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FITCH-DALEY LETTER DOCUMENTS PRATTSVILLE LIFE IN 1840's

Editor's Note: This 1909 letter was found among the effects of the late Ethel Daley of Prattsville, aunt to Mrs. Ida van Dyck Hordines, and is made available for publication through the latter's generosity. Mrs. Ida van Dyck Hordines is an ordained minister with Presbyterian Church ties. Her forebears are closely allied with early Greene County families. John Hordines, a retired educator, and the Reverend Ida, spend their summer months at their rural home at Harvard, New York, where they sponsor a variety of projects for the less fortunate. Both are active supporters of the Greene County Historical Society and its Bronck House Museum.

Brierfield, Alabama
November 30, 1909

James B. Daley
Prattsville, N. Y.

My dear Sir:

Your obliging and satisfying letter of the 26th received. (We await the civil laws delay and results with patience.) Your friendly mention of the Catskill Mountains, as you say, familiar to me, kindles a flame of pleasurable memories. I do not suppose that there is any one in Prattsville now, who can recall and recount the felicities of the palmy days of the village.

In 1845-6-7 and 8, the conditions there became favorably familiar to me. My three brothers and one sister were satisfied with the place. F. J. and J. I. Fitch were "attorneys at law and solicitors in chancery", and Thomas Fitch, Physician. In 1847-48, I was a student at the Prattsville Academy, and at the close of school, valedictorian.

In those years Zadock Pratt's Tannery (between the village and the creek) employed 300 hands. There was an India Rubber factory at the foot of Main Street, controlled by H. S. Sage; and a foundry and machine shop, a planing mill and a tin shop in that vicinity. At the upper end of Main Street was a woolen mill with a great sign on the comb of the building spelled "Woollen Mill" and people jeered. At the falls of Huntersfield Brook, there was a furniture factory, a tannery for deer skins, a tobacco factory (fine cut a specialty), a match factory; and near where Grace Church was, one named Pitcher had a

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Luman Reed (1787 - 1836)
Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art

LUMAN REED— HE MADE AMERICAN ARTISTS THE FASHION

—Editor's Research

In a letter to Thomas Cole at Catskill, dated June 7th 1836, Asher Durand (the artist) writes: "The fatal hour has come. Our dear friend is dead. The funeral will take place on Thursday afternoon. Come and look for the last time on the man whose equal we shall never see again. I can say no more."

And from Thomas Cole's notebook under date of June 13th, we find: "On the 11st inst., I returned from the city to which I had been called upon the melancholy occasion of the death of Mr. Reed, my best and kindest friend. He died on the morning of the 7 inst., after a sickness of five weeks. His mind was clear and calm to the last. In Mr. Reed, I have lost a true, generous and noble friend. I could expatiate upon the grief I feel at his departure but words are poor things. I will simply say, he was admired and beloved, and cannot be forgotten."

Such strong emotional expressions from two giants in the field of American art bear further examination. These farewells were among a number expressed for Luman Reed (1787-1836) whose formative years were spent at Reed's Landing, Coxsackie.

The Hudson River School of Art has received extensive coverage both in books and in magazines. Its founder, Thomas Cole, has merited equal attention. Yet strangely enough, Greene County has been slow to publicize the role of Luman Reed in this art movement whose artists' canvases are among the major

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SAMUEL PLATT SCOTT (1835-1917) - Catskill Artist

Each year visitors to Bronck House find more to attract their interest and attention as the collections expand in scope and quality. The latest significant addition is Samuel Platt Scott's painting of the Haines sawmill, a gift of Esther Haines Dunn, as a memorial to her grandparents, Charles W. and Adaline Bligh Haines. In the Spring, 1978, issue of this Journal Miss Dunn traced the history of the sawmill. We are further indebted to her for the following biographical material which helps to document the work of this little-known Catskill artist.

Although a resident of Danbury, Connecticut, Samuel Scott established his permanent tie with the Catskill region by reason of his marriage to the youngest sister of the sawmill operator; Clarinda Haines was his wife. The Scotts spent their summers in the house which still stands somewhat back of the former Claremont Hotel just east of the small village of Haines Falls—this is, of course, in the Catskills proper. The area where Samuel Platt Scott summered is in the very heart of the wild and precipitous Catskills so dear to and often trod upon by Thomas Cole, A. B. Durand, Kensett, Gifford and other members of the Hudson River School. Certainly he must have known the work of these earlier artists very well and benefited from observing their skills, even though he went his own artistic way.

This artist, in his painting of the old sawmill of "C.W." Haines, has utilized a very fine brush technique, an entirely different handling from that of his large canvases of Kaaterskill Falls, Haines Falls, Snake Creek in the Poconos (done very early in life), "Civilization Wends Its Way Westward," and other scenic works. To do it he took a feather, rather a small one, and stripped off the sides of it until he had only a small end portion at each side of the main rib. He often used this method in painting water and it appears in certain of his still-lifes, such as "Lilac" and "Calla Lily."



Photo Courtesy Esther H. Dunn

Samuel and Clarinda Scott Entertaining Two Young Visitors

Just when and where the artist worked on his canvases is not known. On location? At the summer cottage? In Danbury, in the winter months? An easel in later years stood in the front parlor of their Catskill Mountain cottage, and S. P. Scott is known to have done some of his work there. The room, in recollection, was typical of its day in the early years of this century: lace-curtained, pristine, and silent. The shades were drawn to the sills except when guests came. To children it had a special aura of excitement. Out of the blackness of pulled shades, the flood of sunshine exposed a collection of stuffed wild animals, some in glass cases. There were curiosities in wood carvings too. All of course were the handwork of the artist.

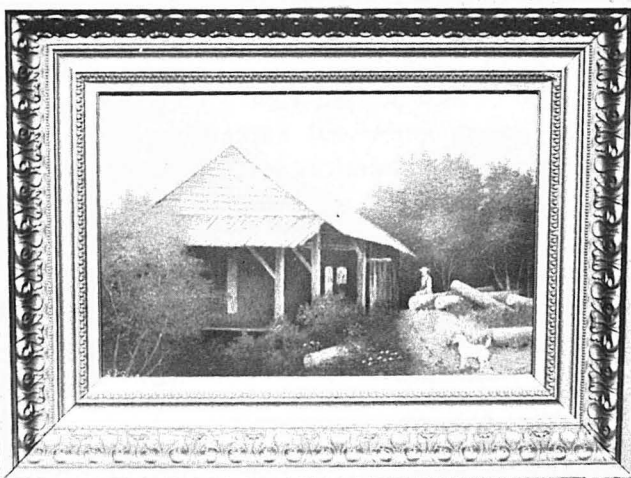
"Uncle Sam" or "Uncle Scott", as many called him, was a fine-looking man. He was thought to have "means" which permitted him an independence of time and activity. His wife, Clarinda, is quoted in family annals as saying, "... no, he wasn't much of one to work but fine at talking to the visitors." That meant the boarders next door at the *Vista*, a Haines family affair. Back in Danbury, the artist had the distinction of owning a pipe organ. The couple had no children but young relatives often visited, remembering the pumping of the organ.

Currently there are perhaps no more than twenty-five known paintings by S. P. Scott—others have disappeared. Each was done as a gift to a family member living in the Catskills; no price was attached to them. Several of the very large ones hung for many years in the old *Lox-Hurst*, in the *Claremont*, and one in the overmantel at the *Vista*, boarding houses located in a row fairly near to one another.

Although Scott is presumed to have been self-taught, present day professional critics rate his work as in a class with top-level 19th century American artists. His handling of falling water, sky, and rock is much in the style of Thomas Cole.

It is the intention of the Bronck Museum staff to display the mill painting with an assemblage of photographs of the sawmill which will serve to enhance the viewers' knowledge of this aspect of Haines Falls' history.

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Anthony J. Gambino Photo

The "C.W." Haines Sawmill (as painted by Samuel P. Scott)

JOE WALTZ—BETWEEN MURDERS HE WROTE POETRY (Part II)

—Editor's Research

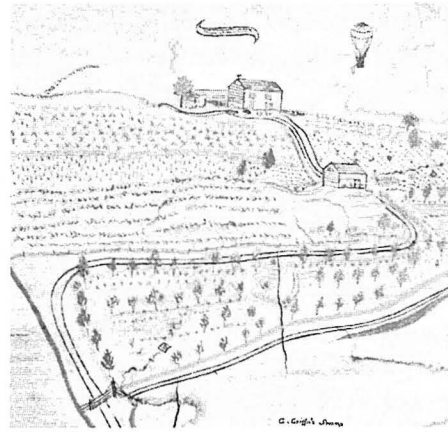
During the months following his conviction for the scissor-grinder's murder, and while awaiting hanging, the public's interest in the Waltz case continued to grow. Detailed descriptions of the refurbishing of the gallows in the Greene County jail found their way into the local newspapers. The gallows had last been utilized in the 1847 hanging of John Kelly for the robbery and murder of Lucretia Lewis of Prattsville in her "cakes and beer" shop. It had been devised by William H. Crosby in 1846 on order of Sheriff Robert Fulton. The newspapers did concede the entire arrangement for the forthcoming execution of Joe Waltz was being done in the most humane manner. "An oak beam is pivoted to an upright in the garret of the old jail. At the west end of the beam, the rope passes down through a hole in the ceiling to the cell below, in which the condemned man is placed for execution. Everything is therefore, out of his sight. Iron weights of about 200 pounds are fastened to the opposite end of the beam, giving leverage of two to one, and sufficient to spring the condemned man instantaneously the required height. The weights are held in place with a catch in control of the sheriff."

The public continued to debate if Joe Waltz would ever be hanged; opinions were sharply divided. The prisoner, facing execution at noon on May 1, 1874, for the murder of the scissor-grinder, Harmon Holcher almost a year earlier, began to devise delaying tactics. He suddenly confessed to a second murder and burial on the family farm between Catskill and Athens. As a result of this action, the sheriff sought and obtained permission of Governor Dix to take Waltz on the farm to locate the second victim's body. On a Tuesday morning at 4 a.m. (to avoid curious onlookers), the secret trip commenced up the Albany and Greene Turnpike to the family farm just beyond the Catskill town line. When they stopped at the turnpike tollgate, the prisoner hailed the old woman gatekeeper as a witch. Upon reaching the farm, Joe led the sheriff's men on a tour of the premises, examining trees and shrubbery, finally pointing out where the alleged second victim was buried. Careful exploration and digging by William Smith and his gang of laborers failed to reveal any such body. It was finally concluded the second confession had been a hoax.

Returning to the Greene County jail, Joe amused himself by tossing orange peels through the grated window. He made inquiries of jailer Charles Ernst as to the day and hour of hanging. That same afternoon Father O'Driscoll of Albany, as well as several local clergy, visited Waltz in his cell.

The next day (Wednesday), Joe contrived to

loosen several large nuts from the cell's iron lining but yielded them up upon demand of Sheriff Coonley. When Joe saw undertaker Kortz, he was heard to remark, "There is my coffin maker." Van Gorden



Joe Waltz Sketch of Farm, Showing Ascending Balloon

came to take his photograph but Joe refused to cooperate, hiding behind the stove. An artist from Albany later was authorized to make the sketch of the prisoner illustrated in the spring issue of this Journal.

The attack on Jailer Ernst was part of a carefully planned attempt to escape; it occurred on April 30. For the past several weeks Joe had been most cooperative in following orders, and was freed of his restraining chains. Unbeknown to the jailhouse staff, Joe had used a sharpened spike as a chisel and screwdriver to remove twenty large countersunk screws out of the iron band which was part of the cell's lining. Of it he made a murderous weapon, using his mattress to cover up his efforts.

Delaying any escape attempt until the last, in the hope of a Governor's reprieve, Joe waited until other officers were at dinner, a time when visitors would be most unlikely to call at the jailhouse door. After Ernst entered Joe's cell, the latter struck down the officer with the improvised weapon, dragged the body to the cell corner, covered the blood with newspapers, and secured the jailer's revolver and key to the outer door to the cell which was fastened with a small padlock.

At the crucial moment, by one of those rare coincidences of fate, Messrs. Olney and Edwards sought admission to the jail by ringing the doorbell. This brought jail officials from their dining room since Charles Ernst did not respond to the bell's ringing. Sheriff Coonley, hearing groans, called out "Charlie?". Receiving no reply and sensing trouble, jailer Olmstead and Sheriff Platt Coonley proceeded to the cell, broke open the outer door, and found jailer Ernst trying to get up, bleeding from several wounds.

First aid was immediately applied; shortly Ernst was removed to an upper room, Doctors Mackey and Wetmore being summoned. Upon washing the blood

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JOE WALTZ - from page 3

away, four very serious wounds were discovered, one over the right eye and three on the scalp. A portion of the skull was found to be pressing on the brain. Dr. Swinburne was promptly summoned from Albany for trepanning. In the meantime, Sheriff Coonley, finding Charles Ernst's revolver missing, returned to Waltz's cell and demanded the weapon. Strangely enough, Joe surrendered it without a struggle.

Although receiving the best medical assistance available, jailer Ernst died within a few days of the attack. Rufus H. King had immediately telegraphed Governor Dix: "Waltz has killed his keeper. A large, excited crowd is about the jail with implements to hang him. If word is received that his reprieve is granted, he will probably be lynched." In a few minutes the reply from Governor Dix: "R.H. King, No reprieve."

After Joe Waltz struck down Ernst, the former spoke only twice in his remaining hours. At no time did Joe look at anyone or make any reply by word or glance. Fearing an attack on the Catskill jail, Sheriff Coonley asked for troops and 105 men were sent from Albany by special train. Company B of the 10th Regiment and Company I of the 25th (National Guard), under the command of Major Davis, arrived by rail on April 30. Facing an immense crowd, often hostile, one company stood guard until 2 a.m. when they were relieved by the other. Edward Mackey, William Minnock and W. H. Whitcomb served in the capacity of deathwatchers the last night.

The local newspapers reported several visitors had called on Joe Waltz during his last hours, two of them being Mrs. Holcher (wife of the victim) and her sister. She tried to converse with Joe but he made no attempt to reply.

On May 1, 1874, a year to the day of the murder of Harmon Holcher, at 8:20 a.m., the prisoner was dressed in a new suit, he standing stolidly with an expressionless face. At 8:45 a.m. Mrs. Waltz and her daughter, Thekla, came for a final meeting. Joe immediately showed anger toward the mother and she left saying: "Joseph, repent and pray for your sins." His sister remained for ten minutes speaking to him in German in a similar vein.

At 9 a.m., Father O'Driscoll arrived but Joe would not respond to his offers of prayer. At 10:11 a.m., the priest led the way from the cell, reading prayers, followed by Joe Waltz and his jailers. Seated in the chair under the gallows, the prisoner was read the death warrant by Sheriff Platt Coonley. It was dated March 14, 1874, and was signed by T. R. Westbrook, Judge of the Supreme Court, and Isaac B. Steele and Lewis Crandall, Justices of Sessions. At 10:16 a.m., Sheriff Coonley pulled the cord, the weights fell, and Joe Waltz was hanged in the presence

of a 12-man jury, the Honorable M. B. Mattice, O. V. Sage and Doctors E. R. Mackey and A. V. D. Collier. The medical men examined the dead body and reported the neck had broken instantly.

When Joe was hanging about six minutes, his father came in and gazed upon him. After 40 minutes, the body was lowered and given in charge of undertaker Kortz who supplied a neat coffin with silver plate engraved "Joseph Waltz, aged Twenty-Three Years." No cemetery in Catskill was willing to inter the remains so Mr. Kortz took the coffin up to the family farm where it was buried on Saturday afternoon in the presence of the family and a few neighbors.

A post-mortem of the brain of the prisoner indicated no signs of damage; intellectual capacity, due to the size, was judged to be of the maximum. The Catskill papers went into great detail in reporting the brain measurements, and the opinions of the various examiners.

Charles Ernst died at 11:35 a.m. on Monday at his residence to which he had been removed on Saturday. The funeral was held on Wednesday from the Reformed Church, G. A. Howard, D.D., preaching the sermon to a large congregation. The Hendrick Hudson Lodge No. 189, I.O.O.F. of Catskill and several neighboring lodges were well represented. Subscription lists at the Tanners' Bank and at the Catskill Bank were started for the relief of the Ernst family.

Joe's second victim had been born in Germany, coming to the United States as a young man. He was appointed to the jailer's post shortly after coming to Catskill. While still in Germany, he had been acquainted with the Waltz family. In his many years of work at the jail, Mr. Ernst served primarily as a detective and was chiefly instrumental in the detection of the scissor-grinder's murderer. Ernst had, in previous years, attempted to befriend Joe Waltz and it was at the former's urging that the shackles were removed from the prisoner during the last weeks.

—One hundred years later, in cataloging the county archives as an American Revolution Bicentennial project in 1975, the Bronck Museum staff found the following document:

Catskill, Nov. 19, 1875
Platt Coonley (Sheriff)

1874

May 1	To Services hanging Joseph Waltz	\$250.00
Noon	Credit by cash	<u>50.00</u>
	Balance	\$200.00

□ □ □ □ □ □

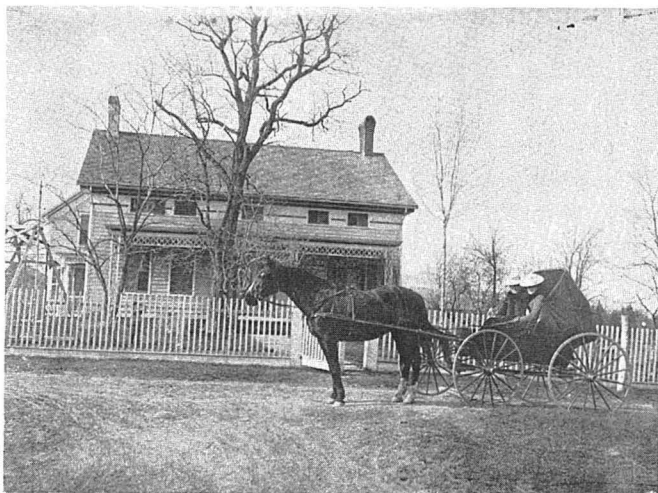
Two coin silver serving spoons, with the Willard name and hallmarks, in excellent condition, have been acquired from a Catskill source. They complement other Catskill silver in the museum's collections.

LUMAN REED - from page 1

treasures of the nation's museums. It was Luman Reed, the successful New York merchant, who provided some of the earliest financial support to both Thomas Cole and Asher Durand—a Luman Reed who grew up at Coxsackie in the sight of the Catskill Mountains and the Hudson River.

Like the village of Catskill, Coxsackie's river landing was the result of post-Revolutionary War development. Luman's father, Eliakim Reed II, (1752-1830), had been supporting his growing family by farming and other activities at Green River (Austerlitz) in Columbia County; it was here that Luman Reed was born on June 4, 1787. Attracted to the river landing as a place to operate a mercantile establishment, Eliakim Reed purchased from the Van Bergens, land in lot 48 of the Coxsackie Patent. Robert Henry Van Bergen (Ye Olden Time) states: "Eliakim Reed bought of the Van Bergens, before 1800, a part of the lot and built a wharf and small storehouse at the northeast corner of a ledge of rocks." After a few years of both land speculation and storekeeping, Eliakim sold out the major part of his holdings to Thomas E. Barker, Ralph Barker and William Judson. This was in the year 1804; it is believed he removed to Greenville about this time.

The Orrin Stevens residence on Stevens Hill just east of Greenville village was Eliakim's home. The hill, in the Coxsackie Turnpike manuscripts, is referred to as Reed's Hill. Luman Reed appears to have been "on his own" and did not remove to Greenville. But his brother, Abijah, became his father's business partner as well as being active in Greenville affairs. Abijah's house (now torn down for the corner gas station) was on the northeast. In the early 1930's it was owned by the Wessels family.



Eliakim Reed Homestead, Greenville, with Subsequent Architectural Modifications; Present Orrin Stevens Residence

Luman Reed, subject of this article, was one of two sons and four daughters of the 1772 marriage of Eliakim Reed II and Rebecca Fitch. Their oldest

child, Lydia, subsequently married Sylvester Ford. Eliakim Reed Ford, a child of this marriage, became one of Oneonta's leading citizens. His daughter married Mr. Bundy who helped form the company which later was to become IBM. Lauria (Vina) born in 1775, married Jonathan Sherrill, pioneer Greenville businessman. Sally, (1777), married her second cousin, Roswell Reed of Coxsackie. The fourth sibling, Abijah, (1782), married Sally Ford. Luman Reed was next in line in the year 1787. The last was Jane, wife of Epenetus Reed; she died early in married life. All left numerous descendants, some of whom still retain ties with Greene County.

The Reeds were descended from John Reed of Cornwall, England, who fled that country for political reasons about 1660 and settled in New England. John died at Norwalk in Connecticut about 1730, aged 98 years. Little is known of the second generation except for the son baptized John. The third generation is represented by Daniel (1697-1763). Eliakim Reed I of the fourth generation married Sarah Richards (1727-1795) at Stamford, Connecticut in the year 1748. Eliakim Reed II, father of our Luman Reed, was one of their seven offspring. The family eventually removed from Connecticut to South Amenia in Dutchess County. The grandparents of Luman are buried in the Amenia Cemetery where, in later years, a monument was erected to their memory.

In a time of meager education and gainful employment at an early age, Luman Reed was put to work in his father's store at Coxsackie. Through the interest of an older second cousin, Roswell Reed of New York City, Luman was financed to limited schooling. The first evidence of his acting in an adult capacity is found in his several months' involvement in lumber speculation at Oswego. Upon returning to Coxsackie, he found employment in the Barker mercantile establishment at Reed's Landing. Demonstrating an aptitude for such work, he was soon taken in as a partner, the firm being then known as Barker and Reed.

This tie was further strengthened by Luman's marriage to his partner's relative (probably sister) on April 30, 1808. Polly Barker (not Baker as listed in some publications) and Luman Reed were united in the Dutch Reformed Church at West Coxsackie, the marriage appearing in that church's register. A study of local land records by Frances Adams (Mrs. Reed Adams) leads to the conclusion that Luman and Polly kept house in the vicinity of the present village building on Mansion Street hill.

The Barker and Reed firm traded extensively with the New York City market, utilizing their own Hudson River sloop. On it they shipped farm produce and returned with manufactured goods for resale.

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Luman Reed frequently accompanied the sloop, acting in the capacity of supercargo. The trips of from seven to ten days, depending upon wind and weather, provided Luman Reed with valuable experience and contacts in the metropolitan area.

During his Cocksackie stint, around the period of the War of 1812, Luman Reed also had financial interests with Theron Skeel. In the Tunis Cochran manuscripts are receipts for lumber and for other payments dated 1812 and 1813 and signed by L [uman] Reed and Skeel.

As time progressed, Luman began to consider a complete change of scene and was attracted to New York City. His cousin, Roswell Reed of that place, who had earlier helped finance Luman's limited education, offered him a position of clerk in the former's wholesale grocery business and he accepted. The Luman Reeds removed to New York City. Demonstrating the same talent for business as heretofore, Luman rose rapidly in his cousin's esteem and by the year 1815, had become a partner. Until the year of his death in 1836, he was regarded as one of that city's leading merchants.

Accumulating a substantial capital, Luman Reed contracted for the construction of a mansion on Greenwich Street (Manhattan); it was one of the first in that city to have its own private art gallery. Readers of *Antiques* magazine (July 1977) may recall the description of that gallery which was open to the public once each week. Louis Legrande Noble, Cole's biographer, also mentions this private art gallery which occupied the entire top floor of the Luman Reed residence.

Luman Reed, the wholesale grocery merchant, was first attracted to European art—the Old Masters—but was shrewd enough to realize he was being deceived as to the paintings' quality and authenticity. He then decided to support living American painters both by purchasing their art and by financing their studies abroad. Among these were Thomas Cole, Asher B. Durand, William Sidney Mount, and George Flagg.

Thomas Cole, after his first European trip, established his studio in rooms at the corner of Wall and Broadway where he both painted and exhibited. As Cole later related the incident, it was here a most fortunate circumstance occurred: "There came in one day, a person in the decline of life,—took rather a hasty turn round the room, serving as a gallery, and went out without a word. There was that, however, in the appearance of this silent visitor, as he looked quietly, but intelligently from picture to picture, which could not be readily forgotten." Cole immediately formed a highly favorable opinion of this

visitor; an introduction followed. The man was Luman Reed.

Noble reports that in the course of that winter Cole received Reed's commission for a large Italian landscape, and during that time Reed did mention his contemplated private art gallery. By letter from Catskill, dated September 18, 1833, Thomas Cole mentions the famous *Course of Empire* series: "I have had some little trouble in finding at once a comprehensive and appropriate title for the Series of pictures I am now painting for Luman Reed. The one which I have at last adopted, although some may consider it lofty and ostentatious, appears very well to me. I call it 'The Course of Empire.' "

The price of the series of large canvases was first set at \$2,500; they were eventually to become highlights of native American art. Visitors to the New York State art exhibit recently held at the South Mall in Albany, may recall this famous group on display.

John Durand, biographer of Asher B. Durand, reports that Luman Reed's interest in Thomas Cole grew rapidly, the planned visit to Cole's Catskill studio in the spring of 1836 being delayed only by the continued deterioration of Luman Reed's health.

Following this art patron's death in 1836, his collection of about 80 paintings was turned over to the New York Gallery of Fine Arts, Reed's son-in-law, Theodore Allen, attempting to secure local support and funding for a permanent public art gallery. But such backing failed to appear and in the year 1855, the Luman Reed collection was given to the New-York Historical Society. After being in and out of fashion for more than a century, it now serves as the nucleus of that institution's famous collection of American art.

Of Luman Reed, it can be said he was among the first to encourage the American artist by both word and financial support. In gratitude, his artist friends elected him the first nonprofessional member of the Sketch Club.

A fitting epitaph is to be found in a newspaper in the year of Luman Reed's death:—"It is well to tell the young artist who has to make his way in this country that his art once had a generous friend who sought to advance its interests by considering the feelings and capacities of its votaries. This was encouragement of the right stamp. To call Mr. Reed a patron of art in the usual acceptance of the word is to give a feeble idea of his usefulness and to the spirit which animated him. He aimed to smooth the path for those who travelled it by letting them pursue it as was most agreeable to themselves. If he ever sought to point the way by making suggestions or requesting favours, it was done with that consideration for the artists' inclinations which made it gratifying to oblige

(continued on page 8)

VEDDER MEMORIAL LIBRARY NOTES

Catalogued for reader use: Peluso's *J. & J. Bard* (ship painters); *The Parish Register, 1708-1840, containing the so-called Kocherthal Records on board the Globe in 1708, and continued by him in New York, as well as St. Paul's Parish (West Camp); Piwonka's Views of Mount Merino, South Bay, and the City of Hudson painted by Henry Ary and his Contemporaries.*

The Julia M. Dolan Collection of 31 bound volumes and 98 file folders relating to the Dolan Sand Company, the Farmers Freighting Line Company, and other Dolan activities in Coxsackie have been processed this late winter and early spring. The gift was arranged by Thelma Dolan.

Subject Collections (Fifth Edition) (R. R. Bowker Co.) is being reprinted; it gives line space to five main subject areas held by the Vedder Library.

Henry Tryon of Coxsackie has contributed two interesting documents relating to shipment of bales of hay from Schoharie via the Albany and Susquehanna Railroad and then down the Hudson on the newly constructed barge *Baldwin* of New Baltimore in the year 1865. Additionally, he has given a copy of Van Loan's *Road Map of the Catskills and Vicinity*, postcard views of the Catskill Mountain House and Hotel Kaaterskill, *A Checklist of Eighteenth Century Albany Imprints* and other printed material.

Georgia S. Murray of Plains, Pennsylvania, has furnished us with a revised fan chart of the descendants of Wilbur Chapman Smith. She invites an exchange of information.

The *Illustrated News*, issue of May 7, 1853, containing the double-page spread about Prattsville, the tanning industry and Colonel Pratt, has been acquired from a New Jersey source.

An urgently needed catalogue file has been purchased with memorial money received from friends and relatives of Mary Hardy; Walter Whitbeck; Florence Cooke; and the Rev. Ida van Dyck Hordine's parents, Edwin and Emma Daley van Dyck.

Special Libraries Association, Upstate New York Chapter, is updating its 1976 publication *A Directory of Special Libraries and Research Resources in New York State*. The Vedder Library has been approved for listing.

Mrs. Clarissa E. Ketcham, NYS Vice Chairman of Genealogical Records, NSDAR, has supplied us with a copy of her excellent work relating to the Newell family of Durham. Her thoughtfulness is most appreciated.

Dennis Buckley, contract photographer for the ARBC county history (1976), has signed over his interest in more than 220 photographic negatives with a wide range of Greene County content.

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FITCH-DALEY LETTER - from page 1

glove factory where buckskin gloves of many stiles [sic] were made.

And Prattsville had a bank, Zadock Pratt, President; John Hopkins, Cashier; James E. Ostrander, Teller; and two immense dogs chained at night to keep off burglars! Dynamite was not the ready instrument of burglars in those days.

I saw the artist cutting the rock on Pratt's Hill and enjoyed many glorious days up there. Col. Ingersoll's son was there once with champagne serenade and many happy days occurred.

Goldsmith's "Deserted Village" is nothing to the change at Prattsville. Besides the industries mentioned, there was an immense oil cloth factory near the old Snyder residence. The Society in Prattsville was then in full bloom.

A man known as Major Lewis was from Boston and experienced in theatricals, while two or three others of some experience joined Lewis in the adventure of a play. The oil cloth factory was to be the theatre. The hanging oil cloths, the proscenium. A stage was erected, a great curtain and rollers and the many appointments made as to the duties of "Stage Manager", Jackson. He arranged signals when the great curtains should roll up and then down. He had been an actor and dressed especially for the occasion with large white patches on his pants and knees. His coat was a long swallowtail. The town (of 1600 residents) was all aglow about the play. The rehearsals had fed the flame. Even Judge Fitch had consented that his daughter, Philomena, should be in it. The hour arrived; the audience also. Stage Manager Jackson had set the actors on their several places on the stage and himself with back to the curtain giving last instructions, when by some misunderstanding, the curtains rolled up Jackson's coat tails, and exposed his white patches and lifted him up from the floor dangling below the curtains. Everybody in consternation and Philomena's Mother screamed to her "come out of there." Judge Fitch, then a Society man in dress suit and white kid gloves, came to the front of the stage and expostulated that it was all a mistake, but no avail, and so ended the theatricals of that day in old time Prattsville.

You speak of wintry weather and my familiar mountains covered with snow. We rarely have any in Alabama, though some times in former years some.

This fall has been exceptionally fine. No storm, no very cold weather. Land suited to cultivations, days very fine to pick cotton. Temperature at 6:00 a.m. 40 degrees. At 3:00 p.m. 70 degrees.

I beg to be Sir; Your Obliging Friend,

/s/ Frank Fitch

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**BUILDING FUND DRIVE IN FINAL STAGES—
CAN YOU HELP !!!**

The year 1979 will complete the first half-century's existence of the Greene County Historical Society. Within a few years of its founding in 1929, a permanent headquarters and museum had been provided by Leonard Bronk Lampman. And over these last decades, with dedicated volunteer help and with no subsidy from either county or town budgets, this Society has enhanced the quality of life in Greene County by collecting, preserving and interpreting the history of the region; it is an important educational function.

The officers and trustees have done a remarkable piece of work raising the yearly funds to cover operating expenses, insuring a conservative, balanced budget each fiscal period. But all their work and effort could not foresee the sudden deterioration of settling foundations, buckling walls and sagging roofs of these two stone and brick pre-Revolutionary buildings.

Determined to adequately preserve these NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK STRUCTURES, under the chairmanship of Wilbur Cross, Executive Vice President, Catskill Savings Bank; H. Milton Chadderdon, GCHS Board Chairman; and Rubén García, GCHS President, a SAVE THE BRONCK HOUSE campaign has been launched. Of the approximately \$113,000 cost, \$81,500 has been secured; \$31,500 is needed. To date pledges and contributions have amounted to \$22,000. Town chairmen serving are Charles Stiefel (Catskill), Walter Fox (Athens), John MacNaughton (Coxsackie), Herbert S. Cahn (Greenville), Charles J. Brown (Windham, Ashland and Jewett), and Paul E. Ackerman (New Baltimore). Contributions may be sent to them or mailed directly to the GCHS Building Fund, c/o Catskill Savings Bank, Catskill, N. Y. 12414.

IF YOU HAVE ALREADY RESPONDED GENEROUSLY, WE DO THANK YOU. IF NOT, WON'T YOU PLEASE JOIN THIS "GRASSROOTS" EFFORT TO SAVE BRONCK HOUSE?

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**DATES TO REMEMBER —
MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

June 3—Greene County Historical Society's Historic Homes Tour, Catskill - Leeds area.

June 11 at 2 p.m.—annual meeting of Society at Bronck House, bring chairs. Special program of events to be announced.

July 29 at 2:30 p.m.—Albert Figols and Priscilla Gordon will sing the leading roles in a three-part Zarzuela (Spanish Folk Opera). Donation \$2.00; to be held rain or shine; bring own chairs. Last year's 'La Boheme' was well received and this year's performance should be equally enjoyable.

LUMAN REED - from page 6

him. It was not alone this motive, however, which prompted an acquiescence with his view. Though not not possessing an educated judgment, he had a natural pictorial perception and good taste which was always in sympathy with the more extended knowledge of his artistic friends. A gentleman observing his munificence once remarked to him, 'These pictures, Mr. Reed, must have cost considerable money.' 'They did,' he replied, 'the outlay is my pleasure—I like it; besides,' his eye lighting up as he spoke, 'the artists are my friends, and it is the means of encouragement and support to better men than myself.' "

Luman Reed is a part of Greene County's history; his parents lived at Coxsackie and Greenville; they are buried in the latter place. His early years were spent at Coxsackie, and here he was married. He knew the river and the Catskills which meant so much to the early Hudson River art school. He gave Cole, Durand and others significant early encouragement. William Dunlap, art historian, ranks Reed as among the great of American benefactors to the fine arts that this country produced.

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KEEP US INFORMED IF !!

The mailing of the Quarterly Journal is a time-consuming task for volunteer help. We want you to receive your copy or copies without delay or confusion. Please notify us at R. D. Coxsackie, 12051 if there is a problem either with your name or address. This summer we expect to revise the master list from which we prepare the addressograph plates. If you have a preference for Ms., Mrs., or Miss, that information would be helpful. The addressograph machine is owned by *Friends of Olana* and is used in a cooperative effort with that non-profit organization.

DUES FOR 1978 SHOULD BE SENT TO DOROTHY SMITH, BOX 97, CATSKILL, N. Y. 12414. Regular membership is \$5, Sustaining \$10, Supporting \$15 or above.

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

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~~Mrs. Edith F. Adams
156 W. Bridge St.
Catskill N.Y. 12414~~