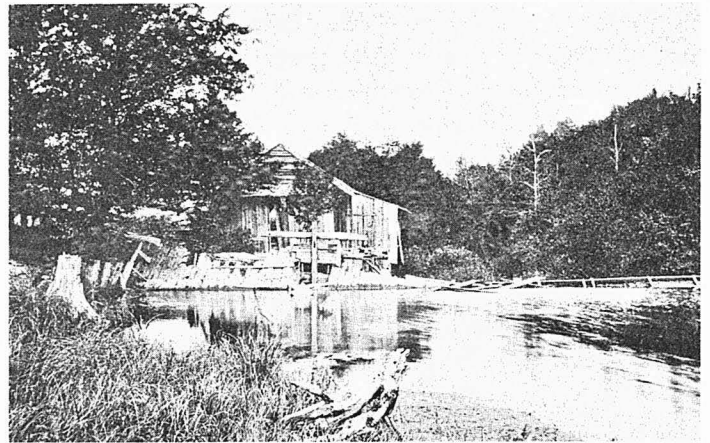
Tangible reminders of these bizarre events are to be found in the archives at the Vedder Memorial Library at Bronck House. Among these are Joe Waltz's large decorated sheets of crude poetry, the newspapers' special editions, an oil sketch of the Waltz homestead between Catskill and Athens (scene of the first crime) as painted by Benjamin Stone, and Sheriff Platt Coonley's bill for services rendered in connection with the hanging on May 1, 1874.

The experts were sharply divided as to Joseph Waltz's responsibility for his actions. Doctor George H. Choate, an expert in lunacy who interviewed him after the trial, declared him insane and not a fit subject for hanging. Dr. Brown of the Bloomingdale Asylum came to the same conclusion after studying the trial testimony and interviewing Joe Waltz for more than three hours. Both doctors were supported in their opinions by Dr. Kellogg of the Poughkeepsie Asylum. In contrast, Dr. Gray of the Utica Asylum and Dr. Ordonaux of the State Commission in Lunacy rendered the professional opinions "feigned insanity".



Artist's Sketch — Joe Waltz

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Haines Sawmill Near The Falls

SAWMILLS ON A MOUNTAIN TOP

—Esther H. Dunn

The Catskills are lands of mountain streams, not lakes. In the 1700's and early 1800's the waters dropped precipitously downward from their heights with a force and fullness in each narrow bed which we do not see today. The sun seldom touched their cold surfaces because of the forest cover. Man rarely went within the spooky, beast-inhabited terrain. He had little reason to.

I write specifically about the eastern Mountain Top—the lands of Haines Falls, Tannersville and the "platter" of Platte Clove to its south, all located in Great Lot No. 25 of the Hardenbergh Patent. These were harsh lands, and dank.

To the east the deep and rocky gorges of the Kauterskill and the Platterkill lie outside the borders of the mountain summit. But they draw from the high mountains above, if sometimes circuitously, a network of waters intent on reaching the ocean by the fastest route.

Westward, the Catskills slope gradually downward in widening valleys with high ridges. The larger streams, added to by many tributaries, were solid gold—meaning that the strong current which could turn a mill wheel was to be a blessing to the settler. The Schoharie Kill alone could support eight mills to the mile.

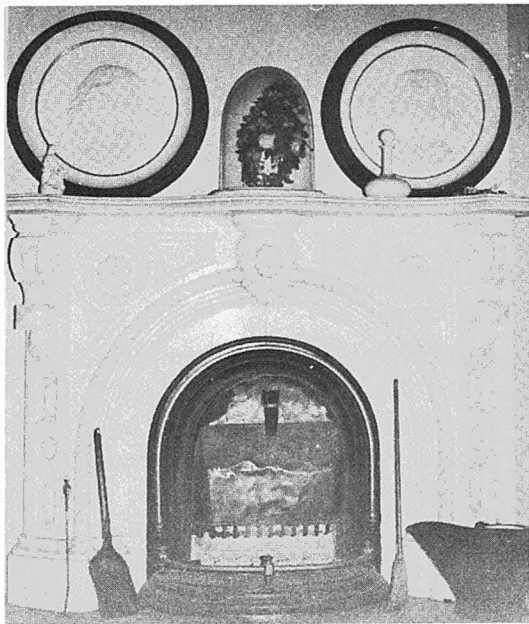
First it had been the sawmill which opened this more workable region. Settlers from Connecticut came in through a northern boundary. Then the needed gristmill came. Next came the hemlock-destroying tanneries. Almost simultaneously there came many small and varied industries, using water power. Sawmills were multiple. By mid-century the lands were

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CATSKILL MARBLE WORKER "SCULPTURE BENT"

—Patricia H. Christian

For over a hundred years the descendants of Joseph Adams wondered who had carved the two marble medallions that hung over the mantle in the parlor of "Marble Lodge", built in 1861 on the south side of the public green in Fair Haven, Vermont. Joseph Adams was a great-great grandfather to my husband, John J. Christian, and he was owner and operator of a marble quarry in West Rutland. The medallions are now cherished heirlooms, but it was only recently we realized that they depicted *The Past* and *The Future*.



The Medallions at Marble Lodge

In 1969, while reading a journal kept by great-great Uncle Hibbard Phelps, I discovered the entry, "Joseph Adams paid \$250 each to Charles Baldwin of Catskill, N. Y., for two marble medallions." Then a few years later, the family discovered five letters written by Mr. Baldwin to Grandfather Adams.

A study of the Baldwin letters reveals that he was a serious sculptor with aesthetic tastes, and most assuredly guided by the prevailing Victorian morality of the nineteenth century. When Mr. Adams expressed concern about draping, the sculptor replied in a letter:

You say that if the medallion is draped, you think it should be *The Past*, and ask me if both should be draped, if one is. If you ask my views in the matter, I will give them. The aim of the medallion is to express certain ideas, and part and portion of them should aid in giving you those ideas. For *The Past*, we wish to express memory, thoughtfulness, looking back over the remembrance of other days. This is then giving the face an expression calculated to convey these ideas, a look of thoughtfulness with somewhat of sadness.

For *The Future*, we have expectation, hope, determination, energy of purpose. These are also shown by the

expression of the countenance. As *The Past* is before *The Future*, so the face in the one is represented as older than the face in the other.

The Future should be draped and *The Past* not draped for this reason.

The drapery of *The Future* seems to express the ideas of concealment—hidden from view—not yet visible—while the absence of drapery on the other medallion is to show that *The Past* has no concealment—nothing hidden or obscure.

My reason for writing to you about the matter was not because I felt doubtful as to how the medallions should be made in order to express the ideas of Past and Future, but because something was said about these things when I was at your house last spring.

You wish to know how much more I will ask to cut the medallion with drapery than without. If you wish it draped, I will cut it so, without extra charge, but I would not advise you to have it draped, as it would not be in keeping with the rest of the medallion.

You wish to know if a piece of marble less than 4 inches thick would do. A piece that will finish to $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches thick is all that is necessary, but thinner than that will not do. If it be 19 inches square instead of 20 inches, it would be just as well, providing it be perfectly sound entirely to the edge. The object of ordering it 20 inches square was that I might have an extra inch in case of small fractures of the edge.

Please reply as soon as you can.

Respectfully yours,

/s/ Charles M. Baldwin

P.S. The piece you sent, I am now working on, and believe it to be an excellent piece in all respects.

The letters of the sculptor intrigued me to the point that I felt compelled to learn more about Charles Baldwin, and obviously Catskill was the place to commence my search. Heretofore Catskill had just been a Thruway exit to me, as my husband and I travelled back and forth from our home in Starlight, Pennsylvania, to summer or fall vacations in his ancestral home in Fair Haven. So one day I drove to Catskill, looked through the phone directory and listed all the addresses of all Baldwins in the immediate area. Then I visited a local monument shop, as often these businesses in small towns are passed from generation to generation. The proprietor of the shop was not a Baldwin, but he was kind enough to tell me about the Bronck House Museum and the Greene County Historical Society. There was not enough time to stop at the Bronck House that day, but when I returned home I wrote inquiring letters to the Baldwins I'd gleaned from the phone book, all to no avail.

Then through correspondence, I became acquainted with Raymond Beecher, who offered to help. Consequently I sent him copies of the five Baldwin-to-Adams letters in my possession.

During the summer of 1974 I visited the Vedder Research Library and discussed my interest further with Curator Raymond Beecher. With stacks of newspapers and directories, he started me on my research.

Continued on page 3

CATSKILL MARBLE WORKER – from page 2

Slowly, between my visits and searches, and Mr. Beecher's hunts, we managed to accumulate some interesting information about Charles M. Baldwin, a little known sculptor from Catskill.

Charles Baldwin acquired a facility for working with marble early in life. By the age of 13 years, he was already a competent artisan. Supplementing training received from his father, Israel H. Baldwin, Charles sought additional experience in stone carving with George Elliott who operated a stone yard at Jefferson Heights between 1863 and 1870. Subsequently Charles worked in his father's yard at the several Catskill locations, eventually succeeding to his father's business. A substantial number of nineteenth century tombstones in Catskill cemeteries were from the skilled hands of the Baldwins.

Israel H. Baldwin, the father, decided in 1834 to relocate in Catskill. He had been recuperating from a serious ankle injury at the Catskill Village hotel operated by Innkeeper Joseph Lynes. Neither Stamford (Delaware County) nor New Preston (Connecticut) ever reclaimed him.

The first business advertisement of the Catskill Baldwins appeared in the *Catskill Recorder* under date of February 14, 1834, in the name of Whitney and Baldwin. Little is known about the Whitney partner, and that co-partnership did not endure for many years. The 1834 advertisement reads:

MARBLE MANUFACTORY The subscribers would inform the public that they have entered into co-partnership in the business of mfg. and vending Building Marble, Grave Stones, and Monuments. They have one manufactory established in Litchfield Co., Conn., another in the village of Catskill, and a third at the head of the Delaware.

Grave stones, Monuments, and Manufacturing Marble of every description will be offered at as low a rate as at any other establishment in the state. Carving done in the neatest manner, and all orders promptly executed.

J. B. Lynes, Agent, Catskill, N. Y.
and William Willard, Saugerties,
Ulster County, N. Y.
Catskill, Feb 14. 1834

By 1837 Israel H. Baldwin had modified the weekly advertisement somewhat:

MARBLE MANUFACTORY The subscriber respectfully informs the public that he still occupies his old stand near the corner of Main and Thompson Streets, where he continues the business of manufacturing and vending BUILDING MARBLE, GRAVESTONES, AND MONUMENTS of every description, which will be offered as low as at any other establishment in the State.

CARVING executed in the neatest manner.

All orders will be promptly executed.

I. H. Baldwin

It was in family living quarters near the marble yard that son Charles Baldwin, the sculptor, was born. The newspaper reports on February 5, 1867, that Mr.

Baldwin, Sr., finally purchased Mrs. Ells' house on Thompson Street. The yard for the business was nearby the Thompson Street corner.

Although marble was quarried as early as 1789 in the Rutland, Vermont area, little of the product was shipped except locally by horse and oxen. When the Champlain Canal opened in 1823, the marble was drawn by team to Whitehall or Comstock, and then it was shipped down the Champlain Canal and the Hudson River to eastern cities. Finally in 1852 the Rutland and Washington Railroad opened, and the marble business expanded greatly. During the post-Civil War era, hundreds of thousands of monuments and markers were shipped from the Rutland marble quarries. Joseph Adams had several salesmen traveling from New England to St. Louis. Every small town had its monument shop and marble carver.

Shortly after the Civil War, Charles Baldwin began to attract local interest with his carving talent. It was a period of American preoccupation with sculpture, much of which began to adorn the mansions and homes of prosperous merchants. At first Charles Baldwin was satisfied to copy known works of art such as that of Richard Henry Park. At the first fair held by the Catskill Agricultural and Horticultural Society on October 1, 2, and 3, 1867, "a medallion in marble by Charles M. Baldwin, being a copy of Park's *Memory*, was awarded a discretionary premium of \$3.00". The *Catskill Recorder and Democrat* in recording the prize, felt Mr. Baldwin gave promise as a sculptor.

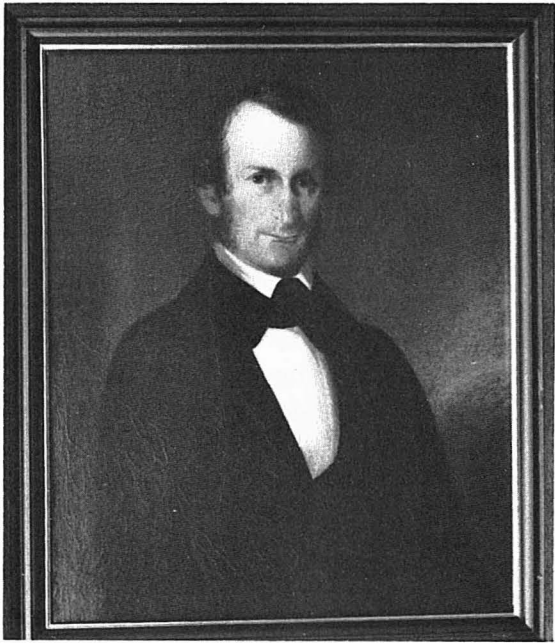
It is known that for a brief period of time in the latter part of the 1860's, Baldwin assisted sculptor R. H. Park and did most of the carving of a head and bust of Little Nell (Charles Dickens' character of *Old Curiosity Shop* fame). Sculptors frequently worked in clay, employing skilled stone cutters to execute the work in marble. But in general, Charles Baldwin's artistic endeavors were limited, and he never completely broke away from his ties with the family and marble yard. He eventually succeeded his father in the business, the yard being removed to the head of Main Street.

Clearly, the problem of how to drape the medallions was solved, and Charles Baldwin delivered the medallions in person to Joseph Adams in Fair Haven in May of 1869. The Baldwins continued to be marble customers of the Joseph Adams firm for many years. As you stroll through local cemeteries, it might be well to look for Baldwin sculptures, which probably are numerous.

After seven generations of Adamses in the old marble house, it has been sold, but the medallions have been retained in the family, and always will be.

My contacts with the Greene County Historical Society, the Vedder Research Library, and the Bronck House have been my pleasure in every way. Each trip

The Pruyn "Likenesses"



LUCAS PRUYN (the physician); oil on canvas, 28½ x 22"; c. 1845-55. Unsigned but also in the James E. Johnson style.



MARY ANGELICA PRUYN; oil on canvas, 27 x 22"; c. 1845-55. Unsigned but conclusively attributed to James E. Johnson.

The Pruyn family portraits, the generous gift of Gerrit Collier, will be on display at the Bronx Museum. The highly successful Historic Home Tour in 1977 financed the conservation of the three earlier portraits painted by James E. Johnson. St. Julian Fishburne of New Paltz was the conservator.

The Collier gift preserves in this region, prime examples of regional and national artists' brush work. James E. Johnson, the Kinderhook artist, was represented in the Columbia County ARB Art Exhibit on July 15-16, 1976. He is known to have painted several family members as well as other area residents. His wife, Sarah Ann Van Vleck, was the daughter of Peter A. Van Vleck; Isaac Pruyn's mother was Jane Van Vleck.

Artist John L. Harding painted in the Albany area between 1825 and 1838, in Philadelphia from 1841-1845, and in NYC from 1848-1852. Work by this individual may be seen in the collections of the New-York Historical Society.

Thomas LeClear (1818-1870), portrait and genre painter, eventually established his studio in New York City; in 1863 he was elected to the National Academy.

Bayard Henry Tyler, the subject of ongoing research, contracted with Isaac Pruyn for the latter's portrait. He also painted Julius Pruyn in 1906.



ISAAC PRUYN; oil on canvas, 28 x 23"; c. 1845-55. Unsigned but also conclusively attributed to James E. Johnson.

An Assemblage of Hudson Valley Portraiture



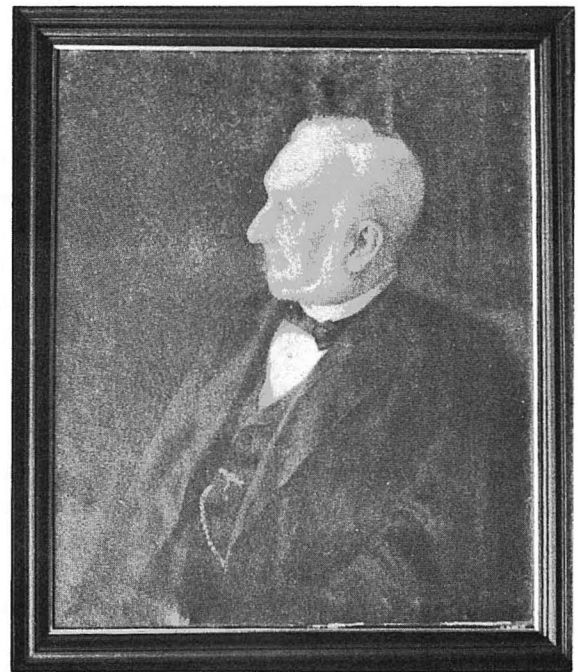
JULIUS PRUYN; oil on canvas, 27 x 22"; signed and dated in lower right: Bayard Tyler, 1906.



CYNTHIA WILLSEY PRUYN (Mrs. Lucas Pruyn); oil on canvas, 31½ x 24"; signed and dated reverse: J. L. Harding Pinxt Nov. 23-1825, Albany.



SARAH LOUISE PRUYN PHILLIP; oil on canvas, 28 x 23"; signed middle right "Thos. LeClear N.A., c. 1870.



ISAAC PRUYN; oil on canvas, 30 x 25"; half portrait of subject as Catskill banker. Signed and dated: Bayard H. Tyler, 1880.

JOE WALTZ – *from page 1*

A petition, signed by many local residents and forwarded to Albany for a “stay of execution” in order to determine sanity, is an indication of the public feeling—a feeling which suffered an abrupt reversal when the prisoner “struck down” his jailer in a final attempt to escape from the Catskill jail.

— — — On May 1, 1873, while doing chores on his father’s farm between Catskill and Athens, Joseph Waltz observed the arrival of the scissor-grinder, Harmon Holcher (also spelled Hulcher in the newspapers), of Albany. Like “Yankee Peddlers”, Holcher earned his livelihood traveling about the countryside with his portable grinding machine; his bell alerted potential customers. It being late in the day, the scissor-grinder sought and secured supper and overnight lodging at the Waltz farm.

After eating the evening meal and exchanging the news of the day, all retired early. Sleep came rapidly to all but Joe Waltz. “Some very bad spirit entered into me,” claimed young Waltz in his later confession as reported by Special Correspondent Walton Van Loan. “I went to my room, I opened my Testament to read. I laid down on my bed and the spirit overcame me. I resisted this spirit again and the spirit resisted me back again. After I was completely overcome, I went out doors and got a hatchet I went in slyly with a low lamp, and set the lamp on the floor, and then my conscience fought with all its might not to do the act, but the evil spirit was stronger—I took up the hatchet and struck Holcher on the head”

Over the next few days Joe managed to wrap the body in a family blanket, bury it on the farm in a shallow grave in the plum orchard, break up and dispose of the grinding machine, hide the victim’s clothing and shoes under the barn floor, and secrete the bell and the pocketbook with sixty or more dollars. He also managed to convince his father that Holcher had left the farmhouse at daybreak, taking the blanket with him; the father in turn, reported the supposed theft of the blanket to the sheriff’s office in Catskill. To further divert suspicion, Joe placed misleading clues in the vicinity of Coxsackie. He threw part of the broken grinding machine on the lawn of the present Musial home on Route 385 and also tacked a note to a telegraph pole in that vicinity.

The authorities’ suspicions were soon focused on the Waltz family, the father and son being taken to Catskill for questioning. On the following Monday morning, handcuffed and closely supervised, the two men were returned to the farm where a crowd of about 300 had assembled as rumors of the murder began to circulate.

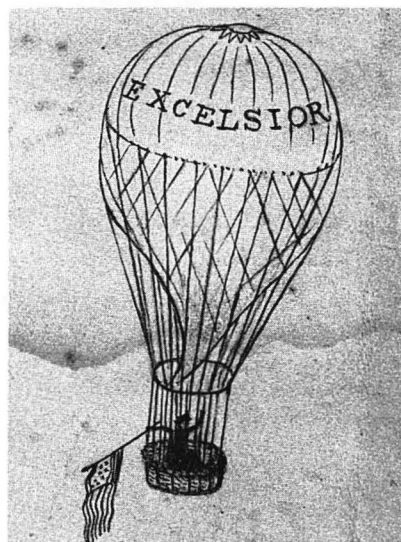
The first time, walking with the authorities around the farm, Joe had little to say. But upon entering the house he asked to have the window blinds closed; he

then confessed to the murder. “You, father, (looking at his parent), are innocent.” Walton Van Loan, covering the story, reported that Joseph Waltz had confided to him that he did not want the scissor-grinder’s money, and that he could only account for his many bad deeds by an evil spirit getting the mastery over him. (He had earlier set fire to local schoolhouses and also had stolen schoolbooks). After the victim’s body was unearthed, Joe was returned to Catskill jail, being very communicative, expressing relief and praying.

In a March 1874 session of Oyer and Terminer, 85 names were drawn before a jury could be selected—John Goodwin, Lewis Barton and Jeremiah Overbaugh of Catskill; Lysander Lennon and Peter Evory of Cairo; Alvah W. Bliss, Henry S. Mace, Jeremiah Cunningham and Puluski Brown of Durham; and Abram M. Hallenbeck and John Van Dyck of Coxsackie. Theodor Westbrock was designated Trial Judge; Sidney Crosswell, District Attorney, was assisted by John A. Griswold. The prisoner was defended by A. Melvin Osborn and C. C. Givens. Supported by a full confession, the jury found Joseph Waltz guilty of murder, insanity being ruled out.

Stephen Vining in later years recalled the sentencing; the prisoner became very obstreperous and had to be controlled. The presiding judge pronounced: “Your sentence is that you shall be kept within the walls at the Greene County jail until the first day of May next.” At this point Joe interrupted by saying, “Go home then?” The judge continued: “Then you shall be hung by your neck until you are dead.”

During the ensuing months awaiting hanging or commutation of sentence by Governor Dix, and while his sanity status was being debated by experts in the field of mental diseases, Joe Waltz occupied much of his cell time by writing and illustrating bizarre verses, using colored pencils to decorate the hand-lettered sheets. One such “artistic” effort was a balloon drawing. It carried the name “Excelsior”, and an American flag. Joe drew himself in the balloon’s basket, saying “Good by, mother earth!”



*Joe Waltz's
Balloon
Sketch*

—A.J. Gambino
photo

*Continued
on page 9*

SAWMILLS ON A MOUNTAIN TOP

—continued from page 1

well-cleared and excellent for farming. The soil was good. But on our Mountain Top by mid-nineteenth century, sawmills on its smaller, if rapid streams, were in fair number only. They now often served as an adjunct to a man's way of making a living.

The first sawmill within our lands was part of a real estate promotion by James Desbrosses, owner of Great Lot No. 25 and more, who wished to open up and thereby capitalize on his untouched forest holdings. He found two prominent and wealthy men in Kingston, Jacob Tremper and Peter VanGassbeck, to whom in 1787 he leased 700 acres in the area of the Roaring Kill and today's Elka Park. Shortly thereafter, within that mountain-top parcel, a sawmill was built on the double stream which is a headwater of the west-running Schoharie, above Dibble's Dam. A gristmill was soon built, presumably by Alexander Boyd who was a specialist in millstones imported from France.

The lure which had attracted the two wealthy Kingston men was: magnificent forest trees; water power from rushing mountain streams; a ready market for lumber in Kingston which had been burned by the British; easy access there through the cut at Mink Hollow and via Woodstock; and all at a very low price. When the lure "took", Mr. Desbrosses advertised in Connecticut newspapers and elsewhere for settlers for his "opened" territory. "Cheap lands in the west", he cried. Rent would be due only each seven years and 3-life leases were available.

Between 1790 and 1800 some sixty families moved in to our dark and isolated territory, felled the trees, built homes, sheds, stonewalls, locked their animals securely in at night. The howling of wolves was fearful. The soil was poor, the growing season very short. With the exception of perhaps four families, thirty years later, they moved out en masse to the Middle West where living was to be easier.

This first settlement on our Mountain Top is not recorded in history books. Yet it is documented precisely by original lease and rent books, census records, deeds, etc. A surveyor's map shows the location of the early sawmill and gristmill.

Water power was as basic to those people, in their daily use of wood products, as electricity is to us today. Water power they had, in a myriad of streams. The men were ingenious enough to harness it. A very simple mill, without a dam for sustained force, could be worked when melting snows and spring freshets filled the streams, to the benefit of its owner and likely his neighbor. Neighbors helped each other.

Certain men on the Mountain Top today, born to the land, know where sawmills have stood at various times. They can name a dozen and more locations on

the various streams. The one on the Roaring Kill below the bridge is usually mentioned first. These men know from hearsay, family ownership, remnants of foundations and dams, from certain logistics mixed with instinct. Surveyors run across the mention of mills when checking land rights; lawyers in old deeds and wills.

Sawmills and their dams were located with a shrewd eye to nature's ways. A site downhill from where the logs were to come was an asset. A place to unload behind the mill made getting them onto the carrier easier. Traffic often built the road to a mill. The buildings were of rough boards and little more than framework. They were never painted. Wheels vibrating, the saw screeching, sawdust flying, mills had a quality which distinctly said it was man's domain.

Up-and-down saws were in common use on the Mountain Top until far into the 1800's. The blade was about 8 feet high and 8 inches wide, set in a strong rectangular frame of wood. The saw moved up and down, cutting on the down-stroke only. It was driven by a wooden crank from below, powered by the turning of the waterwheel. Few nails were used in the mechanism, no belts, little iron. The circular saw, much faster cutting, had long been invented but was not popular until, many years later, the strength of its teeth was perfected.

One, two or three men might run a sawmill. The sawyer directed the cutting of the wood. His was the skill that got the best from a log and avoided waste. A second man placed the log on a cradle which moved forward to meet the saw. The third man removed the log latterly. Old-timers did it with a bar after each cut.

About a quarter-mile back from the high waterfall at the head of Kauterskill Clove, a mill and dam was in continuous use from 1848 to 1895. It stood downstream where the waters run in a long, smooth stretch, on the north bank of the creek. These waters start, mainly, on the south slopes of the North Mountain ridge. By 1860 much of that land had been cleared for pasture and grain. More people now lived on the Mountain Top; the boarding house era was starting; summer parks would come later. The mill and dam belonged to Charles W. Haines, known by all as "C.W." or "Christian Charlie", a man born to the land. The high waterfall, which in summer he put on display to the public for 25¢, carries his name.

Like other farmers with mills, he did custom-sawing for the people around. Logs of hard maple were often taken to him to be cut for making stoneboats, as essential to a mountain man as wagon or sled. It took a knack for a sawyer to make the upward turn in the boards, like a toboggan. The ideal log was a maple with a natural crook which could be cut with the grain for greater strength. Stones were cleared from fields in

CURATOR'S CORNER

A pilot program for a regional consortium dealing with American art is being undertaken in western New England with financial support from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The program was initiated by the Dunlap Society, a non-profit association, whose aim is to increase and broaden the awareness and appreciation of American Art. The Bronck Museum has been invited to participate; its art holdings are rated as having both regional and national significance.

The National Geographic Society's 1977 publication, *Visiting Our Past—America's History Lands* has one section on the Dutch in the Hudson Valley; the Bronck House is illustrated.

Ella Dedrick Walsh of Catskill has contributed 2 early baby bonnets, lace with drawstring, found in the Bible of her mother, Emmagene (Van Aken) Dedrick of Old Kings Road, Catskill. The Dedrick farm is now La Rive Restaurant. Also included was a calligraphic fish, drawn on paper, from the Van Aken family.

Ray Van Valkenburgh writes from Daytona Beach, Florida, that he enjoyed the Soap Box Factory article (Vol. 1, Issue 3, Fall, 1977). One of his Rice ancestors was known to have had a wooden button factory at Leeds. Mr. Van Valkenburgh and his sister, Dorothy, have four direct ancestral families who have each been in America almost 3½ centuries. Few families can equal that!

Special exhibits are being planned for the 1978 season with contents being drawn from the Bronck House holdings in storage, as well as from friends of the society. A wide variety of nineteenth century flower vases, "fancy" needlework, and letter writing equipment will comprise three separate exhibits for the hyphen hallway showcase.

Louise S. Messenger of Delmar, a Vedder Library patron and contributor, has been researching the Rea family of Coxsackie. Last fall she visited the William Rea plot in Riverside Cemetery. While on site, on impulse, she softly called "William Rea, where are you?" With that the nearby vault door slowly swung open. Was he trying to tell her something? Mrs. Messenger's sister was so startled, she dropped a package she was carrying. Actually, Louise Messenger writes, the workmen were in the cemetery and had temporarily left the storage vault door unlatched. But the incident is on its way to becoming a classic family story.

From Brockton, Massachusetts, we have received some useful genealogical information from Mary Vedder Kamenoff, sister of the late Lovisa Vedder Smith of Roxbury. It also contained a promise to help with the editing of Mrs. Levi King's Cairo diary when selected portions are published.

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VEDDER MEMORIAL LIBRARY NOTES

The Society has acquired and catalogued the monumental *Index to the Public Records of the County of Albany, 1630-1894*. The thirty-seven large folio volumes covering grantors, grantees, mortgagors, etc., should be of use to local researchers since, until the year 1800, Greene was part of Albany County. The acquisition and transportation was handled by Trustee Thomas Blaisdell and Historian Mabel Smith.

A thorough research work of genealogical interest has been prepared by Mrs. Marguerite B. Simpkins under the auspices of the Meeting House Hill Chapter, NSDAR. Covering Bible records of Baker, Parks, Simpson, Vermilyea and White families, a typed copy, with a useful index, has been deposited with us.

The James Malcolm Pierson Collection of Civil War manuscripts, among which are a number pertaining to Greene County men, has been donated by Dr. Alexander P. Leverty II, of Richmond, Virginia. A subsequent Journal article will discuss their content, particularly in connection with the famed 120th Volunteers, NYS Militia.

□□□□□□

Recent acquisitions now on the reference shelves:

Maas—*The Victorian Home In America*
Aronson—*On the Mountain, in the Valley . . .*
Fellows—*Dutch Systems in Family Naming*
McIntosh—*The Forests of the Catskill*
Piwonka—*Ammi Phillips*
Greenville Central School—*Silhouette, Vol. 2, No. 1*
Durham Township—*AR Bicentennial Booklet*
Miller—*Timbers of Time*
Wiltwyck Rural Cemetery Book
Adams—*Guide to the Catskills*
Haskins—*Fireside Recollections*
Mitchell—*Land in the Catskills*
Piwonka—*A Visible Heritage*
Clough—*Dutch Uncles and New England Cousins*
Friends of Olana—*Olana Cookbook*
Kelly—*Reformed Churches, Coxsackie; Marriages*
NYS Museum—*Recent Contributions to Hudson Valley Prehistory*
Hall—*Ice Industry*
Felt—*Researching . . . Local History*
Beers—*Albany County Atlas (reprint)*

Can You Help Us Locate Any of These Volumes for the Vedder Memorial Library?

Foster, John O. (Rev.); *Life and Labors of Mrs. Maggie Newton Van Cott*; Cincinnati, Hitchcock and Walden
Robbins, Phyllis; *Maude Adams, An Intimate Portrait*; G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1956
Henry, Arthur; *The House in the Woods*; Tannersville, (about 1900)
McAllister, Ethel M.; *Biography of Amos Eaton*
Eaton, Amos; *The Young Botanists' Tablet of Memory*; Nathan Elliott, Catskill
Van Cott, Maggie Newton; *Aunt Maggie Bascom's Soliloquy for Wornout Preachers*; George W. Squires, publisher, Cairo, New York

SAWMILLS ON A MOUNTAIN TOP

—continued from page 7

those early days and later, by horse and stoneboat, which is flat and slides easily over the ground. Many a cottage at Onteora Park has had its foundation stones delivered that way.

Of course “Christian Charlie” had work of his own to be done at the mill. He was enlarging his home to a boarding house. He had barns, sheds and fences to mend. Like others, he owned woodlots from which his lumber came. The need for sawn wood was constant.

Typically, the road to his mill from the “village” went directly to the bank of the Kauterskill creek. The dam there was big and built in an old-fashioned way with logs and no nails. Erect logs crossed each other, notched; rocks filled in the bottom space; slabs lined the slanting upper parts. A trestle-like sluiceway carried the dam waters to the overshot waterwheel. The saw was up-and-down.

When “Christian Charlie” died, in 1895, the wheel of his mill stopped turning. Five years later, when the dam was being repaired, a workman left sparks which by accident burned the old mill to the ground. It was the end of the century, the end of an era.

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Esther H. Dunn writes from a lifetime of personal research and experience of this section of the Catskill Mountains. A direct descendant of one branch of the Haines family, for whom the falls and the hamlet are named, she has shared her knowledge with the reading public in articles published in The Conservationist, The Catskills magazine and our Journal.

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—The Editor

The Reverend Ida van Dyck Hordines, with ties to this region, has provided a generous check in memory of her parents, Edwin Henshaw van Dyck and Emma Daley van Dyck. The Hordines have also contributed useful material for the Vedder Library, a part of which will eventually be published in our Journal.

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CATSKILL MARBLE WORKER — from page 3

through the Catskills on our way to the old marble house in Vermont, my husband and I manage to visit another magnificent part of the Hudson River Valley and the Catskills. One of my great thrills was finding the site of the old Catskill Mountain House and viewing the expanse of the river valley. On that same day, I discovered the Kaaterskill Falls and the area formerly occupied by the Laurel House. Little wonder that those Hudson River painters were so inspired. My Starlight flower garden now contains some lovely Cocksackie loosestrife and West Windham thyme, mementos of my Baldwin search.

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JOE WALTZ — from page 6

Joe had become interested in outer space from having observed an insane man at Kauterskill several months earlier. That individual had alarmed the countryside by proclaiming himself “a disciple of the sun and the moon”.

Not only did Joe illustrate his poetry, but he used a different colored crayon pencil for each succeeding word. The one reads:

Far up in the moon no bad spirits can go,
And thus it will make a bright home for this Joe—
And there I'll see God and the angels no doubt,
And so I must go—my dear friends let me out.

And now let me shake off this slumbering trance,
And kill every devil, and onward advance,
For my spirit is like an inflated balloon,
In which I am going to sail to the moon.

A second illustrated poem which has survived is in the same theme:

Books! Buried Books, and Bells!
A Lost Man and a Lost Summer

I wished to go astray
And travel for awhile
And then perhaps I'd stay
Upon some pleasant Isle.

For here I cannot see
The Sun, a moon or more,
And therefore I must flee
And break this Iron door.

And there I'd build a tower
So strong and very high
That no infernal power
Could to its summit fly.

And then I would prepare,
To make the grand ascent,
And everyone would stare
'Till all His time is spent.

And there upon the sky,
I'd live alone and free;
And then when I would die
I'd near to Heaven be.

Some powerful telescopes [sic],
I'd take with me up there;
And a lot of strings and ropes,
For hanging in the air.

I'd fit out a great balloon,
And then when all is done,
I'd sail into the Moon,
And then I'd see the Sun.

I'd see Our Earth afar,
And other planets too
And many a bright new star,
And worlds and suns I'd view.

And there I would explore
The surface of the Moon;
Until my feet get Sore,
And then I'd rest at noon.

But what if there should be,
No noon or evening there;
And what if I should see,
Strange people everywhere.

The months dragged on for Joe Waltz in his Catskill jail cell. His date with the hangman was fast approaching. Should he attempt to escape? If so, how?
(To be concluded in the Summer issue.)

AVAILABLE THROUGH THE SOCIETY

Bronck House Tile	\$3.75
Vedder—Greene Co. History	8.50
ARBC—Greene Co. History	6.00
Beecher—Letters from a Rev.	3.50
Beecher—Out to Greenville and Beyond; Historical Sketches	5.50
Beers' Greene Co. Township Maps	4.00
Plus Sales Tax and Handling	

OPERATION HELP !!!

Letter from the President:

These are the times that try men's souls—and their finances, too! The Board of Directors has been wrestling with the super-challenge of raising \$31,500 in order to match the newly-received Federal-State grant of \$31,500. This new grant will assure us the funds needed for the second phase of restoration work for our unique and beloved Bronck House. In the first phase, the Society used \$25,000 of its own funds to match the first Federal-State grant of \$25,000. The total restoration work has been estimated at \$113,000. This seems like a lot of money—and it is. But no amount of money could possibly replace the Bronck House with its historical traditions that span over 300 years.

Wilbur Cross of the Catskill Savings Bank is heading the fund drive. To date, about \$15,000 has been donated or pledged by businesses, banks, organizations and individuals. However, at this point, the fund drive is being directed at the general membership, from whom we hope to raise the balance. The enclosed brochure will explain further and help you make your generous tax-deductible contribution in the knowledge that you are helping preserve for future generations an important part of our heritage—our roots here in the Hudson Valley. Remember that the Society receives no taxpayer support and is operated through memberships, admissions, contributions and bequests, and volunteer help. Its operation is truly a "labor of love."

If you haven't yet sent your membership to Dorothy Smith, please do so at the earliest, so that we may continue sending you the Quarterly Journal. We would appreciate hearing your comments on the Journal. Also, if you have suitable material, contact the editor, Ray Beecher.

This summer we will engage in some interesting activities, such as a new Historic Home Tour, another operatic performance by the singing Figols family, more landscaping by the Men's Garden Club and a Nature Walk for all to enjoy.

We are looking forward to the Society's 50th anniversary in 1979. Hopefully we will have a restored Bronck House in which to celebrate. Please help us materialize these plans. The restored Bronck House should be a cultural center, rich in its heritage of the past, but also a dynamic force for the culture of the present and the future.

Sincerely,

J. Rubén García

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Anthony J. Gambino, former New Baltimore town historian, and contributing photographer to this Journal, is researching material for his forthcoming book dealing with sloops, steamboats and river men of that vicinity. Any information and photographs would be appreciated. Contact him at Box 159, New Baltimore.

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PLANS FOR 1978 TRADING POST SEASON UNDERWAY

Who left that box of merchandise? Should it be priced now? Is that a piece of antique glassware? Is this fork plated or sterling? Which sales room for display? Such questions and many others arise each day as volunteers staff the Trading Post during the summer months. This phase of museum operations, conceived by George Bagley, each year raises thousands of dollars toward the Bronck Museum's budget.

Bargain hunters, antique dealers and collectors of all sorts, as well as the visiting museum public, find their way to the buildings west of the parking lot. Some donate as well as purchase. Cut glass has gone to Texas, documents to California, furniture to New York City — as collecting tastes continue to change and broaden, a wide variety of stock is sold.

The secret of this highly successful Trading Post lies in the dedication of some twenty volunteers, some of whom come weekly, others serving as substitutes on call. Some days little is sold as patronage is light. On other days the staff is busy. It is all part of the story.

In hot weather, cool weather, in sunshine and in rain, Kay Newbury's volunteer staff is on deck. Some like to work in teams such as Betty Greene, Eleanor Albright (Athens), and Pauline Smith; Elsa Unterbusch and June Vincent; Kay and Danny Monahan; Marion Becker and Edna Muller; Mildred Van Ess and Olga Santora. Others like Walter and Frances Dietz, Mary Lankenau, Thelma Dolan and Laura Irwin provide essential substitute coverage. And certainly no one over the years has been more diligent in attendance than Edna Gallt of Catskill.

As Kay Newbury starts to plan the 1978 season which runs from mid-June into early September, give some thought to becoming a volunteer. Or if you have merchandise to donate (other than used clothing), write her a note at R.D. Coxsackie, 12051. Join these Friends of Bronck Museum!

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

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