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A TRIP TO WEST POINT AND THE CATSKILLS IN 1835

During the first week of July, 1835, in company with her husband, Joseph, her mother-in-law, servants and acquaintances, Cornelia Fletcher Clay, commenced one phase of a summer's travel – up the Hudson, a stop off at West Point, then on to the village of Catskill and finally up the Kaaterskill Clove into the heart of the northern Catskills. One side trip was made to the Catskill Mountain House and the Kaaterskill Falls.

Cornelia was an observant traveler; her July 13th letter to her mother written from Mrs. Laussart's establishment at Clovesville is filled with interesting information relative to the primitive traveling conditions of the era as well as appreciative remarks concerning the scenery enroute. Clovesville was in Delaware County on the Bushkill below Griffin's Corners.

This surviving letter was acquired by the Greene County Historical Society for its Vedder Memorial Library collection of regional material. With the exception of some minor changes to assist the reader (i.e. periods at the end of sentences and paragraphing), the letter is printed verbatim.

The Editor

Dear Mother, Father, and Cynthia,

On Sunday week I sent my letter to the office, and was quite disappointed at not receiving one in return. I should have left New York with the hope of getting your letter upon my arrival at Mrs. Laussart's as Joseph left word for letters to be forwarded there. On Sunday I was too warm and tired to go to church. After tea we went to see Mrs. Hines. She took me upstairs to see her little ones – five healthy looking children. We sat for some time with her as she had still many things to ask me.

In the morning we started for West Point – Mrs. Reynolds, Ann Lewis, Miss Lawrence (a lady of some 30 odd), Mr. Boggs, Mr. Horner, Mr. Hausfurt and Henry Croskey were of our party. We reached West Point at 11. Had ample time to rest before dressing for dinner. The view is perfect from the piazza and front windows of the Hotel. Before you lies the Hudson and some nine miles off you distinctly see Newburg[h] on the slope of a high hill. I wish I could describe this beautiful prospect but words cannot do it justice. We had a very excellent dinner after which we all retired to our rooms to take a little repose for rest before going up to Fort Putnam. I forgot to mention that Com. Elliot came with us and James Henderson, of whom, I am happy to state, the Commodore [Commandant] gives a most excellent

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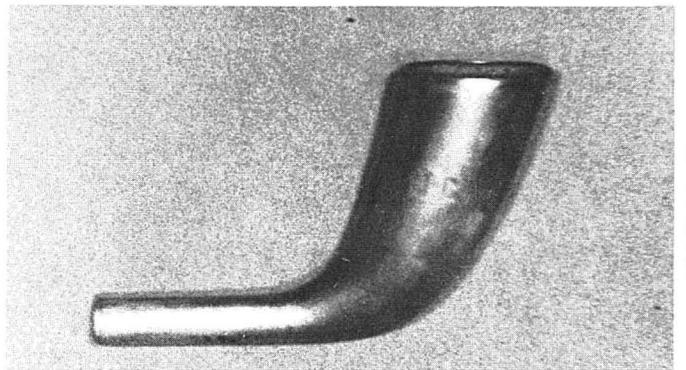
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION AT BRONCK HOMESTEAD – 1979

–Shelby Kriele

Archaeology is today playing an increasing role in the interpretation of the early American lifestyle. The efforts of the historic archaeologist provide a tantalizing glimpse into all areas of American lifeway, whether at home or at work. The information which the archaeologist gains through his study of the location, organization, and composition of cultural debris is of importance to the informed historian. The archaeologist can often provide the missing link in some presumed chain of historic events. For the historian, archaeological data can substantiate long accepted notions of history, or it can debunk some widely held historic myth.

The archaeological survey done at the Bronck Homestead was a component of the recent renovations. Typical of many such excavations today only areas which would be disturbed by the installation of subsurface drainage piping were investigated. No attempt was made to find a refuse dump site.

Four thousand, two hundred ninety seven artifacts belonging to ten different groupings were recovered. The largest groupings in terms of amounts of retrievable artifacts were the Architectural and the Kitchen groups. The most intriguing artifacts recovered were associated with the quantitatively small groupings of Arms and Personal Items.



Val Kriele Photo

Silver IB (JB) Inscribed Pipe Bowl

The Architectural group comprised nearly half of all recovered material. This would not seem too surprising on a site such as the Bronck Homestead which underwent three phases of construction and untold amounts of maintenance over a known three-hundred year period of occupation. The most commonly occurring component of the Architectural group was the square cut or wire nail associated with

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AND THE CATSKILL MOB PULLED DOWN NANCY McFALL'S HOUSE

—Raymond Beecher

The Circuit Court was in session that October of 1807; the hotels and lodging houses were filled with officials, jurors, witnesses, attorneys, plaintiffs and defendants needing affordable accommodations. Nancy McFall's rooming house on the east side of Catskill Creek toward the lower end of Main Street attracted men who were willing to sleep five or more in a bedchamber if the price was right. Its reputation was not of the best but to John Scott of Canton (Cairo) it was adequate.

On October 3 a body came to rest on the west shore of Catskill Creek at a spot later described by witnesses as "opposite where Day's sloop was building all summer." Delucina Backus was among a group of men who spotted the corpse and was later to describe it as "dressed in a great coat, shoes, stockings, pantaloons and a type of cape, floating face down, half in and half out of the water." Backus and his friends brought the body over the creek in a small boat. Mackay Croswell, the newspaper printer and publisher, was the first to identify the dead man as John Scott.

To meet the law's requirement, Coroner James Bennett held a routine inquest; the bruises on the face and body of the deceased were assumed to have been caused by the action of water and creek stones. The verdict was a quick one — death by accidental drowning. Privately, all felt Scott, under the influence of liquor, had fallen into the creek.

Burial was underway at Catskill that same Saturday when rumors began to circulate that death had been occasioned by foul play. Bennett, believing this to be idle gossip, refused to delay the interment. During the next several hours it became certain that homicide was a distinct possibility. The grave was reopened the following day, Sunday, at 4 p.m. The coffin was turned upside down to eject the body and, upon examination by Doctors Croswell and Camp, the neck was found to be broken. The doctors discounted this happening during exhumation.

Upon learning that the deceased, John Scott, had been attending the Circuit Court as a witness, and had rented cheap sleeping accommodations at Nancy McFall's house on the creek's east side, Coroner Bennett next directed his attention to her lodging house. A careful inspection both indoors and outside revealed a newly scrubbed floor as well as muddy tracks to the creek bank; here and there blood and tufts of hair were identified. It appeared a body had been dragged to the water's edge and pushed out into the current of Catskill Creek. Foul play rumor became foul play fact! Thus commenced a major homicide investigation and trial of five Greene

County residents before a special term of the Court of Oyer and Terminer and General Goal Delivery. Their Honors W. W. Van Ness and Leonard Bronk were in attendance.

Judge Van Ness had earlier made an elaborate and extensive charge to the grand jury who, in two days' time, brought in indictments against John Williams, Archibald McClary, James S. Stiles, Nicholas Shoulders and Nancy McFall. Williams was the first to be tried.

In his opening remarks to jurors John Dibble, John F. Tolley, Thomas George, Isaac Buel, Joseph Coulson, Jr., Elisha D. Hall, Daniel Miles, John I. Youngs, Leonard Witbeck, Minor Hubble, Elisha Smith and Jehiel Tuttle, the assistant attorney general (district attorney) John Van der Speigle Scott indicated he intended to prove that the victim, John Scott, came to his death by violence at the hands of John Williams. Coroner Bennett was the first witness; he retold the facts relating to the coroner's inquest.

Fortullus Luddington admitted seeing Williams, the chief suspect, at the Luddington tavern on Monday, September 28, when the latter came in to purchase rum on credit. At that time Williams was accompanied by his friend McClary. These two men returned to Luddington's in the afternoon between 2 and 3 o'clock; this time Williams had funds, ordered a bottle of rum of Luddington and paid out one half crown.

"I came to Nancy McFall's house on Monday the 28th, a little after sundown," testified Lackey Gafney. "I saw an old man there, I think his name was Scott. Nancy was in bed. John Williams, Archibald McClary and Nicholas Shoulders went into Nancy's house with me. Some one of the company sent out for rum and it came back in a white pitcher. All drank a glass around. The old man [Scott] paid for it. Some went outdoors; Williams seemed upset and was in and out. At one time I saw him drag the old man out-of-doors. McClary and I went upstairs to bed after 10 p.m., leaving Williams, Stiles, Nancy and Shoulders below. About an hour before day, Williams came up to bed. He and Stiles were cursing and screaming. At daylight, Nancy came up demanding pay for all the lodgings. She counted the persons in the room, then asked where the rum was." Here the notes indicate Gafney denied seeing any intention of or fact of murder and protested his own innocence.

It was John Blanchard who testified that a quarrel had broken out at Nancy McFall's place that fateful Monday evening when Scott was urged to purchase the rum. Words ensued. Blanchard did admit seeing John Williams drag the old man out-of-doors.

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THE CATSKILL MOB [Continued from page 2]

The trial jury next was called upon to weigh the evidence relating to Scott's pocketbook. William Sutherland stated he had earlier served a subpoena which had brought Scott from Canton as a witness in the trial of Tobey vs. Botsford. He saw Scott at that time put the subpoena in the pocketbook in question. It was Kenneth McKensie, living in Catskill Village about one mile from Nancy McFall's place, who indicated Stiles of Canton had come to his house for breakfast and had pawned Scott's pocketbook for grog, stating he had found it.

Further information as to the whereabouts of John Scott on the 28th came from James Cleveland. He told the court he saw John Scott earlier that Monday evening at Orry Ferguson's — had supper with him — after supper Scott gave Cleveland a two dollar bill to get a pint of rum of which they all partook. Then Scott announced he would go to Nancy's house where he would stay the night, she being a friend of his. Cleveland also stated Scott did more drinking, and in the process he noted Scott had one dollar in American silver, a half dollar in silver, two shillings and sixpence in the pocketbook. "I lighted him downstairs at his request."

Probably the understatement of the entire trial was made by Orry Ferguson who thought Scott "a good deal disguised in liquor."

Seth Tobey, in whose case Scott had been subpoenaed, admitted he had talked with Scott on the Monday afternoon in question, the 28th, but when he went to converse with him again the next morning, Scott could not be found. "I checked at Nancy McFall's place; it was newly cleaned out and scrubbed."

Both Isaac Van Gorden and Abraham Drake stated they were at Nancy McFall's that fateful evening but "did not linger long." They could add little to the evidence.

The defense sought to establish the character of the prisoner, John Williams, in a favorable light. James Wetsall, who lived 1½ miles from the village, indicated the prisoner was a good worker. John Starr, Moncrief and Walter Livingston felt Williams was "of good character." Tavern keeper Margaret VandeBogart living near John Williams testified he was apt to drink.

Moses I. Cantine appeared to answer some technical questions while Doctor Croswell rendered his professional opinion as to the length of time Scott's body was in the water, admitting a drinking man might rise sooner. Doctor Camp said he had heard all the testimony but could offer little in the way of an opinion — he did think the bodily bruises had occurred before death.

But it was Francis Botsford's testimony which

adds such a distinct character to this homicide case. It was one aspect which failed to make the pages of the *Catskill Recorder*. Commenting on the outraged feeling against Nancy McFall's rooming house, Botsford simply stated: "The house of Nancy McFall was pulled down completely on Sunday by a mob." Thurlow Weed in his *Reminiscences of Catskill*, written at Albany on March 29, 1865, recalled as a Catskill youth witnessing the event: "Toward evening groups were seen at corners, growing more and more excited, until Justice not yet having drawn its boots, the multitude pressed through Main Street, strengthening in number and enthusiasm, down to the dwelling of the doomed Nance, which was demolished and scattered to the winds and the waves."

The testimony concluded, the attorneys made their summations and John Williams' case went to the jury for deliberation. He was found GUILTY and on Friday, November 6, 1807, Judge Van Ness pronounced the sentence of death by hanging. The *Recorder* noted the prisoner reacted with violent agonies.

Earlier that same day, after having been arraigned, McClary, Shoulders, Stiles and Nancy McFall were found NOT GUILTY by separate trials.

Mackay Croswell, editor of the *Catskill Recorder*, was quick to seize upon the public's interest in the affair and soon had available for purchase a pamphlet entitled *The Life and Confession of John Williams*. Again Thurlow Weed recalls: "On the day of execution, and only an hour from the fatal moment, when an immense concourse of people were assembled, came a Reprieve!" The Governor's secretary, Mr. Spencer, had arrived in Catskill with the necessary legal papers to postpone the execution. But Mackay Croswell sold his pamphlet nevertheless, merely adding to the title "who was to have been executed on the 18th instant."

Judge Van Ness, by letter, had earlier stated to the Governor that while John Williams was definitely guilty of the murder of John Scott, there was no malice aforethought. To this opinion, Chief Justice Kent had agreed. Williams' sentence of hanging would now rest with the State Legislature.

As a sidelight, Anna Scott was appointed administratrix of John's estate and we find her advertising in the *Recorder* that same month for any claims in order to settle Scott's estate.

The readers in Catskill and wherever the *Recorder* circulated were kept abreast of the Albany developments. On February 8, 1808 the newspaper reported that Mr. Gold, from the House of Assembly committee to whom was referred that portion of the Governor's speech relative to the case of John Williams who was convicted of murder at the late

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THE CATSKILL MOB [Continued from page 3]

circuit in Greene County, reported to the full house as follows:

1. That the testimony adduced against the prisoner on the trial, is such as to leave in their mind very little doubt of the deceased having come to his death by violence offered him by the prisoner.

2. As to the legal requirements to constitute the crime of Murder, the testimony is not so satisfactory as could be wished on a trial for life — as case stands the killing was presented without previous ill-will or resentment of the prisoner against the deceased. Does not seem as if there was any weapon to destroy life. From the time and circumstances it is the opinion of the committee, to be inferred as probable that a sudden quarrel without previous ill-will did arise and from that violence and death ensued.

Upon the whole the case is such upon the proofs as to raise well-grounded doubts, that according to principles of law, that the prisoner be guilty of murder — and they believed it consistent with the policy of our law to extend mercy, and that a pardon of the offense may properly be granted to the said John Williams.

The report of this special committee was accepted by the full house and the committee was ordered to prepare a bill accordingly.

Finally, in the *Recorder* dated March 21, 1808, we read: A Joint Resolution was passed in both houses [of the legislature] “that the said John Williams, be and he hereby is fully and absolutely pardoned and discharged from the felony and conviction aforesaid, and all execution and forfeiture thereon, that debates whether the committee should agree to the same, it was carried in the affirmative — Ayes 42, Noes 39.” The *Council of Revision*, a part of the state government in the earliest years, then sanctioned the passed bill. William’s life was spared by a close vote.

These defendants in the Scott murder case fade into obscurity at least as far as the law is concerned. Pinckney’s *Sketches of Catskill* recalls the incident; the Van Dyck—Bronck trial notes are at the Vedder Memorial Library at the Bronck Museum, as are the *Catskill Recorder* issues. The Greene County Historical Society has on its wanted list Mackay Crosswell’s pamphlet with its Catskill imprint — *The Life and Confession of John Williams who was to have been executed on the 18th instant* — an alert to Journal readers.

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Some little time has elapsed since the society has received a legacy. Have any readers ever considered mentioning the Bronck Museum, the Vedder Library or the Society itself in their wills? Every few thousand dollars helps.

C. A. CLEGG’S SUNSET PARK AT HAINES FALLS

—Raymond Beecher

Situated on the north slope of Round Top Mountain, at the head of the Kaaterskill Clove, Sunset Park was one of a triumvirate of private summer residential areas at Haines Falls, the others being Twilight and Santa Cruz. C. A. Clegg was the developer of Sunset, both renting and selling furnished cottages, as well as offering building sites.

By the turn of the 19th century, Mr. Clegg was placing large illustrated advertisements in prominent sections of selected magazines — the *Churchman*, the *Living Church*, the *Philadelphia Journal of Fine Arts*, *The Home Journal*, as well as in newspapers such as the *New York Herald World*. To further attract potential purchasers and renters, Proprietor Clegg arranged with the Catskill Evening Line to furnish travelers bound for the Park with round trip tickets at the one-way fare of two dollars from New York City.

Testimonials endorsing the advantages of summer living in Sunset Park were solicited. The *Tribune* would report “many prominent people from greater New York are enjoying ideal summer life there with household cares and the empty formalities of society life reduced to a bare minimum.” The Reverend J. O. Wilson, D. D., Pastor of St. Andrews M. E. Church, New York City wrote: “It has been my good fortune to visit most of the popular mountain resorts of this country and I am convinced that Sunset Park with its inspiring view of mountains, valleys and sunsets, is unsurpassed in all the Catskill Mountains. The fact that I have selected this park for my summer residence, and have spent ten consecutive seasons there, is proof of the sincerity of my testimony.”

The Sunset Park development had commenced in the last years of the nineteenth century. Grandiose plans were formulated but cost realities brought about a drastic curtailment including Clegg’s proposed 1894 idea to build an electric railroad from the Haines Falls depot to this private park. Sunset Inn, however, was constructed, work commencing in the fall of 1901. The hotel as built had a wide central hall; on one side was the dining room patronized by many park area residents; the other side contained the huge sitting room. A recreational bowling alley was located under the front porch. Floors of the inn were of hardwood; bedrooms were well furnished even to rugs; the staff was expected to maintain the inn in spotless condition. The main water supply came by pipe from the other side of the hamlet of Haines Falls, on the south side of North Mountain. Water was always a problem to the inn and the

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SUNSET PARK [Continued from page 4]
cottages in its park.



Sunset Park – Post Card View

The new hotel had its formal opening on June 16, 1902. The Catskill *Examiner* reported on May 24: "The elegant new hotel only one-half mile from Haines Falls' post office and railroad station is the largest, handsomest and most modern hotel of any of the Catskill Mountain parks. Its elevation of 2020 feet enables it to have a view of the Hudson River and of Mt. Everett in the Berkshire Hills. The Ohio Society of New York, of which C. A. Clegg, the owner of the house, is a member, has been invited to be his guests at the opening of this elegant new hotel. F. N. Rogers, formerly of the Rip Van Winkle House, Palenville, is manager."

While the hotel did its own laundry, the personal laundry of the hotel guests was handled by a young couple from the hamlet. Each evening they walked along the railroad track – because it was peaceful and pleasant, carrying the clean laundry back and up the steep hills to Sunset, picking up new laundry for the return trip. They transported as many as five baskets of the finished work on a pole, walking Indian file. The husband ironed the heavy white duck shirts which as a fashion were almost a uniform with the ladies. These were heavily starched (as was almost all underwear and all else). Petticoats had double ruffles and were exceedingly full that they might cause the skirts to swish and rustle. Private laundry work from the inns and parks was good business to the local people. This young couple made enough to buy their first house.

The activities of residents of Sunset Park occasionally found their way into county newspapers. We read such news items as James C. Frank having charge of the grounds at Henry Staukamp's cottage, that the Misses Turnbull were vacationing at their summer residence, and that the Gottfried Kreigers of Newark, New Jersey, were using their cottage earlier than usual for a few days in the late spring.

Owen C. Becker, acting as proprietor of Sunset Inn in 1907, somehow found space for those guests fleeing the burning Squirrel Inn in Twilight Park, filled though his own hostelry was. The next season that same manager would advertise in *Catskill Mountain Resorts*, published by the Ulster and Delaware Railroad, indicating Sunset Inn could accommodate 200 persons with terms upon application. In the same publication for 1916, we find J. F. Byrnes the resident manager.

One present-day resident of Twilight Park recalls that around 1924 Sunset Park had a marvelous chef and many residents of Twilight Park were attracted to its dining room, at the same time enjoying the superb view.

Mrs. Kenworthy subsequently took over ownership of the hotel and most of Sunset Park, the inn more or less becoming "something unto itself." In these later years it drew a clientele of Armenian and Grecian descent.

Charles A. Clegg was rumored to have invested more than a million dollars in his hostelry of luxury and its surrounding private park. The anticipated fortune from its operation continued to evade him. Neither were others very successful. During the great depression of the 1930's when the private parks in this section of the Catskills were struggling to exist, Sunset Park dissolved. None of the cottages became part of Twilight Park.

No longer operating as a hotel, the building has deteriorated; mortgages and liens are now part of its history. In the 1970's the several plots of land were advertised for back taxes. The Excelsior Restaurant Corporation of New York City (Mr. Thomas Lagoumis) is believed to have been the most recent owner.

The writer acknowledges the assistance of Esther H. Dunn and Justine Hommel in the preparation of this article.

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DATES TO REMEMBER! MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

May 9 (Saturday) 1 - 4 p.m. – Tour of the Kykuit and Embought historic areas. Guides are Roberta Everitt and Barbara Van Orden. Rain date May 16. This will be a private car – walking tour and is free to paid-up GCHS members.

June 13 (Saturday) 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. – Annual Historic Homes Tour; different section of Greene County.

July 11 (Saturday) 10 a.m. – Walking tour of Austin's Glen with coordinators Helen Van Ess and Raymond Beecher. This event will include a picnic lunch. Rain date July 18. Free to paid-up members.

For the May 9 and July 11 events, make reservations by letter request to the Society at Coxsackie, 12051. Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope for detailed instructions. Historic Home Tour ticket sale details will be announced in the newspapers and in the Summer issue of this Journal.

TRIP TO THE CATSKILLS *[Continued from page 1]*

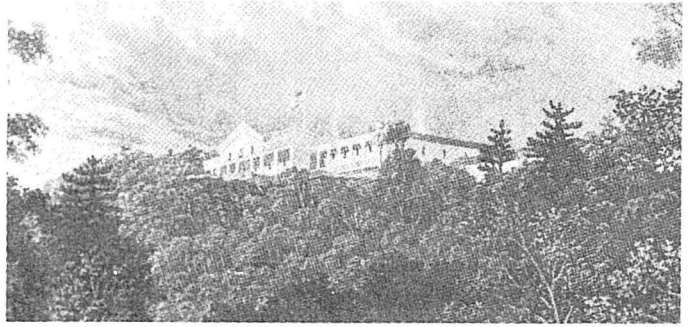
character and I certainly never saw any one more improved in appearance. You see we were well provided with beaux. I had quite a talk with James, and fully expected his mother would call to see me – you know they live at the Point. She did not make her appearance however, and though I saw the Doct, he did not recognize me, so I let it pass.

About ½ past four we all started for the Fort. It is a fatiguing scramble to get to it as it is situated on a very high hill the ascent to which is very rough and steep. Anna was too tired after going up the hill to ascend to the Fort but I was more persevering and scrambled to the top, Ma [mother-in-law] telling me where to step and how far to go. The view from the summit is very fine and compensated for the fatigue of the walk. We returned in time to see the parade. I wish you could hear the West Point band. The music is so delightful. After tea we walked in the piazza, admired the view by moonlight and amused ourselves in divers ways. There were a great many visitors at the point, among others Mr. and Mrs. Walton, Miss Walton flying about and talking incessantly.

Immediately after breakfast we all started for a walk. Visited the gardens and a spot which is call the retreat – a beautiful spot just on the bank of the river gradually sloping from the hill down. Seats placed in little odd nooks and corners and a beautiful fountain throws jets of water, sometimes very high. We then went to see Kosciusko's monument just on the brow of the hill by which time we had to hurry back to see that our trunks etc. were ready. We then walked down to the landing through an avenue of trees. In a few minutes the boat came along and we bade adieu to West Point. Henry returned to New York the day before.

The boat was very much crowded but I did not see one familiar face until I went down to the cabin just before dinner. There I saw an elderly lady with a merino dress, muslin collar, leghorn bonnet trimmed with green and any quantity of cap border, talking away to everyone who came near her. I instantly recognized Mrs. Deacon Lincoln. I went up and made myself known and we had a long chat together. She seemed delighted to see me and had a great many questions to ask about you and Pa. She told me she had heard of Pa's maltreatment and had felt very much for him and for all of us. Elizabeth's death and my marriage she had not heard of. She spoke very affectionately of yourself and Cynthia and sent a great deal of love to you both. She went in search of her husband who appeared delighted to meet me. He inquired for Pa and all of you. Little Marion was not forgotten by either of them. They both desired me again and again to remember them most affection-

ately. I wished to introduce Mr. Clay but we were nearing Catskill and he was attending to the baggage – no little trouble seeing he had three ladies besides ourselves to take care of. By the time we had dined the boat stopped there. I had just time to say good bye to Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln, when we were hurried on shore. The stages were waiting so we got in and drove up to the town, about a mile from the landing. We left Christina and Sylvia [the two servants] at Van Bergen's Hotel and with them all our baggage but Joseph's trunk and Ma's, and wended our way to the Mountain House upon one of the high Catskills.



Catskill Mountain House – circa 1835

Pretty tough work this going up the mountain to the House on the top and very steep, so much that we stopped every few rods to breathe the horses. The gentlemen walked all the way up. We arrived at the Mountain House just before dark in time to catch one glimpse of the vast prospect, the immense map spread out before us. The evening was delightful – cool, pleasant, and bright moonlight. The younger members of the party, Ann Lewis, etc. amused themselves after tea with riding on the flying horses while Mrs. Reynolds and I sat and laughed at them. After it became too damp to sit out I played awhile for them to dance but Mr. Boggs found a fiddler among the servants and called him up. We retired about 11, mosquitoes and other annoyances in abundance.

As soon as day dawned we stationed ourselves at the window to see the sun rise and a splendid sight it was. It looked like an immense crimson globe and you may imagine the effect from behind a dark cloud. After the sun had fully risen, the mist began to descend, and in a short time it lay far below us like a sea – nothing to be seen but the sky above and this ocean of vapour cloud. By the time we had breakfasted, this cleared away and we had the prospect in all its magnificence. From this elevation you see three states – New York, Massachusetts and Connecticut. The mountains of Massachusetts are distinctly seen. I am sure I saw the saddle mountain of which you have a fine view from Pittsfield. Hudson, 5 miles from Catskill, is distinctly visible and for many miles above and below you travel the

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TRIP TO THE CATSKILLS *[Continued from page 6]*

Hudson River. The Mountain House is 2212 feet above the river – imagine what an immense extent of country one overlooks from such an elevation.

At 10 o'clock we set off for the Kaaterskill Falls in one of the long wagons with three or four seats. Mrs. Reynolds, Miss Lawrence, Ann Lewis, Joseph, Anna, Mr. Boggs and myself composed the party. From the place where the waggon stopped to the falls is about a quarter of a mile through the woods. Arrived there. They all, except Anna and I, went down by very steep stone steps and precipitous paths to the rocks below the falls. I understood there was a good view to be had from the top and wisely concluded to remain there. Besides, Ma had charged me not to venture down those slippery paths. A boy conducted us to a beautiful spot on a very high bank from which we had a most splendid view of the falls and withal a nice seat on a natural bench formed by the roots of a tree. The Kaaterskill is a tributary of Catskill Creek and presents a cascade of 240 feet in two perpendicular descents – the one 160, the other 80 feet. The water rushes over a point of rock, scattering the foam and spray on all sides and the scenery around is very wild and romantic. We sat a long time looking at the falls and viewing the party below scrambling about the rocks. Returned in time for dinner and about three o'clock started off for Catskill. We arrived in time for the boat from Albany, in which Mrs. Reynolds, Ann Lewis and Mr. Boggs with Miss Lawrence, returned to New York leaving us for the night at Catskill. Van Bergen's is an excellent house. We had a very nice supper and such clean delightful beds, it was refreshing to look at them.

We breakfasted there and left in the 8 o'clock stage. The road called the Clove and running between two very high mountains, presents some of the most sublime scenery I ever beheld. I have not room or words to describe it. I got out once to look at what is really a curiosity. It is called the dog's hole or whirl. It is a kind of whirlpool in the midst of a stream and takes its name from an unfortunate dog which fell in and was carried round till he died. Just on the other side of the bank is a dark cave in the rock. And to crown all, a most beautiful waterfall. You can not picture a wilder scene. Indeed the views along the road were so splendid that I did not mind the fatigue. The late rains had rendered the road very bad – the stage proprietor said he had not known them in such a state for 5 years.

We stopped about three o'clock to dine at a forlorn little house where they gave us the best they had. We contrived to make a dinner upon strawberries, a kind of spice cake and new cheese. Laid

in a few fips worth of the said spice cake to eat on the road and continued our journey, the weather very lowering.

We reached the place where we expected to stop for the night about 8 o'clock. Our baggage, by the way, had been sent on before in a waggon. We were ushered into a room uncarpeted, containing three or four chairs and a wooden table, and on the franklin stove a large tin kitchen. This as you may suppose, looked pretty cheerless after a ride of some 28 miles. A tall, gaunt woman with high cheekbones and sharp features came in. Upon our asking if she could accommodate us said she had but two beds she could spare. There were seven of us without the child. We then asked if she could give us clean linen. She said yes the sheets had been put on for the company last Independence [Day]. We did not much relish the idea of sleeping in the same sheets that had been used by a parcel of rowdy soldiers so we asked if she couldn't change the beds. She said she only had some coarse sheets such as her children slept in. We told her that would do if clean and we'd manage with the two beds. We found out from her husband that there was not a clean sheet of any kind about the house – all had been used last Independence and were in the wash. Whereupon the old woman told us if we did not choose to take what we could get, we might go where we could find better. The next tavern was some miles further, the night advancing and it beginning to rain. Joseph said he would try what could be done so he sallied out with the driver to see if any one would take us in. In a short time he returned with the pleasing intelligence that there was a nice little woman in the next house above who said she could give us two beds and that her mother who lived opposite her could spare one and that she would make us comfortable.

We picked up our baskets, etc., had our trunks put on the stage not choosing to leave them in such a place, and took up our line of march. We were very kindly received & our baggage put away safely. The young woman only 20 was quite advanced in a certain way and was much fatigued with a heavy wash she had done that day. But with the aid of Christina and Sylvia and her mother who came over to assist, we soon had a nice supper – the most delicious short cakes I ever tasted made entirely with cream, preserved strawberries, fresh butter and excellent tea. Her best bed was given up and being a very large one, Ma, Anna and Estelle with the child contrived to sleep in it cross wise. The two girls had the other. Joseph and I went over to the old lady's – I was exceedingly fatigued. I don't think I ever felt so exhausted – it was a great comfort to get into a clean nice bed and to be with such kind people. The old

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TRIP TO THE CATSKILLS *[Continued from page 7]*

lady told me I seemed very much tired, and must call her if I felt sick in the night. I soon fell asleep and only woke when they sent for me to breakfast – short cakes, delightful coffee, ham and eggs.

Our journey was to be continued in an open waggon, as the mountain we had to cross could not be travelled by a stage. But it rained so hard that we could not think of starting. About twelve it began to clear. We ate a hurried dinner and prepared to try our luck. We remunerated our kind entertainers very satisfactorily – they said they considered themselves greatly overpaid. We read and slept away the morning. Joseph gave Mr. Phillips, the husband of this little woman, a job – the soleing of a pair of boots. We took a kind leave of them and started for Mrs. Laussart's place some 16 miles in a long waggon with four seats, our baggage piled up in front.

We did not reach Mrs. Laussart's until between 8 and nine. She received us very kindly. We are comfortably fixed. Her own house has two parlours, her own bedroom and one upstairs. The house across the road is fitted up for us so we each have a separate chamber. There is a very nice sitting room and a sort of kitchen. We breakfast and dine at her house and have tea at ours. Christina gets tea – has a little stove and every thing very good. Joseph catches a string of trout to add to our dinner but the violent gusts of yesterday will stop the trout fishing for awhile. We sew a great deal as Mrs. Lussart has no one to do anything for her but I do not confine myself to it for I can not sit still a great while. She has a beautiful flower garden. I never saw finer roses. I must write to Aunt Fanny today to say we do not wish to hurry home. If Mr. Clay could afford it he would go to Boston having a great desire to see that part of the country. But our journey has already cost much more than we anticipated. We'll see how our funds hold out when we get to Pittsfield. He might go alone to Boston and leave me at Aunt Fanny's.

I hope this Saturday's mail will bring me the letter I expected at New York. I cannot tell Nora much. I long to hear from you. If we had reached here by Wednesday of last week you would have heard earlier. Afraid you will be very uneasy but hope this letter may reach you safely. My best love to everyone. Believe me I think of you all very constantly. I shall be impatient to reach Pittsfield that I may hear from you.

Ever your most affectionately
Cornelia

REQUIEM FOR AN ANCESTOR

–Louise S. Messinger

Delmar, New York

“William Rey” stood five feet eight inches tall. He had blue eyes, fair complexion, and light hair. He was born in Ireland in 1743. His name appears on 1762 and 1763 muster rolls of men raised in Orange and Ulster Counties “for guarding the western frontiers.” There is a tradition in one branch of the Rea family that William Rea of Coxsackie was of Irish ancestry.

“William Rey” and “Marietje Wells” were granted a license to wed by the Secretary of the Province of New York, June 21, 1765. Baptismal entries for their children are found in the records of the West Coxsackie First Reformed Church and Athens Zion Lutheran Church.

In 1767, the name “Wielliem Rea” appears in the rank of Captain Marte Hallenbeck's Company of Albany County Militia. The Coxsackie Association of 1775 bears the signature of William Rea. Yet, on January 5, 1776, it was reported to the Albany Committee of Correspondence that “William Rea Merchant” was guilty of speaking “contemptuously” of the “Committee” and the Provincial “Congress.” On July 31st of that year, William Rea, with others similarly accused, was brought before the Committee, and on August 9th was tendered the “new” Association, which he signed, and, after payment of charges, was released. William Rea's troubles were not at an end.

A time came when all persons of “equivocal” or “neutral” character were presented an oath of allegiance to the colonies. There was no middle ground – a man signified allegiance to the colonial cause, or he was branded loyalist. Apparently, William Rea did not actively aid the “enemy,” but may have expressed doubts about the legitimacy of the colonial government. Whatever his reasons, his confrontation with the Albany Committee and other bodies were numerous.

Beginning in 1777 and continuing through 1783, he was several times recalled, and each time proffered the oath. He continued to equivocate, requesting additional time to consider. When he did not appear on an appointed day, it was ordered on August 1, 1778 that he, among others, appear on “Friday the 14th day of August . . . with 14 days Provision for themselves and such of their Families as they chuse should accompany them . . . They are . . . (to) take with them all their Cloathing and Houshold Furniture . . . The Charges of Transportation to the Enemies Lines is to be defrayed by themselves . . .”

It is not clear whether, at this time, William Rea was banished, held in fleet prison, or released on

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VEDDER LIBRARY NOTES

□◇ A few months ago Catskill Mountain author Alf Evers had some kind words for the continued growth of the Vedder Memorial Library's collection of regional material. Your yearly membership dues provides funds for library supplies!

□◇ Eleanor Johnstone Beach (Mrs. Charles A. W. Beach) of Catskill has deposited a two-generation collection of historical material with special emphasis on the Catskill Mountain Railroad. Photographs, newspaper clippings, manuscript papers and volumes, post cards, broadsides and miscellaneous items reflect the wide scope of this generous Beach family gift. Charles A. Beach was the General Superintendent of the Catskill Mountain Railroad and later its President. The collection will bear the names of both Charles A. Beach and that of his son, Charles A. W. Beach. We have reason to be grateful to Eleanor Johnstone Beach for preserving this material for Greene County.

□◇ A generous offer by Catskill attorneys George Pulver, Jr., and Edward Stiefel enabled the Vedder Library staff to analyze the basement vault room records of this pioneer law firm. In the process the Society selected 3½ van loads of maps, case folders, pamphlets, minute books, ledgers, etc. which reflect many of the nineteenth century activities of Greene County individuals and corporations. John T. Mann's record book for the Canajoharie and Catskill Railroad was among the material. Mountain View Coach Lines, Inc. assisted in the removal of the files, etc. to Bronck Museum. It will take at least three years to sort through and catalogue this gift.

□◇ Subsequent to the sale of his Coxsackie residence and his removal to Florida, Charles Collier donated a Burr map of Greene County in pristine condition.

□◇ From Greenport, Columbia County, the Robert A. Macks have brought to the library his grandfather's and his father's numerous diaries, scrapbooks and other historical material. It is given in memory of Arthur C. Mack, a former president of this Society.

□◇ Four volumes entitled *Pictorial History of the Second World War* are the gift of Ms. Christina Wessel, Spring Street, Catskill.

□◇ Losee photographs and other historical library items came in two gifts from Mr. H. Losee of Albany. Three large photographs reveal the Losee ties to the hamlet of Grapeville.

□◇ Two scrapbooks kept by Ruth Bloodgood Irish of Hensonville have come from R. VanValkenburgh of Daytona Beach, Florida. They contain a wealth of local Word War I material.

□ □ □ □ □

REQUIEM FOR AN ANCESTOR

[Continued from page 8]

parole. Whatever happened to him, his family apparently did not join him in any sort of exile. No doubt, his wife and her family managed his property during his absences. It is in the records that, at one time during the war, he worked with a group performing construction work for the army. On at least one occasion he was transported within the enemy lines, probably New York City, during its occupation by the British.

On December 6, 1776, a Mrs. Ray requested permission to visit her husband at New York. This request was denied by the Albany Committee of Correspondence. Colonel Cornelius Wynkoop wrote to Governor George Clinton from Coeymans on May 5, 1778, presenting a request of Mrs. Ray to visit her husband, again at New York.

John Cumming, a banished loyalist, wrote Governor Clinton from New York City (then held by the British), on May 5, 1778, pleading his own case and, in a postscript, wrote: "Will your Excellency please to consider the Case of Mr. Wm. Ray of Coxsackie who I never look'd on as your enemy." There followed a deposition from Dr. Samuel Bard, bearing the same date, which read: "The Subscriber hereby certifies, that Will'm Ray, after for above a twelve month past, having been attacked, with an Intermitting Fever, which frequently returned; has now for six months been afflicted with a Dropsy, which hitherto has eluded the Force of every Remedy that has been prescribed for him, and which from its obstinacy and continuance has now become of very doubtful event. Samuel Bard."

After the war's end, in 1784, special legislation was enacted to permit several accused Loyalists "to return to and reside within this State without any molestation . . ." Among these was William Rea.

Despite the years of turmoil, William Rea became a man of property and some stature in the community. He purchased, from the Bronks, property at the Upper Landing where he built his home; he purchased Rattlesnake Island; he sold to Leonard Bronk a slave, Saar; he was witness to a deed of 1787 "by which Fountain Flats is divided." His sons and daughters married members of prominent Greene County families – among them, the Conines, Vandenberg and Grooms.

Some time between his 49th and 50th years, William Rea died. His will was executed May 4, 1792, proved November 16, 1792, and Letters Testamentary issued May 16, 1793.

The Patriot's Index of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution lists "William Ray" as having rendered patriotic service. A bitter irony.

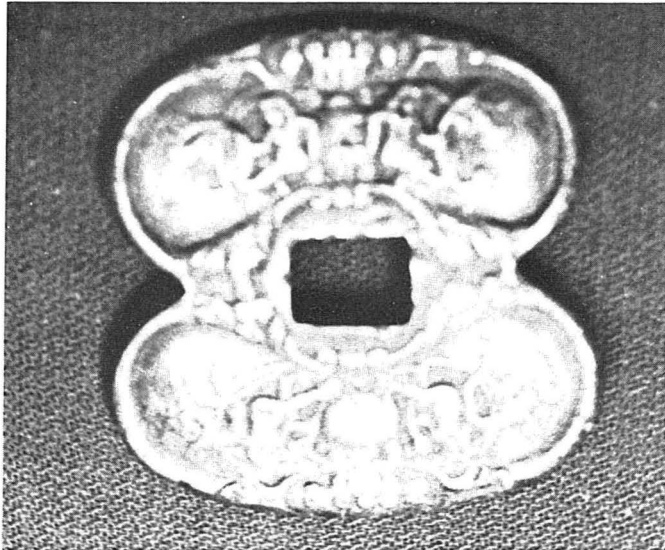
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

[Continued from page 1]

the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Window glass fragments also formed a large part of this group, as with the nails, most of the window glass fragments date from the nineteenth century. Fragments of hinges, staples, spikes, and a pintle complete the Architectural group.

Thirty-five percent of all the artifacts recovered fell into the second largest grouping, the Kitchen group. Within the Kitchen group the largest number of dishware fragments were of the whiteware type in common use through the nineteenth century. The earliest ceramic found in any significant quantity was pearlware which saw the height of its popularity between 1780 and 1840. Delft, the characteristic Dutch ceramic, was found in such a small quantity as to be conspicuous by its absence. Nineteenth and twentieth century glass bottles, fragments of drinking glasses, pressed glass, and chimney glass comprised the rest of the Kitchen group.



Val Kriele Photo

English Small Sword Counterguard

The first of the luxury items recovered was a brass counterguard presumably from an English small sword of the mid-eighteenth century. The counterguard was originally positioned below the handle of a sword with the sword blade protruding through the central opening of the counterguard. An elaborate cornucopia and sphere design appears on both top and bottom surfaces. The quality of workmanship and the elaborate embellishment of the counterguard would seem to indicate that its original owner was prosperous and in a position that would warrant the display and use of such an item. During the mid-eighteenth century both Jan Bronck and his son, Leendert belonged to the colonial militia, a setting in which either officer could have been expected to own a sword.

The rarest item recovered was a silver pipe bowl inscribed with the letters "IB". It is certainly conceivable that this item was once the property of Jan Bronck (the use of the letter I for J was common practice in both Dutch and English until 1800). Metal pipe bowls equipped with removable clay stems, though rare, are known to have been in existence during colonial times. Just how the owners used such pipes is not known since the metal of the bowl would have been distorted by heat and difficult to handle when lit.

The archaeological survey at the Bronck Museum substantiated to a large degree what was known about the history of the family and their dwellings. The Kitchen and Architecture groups reveal how a family carried on the fundamental tasks of feeding and sheltering itself. The luxury items provide an indication of affluence and suggest the societal relationships of family members. Given the limited scope of the excavations, much was recovered while other artifacts still remain to be found – items which will further contribute to our understanding of history at the Bronck Homestead.

Editor's Note: The Bronck House: An Archaeological Site Report prepared for the society by Murphy, Murphy-Miazga Cultural Resource Services, Coxsackie, New York, provides the research information for Mrs. Kriele's article. The complete survey is on file in the Vedder Memorial Library at Bronck Museum.

□ □ □ □ □

ADDITIONAL THANK YOUS ARE IN ORDER

Five names should be added to the list of contributors to the Bronck Museum Restoration Fund as printed in the last issue of *The Journal*. These are:

Mr. and Mrs. Allan Piser, Catskill

Mrs. Mabel P. Smith, Catskill

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Ackerman, Hannacroix

The treasurer reports final payments to the firm of Mendel, Mesick, Cohen and Waite for the Historic Structures Report. Persons still desiring to contribute toward restoration work on the 1663 and 1738 houses should send their checks payable to the society, R. D. Coxsackie, New York 12051.

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