

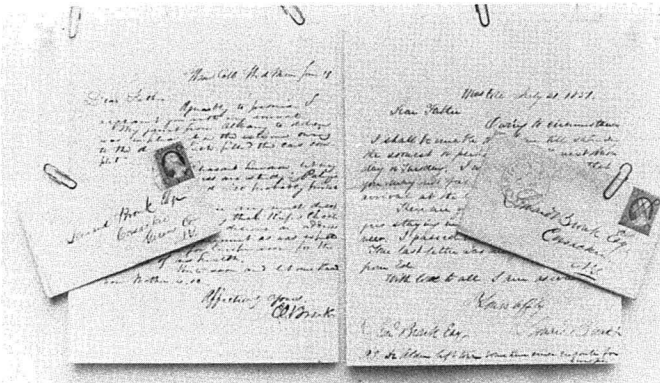
PALE DEATH (continued from page 1)

These two young men, closely tied by blood, age and common interests, were the offspring of an affluent Dutch-English family of Coxsackie. Their paternal grandfather, Leonard Bronk (1751-1828) had been an only child who inherited a substantial estate. Politically he was a Federalist who served as a state senator for the Middle District, as first judge of the Greene County Court of Common Pleas, and as a senior statesman for this newly established county. The other grandfather, John Ely (1774-1848), was an affluent medical practitioner residing first at Greenville (Newry) and then at Coxsackie; he also served in the New York State legislature (the Assembly) and later for a term in the twenty-sixth federal Congress.

Both Bronk sons matriculated at Williams College for the fall term of 1847. In the family archives are to be found a series of letters written home to their parents at Coxsackie who were soon to remove from the Bronck Homestead to the Ely house on the hill. While in the main these letters reflect Williams College life, they yield up additional insights into the lives of this generation of Bronks.

The Bronks, father and two sons, traveled to Williams College in the fall of 1847 to enroll Edwin as a sophomore and Leonard as a freshman. The first letter to survive was written after the father left for the return to Coxsackie; the date of the letter is September 25, 1847.

I got your letter from the office just as I was going to recitation last Monday afternoon and I assure you we were very glad to hear from you. You must tell Aunt Adelaide [Dummond] if she wants to see us as much as she pretends she must set her machinery in motion and come on and we will make it as pleasant for her as we can. We are just about as you left us having bought no furniture but a dusting pan and foot tub since you left; however it begins to look quite like home and we have got our other stove up which we think will keep us sufficiently warm during the coldest weather. Our lessons are of a pretty good length and some of them quite hard but by close application and devoting some of our play time to the learning of them we generally succeed in getting them before recitation



Letters of Leonard and Edwin from Williams College

hours. As to books I can get along very well, not needing a Euclid this term and having bought a Combe's Physiology of Porter the student that has rooms opposite to us. There are now I believe 41 students in my class and about an equal number in Edwin's. The weather for a few days back has been quite pleasant and warm but last night it has been raining. I should judge from appearances pretty much all night and then there is as yet but little prospect of its clearing off. I was quite homesick last Saturday for the first time but it went over after a while and I have not had a turn of it since. We are all well and in expectation of a visit from some of you sometime about the middle of October if not before. Give our love to all, Write soon.

Yours in haste
L. Bronk Jr.

P.S.

Edwin has safely deposited your letter in the bottom of his trunk. Tell mother, Aunt Adelaide and Sis we expect a letter from each of them very soon.

Next it was Edwin's turn to write home which he did on October 1. In his letter he would mention being allotted to the Philologian Literary Society and asked for father's advice about joining. It was a period of time when some college students rented rooms off campus and improved their living conditions with additional pieces of furniture. One of the Bronk's first orders was for a student standing desk to be built and delivered by the middle of the month. "Wednesday afternoon I had the 'honor' to declaim [orate] from the chapel stage. The Freshmen class have taken an algebra by Loomis in place of Day's which Leonard thinks will not be so difficult."

By November both brothers were settled into the college routine. Mr. Gay, their landlord, sent word that he was willing to take \$200 for the span of sorrel horses which Leonard Bronk, Sr. had inspected that past September. For the midterm vacation which began December 8, the return to Coxsackie would be by the Kinderhook river crossing — they would start Wednesday morning and arrive at that depot by noon. The ice in the river dictated the route.

For the spring term Edwin and Leonard returned via Pittsfield and North Adams. They had been boarding at Mrs. Sylvester's but now accepted a proposal of Mr. Hosford who wanted to take a club to board, about a dozen young men. The new dining arrangements proved satisfactory, "a Junior — Ogden, purchases the provisions and supervises the whole affair. As regards the instruments for surveying I have not yet determined what to do." Edwin would report in this communication that Leonard was reluctant to write, a situation subsequently corrected by Leonard's letter of March 3, 1848. On that date their mother, Maria Ely Bronk, was told of the welcome receipt of Sister Adelaide's letters, the state of the weather, and certain other activities:

The burial of Col. Martin Scott, who was killed in the battle of Cherubusco [Mexican War] (I believe)

(continued on page 3)

Val Kriele Photo

PALE DEATH *(continued from page 2)*

takes place in Bennington today, and quite a number of the students have gone up. I attended a donation party at Dr. Peters on the strength of twenty five cents donation. Our class gave him a chest of tea & box of raisins, in which my donation was invested. The Sophomore class gave him a barrel of Sugar, & the Junior class a barrel of flour

Periodic examinations were the order of the day for Williams students; Leonard frequently described these in humorous terms, as in his letter of April 15, 1848:

Last week, on Tuesday, Edwin was called up before the judge of the supreme court of Williams College for an investigation of his knowledge of Euclid & Prometheus & I am happy to say was acquitted. And on the following Saturday I was summoned before judges Griffin & Hosford to answer some questions which they proposed to ask from Horace & Livy and was in like manner acquitted. We, after having received your letter and considering for some time the propriety of joining the society of which we spoke, have given our assent and are now members of K.A. [Kappa Alpha] society.

An intimation of future health problems is given by the mention of Leonard's troublesome cough.

The Bronks generally traveled by stage coach, at least between Albany and Williamstown. On the return trip in late May of 1848 for the new college term, they were fortunate to ride inside during the rain storm from North Adams. At other times, however, they complained of dusty roads. This term they decided to board at the Mansion House. They did not participate in the college "Monday Mountain Day" climbing Mt. Greylock but rather walked to Snow Hole, a distance of about six miles. They felt they had made a wise decision as the Mt. Greylock group found the summit enveloped with mist with the view nonexistent; some of the students remained for the sunrise.

College students generally find it difficult to write in much detail concerning their college activities and social life. They often fall back on the state of the weather, examinations scheduled and/or completed, and the necessity of needing money and clothing. On July 13, 1848 Leonard stated:

I intended to have written before but having been quite busy I have put it off till now. There is so little to write about. We have the same routine of duty to go through from day to day and week to week If you think you can procure some thin black cassimere for pants, have them made up and sent on without much trouble & safely, I should like it very well. If you have pantaloons made tell the tailor to make them the same as my last pair & without lining.

Matters of health began to appear in letters written home during the summer of 1848: "Edwin

says his health is in his opinion about the same as when he left home. I am still in enjoyment of my usual degree of health." They were pleased to hear Grandpa was better. (Dr. Ely died that year).

In the fall term of 1848 Leonard acknowledged the respect given him by lowly Freshmen as he traveled about the streets in his "sophomoric boots, as dignified as possible." Edwin and Leonard attended the General Tom Thumb levee and were impressed — "truly a man in miniature, his performance very fine." They had been busy arranging their possessions and cleaning their room. The cost of textbooks, a problem to every generation of college students, affected Leonard's budget. Day's Mathematics cost him \$3.50 plus 25 cents expressage. Over the previous vacation their room had been repapered in every respect.

A sense of humor frequently creeps into Leonard's letters, particularly in his description of everyday events:

We retire in the evening and depart into the shadowy regions of Morpheus where we remain to all appearances but a short time before the 'tintinabulations' of the chapel bell sound forth upon our terror stricken ears warning us to clothe ourselves in our usual habiliments to transport our corporeal systems over to morning prayers and thence to recitations.

In response to an inquiry from his father, Leonard located a section from an Ode of Horace's. Little did they both realize how appropriate it would be a few years hence: "Pale death with impartial footsteps knocks at the cottage of the poor and the lofty dwellings of the rich. O happy Sextus, the sum of our short life forbids us from remote expectations." Leonard concluded that letter by reminding his father they had not yet paid their board bill, washing and other charges, "not having been given as much money as usual at the beginning of the term — \$60 would do."

The Christmas holidays of December 1848 were spent at home in Coxsackie, now at 28 Ely Street, but Edwin and Leonard were soon back at Williamstown everything the same there "except for a little bustle created by the arrival of the students." The sleighing was about as good as at Coxsackie.

March 30, 1849 found Leonard in the midst of term examinations. He was a competent scholar and had little difficulty mastering his subjects. The expulsion of 2 or 3 classmates impressed Leonard, a fact he reported to his father. The term was to close in four weeks and Leonard wrote they then expected to transport themselves "from the land of the pumpkins to the land of 'pork and beans.' "

Both Bronk sons enrolled in what might be construed as summer terms. Whether this was to make up entrance deficiencies or merely to complete

(continued on page 4)

PALE DEATH (continued from page 3)

diploma requirements, is uncertain. They were at Williams College in June of 1849. Leonard was doing well but Edwin had yet to make up his examinations. The cholera epidemic had not reached Williamstown nor did there appear to be any fear it would.

Leonard Bronk, Sr. had purchased a new buggy and steed; Leonard, Jr. wrote inquiring if there was to be a "grand entree" by Sister Adelaide if she came in the new equipage.

At the commencement exercises on Sunday, August 15, 1849, Leonard reported an address given by President Hopkins, and a second by Dr. Murray. On Tuesday afternoon he was to hear a third by Dr. Leland, of Columbia College, S.C.; in the evening they listened to the Prize Rhetorical Exercises before the Adelpic Union by the Reverend Adams Reed of Salisbury, Connecticut. Before leaving at the term's end, Leonard and Edwin made new arrangements for rooms for the next semester. Leonard was to have a roommate but Edwin would be on his own. "We will have to buy more furniture and will need more of the with all [money]."

On September 14, 1849, Leonard and Edwin were once again back at Williamstown for the fall college term. On the way Leonard purchased a carpet at Pittsfield and was then engaged in putting it down; the bed was set up next. Leonard's roommate (unidentified) had arrived but was out trying to locate his trunk. The Freshman class was reported to be 36, the Sophomore group had increased to 56 students. Edwin was finding his Senior year very pleasant. He began walking between prayers and breakfast. He reported: "the pipe or rather logs for conducting water to the colleges are laid though the water has not been let in yet. The Senior oration next term starts in the middle of the alphabet."

On April 6, 1850, Leonard wrote home indicating he was getting bored with college routine: "We are going through about the same obnoxious course of grubbing as ever. Nothing exciting has occurred here lately. Piagah [local mountain] has neither tumbled over on us, neither has Greylock sent forth any eruptions of molten lava, nor have any mighty earthquakes shaken the quiet valley . . . I suppose Cocksackie clay is now in a very humid, pliant and flexible state. Very conducive to polish boots and glistening shoe leather. All that I have hitherto said you may consider as a sort of introduction to the important idea I am about to convey which is altogether a more matter-of-fact sort of thing than I have hitherto given expression to, which is the truth and also of primary importance. It is simply this, that our bullion is rather low. \$50.00?"

Again a vacation period intervened but by May 30, 1850 they were back for their studies. Leonard

Sr. had accompanied his two sons to Albany and had returned to Cocksackie by steamboat. The absence of President Hopkins who was in Boston, the mental condition of Mrs. Hopkins, and the determination of Professor Tatlock to remain in Williamstown were included as interesting bits of news for the Cocksackie folk.

Enrolled during the summer months of 1850, Leonard could begin to feel the dignity of the Senior year creeping upon him. He reported Edwin was not studying very hard thus far that term. Thoughts of home and the haying season at the Bronck Farm came to Leonard's mind and he expressed the wish he might be there handling a scythe and hay fork for a short time. The college staff, in preparation for a triennial catalogue, was trying to get biographical data about Rufus Raymond who was graduated from Williams in 1807 and was alleged to have died at Cocksackie.

In mid-August Leonard could report the term was going by fast. If Leonard Sr. and family were planning to visit Williamstown, they should stop at the Union House where Leonard had made tentative reservations with Mr. Hosford.

Williams Biographical Annals summarizes the final aspects of the Bronks' student days and their untimely passing:

Edwin E. Bronk [Class of 1850], of Cocksackie, N.Y., born July 11, 1829, studied Law, but was never well enough to practice; and died, Unmarried, in June 1861, after a lingering illness. Ever gentlemanly and unobtrusive in all our intercourse. Had high rank as a student, and was one of the speakers in his Junior year at the Prize Rhetorical Exercise [topic - Polarity of the Magnet]. His family have all passed away, save one surviving sister [Adelaide] who is wife of Rev. Louis [Lewis] Lampman, of Newark, N.J.

Leonard Bronk [Class of 1851] was born at Cocksackie, N.Y. October 21, 1831. After graduating he commenced the study of law at Hudson. The winter of 1852-3 he spent at the Albany Law School. April 8, 1853, he was admitted to the bar at Albany, as were also DeWitt and Alden of the same class. In the fall of 1853 Leonard and his brother, Edwin (Class of 1850) went south for their health; but Leonard was not benefited and returned home to die. His death occurred July 23, 1854. He was unmarried.

In the year 1855, after the tragic death of his brother, Edwin E. Bronk took what might be called the Grand Tour of Europe. His passport and passport book as well as his European travel guides are in the family archives at Bronck Museum. Edwin is described as being 5' 9" in height, with hazel eyes, black hair, and dark complexion. From the various border permits stamped in his passport book, we can determine he traveled to France, the German and the Italian States, Belgium, and as far east as Constantinople. Unfortunately no letters have survived for these years. □ □ □ □ □

GOOD-NEWS LETTER *(continued from page 1)*

It was back in the first months of 1942 that the inspiration for the Good-News Letter came, when Jimmy Nardo wrote the first postal card to your chairman, George W. Bagley, asking for "news." Jimmy got a long letter in reply and at the same time came the question "If he likes to know what's going on back home, wouldn't the rest of the fellows also be interested?" You know the rest of the story because nearly three thousand of you have been on the mailing list at one time or another.

One or two volunteers helped the first month and about 500 letters were mailed out the day Corregidor fell. That was May 7th, 1942. Since then we are mighty proud that we've never missed a deadline, and always on the 6th or 7th of every month, a letter has gone out. At first it was a four page affair. Later it expanded to as many as 10 pages but overseas postage rates crippled us and we reduced the size by purchasing a Vari-Typer with which to cut the stencils. A good many of your folks here at home addressed envelopes, folded letters and handled the address changes. There were hundreds of thousands of address changes — some fellows had a couple dozen apiece, but we tried our best to keep up with you. Sometimes we fell down miserably, but we kept at it. Censorship limited us to a great extent and it became impossible to more than hint at where some of you were. Lots of times we could read between the lines in your replies — incidentally we have on file over 8000 airmails, V-letters and regular letters and cards that you have sent us. For two years we had a current mailing list of over 2000 a month and the highest number was last April — just a year ago when we sent out 2315 Good-News Letters of which 1261 went overseas.

The fellow in charge of our monthly job of addressing and mailing was Eddy V. Z. Henderson, and he secured assistance from a score or more men and women who spent many an hour with the typewriters and pen and ink, filling in the serial numbers and addresses. There are several on the staff who have been "regulars" right through the war, and others have from necessity come and gone from time to time. Probably we never will know exactly how many homefront workers spent their time on this monthly job of sending out the News Letter.

Now that so many of you are coming home, or are already discharged and now that the mails are operating better, censorship restrictions are lifted and the war is over, we are sure you will be able to get home-town news from your folks far better than heretofore. They have done a swell job too, backing us up financially and it never was necessary to make many requests for funds to defray our costs during

the last four years.

Greene County is the garden spot of the valley. We are proud of it and we are mighty proud of all the Greene County men and women who have been through this war. This war wasn't like any we've ever had before. More people were involved and the results were much more far reaching than anything before in history. Naturally we are all glad that it is over, and we hope for each of you that you will make the best of your situation and that in due time you will be back home again in Greene County. It's a great place and it is always changing — but always much the same. Nowadays the post-war changes are noticeable because of new businesses and buildings. We'll let you in on the most recent: Construction is already under way for a new garage for the Boice Motor Company



Office staff volunteers for the Good-News Letter, taken at Catskill, March 29, 1944

of Catskill At Hunter, Alfred Ferraro, owner of Sunshine Villa, announces plans to build a lake which will extend from the former CCC site to a point near Camp Jened Donald D. Scarborough returns to duty as superintendent of the New York State Vocational Institution at Coxsackie, April first, after more than two years of service with the AMG in Europe Judge Fromer, State Troopers and Sheriff's office believe they have cleaned up a wave of juvenile delinquency which had Athens worried Kiskatom is investigating the possibility of establishing a fire district. William Lasher is president of the newly formed fire company and pledges already mounting toward the \$2000-\$3000 needed for the equipment The Army stepped into Catskill to request local authorities to take action against Nifty's Restaurant, Water Street, an alleged disorderly house.

(continued on page 6)

GOOD-NEWS LETTER *(continued from page 5)*

. . . . Raymond L. Harring was elected president of the Catskill Country Club and Richard M. Ace was named to head the Rip Van Winkle Club at its 61st annual meeting. Twelve members of the Rips have been in service and all are now demobilized except one. The annual meeting was a welcome-home party for the vets. First Baptist Church of Catskill dedicated its new organ on the second anniversary of the decision to launch the project.

MARRIED: Ruth L. Dovey, Johnstown, N.Y., to Wiltsie Finch, Catskill; Lois Best to George B. Wagner, both of Catskill; Mrs. Manuella Boomhower to Ernest B. Slater, both of Greenville; Gertrude Nehring, Schenectady to William Hodor, Catskill; Fay Triglia, the Bronx to Louis J. Petramale, Athens; Beatrice Wallace, Coxsackie, to Clarke Post, Catskill Here are a few new citizens: A son to the Frank Kozlowskis of Athens; a daughter to the William Beemers of New Baltimore.

Here's a letter from Cecil Apjohn of Catskill written from Nordenham, Germany And from Nagasaki, Japan we have a letter from Pfc Marvin C. Rose of Tannersville Bob Van Valkenburgh, with an address of c/o F.P.O. San Francisco who writes: "I've enjoyed reading the Good-News Letters very much and to assure it's continuance I'm sending you my new address. I'm stationed on Guam now at a base where all the discharges are shipped home from. Say hello to all my buddies in the service for me, will you?"

[And so the Good-News Letter goes, with names and names of births, marriages, engagements, discharges from the armed forces, and new military addresses.]

And that, fellows and girls, is the end of the news which will come to you from our office. There are about five hundred names in our open file which is just what we started with four years ago, but of course the original five hundred have all been replaced as far as we know.

Those of us who are in at the end are: George and Eleanor Bagley, Gilbert Fredenburgh, Eddy V. Z. Henderson, Mrs. Florence MacLaughlin, Helen Moore, Mrs. Mary Alice Reaves, Mrs. Eva Rowe, Mrs. Mabel Smith, Mrs. J. W. Brooks, Elsie Young, regular staff members, and Mrs. Anna W. Bagley, Mrs. J. W. Brooks, Lewis Faubel and Mrs. Jennie Tootill. From these people listed above in particular and from everyone else in Greene County, we are signing off for the last time as

"The Gang Back Home"

□ □ □ □ □

WE APPRECIATE GREAT GRANDMOTHER'S SHAWL BUT

Unlike many museums, the Bronck complex of historical buildings and its contents are supported almost entirely by private funds, funds which come from a variety of activities. These monies are stretched to do a lot of museum work by the additional contribution of hours of volunteer help.

In his will probated in 1939, Leonard Bronk Lampman set aside the income from a \$50,000 trust fund to maintain the historic Bronck Homestead. With the nation still in the grip of the great depression of the 1930's, that seemed entirely adequate. But the years of continued inflation had an adverse influence. Fortunately in the early 1960's President Henry Werker encouraged the Albany trustee to consider more remunerative investments than government bonds, investments which yielded increased yearly income and some growth in principal.

And as the 1960 decade passed, the Society received several small legacies which were added to the building renovation funds which were utilized within the last few years.

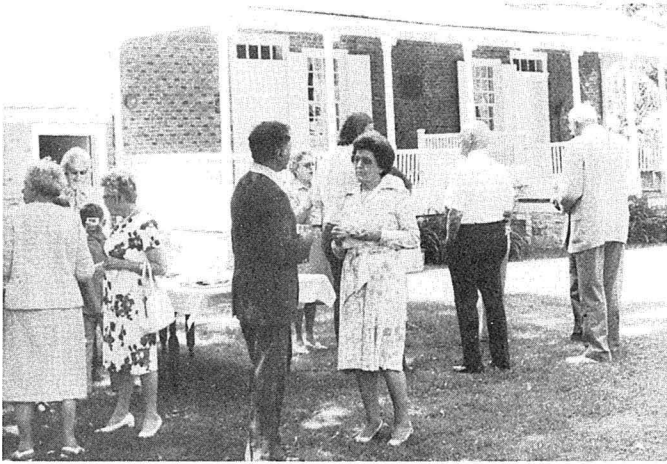
Nelson and Marguerite Griswold of Platte Clove and Lake Jackson, Texas, made the next move. Theirs was a donation of a substantial block of Dow Chemical stock which has doubled in size with a split. That stock is now worth several thousand dollars.

Certain of the trustees, after a brief respite from the capital fund drive undertaken to provide the funds for the major building conservation effort of 1979-1980, have now begun the task of raising a capital endowment for this society. It is a low-keyed effort but one which is paying off. Four persons have indicated plans to provide legacies for this purpose.

And in late May of this year, the society was notified of the generous arrangement made by the late William Van Bergen Van Dyck. Subject to a lifetime interest for his niece, Mrs. Florence Van Dyck Bucher, a fifty percent share in a substantial trust will eventually come to the Greene County Historical Society, Inc. Mr. Van Dyck was a cousin of Leonard Bronk Lampman and was also a good friend to the Bronck Museum.

Members of the corporation and others in sympathy with the goals and purposes of this not-for-profit educational body, chartered by the University of the State of New York, are urged to consider naming this society in their wills. Sums, both large and small, will assist in providing the type of income needed to support this National Historic Landmark. Don't put off good intentions!

□ □ □ □ □



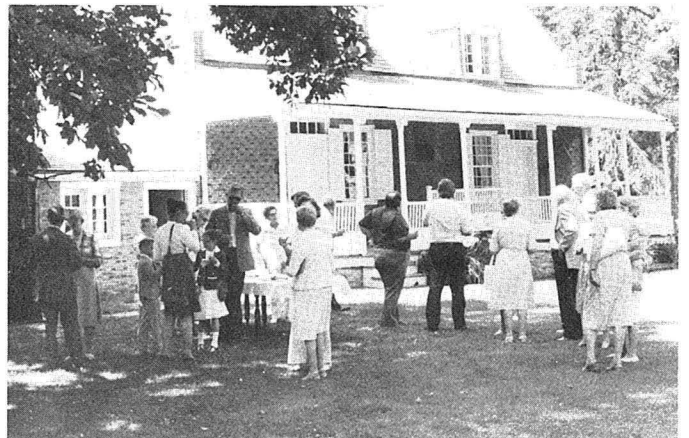
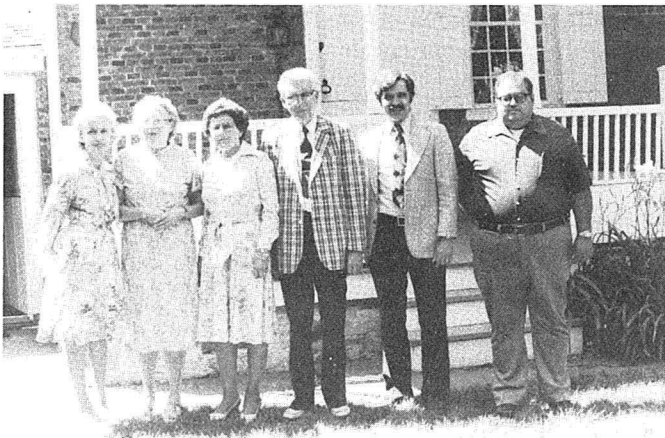
President Kriele
photographs the

**Annual Meeting
and
Open House**

June 28, 1981



Lower left are newly elected trustees Betty Gustavson, Betty Miller, Kitty von Schenk, Leonard Palmer, David Dorffeld, and Frank Jolly.



THE CORVÉE IN NINETEENTH CENTURY GREENE COUNTY

—Raymond Beecher and Frances Dietz

Under feudal law in Europe, public authorities exacted unpaid or partially paid labor for road maintenance. The colonial policy in America, established by royal decree in 1643, continued this ancient system by requiring all able-bodied males between the ages of sixteen and sixty to labor at least one day a year on the King's Highways or be subject to a fine of five shillings. Locally, in the construction of the King's Highway which passes through the eastern section of Greene County, it was directed that much of the labor should be drawn from local residents.

The development of the privately financed turnpike roads in the earlier years of the nineteenth century was a means of providing "through" transportation but the problem of local maintenance of secondary roads was ever-present. It was resolved by continuing the ancient practice of forced labor. The townships were divided into road districts by Road Commissioners; each district had its Overseer of Highways, usually one of the larger property owners whose land holdings were in that district. Each year the town Road Commissioners would assess the number of days of labor to be performed by residents, notify the various Overseers of the Highways, and hold them to proper completion of the work.

In the James Stevens Memorial Collection at Bronck Museum are surviving records of such road activity in the town of Greenfield (Greenville) between the years 1809-1812. By order of the Commissioners Isaac Blakely, Peter Brandow and Henry N. Stone, the Overseer of District No. 32, Henry Talmage, whose responsibility began at the Albany County line by Timothy Lake's land and ran south to Calendar's store at the village four corners, was instructed to repair that stretch of highway. "You are hereby required to take the above named men under your charge and work the District Road as the Law Directs. Also make return according to Law. Given under our hands at the town of Greenfield this 30th of April 1809. Property owners and days assessed were: Edward Lake 4, Truman Lake 5, Louis Lake 4, George Dudley 8, Isaac Blakely 8, Asa Blakely 1, Samuel Spees 8, Benjamin Spees 7, Joseph Torrance 1, Henry Talmage 10, Levert Denison 3, Jessie Denison 2, Samuel Bennet 2, Abel Wakely 7, Benoi Austen 3, Oliver Gibbs 4, Ransom Hinman 6, James Brown 2, and John Spoor 1.

By March 22, Henry Talmage could report back to the commissioners that the property owners in his district had worked the assigned number of days except that James Brown and John Spees had

absconded previous to the working of the road. "Benjamin Hinman has also been absent so I could not call on him." From the Talmage report, it can be seen the major property owners were permitted to use hired hands, sons or grandsons, as well as tenants.

Included in that same James Stevens Memorial Collection, is an original 1812-1813 list of 398 town of Greenville adult male residents, identified by road districts. It is not the undated list printed in Beers' *History of Greene County* on page 293.

In comparison with the Greenville experience of the early decades of the nineteenth century, we find that by 1894, at the advent of the automobile age, this system of road maintenance had become more formalized with printed forms, etc. By then it was permitted to commute the days of labor by paying the sum of one dollar the day. Yet many individuals, particularly in the rural areas, preferred work to commutation. They supplied teams of horses or oxen; the town had pieces of larger equipment.

In addition to keeping the roads passable, the District Overseer of Highways was now charged with the responsibility of having the various property owners cut weeds, briars and brush within the bounds of the highway within ten days of being notified.

One amusing incident of the corvée system of road repair is found in the dispute between John M. Haynes of Big Hollow and Highway Overseer John McGlashan. In a letter to the Greene County Board of Supervisors dated November 5, 1895, the former complained of mistreatment. That letter, with its misspelling and lack of punctuation is quoted:

Overseer of the highway John McGlashan warned me last June with team to work on the mountain road with the road machine I said to him I would not work my colt on the mountain on the machine I would plow or work with the small scraper he said then he had no use for me he wished me to work my team with an ox team

Aug 8th he warned me to work again with team I hired a man and a good ox team for ½ day or all day just as he liked he axcepted them then I said may I bring on more help and work out my whole assessment he said no I shall return you for the two days that you did not work in June I then tend him \$2.00 before witnesses that he said he paid for man and team he would not axcept it said I might go on and work ½ day I then went on the road with my men and worked where he warned me worked out my full Assessment 3½ days did good and necessary work that I can prove

We wer working at one time puting in a Stone Sluise as he ordered the machine caught on one of the large Stones he called for a bar my man steped up and raised the whell this was the only bar on the Sluise at that time

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EXCERPTS FROM ROBERT BLOOMER GRIFFIN'S DIARY (1866)

—Mrs. R. D. Olney, Manhattan, Kansas

Robert B. Griffin, son of Abijah and Abigail (Bloomer) Griffin, grandson of Gershom Griffin, was born 11 June 1809 in Hunter, Greene County, New York. In 1833 the Griffin family migrated to Huron County, Ohio. A few of the family remained in Greene County, and this diary portrays a trip back to visit Robert's place of birth and the cousins still living in the area. Entries use Robert's spelling.

Oct. 23, 1866. Came to Poughkeepsie. Crossed the river, hired a conveyance and arrived in the valley at H. Griffins about 2 o'clock. Staid the night.

Oct. 24, 1866. Went to Isaac Griffins this morning. Staid until 11:00, then went to their daughter, Mrs. Duryeas. Took dinner, then went to Charles Griffins. Staid the night.

Oct. 25. Got up this morning all right, took a breakfast of clams, then went to Mrs. Thorns. Took dinner, then started for R. Coles. Stayed until bed time and then returned to C. Griffins. Staid all night.

Oct. 26. Got up this morning in good time. Took our breakfast of clams. Went with Charles over on the Wallakill to a place called Baren. Came back to dinner, then went to his son, Henry's in the afternoon. Staid till night and then came back to Isaac's and staid all night.

Oct. 27. Got up this morning in good visiting time. Went this noon to a Quaker Meeting. Heard a man preach from Ioway. Came home and took dinner, then went to Charles'. Seen them play ball and then all hands came to Henry's. Staid all night.

Oct. 29. This day some appearance of rain. Henry Griffin took us to Newburgh. Rained some on the way. Took a steam boat at 11:00 and came up the river to Rhinebeck. Crossed over to Rondout. Got a conveyance and went to see Caroline & Esther Ann. Found them all well. Staid the night.

Oct. 30. Rained all night. Raining still this morn. Staid in house all fore noon. Partly cleared this pm. Went up to Kingston and engaged a team to take us to Woodstock.

Oct. 31. Got up this morn and found weather pleasant but cool. Took breakfast and prepared for a start. Our team came between 8 and 9. Took passage and started for Woodstock. Got there about noon. Found letters awaiting us from home. Staid to John Miller's until eve. Then went to Josephine's and staid all night.

Nov. 1. After breakfast went over to John Miller's. Walked around and visited with John until afternoon, then went over to Joseph's and took tea; then came back to John's and staid all night.

(continued on page 10)

VEDDER LIBRARY NOTES

□◇ The 34th Edition, American Library Directory, to be published this fall, lists the Vedder Memorial Library as a major research source for Greene County, the Catskill Mountains and the mid-Hudson River. And it all began with Charles E. Dornbusch's efforts in bringing together an accumulation of miscellaneous material and shaping it into a working library.

□◇ The Oneida Historical Society has contributed four 1905 postcards depicting the wreck of the *Young America* just north of the Athens-Hudson Light House.

□◇ From Florence Palmer Hunter of Catskill has come a handbook of military information relating to the Spanish-American War. It is the *Official Roster of the 203d Regiment, New York Volunteer Infantry*. The officers and enlisted men of Company K, Catskill, are listed, including forebears of Mrs. Hunter.

□◇ Original photographs, glass plate negatives and glossy prints are part of the Wells-Van Loan material secured from Grant W. Van Loan of Fort Plain. Charles C. Wells was a late nineteenth, early twentieth century Coxsackie photographer and took numerous photographs of river boats passing the landing, street scenes and local residents.

□◇ Through arrangements with Mrs. Ethel Rathbun of Delmar, a good friend to this library and the Society, Mrs. Douglas Reynolds has donated an unusually informative mortgage indenture dated 1818. It covers land in Greenville township along the Coxsackie Turnpike. One reads such surnames as Conine, Lyon, Reynolds, Smith, Badgely, Cowell, Clark, Lansing as well as the firm of Reed and Skeel. The earliest date mentioned is January 25, 1798.

□◇ The Civil War collection is strengthened by the acquisition of the EXTRA Edition of the *Catskill Democratic Journal* published September 9, 1863. It lists the various townships' men whose names were drawn in that lottery for the military draft. Mr. Philip H. DuBois of St. Louis, Missouri was the donor.

□◇ A group of regional postcards, including several rarer views not heretofore in the collection at the Vedder Library, have come from Miss Norma Saile and Mrs. Roland E. Heermance via Roberta Everitt. Of particular interest is the card of the Catskill Mt. Railway passenger train at the depot on Water Street, Catskill, and the dirt road scene of North Washington Street, Athens.

□◇ The center for Asian Studies, University of Hawaii at Manoa, has listed the Far East watercolors and letters now in the Howland collection at this library.

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GRIFFIN DIARY (continued from page 9)

Nov. 2. Started this morn for Hunter in company with John Miller and wife. Went up the Plattekill Clove Road. Found it rough and steep as in olden time. Passed our former residence. Went to James Douglass'. Spent the day very pleasantly in tramping round and making calls.

Nov. 4. Sunday at Douglass'. Went to Church this afternoon and again in evening.

Nov. 5. This morning the air is cool but very pleasant. Saw ice 1/2 inch thick. Douglass' took us to the old place. Made a general inspection of the premises. Took dinner in the old house with Larry Norton, its present occupant. All is changed here. I am a stranger in my childhood home.

Nov. 6. Election day here. Went to Pine Orchard. Visited the Mountain House. Weather clear, had a splendid view. Went to the Falls and looked down into the abiss where the water falls a distance of over 200 feet. Then went down a flite of stairs to the bottom of the chasm and took an upward view. After satisfying our curiosity, started for home. Came where they were holding election. Stopped and saw some old friends.

Nov. 7. Weather fine. Took Douglass' team and went to the Stoney Clove. Waked this morning with the head ache and did not enjoy the scene as I otherwise would. Got home at 2 o'clock. Took dinner and then went to C. Burgesses and took tea. Staid the evening.

Nov. 8. Started up town in company with Douglass. Went to Frays tavern and from there to J. Roses. Made a short visit and then went to the old church. Came back to Frays and from there home. Arrived at Douglass' at 4. Found the children all at home. Took tea and visited until bed time.

Nov. 9. Packed our traps and started from Henry Griffins'. Daniel Douglass' wife and Hattie went with us. Had a good time crossing the mountains. Got to Henry's about noon.

Nov. 10. Got K P this morning in good health and made preparations for another move. Got our breakfast and started for J. Warners'. Went down the mountain without breaking our necks and got to Warners' about 1 o'clock. Found them all well. Had a good time.

Nov. 11. Sunday. Stayed at J. Warners' until after noon then went to Miller Jones'. Stayed until evening and came back and staid at Warners' through the night.

Nov. 12. Started in company with Warner and his wife for Catskill. Got there at 1 o'clock in time for the boat. Took passage and came up the river. Got to Albany at 5. Took westward train on the NY Central at 6 and started for Port Byron.

□ □ □ □ □

THE CORVÉE (continued from page 8)

At another time my men wer at work together and no other men they asked him if they wer doing good work he said they wer /s/ John M. Haynes

In the same year, Clarence L. Wiltse of Tannersville, District Overseer in the town of Hunter, had to report to Commissioner of Highways Michael O'Hara that he was having trouble getting people to cut the brush along their roads, even after proper notification. He therefore listed a special assessment for brush cutting and hauling away as follows:

W. P. Ellis	\$10.14	Mrs. S. S. Mulford	7.45
Celia Carroll	1.20	P. W. Perkins	2.12
P. H. Smith	2.30	Mrs. F. M. Arming	1.50
Mrs. DeLong	1.50	George Campbell	8.95
John Shoebly	3.08	H. H. Payne	1.20
			Total \$39.44

In the files of the Town Historian of New Baltimore is a Road Warrant issued on March 29, 1883 by the elected Commissioners of Highways (Andrew Van Slyke, William J. Akins, and Allen L. Dean) to William A. Clow, Overseer of Highways in District No. 36 of the Town of New Baltimore. Mr. Clow made the following assessment of days to be worked on the portion of town roads in his district:

Wm. A. Clow	6 1/2
Thomas Albright	2 1/2
Peter VanDerpool	10

He returned the warrant to the Commissioners stating that all three of the property owners had completed their assessed days by June 8th. Thus there were no commutations and no fines. Had the labor not been performed, the fine would have been \$1.50 per day.

For lack of a better system the corvée continued for much of the nineteenth century in the rural areas. But the Good Roads Association was about to use its influence for a change in the system. One can readily understand the relief of the public officials when the county and town highway departments hired permanent crews and were financed from the annual budgets. It was the end of a system of road maintenance which began in medieval times and continued into the early years of the twentieth century.

□ □ □ □ □

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