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Fall, 1978

BRINGING YOU UP-TO-DATE— A REPORT FROM PRESIDENT GARCÍA

The general membership and friends of the Greene County Historical Society have shown their interest, generosity and concern by contributing to our emergency Building Fund for the restoration work of the Bronck House. To date, about \$29,500 has been raised in cash and pledges; a total of \$31,500 is needed to meet the matching-grants criteria. Your fund committee is optimistic that the planned "final push" will bring in the last few thousands of dollars. If you have not yet sent in your donation, please mail it to Wilbur Cross, Bronck Building Fund Chairman, The Catskill Savings Bank, Catskill, New York 12414.

John Mesick, our architectural historian, assures us that work is about to begin at last. By summer's end, the Bronck House should be wearing a new roof of historically accurate wood shingles, treated for both long life and against fire. The heavy slate roofs must go—they are simply too heavy for the sidewalls.

The Society has been fortunate in securing a team of four young CETA workers who will help us with various projects, among them the correcting of our addressograph plates used for the mailing of the very popular *Quarterly Journal*. We are still sending the Journal to all 1977 members, so if you have not yet paid your dues, please send five dollars or more to "keep the faith."

The June 3 House Tour was a great success, despite the inclement weather. A sincere thanks to the people who opened their beautiful homes to about 500 guests on our behalf. More than \$2,000 was netted. The money will be used for the Bronck Museum and its collections. Next year's Home Tour is already being planned as one of the many activities that will celebrate the Society's Fiftieth Anniversary.

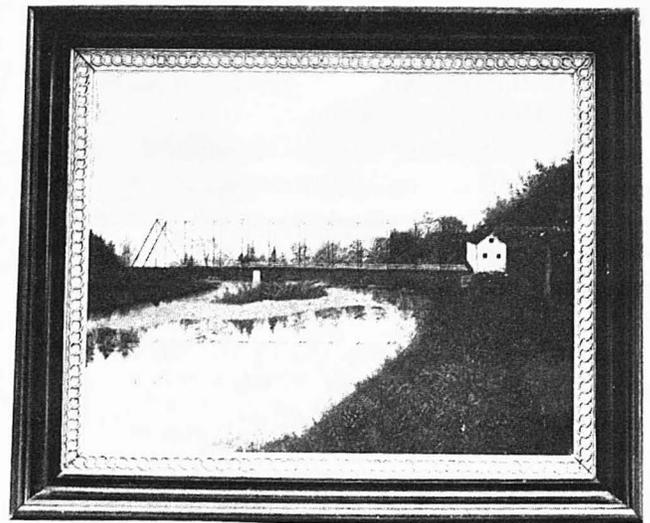
On September 10, as part of Greene County's "I Love New York" celebration, the *Brigade of the American Revolution* will hold an all-day encampment featuring maneuvers, camp life and skirmishes. Watch the newspapers for more details.

Again, thank you all for helping us realize the impossible dream—raising the needed \$31,500. Just a little more, and By George, we've got it!!!

SOUTH CAIRO LANDSCAPES WILLED TO BRONCK MUSEUM

Three late nineteenth century Greene County scenes, painted in oil on canvas by May Melissa Thorne (1856-1947), are a 1978 legacy from the late Anna M. Kniffen of Catskill, daughter of the artist. Two depict waterfalls on Bell Brook while the third perpetuates the iron bridge across the Catskill Creek at South Cairo.

Bell Brook, west of South Cairo, is a tributary of the Catskill Creek. Here Beelzebub Barton established his foundry in the early 1800's for the manufacture of sleigh and church bells. At the head of the brook, at Deer Lick Ravine, was the picturesque falls locally known as Bedells after the then owner, Otis Bedell. A short distance downstream on the same brook was Little Falls on land owned by Jerome C. Thorne (1853-1934), husband of the artist.



Sydney Thomson Photo

The third Greene County scene has folk art quality. It was painted by May Melissa during the summer of 1893. The view shows the sand and gravel bar in the center of Catskill Creek, the first iron bridge with its reflection in the water, and the yellow barn of Charles Abrams at one end of the bridge crossing. May Calder Thorne's second daughter, Alma Thorne Penny, Ph.D., of Catskill, who is now 94, vividly recalls carrying her mother's paint box to the site.

(continued on page 7)

WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE— BUT NOT IN CATSKILL

Editor's Research

The severe drought of 1880, reinforced by the equally dry summer of 1881, brought about a renewed demand by Catskillians for a more adequate supply of household water.

Since 1803, Catskill village did have a modest water system of sorts—wooden pipes led from the Cold spring on the land of Jacob Bogardus (Spring Street), to the village's approximately 150 buildings. By the year 1816, the Aqueduct Association was in operation, combining the functions of banking and water supply. Their scrip or "promises to pay" were signed by J. Pinckney, treasurer; one surviving, in the amount of 12½ cents, bears the date of August 24, 1816.

The New York State legislature, in the year 1819, issued a new charter in the name of the President, Directors and Company of the Greene County Bank; it superseded the Aqueduct Association. When that bank terminated its operation in 1826, the water supply function continued under local sponsorship. The laws of the State of New York, passed at the fifty-ninth session (1836), included "An Act authorizing Francis Sayre and his associates [Henry Meigs, James G. Elliott and Terhune K. Cooke] to supply the village of Catskill with pure and wholesome water" for a period of thirty years, the capital stock not to exceed \$10,000.

These early water companies' efforts, supplemented by dug wells, springs, cisterns and strategically located small reservoirs managed to meet the village needs for many years. In 1873, the legislature once again granted monopoly privileges to a group of Catskill men for a new water company; little action was taken and the authority expired by limitation. But for many homeowners, even with backyard privies, this lack of adequate water for household and fire protection was a constant source of anxiety. They were completely at the mercy of the village water carriers in the dry season, a situation which became most acute in the summers of 1880 and 1881.

It was an era in which officials were slowly giving more attention to sanitary conditions. The Catskill village health officer was soon to commence a personal inspection of privies, backyards, and livestock control. "Pure Water" was becoming a fighting phrase. The curtain was about to be raised on a major municipal drama.

Emotions ran high over the several issues connected with the water problem. Should the

(continued on page 3)



Orin Q. Flint



Emma Cooper Kiltz Flint

ORIN QUEAL FLINT (1867 - 1933); SOCIETY'S FIRST PRESIDENT

"Let me urge upon all to confer with your town historian and the county historian relative to any subject deemed to be of interest. Preserve ancient documents and records, and refer them to someone qualified to advise relative to their worth In this way permanent records of incalculable value will be preserved.

"Just at present these things may not be well appreciated. But there is an awakening, and the day is not far distant when, it shall be said of all who have aided this local history undertaking — right well they did serve us — we of coming generations and such meed of praise as we may give, and unbounded appreciation, shall be our laurel wreath to them."

So wrote Orin Q. Flint on January 15, 1927, as a part of his introductory remarks to Mrs. Vedder's *History of Greene County*. This same individual was shortly to become actively involved in the formation of the Greene County Historical Society in 1929, and was to serve as its first President. Although he did not live to see the Bronck Museum established, his efforts to incorporate this society, and his personal conversations with Leonard Bronk Lampman, influenced the latter to make that generous provision.

A mini biography of Mr. Flint has been supplied to us by his daughter, Frances Flint Wayman (Mrs. M. Bruce Wayman) of Tappahannock, Virginia. It reveals a man active in state and regional affairs and generous of his time for the benefit of his fellow men. His early years were spent at Worcester, New York; he was born September 12, 1867, on the family farm which was settled in 1792 by Joseph Flint, a Revolutionary War officer. That Flint homestead was among the pioneer efforts to settle Otsego County. The parents of Orin Flint, Lester Milo and Eliza Ann Wieting, were descendants of New England stock, the first Flint, Thomas, being one of the founders of Salem, Massachusetts in 1642.

(continued on page 7)

WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE *(from page 2)*

village build and operate its own water works or should it grant a franchise to a private company? Would Hudson River water or that from Catskill Creek be pure enough for household purposes? If the water became available, should it be free to users, being paid for from tax revenues? Should a gravity system or a steam pumping system be endorsed? What about West Catskill water needs? And so it went! Meetings were held at the Opera House, rival committees were formed, several experts were consulted and *nom de plume* writers filled the newspapers with their opinions. Even the problems of full assessments and the taxation of personal property were raised.

The most negative viewpoint came from individuals such as Samuel Harris who stated: "I consider an occasional scarcity of water for domestic purposes a very inadequate pretext to spend toward a quarter of a million dollars, in a village where ten thousand would furnish an ample number of wells and cisterns; it is folly." The Citizens *Committee of 13*, with such members as Orrin Day, Joseph Hallock and Noble P. Cowles, were determined to block any franchise to a capitalistic private company. Other public-spirited men, such as John H. Bagley, Jr., tired of the delay felt a private company was the only solution. Catskill village was free of debt and there was a reluctance to bond the municipality—after all, its yearly operating budget was already slightly in excess of \$10,000! Again Mr. Harris (the mill owner): "I'm against the village going into it. Let private investors take the risk."

The groundswell of opinion in favor of an improved water supply continued to surface, Mr. Harris and his supporters to the contrary. The second year of drought helped tip the scales. It was no longer a question of *should* Catskill have a water works but rather what type and from what source. Peches and Green Lakes were soon determined to be inadequate both in size and elevation. While a turbine wheel could be utilized at Cooke's Dam (Rushmore's) on the Catskill Creek, the supply of water might fail in dry summers. Refuse from the Leeds mills was a source of contamination.

The newer concept of a series of driven wells, as utilized by the cities of Mt. Holyoke, Providence, and Newark, was proposed for the land known as Green Patent. Objections were raised as to the hardness of the water for household use and the uncertainty of the source of the underground veins. N. W. Green, patentee, sought to convince Catskillians there was no purer source of water. Additionally, he pointed out that no storage

reservoirs would be needed—a definite saving of money. On December 14, 1880, Civil Engineer Van Ness submitted a detailed report on driven wells, but the idea gained little support.

Many favored pumping water either from the Hudson River or from the Catskill Creek; suddenly James Harvey Van Gelder of Catskill proposed a gravity flow system from a yet-to-be created lake he was later to name Lake Kiskatom.

Why anyone should have favored untreated Hudson River water seems inconceivable in this day and age. But river pollution in 1880 was not that severe. For years boatmen had filled their water casks at Deiper Hook (near present site of the Rip Van Winkle Bridge), supposing it to be purer than at any other place along the Hudson. And there was some basis in fact for their belief. The river current kept debris and pollutants far out in the channel; Hudson and Athens were five miles away with rural lands in between those places and Catskill. Deiper Hook was almost a lake or water basin within the river structure, outside the current area, and fed by underground springs. Tests rated the water as sufficiently pure for domestic purposes.

The village trustees, under pressure from all sides, sought professional opinions. Engineer Van Ness was hired to evaluate the Hudson River plan. If, as he reported, the trustees were to favor the river water, Robert Seaman's land would be inadequate for a shorebased pumping site and coal sheds. Deiper Hook, in his opinion, was the only practical site. Van Ness also recommended a settling basin separate from the reservoir. He doubted if the river plan would fully accommodate the West Catskill area.

Now the "letters to the editor" began to appear in the *Recorder* and the *Examiner*. PLAIN FACTS wrote in December 1880, indicating concern that the total sum needed for the village budget was \$10,568.29—a water works would boost this amount to \$22,788.29 yearly. Did people realize installation of indoor plumbing was costly—a minimum of at least \$150 per household? And what of those property owners who would be taxed even though they did not want indoor plumbing?

The next month PLUCK reminded the villagers that small steam pumps for water were not as cheap as expected—they might as well consider a larger pumping unit. And they should also consider costs of repairs and the expense of coal at four dollars the ton!

"In last year's drought with its resultant shortage of water," RESIDENT wrote, "only the water carriers were the gainers."

(continued on page 4)

WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE *(from page 3)*

Even Rip Van Winkle was exhumed. One writer reminded the newspaper readers that Catskill had in the past lost out as the eastern terminus of the Erie Canal, that opposition was presently afoot to the proposed South Cairo and East Durham Railroad, and that the village was losing manufacturing firms with its Rip Van Winkle attitude. Would the water supply be the next victim of such thinking?

The perennial problem of full value assessments surfaced. The tax roll for the village contained 640 names for both real and personal property taxation. Thirty-four persons were assessed for \$50 or under; only eight were down for over \$10,000. The highest assessment was set on the Prospect Park Hotel at \$21,200. PROGRESS wrote that yearly taxes for a municipal water system would be minimal—25 cents for a hundred dollar assessment, \$2.43 for a thousand dollar one, \$12.15 for five thousand, and \$24.20 for ten thousand. Even the Prospect Park Hotel need only pay an added tax of \$51.58 for pure water.

Nom de plume REAL ESTATE demanded to know from the newspaper readers why the taxation should fall so heavily on real estate when everyone knew much of the wealth of Catskill was in personal property, only barely taxed.

And finally EQUITY stated he was against full assessment unless all other Greene County towns and villages followed suit.

The village board, in June of 1881, voted 5 - 0 to appoint a committee to investigate the water situation. John H. Bagley, Jr., Isaac Pruyn, and William McLaury became the citizens' representatives while Hiram Van Steenbergh and James H. Thomas were designated board committee members.

On October 3, 1881, in a meeting at the village Opera House, this committee gave its comprehensive report. After extensive discussion, the taxpayers present voted in favor of James Van Gelder's motion to authorize the village trustees to hire a competent Civil Engineer, at a cost not to exceed \$500, to ascertain the source of the purest water available to Catskill.

In the meantime, between the committee's appointment in June and its report in October, two private proposals were forthcoming. John Lockwood, on behalf of himself and his associates, on June 10, submitted a plan to contract to build, maintain and supply the village of Catskill with "pure and wholesome water," pumping from the river at Deiper Hook. Their system would include pumping machinery for one million gallons daily, a three million gallon distributing reservoir on

Hopkins Hill, and seven miles of village mains and distribution pipes, with 70 double nozzle hydrants. They further offered to sell the system to the village after ten years, if the latter decided to purchase. Mr. Lockwood was a salesman for pumping systems which had been installed in several cities and villages.

A second offer for private construction was publicized on September 30, a group of responsible citizens announcing they were ready to accept a franchise from the village and commence the building of an ample water works, provided only that the village obligate itself to take 45 hydrants at a yearly rental of \$50 each. By August 4, 1882, this newly formed corporation had met all the legal requirements and was incorporated as the *Catskill Water Supply Company*. The village trustees, by law, now had only 30 days to grant or reject a franchise. By a favorable vote, the *Catskill Water Supply* now acquired all the statutory right to lay and maintain its pipes and hydrants for the distribution of water. The agreement, later to be deemed deficient, called for a yearly payment to the company of \$3,000 and the absorption of any taxes on its property in return for 60 *dry* hydrants and water supplied to fire houses, schools, and other municipal buildings. It specified that the village had the right to purchase the water works after nine years' operation.

It was this contract which led to the INDIGNATION MEETING. That group sought to prove, in a public hearing at the Opera House in February, 1883, that the trustees of the village lacked authority to contract for the payment of a greater sum than \$250 annually without specific voter approval. They also strongly objected to the vagueness of the word *dry* for the hydrants. Counselor Werner, who summarized the position of the *Committee of 13*, urged that the contract be cancelled by mutual consent to avoid litigation, although admitting this would still not terminate the existence of the *Catskill Water Supply Company*.

In its December 22 (1882) issue, the *Daily Mail* reported new developments—the purchase of land and water rights on the Catskill Creek by the *Catskill Water Supply Company*. The site purchased was part of William Newkirk's Leeds land, east of the creek, about one-fourth of a mile above Austin's paper mill, and situated between the track of the Catskill Mountain Railroad and the creek bed. This section was locally known as Newkirk Falls. The company planned to erect a masonry dam, twelve feet in height, forming a storage reservoir of from 1½ to 2 million gallons.

(continued on page 8)

GREENE COUNTY GETS THE NEWS: GOLD IN CALIFORNIA!

Editor's Research

Reports, some highly exaggerated, of the availability of gold in California began filtering back east and into Greene County by late fall of 1848. The *Catskill Messenger*, in its December 16th issue, took notice by copying a short paragraph from the *Journal of Commerce* (NYC): "The Gold Mania—Since October 7, no less than three steamers, seven ships and a bark, including several vessels chartered by the government, have cleared from this port for California, while some half dozen others have sailed from Boston, Baltimore and Salem, for the same destination. One brig and seven ships are fitting out here, to leave in a few days. The ship, *Sea Queen*, Capt. Manson, which cleared on Friday for San Francisco, took out a detachment of United States Infantry, under Major Miller, 230 in number."

The tendency for the local press, at first, was to disparage the gold strike as of minor importance. One early article stressed the experience of a ship captain who had thrown part of his cargo of guano overboard to make room for unrefined gold ore, only to arrive east with iron pyrite (fool's gold). Another issue humorously reported that a group of wagon trainers en route to California by the overland trail, had been attacked by Indians in a mountain pass. The latter hurled stones down upon the wagon train but it all ended well when the travelers found the stones to be a type of gold-bearing ore.

The *Catskill Messenger* editor had a sobering comment about this "excitement of the year." "The official reports that have been published, of the discovery of gold in California, are having precisely the effect which any one might have anticipated. There is a general rush for the new found Dorado. More ships are up for California than are usually advertised for Liverpool. We hear on every side of men who are preparing to start. Many are without employment or prospects here, and of course grasp at the brilliant chances of success held out there. But others are relinquishing engagements which give them support, comfort and the prospect of competency, to try their fortunes and seize the wealth which invites them to the far-off but glittering regions of the Western World.

"Such men, young, enterprising, adventurous, are not now, of course, in the mood to listen to advice. Their fancies teem with visions which bewilder judgment and intoxicate reason. But we cannot help thinking they would do well to *wait*. Let them 'sleep on it.' They will act wisely to weigh

carefully all the objections against the expedition they propose, as well as the advantages which it holds out to them"

But to the young and adventurous, the lure of "gold for the taking" was too strong. It was no longer a question of going, but rather, by which route. The paper featured, somewhat resignedly, the advantages and disadvantages of traveling to California by the long overland trail, or by boat and horseback across the Isthmus of Panama, or by sailing vessel around South America; most of the Greene County men chose Cape Horn.

To stem the gold fever, newspapers not only exhumed Benjamin Franklin's maxims, but also published some of their own moralisms, unsophisticated though they were:

HINTS FOR EMIGRANTS TO CALIFORNIA

Remember—That the earth is not very deep in those parts, and it may be very dangerous to dig too deep.

—That if men will desert their country's flag for gold, it is an evil temptation.

—That if it can be dug out of the rocks with a jackknife, it is not worth digging for; and any respectable jackknife is worth its weight a hundred times in gold.

—That to a hungry man a good sized potato is worth all the California "carats."

—That it is better to dwell with humble livers in content, than wear a golden sorrow.

But the same readers, that Christmas season, could also note that the *Catskill Recorder* was up for sale, its editor, Mr. Sylvester, being smitten with the gold mania and intended "bringing up in California." He estimated his printing office to be worth \$2,500 cash. (Since he was subsequently reported to be the new telegraph station operator at Catskill, it appears he may not have traveled westward).

Under date of January 20, 1849, the *Catskill Messenger* reported: "For California—among the passengers in the ship *Albany*, which sailed from New York early last week for San Francisco, were several of our young enterprising townsmen, as well as one of a larger group; viz, William Dorlon, George Breasted, Edward Seaman, E. N. Meigs, Henry Meigs [of later fame] and Reuben Palmer. Mr. Rush Green also sailed for the same destination, in the ship *Brooklyn*. We wish most cordially that every blessing may attend these gallant spirits in those far-off diggings, and that they may speedily return in good health, and with lots of the right sort. John Jacob Astor laid the foundation of his fortune in that vicinity and we expect to see Catskill before long, numbering her millionaires by the dozen." *(continued on page 6)*

The local newspapers continued to print the current crop of reports. Under date of January 27, 1849, we read: "The following rumors, they who are afflicted with the 'fever' must take with a few grains of allowance. We give as we find them:

That Lieut. Frisby, of the Albany Company, attached to the New York Regiment, has written to his family that he has accumulated \$200,000 worth of gold dust.

—That a letter has been received at New London, from one of the runaway gold seekers, saying that 'the shabbiest sheep of the old ship Washington's crew has got \$150,000 worth of gold, and I have got much more.'

—That a cargo of bad whiskey and camphine gin sold along the Sacramento at \$50 the gill. This may be taken with a good many *drops* of allowance.

—That whole villages, in the shape of ready made three-story houses, are shipping off to California. (Don't believe this: the material, that is, the wood, to build a cabin here and there, has been sent in some few instances. That's all.) We can tolerate losing our neighbors, and our fellow citizens, for awhile, but we protest this carrying off of cities and villages with them, as some of the newspaper correspondents assert

—That Mr. Porter, in his 'Aerial Lecture' at Clinton Hall, in this city, Wednesday evening, said he had built a balloon, which he calculates can make the voyage to Sutter's Fort in two days." The *Catskill Messenger* editor had subjoined this from the *N.Y. Express*.

Local merchants, as well as patent medicine manufacturers, were quick to use the gold rush theme to move merchandise. A. T. Story of Catskill the tailoring establishment, inserted an advertisement for December 30, 1848: "Ho, for California; Ho! Clear the Way round Cape Horn! The SUBSCRIBERS, being smitten with the GOLD FEVER, are in haste to be away to the new El Dorado. They therefore invite all to come and carry off Ready Made Clothing, at the lowest of low prices, since they [Storys] are sure of making up their deficiencies when they arrive in those diggings. Now is the time to exchange 'bank rags' [paper money] for warm and fashionable Garments, which must cost, before a year is past, twice as many dollars as can buy them today. The Subscribers urgently call upon their creditors to send in their accounts, and receive payment now; and they hope all who are indebted to them, will take the hint, since money must be double the value this month, that it shall be in December, 1849."

Brandreth's Pills immodestly advertised: "NOTICE TO CALIFORNIANS—Persons about emigrating to those distant regions, and who are

desirous of reaching their destination as speedily as possible, are earnestly advised to procure a box of Brandreth's Pills, which will be sure to procure them a safe and speedy passage. It is also believed that they will obviate the necessity of taking spades and pickaxes, as one or two of them placed in the ground over night, will, if there is any gold to be found, work it entirely out before morning."

Again, with tongue in cheek, the newspapers wrote: "The gold gathering on the Sacramento are now measured by the barrel. Mr. Marcy, a son of the Sec. of War, according to the latest accounts, has 16 flour barrels full of the 'dust' buried in the sand, and only awaiting the arrival of a ship as the sign of its resurrection. Pre-emption rights are beginning to be claimed there. When a man stumbles on a spot pretty much all gold, he throws himself down upon it and claims it by right of a first settler. —In the course of a few years it will be decidedly vulgar to be rich."

Still they left Greene County! By January 27, 1849, it was reported: "FOR CALIFORNIA—A company of young men from this village [Catskill] are preparing to leave for California. There are, as yet, only about a half dozen who have decided upon going in this company. A number besides these are going in a company got up in Albany. Altogether they number about a dozen. A company of eleven have just left Prattsville, for the same destination. Of these, Col. Pratt sends out six. The others go 'in their own hooks.'"

February 10th: "We understand that a company is preparing to leave Coxsackie for California. Several persons from Cairo are preparing to leave for the gold region. Greene County will be well represented. We also understand that HACKSTAFF of the *Prattsville Advocate* calls upon his patrons to pay up, as he is soon to be with his defunct brethren on the banks of the Sacramento." The editors of the *Catskill Messenger* and the *Prattsville Advocate* had been conducting a feud of words in their respective papers based upon differences in political affiliations.

The term "company" needs further clarification. It was an informal association of men who pooled money and talent to purchase supplies in the east, such as food, picks and shovels, tents and clothing, as well as arranging for ship passage. Most dissolved soon after reaching California shores.

And on March 17th: "A company of 15 young men have left Cairo for the land of Gold. They are to sail in the *Crescent City* from New York. Cairo has already sent a large deputation to the gold diggings."

(continued on page 8)

ORIN Q. FLINT *(from page 2)*

Early education was provided in a typical district school, then at the Union School of Worcester, and eventually at the Delaware Literary Institute in Franklin, New York. Following his graduation from the latter place, he taught school at Engleville and Sharon between the years 1886 and 1887. His next step was to matriculate at State Teachers College at Albany where he earned an enviable scholastic record, being named Valedictorian of his class at the time of his graduation. Again he taught school, this time at Cheviot before coming to Athens in Greene County where he served as Principal of the Upper Village School, District #1.

In January, 1897, Judge Sanderson appointed Orin Flint to the position of School Commissioner in this county, which had been vacated by the death of the incumbent. In this capacity he served for nine years, being elected to the office until 1905. He then took up the study of law, commuting from Athens via ferry to Hudson where he entrained for Albany and the Law School. From this institution of higher learning, he was graduated in 1905.

For a brief period Mr. Flint practiced law in Catskill in partnership with Mr. Patrie, following which he established his own office in Athens. In 1910 he was appointed District Attorney for Greene County but eventually resumed his law practice in Athens. In 1919 he began his career in state service, being appointed Senior Auditor to assist in organizing the new State Income Tax Bureau, and in 1920 he was designated Title Examiner in the State Attorney General's office. For the next thirteen years, until his death, he served in that capacity. The titles to land which he examined for contemplated state purchase increased Mr. Flint's interest in local history, especially of the Catskill region. It was a knowledge the State Historian wanted to tap for the proposed several-volume state history; unfortunately, Mr. Flint's death intervened.

This Greene County citizen had many interests, education and history being two of his greatest. He served on school boards at Athens and was President of that Board of Education for several terms. Membership in several civic groups and lodges is noted. He was Past Chancellor of Athens Lodge No. 129, Knights of Pythias; member Royal Arcanum, Hudson City Council 1221; Catskill Lodge No. 468, F. & A. M.; Secretary for three years and afterward President of the Greene County Firemens Association; charter member of Loonenburg Grange; and a member of St. Paul's Methodist Church of Athens. For 28 years he was a

member of that town board, and for several years was Police Justice.

He married twice. His first wife, Allie Wilcox of Worcester, New York, died shortly after their marriage in 1890. He married Emma Cooper Klitz of Athens on December 20, 1895. They had seven children: Joseph Howard Flint of Round Hill, Virginia; Mrs. Walker Saunders (Mildred) of Schenectady (deceased); Mrs. M. Bruce Wayman (Frances) of Tappahannock, Virginia; Dr. Orin Queal Flint, Jr., of Delhi (deceased); Mrs. Edward A. Smith (Clara) of Oneonta; Mr. Amos Wieting Flint of Sarasota, Florida; and Mrs. Crispin C. VanValkenburg (Marjorie) of Athens.

This county and this society lost a good friend and citizen at the passing of Orin Queal Flint, Sr., in his sixty-sixth year, on August 27, 1933; he left a legacy in the Greene County Historical Society soon to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary. As its first President, we honor his efforts in our behalf.

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SOUTH CAIRO LANDSCAPES *(from page 1)*

May Melissa Calder Thorne was the daughter of William D. and Ellen Jackson Calder who, at one time, operated the woolen mill at South Westerlo. Their home still stands in that village. Both Mrs. Thorne and her husband, Jerome Chidester Thorne, were schoolteachers. She was educated at the Rye (N.Y.) Seminary, he at the Fort Edward Institute. They were married at Indian Ridge Farm in 1880.

Informal training in art came to May Melissa from her aunt, Melissa Calder, who was adept at pastels and also in the medium of oils.

The paintings, to be known as the Anna M. Kniffen Memorial Collection, are a desirable addition to the brush and canvas work of avocational artists who sought to record the natural and man-made landscapes of Greene County. Mrs. Kniffen's sister, Evalyn Thorne Ramsey, late of Medway, also enhanced the collections at Bronck House several years ago.

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NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Occasionally we get inquiries as to the advisability of sending two copies of the Journal to members of the same family at the same address. The cost of printing extra copies is almost negligible; the bulk mailing makes the postage low in price. Some couples want two copies and they are entitled to one for each dues-paying member. If you should get two, until the situation is resolved one way or the other, please pass the extra copy on to a friend. We have gained some new members in that way. Thanks!

Pumping for 250,000 gallons per day would be done by water power except in time of low water flow when auxiliary steam power would be utilized. A distributing reservoir to hold four million gallons was also to be built on two acres of land along the turnpike purchased of Frederick Palmer (the former Peters' property), just beyond the tollgate. Palmer received his payment in cash in the amount of \$1,100 but William Newkirk accepted \$500 in stock of the newly organized company. The survey had been done by Colonel J. L. Yates; the water company announced Mr. Lockwood had also indicated satisfaction with their plan. (He probably wanted to sell them the auxiliary steam pumping system).

From a study of available information, one concludes the capital for this water corporation was primarily from outside the county. However, the directors did elect John H. Bagley, Jr., president of the *Catskill Water Supply Company*.

Pressured by mounting opposition to a monopoly franchise for such a private group of investors, the village trustees, on May 10, 1883, organized themselves into a Board of Water Commissioners, pursuant to Chapter 181, laws of 1875, and called a public meeting for June 1 for the purpose of bonding the village in the amount of \$100,000 to build a municipal water works. At that meeting, after lengthy legal summations were made by the Hon. J. I. Werner, with James Van Gelder speaking in favor of the bonding, the majority voted to bond the village. The *Committee of 13* had won!

John Lockwood, by now merging his interests with those of the Catskill Water Supply Company, reminded the village the company was ready to build the Catskill Creek system for \$97,500. "We have a contract for the introduction of water into the village." He went on to request the village to purchase the pipes and lands already secured for the water works.

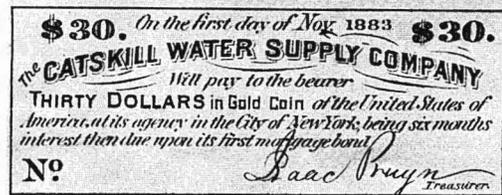
The village contracted for its own water system, utilizing the Deiper Hook site. A pumping station and storage reservoir were constructed; rights-of-way were purchased from the Cole estate. Catskill village was finally to have its water. The problem seemed resolved but twelve years later, with the pumping system requiring major repairs, and the Hudson River becoming increasingly polluted, it became obvious it had been a poor decision. It was then that James Harvey Van Gelder proposed the formation of the Lake Kiskatom Water Works and Electric Power Company, an effort to be reviewed in the forthcoming Winter issue of this Journal.



Stock Certificate issued to John Lockwood & Co., signed by President J. H. Bagley, Jr., May 18, 1883.



Unissued First Mortgage Bond - \$1,000



Interest Coupon - six months' interest for thirty dollars in gold coin, Isaac Pruyn, Treasurer

GOLD IN CALIFORNIA (from page 6)

By early March, the men forming the Columbia and Greene Association had procured accommodations on the sailing bark *Mousam* and left soon thereafter. Catskill members were Alex Vedder, P. D. Fraleigh, C. Smith, W. D. Elting, P. Hollenbeck, C. V. Hickok and C. Van Dusen. From Cairo this association recruited P. Rouse, W. Purdy, P. A. Winna and F. C. Riesdorff; Athens sent H. Lampman. It was estimated that since the California fever commenced, about three hundred vessels, with an aggregate of over 200,000 passengers, left the Atlantic seaboard for San Francisco. Numerous other vessels left from European ports.

Gold mining manuals were quickly printed and as rapidly sold out. J. H. Van Gorden of Catskill offered G. G. Foster's *The Gold Mines of California*. "This volume contains all the authentic information received from California, relative to the Gold Mines of that country. A map of the Gold region is also given. The contents are made up

(continued on page 9)

from the official accounts received from California; and, therefore, we suppose it to give correct views of things in general. A second edition has recently been issued, the work commanding a ready sale. Price 25 cts. For sale in this Village."

California was not the only region where gold was being found. The *Messenger* editor bemoaned the fact that "they had the misfortune in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, to find another gold mine. Farmers and laboring men are leaving their honest occupations, and even students of the university, to go to the diggings. What a misfortune!"

Since gold field news helped sell the Catskill newspapers, hardly a weekly issue went by but some information was printed about the gold strikes. Parents and other relatives were assured of the safe passage of vessels, the news of which was brought by returning ships. Thus on March 17th (1849), the *Messenger* could report: "The Steamer California—This noble steamship when heard from, had reached Acapulco whence she was to sail for Mazatlan and San Francisco on the 11th of February. Her passengers, 350 in number, were all well." The reader should recall that letters sent by boat were frequently delayed for months; the telegraph facilities to California were not yet constructed.

The method of staking a gold claim, as used in 1848, was carefully explained to Greene County newspaper readers: "SURVEYING IN CALIFORNIA—In California, when a man finds a good spot of gold, he measures off his title by throwing himself full spread upon the ground. The extent to which he can spread his arms and legs constitutes a 'survey' that is admitted to be a full right, for the time being. Sometimes there are scores engaged at the same instant in this unique mode of 'surveying'. The above is no doubt 'semi-official' and may be relied on."

Still they went. Albertus del Orient Browere, the Catskill artist, was there twice. Like many of his contemporaries, he did not strike gold. But today his oil paintings of the California gold rush scenes are more than worth their weight in gold. Henry Meigs struck gold but in a different manner; his financial dealings with the city of San Francisco led to his sudden departure for South America where he made a fortune in railroad construction; a portion of it came back to Catskill for a church building. But for most of the Greene County men, it was an adventurous experience without financial rewards. The returnees did not walk the streets of Greene County towns and villages as millionaires.

□ □ □ □ □ □

Edith Saxe Minerley is assembling records of the Sax and Saxe families of this region. A copy is on file for reader use at the library.

As a result of our listing needed books in the Spring, 1978, issue of *The Journal*, Helen and Mary Becker of Catskill are donating Arthur Henry's *The House in the Woods*.

Work progresses on the preparation of data sheets for the Library of Congress and their National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections. Now completed are the Borthwick, the Van Gelder—Pine—Wardle—Fiero, the Florence Cole Vincent, the Katharine Decker, the Scott and Elgirtha I. Ellis, the Howland, the Kate Loomis, the James C. Stevens, the Catskill Mountain Railroad and the Greene County Supervisors collections.

A manuscript acquisition of major importance which will strengthen the society's ongoing research into the history of the lime industry in Greene County, has been received from Douglas H. Day of Hudson. This detailed ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT is dated February 2, 1856, and covers all aspects of the operation of the Sylvester Nichols lime kiln in the township of Athens. The leasee was William H. Day, great grandfather of the donor.

Henry Tryon, of RD, Coxsackie, keeps finding family items for the Bronck Museum and the library collection. A series of photographs of Hudson River scenes (circa 1905) including the Four Mile Point Lighthouse and icehouse are among the latest gifts.

The library staff is now filling the third manuscript box from recent additions to the Van Gelder—Pine—Wardle—Fiero Collection; Winifred Wardle Fiero is the contributor of this interesting collection of family papers, many of which will serve for Journal articles.

New York State: The Battleground of the Revolutionary War by Hamilton Fish, has been catalogued. We are also very pleased to have received *Lumber, Shingles, and Chips* compiled by Florence Prehn of Rifton, New York. It is a major genealogical aid to early Ulster County families.

In order to engage in a more comprehensive genealogy service, the Vedder Memorial Library requests that all members send in copies of their genealogy and copies of births, marriages and deaths from their Bibles and other records. Entirely new files are being set up.

An exchange of correspondence with Ida and John Hordines has brought three sepia views of Coxsackie in earlier years.

CURATOR'S CORNER

A Regional Conference of Historical Agencies, dedicated to serving historical societies, museums, preservation agencies and related institutions, as well as officially appointed county and town historians, has been formed for the four counties of Greene, Albany, Columbia and Rensselaer. Headquarters are being provided by the Shaker Museum, Old Chatham. On a temporary basis your editor has been representing Greene County.

Cataloging the collections for administrative control, has been an ongoing effort for the last several years at Bronck Museum. Again this season, Mrs. Shelby Kriele, Assistant Curator, is volunteering her time toward the completion of this essential project.

The large English Staffordshire pottery pitcher, probably manufactured for commercial advertising purposes, and long minus its spout, has been mended by Restorers of America in Ravena. Mrs. Ellen Whitbeck, trustee, generously met the cost of restoration. The pitcher is part of the Katharine Decker Memorial Collection.

Few Greene County residents have contributed more in time and effort to the growth of this historical society and its museum than our retiring Financial Secretary, Dorothy Smith, of Kiskatom. For almost 27 years she has maintained the membership records, processing new applications and renewals, posting the cards and banking the dues money. It is one of those nonglamorous tasks vital to the success of any organization. For her innumerable years of volunteer service, we express our grateful appreciation. More formal recognition will be forthcoming at the 50th Anniversary banquet in 1979.

As a public service to the Bronck Museum, Mohawk Valley Printing Company and its sales representative, B. Robert Ratajack, have arranged to print and distribute a restaurant placemat using Bronck House as the central theme. In the thousands, these will be available for restaurant use; the publicity for Bronck Museum is most desirable.

Calvin S. Borthwick of Glen Ridge, New Jersey, who has been a most generous contributor to the Bronck Museum and its research library, writes about his family photograph on page 87 of *Out To Greenville And Beyond*. That photograph contains four generations of Smiths and Borthwicks from the Cornwallville area. On the wall one finds a similar illustration with the same "four-generations" theme—that of the British Royal Family from Queen Victoria's time.

The Queens County Historical Society has sent two representatives to upstate museums, including

the Bronck House, to arrange for the lending of material for their summer exhibit *Barns*.

President Ruben Garcia's early colonial painting, *The Transfiguration*, is an exciting find. Its identification came as a result of the New York State Museum's exhibition in the South Mall. The newly-identified art work was the subject of a well-attended afternoon's program by the Catskill Monday Club with County Historian Mabel Smith as the guest speaker.

Mr. Henry Tryon of Route 385, Coxsackie, has again deposited items of local historical interest with the museum and its research library. The large bronze plaque, dedicated on September 20, 1908, to Jane Tryon and memorializing her work with the Four Mile Point Sunday School has found a permanent home.

Harvey R. Goslee of Wilton, Connecticut, keeps in contact with us. The old Goslee homestead in Jewett Heights, the present home of his brother, Milton, dates from the early years of the Mountain Top's settlement.

A lively discussion of Historic Preservation was one of the main items of "new business" at the July Quarterly Meeting of the Society. Many residents are deeply disturbed at the lack of sensitivity or seeming disinterest of the County Legislature in preserving the architectural integrity of some of the County's old and viable buildings and districts, notably the Van Dusen building and its surroundings on lower Main Street, Catskill.

Equally distressful is the intended tampering with an oak-paneled judge's chamber in the County Court House to make room for the Motor Vehicle Department, which needs more space.

We hope that the public outcry aroused by the Legislature's actions will cause it to pause and seek counsel from the public-spirited critics who view this unhappy intrusion into the public trust with alarm.

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