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TRANSPORTATION TO THE MOUNTAIN HOUSE —C. A. BEACH & CO.

—Raymond Beecher

In 1980, shortly after the demise of her husband, Charles A. W. Beach, Mrs. Eleanor Johnston Beach of Catskill established the C. A. and the C. A. W. Beach Memorial Collection in the Vedder Memorial Library at Bronck Museum. In the main this important collection of ledgers, journals, letters and miscellaneous material relates to the Catskill Mountain House, the Beach Stage Coach line, the preliminary negotiations and subsequent work on the Catskill Mountain and the Otis Elevating Railways and to the Irving House in Catskill Village. One section of this primary historical source material has furnished the background for this article.

The fall of 1869 brought new problems to Charles L. Beach (1808-1902), owner of the Catskill Mountain House. His younger brother, Addison F. Beach (1817-1891) was no longer interested in operating what remained of the far flung Beach stage coach transportation system. Reliable, regularly scheduled service to the famed hotel was absolutely essential; resourceful Charles L. Beach came up with a solution; he would form a partnership with his nephew, Charles A. Beach (1843-1913). The former would supply part of the capital and credit while

ARCHIBALD STEPHENS OF STEPHENSVILLE

—Thomas Blaisdell

How frequently, as we drive through a small hamlet today, do we marvel what human beings could once have found in that locality to stimulate and gratify the desire to live there rather than somewhere else! But such an environment, however unattractive it may be now, could once have appeared to an observer as more desirable than a villa on the French Riviera if he had invested years of his life in its preparation and development.

Such must have been the feeling of Archibald Stephens, Esquire, of the little settlement of Stephenville (now the hamlet of Alcove in the southwest corner of the Town of Coeymans) during the early decades of the 19th Century as he carved out for himself a large and prosperous country estate. The John Preston map of the farm, drawn in 1824 and illustrated in Bennett's *The People's Choice*¹, shows the extent of the land and the variety of the enterprises that Stephens had acquired through almost a half-century of effort. There was a comfortable mansion house, a gristmill, a stone quarry, many outbuildings and springs, and some hundred and fifty acres of land — all of which became the property of his son Archibald on the death of Archibald, Senior, in 1836.



Charles Addison Beach (1843-1913)

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Stephens Store at Stephenville (Alcove), erected about 1808.

Note fine stonework.

Photo from author's collection.

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C. A. BEACH & CO. [continued from page 11]

Charles A. Beach would manage the livery business as part owner.

The relationship between Charles L. Beach and his nephew, Charles A. Beach had always been a close one since, at the age of four years, the latter had been taken into the Beach home on Liberty Street, Catskill; he was reared with his cousins. As a young adult he had been involved in Hudson River steamboat transportation between Catskill and New York, another earlier Beach family enterprise.

The partnership contract between Charles L. and Charles A. Beach reads:

This is to certify that we the undersign Charles L. Beach and Charles A. Beach have entered into co-partnership with the style and firm of C. A. Beach & Co. for the purpose of a Stage and Livery Business, to contribute equally to a Capital Stock of Seven Thousand and Five Hundred Dollars and Share and Share alike in all gains & Profits and all Losses and expense.

/s/ Charles L. Beach

/s/ Charles A. Beach

The bill of sale from Addison F. Beach to the new firm of C. A. Beach & Co. is also dated February 12, 1870. An inventory taken at the time lists a variety of wheeled vehicles as well as horses. We read of seven coaches, ten wagons and carriages, one lumber wagon, two one-horse wagons, a cutter, a Concord sleigh, a pair of bobs, and a half interest in an express wagon. The horses carried such names as Cauterskill Jim, Smith Haines, Oneonta, Roggen, Rowdy, Burget Colt, Hudson and Gilboa Velocipede — they were valued at \$2,505. The sale price covered the various tools and equipment in the barn, stable and yard, as well as the office furniture. Collectors might note the bill of sale expressly included the framed print "Duke of Brighton Coach." The goodwill value of the livery and stage business was set at \$1,500; the total purchase price came to \$7,500. C. A. Beach & Co. did not purchase the real estate but rather rented the premises for \$450 the year.

The season of 1870, the first under the new firm, was profitable enough so as to encourage C. A. Beach to buy out his partner. This transaction took place on paper the last day of December 1870:

This is to certify that the Co-partnership entered into by the undersigned Febry. 12, 1870 under the Style and firm of C. A. Beach & Co. is this day dissolved by mutual consent and by the sale of C. L. Beach of his right title and interest to C. A. Beach. The Business continued by C. A. Beach and for his individual benefit.

From this date until shortly after the opening of the Catskill Mountain Railway in 1882, Charles A. Beach was the sole proprietor and operator of the stage coach line to the Mountain House. During the summer season he roomed at the family hotel,

directing the stage coach line from that vantage point.

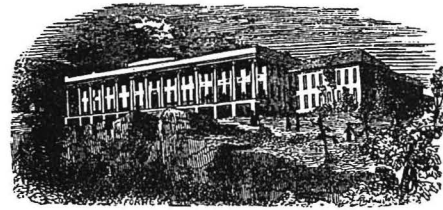
After one season's experience, Charles A. concluded it was too expensive to board his horses in Catskill over the winter months. The problem was to locate a cheaper place. To that purpose he had flyers printed at J. B. Hall's "Steam Presses, Recorder Office, Catskill" on September 12, 1871:

ADVERT. TO FARMERS!

Any farmer, within 50 miles of Catskill, having comfortable Stable Room, and about 100 or 125 tons of Good Hay, desirous of Wintering 25 or 30 Horses, will please address me by letter, before the 1st of October, stating terms, etc. Also price per week for board of man to take care of the Horses.

There must be an abundance of water, (a running stream preferred) and a large field for the Horses to run in during the day.

Chas. A. Beach



THE CATSKILL MOUNTAIN HOUSE.

C. L. BEACH, Proprietor.

This favorite Summer Resort is now open for the reception of visitors. The building is 200 feet front, with a wing 180 feet, and three stories high. A splendid colonnade extends along the front of the main building.

It is situated 12 miles from the village of Catskill, upon the summit of one of the principal Mountains, at an elevation of 3000 feet above tide water.

For the accommodation of visitors, and to save them from annoyance, imposition, exorbitant charges, &c., the Messrs. BEACH have established a line of stages in connection with the Hudson River Day Boats, the Trains of the Hudson River Rail Road and the Mountain House. They have also established a Steam Ferry between Catskill Landing and Oak Hill Station for the better accommodation of passengers by Railroad.

Their AGENT will be found at all times, at the Steamboat Landing and at the H. R. R. Station, Oak Hill, to assist passengers, take charge of baggage, &c.

A word to those unacquainted with this spot, may not be unacceptable. It is twelve miles from Catskill Landing, upon the summit of one of the principal Mountains, at an elevation of three thousand feet above tide water. The Mountain is here crowned by a Table Rock of immense size on which the House is built. This rock terminates a few feet in front of the House in a fearful precipice. In the rear, peaks upon peaks arise in every direction, and far away in the distance, all covered with luxuriant foliage. No description can do justice to the almost illimitable prospect in front. Standing upon the piazza, or rock, just mentioned, you seem to have left the earth, and to be gazing from some ethereal height down upon the world and its concerns. You see nothing above or around you—all is below—even the clouds wheel and roll in fleecy grandeur at your feet. Forests, meadows, harvest fields, plains, mountains, rivers, lakes, cottages, villages and cities are in every direction.—A deep repose seems to have settled upon the world. No sound reaches you, except, perhaps the rattle of thunder from some distant hill, or the sweet song of the mountain bird upon the tree beneath you.

The South and North Mountains are peaks a short distance from the House, affording different, and if possible, still more magnificent views. Good foot-paths lead to these points and, aside from the prospect, the cool, bracing air, renders these, and many other walks about the mountains, invigorating and delightful.

The "KATERSHILL FALLS" is another wonder to be seen at this place. Indeed, many prefer the beauty here presented, to the view in front. They are about two and a half or three miles west of the Mountain House, to which carriages run for the accommodation of visitors. The body of water is small, and comes from two lakes on the summit of the mountain. It precipitates itself over a rock at the end of one of the lakes, to the depth of one hundred and eighty feet, then runs about one hundred feet and springs over another rock to the depth of eighty feet more. The descent to the bottom is perfectly safe and easy. Steps are arranged all the way; and, although thousands yearly descend them, no accident has ever happened. When at the bottom, you gaze with astonishment and delight at the wonders before you. You pass behind the water, and find yourself in a cavernous amphitheatre, whose rocky vault extends far in front, and the falling spray seems a curtain of mist let down at the entrance. You look beyond, and as you see the moss covered rock arising to the very heavens above, you seem to be in some dilapidated cathedral of nature, the roof of which has long since disappeared.

Such are a few of the attractions at and about the MOUNTAIN HOUSE. Some have been deterred from visiting it, from the impression that access to it must be difficult and dangerous. This is a great mistake. The road is as fine as can be found in the country; and although the ascent to the Mountain is a continuous rise for about three miles, yet there is no grade upon it as high as is passed over by all our roads. And so wild and picturesque is the scenery (of the ascent) that it would well repay the ride if there were nothing attractive on the summit.

Catskill Mountain House flyer urging visitors to use Beach Stage Coach service.

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C. A. BEACH & CO. [continued from page 12]

The flyer reached the inn at Prattsville operated by Charles E. Richtmyer and it was he who contracted with Beach to provide a winter's keep for between 25 and 40 horses until the first day of June 1872 on the following terms:

For fall pasturing, depending upon the weather, at 25 cents per week per animal; for keeping horses on hay of good quality, allowing them all they will eat until the pasturage is good in the month of May, 1872, at 7 dollars the month for each horse; for pasturage in May 37½ cents the week per animal.

The contract with Richtmyer also provided for good winter stable accommodations including straw bedding. The eighteen-acre lot in the rear of the hotel and residence was reserved solely for the Beach horses. Dan Jones, Beach's man, was to tend the horses, being provided with room and board at four dollars the week. His wages were set at 15 dollars the month.

Application for work as drivers and stable hands came into C. A. Beach's office at irregular intervals. The addresses were in Greene, Schoharie, Delaware and Albany Counties and as far away as Otsego's Butternut Valley. One reads the names of Daniel Decker of Cairo, Frank Hilyard of Durham, Ransom Van Loan of Conesville, Obediah Ruland of Mooresville, Edward Colar of Morris, Granville Snyder of Cooksburg and Ephraim LeGrange of Roxbury. Men were taken on as needed with the largest payrolls being in the months of July and August. Turnover was heavy. Wages were set at from \$20 to \$40 the month, depending upon whether or not board and washing was furnished. Sleeping facilities were provided at the Catskill Point stables – cots, blankets and clean bed linen. In 1872 Mrs. Carpenter agreed to board the men for 20 cents the meal; she commenced with 3 men for breakfast on June 1.

In the earlier years on lists maintained by C. A. Beach, one finds the names of potential employees with such marginal comments as "looks dirty," "drinks," "remember him," "four-horse driver," "two-horse driver," "not coming," and "engaged." Drivers for the four-horse stages were especially desirable and were paid a bonus which could raise their wages to \$40 the month as against \$25 the month for a two-horse man.

Adequate operating capital was always a problem since the income was seasonal. Money was borrowed from the Tanners National Bank with notes endorsed by Charles L. Beach. Addison F. Beach had also accepted notes for the sale of the livery business in 1870 and that interest payment had to be met. After a decade of operation Charles A. Beach came to the conclusion he had made money during the first three years but thereafter found the firm only

marginally profitable at best. As sideline income, C. A. Beach & Co. provided stabling accommodations for Catskill horses owned by such men as Jas. E. Beach and Joshua Atwater. Frederick Cooke for many years paid the firm \$150 for the yearly supply of horse manure. A monthly salary of \$150 was withdrawn by Charles A. Beach for his personal use, he being unmarried at the time.

Substantial quantities of hay and oats, as well as straw for bedding, were hauled in to the Point or up to the Catskill Mountain House. Hay supplies came from such individuals as Jeremiah Burgett and afterward Mrs. Burgett, Isaac Rouse, H. F. Vedder, Charles H. Pierson, Peter H. Van Hoesen, Jacob Van Orden, Abram Phillips, J. P. Lennon and David E. Horton. In an emergency, the firm of Jones and Bagley could also be called upon.

By the fall of 1872 the problem of wintering the horses had to be faced once again. This time C. A. Beach went farther afield in contracting with Henry R. Washbon – the horses were to be driven to the Morris area of Otsego County. Hay in the amount of 100 tons, 2 tons of oat straw and 50 bushels of corn were to be supplied. Beach was to pay \$500 by December 1, 1872 and \$700 by April 1, 1873. The signed contract was deposited with A. G. More & Company, bankers at Morris. C. L. Beach welcomed the opportunity to winter his Catskill Mountain House Company animals with those of C. A. Beach & Company. Ten Mountain House horses were included in the drive to Morris that late fall; C. A. Beach had 28.

Other expenses were shared between the Catskill Mountain House Company and C. A. Beach & Co. – wages for assistant agent S. W. Stimpson, horse feed at the Pine Orchard and advertising. Van Loan's *Catskill Mountain Guide* for 1880 carries one of the Beach cooperative advertisements, "Ho! For the Mountains!" It stresses the fact that the Catskill Mountain House has its own transportation with C. A. Beach's Mountain House stages and carriages:

The stage-coaches of the past have been superseded by light platform wagons and the time from the Landing to the Hotel is now about one hour less than in former years; the stage fare reduced to \$2.00 including hand luggage – trunks extra according to size.

That advertisement goes on to list the principal drives available to guests – Cauterskill Falls, Haines Falls, Palenville, Cauterskill Clove, Fawn's Leap, Tannersville, Plattekill Clove, Stony Clove, and Hunter Village. The Mountain House reminded readers of Van Loan's guide. It had its own dockage and agents at Catskill Point for the assistance of guests arriving by Hudson River steamboat.

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Not only was fodder and bedding needed for horses at Catskill Point stable but also at the Mountain House. In 1872 between January 8 and June 14 C. A. Beach noted that 449 bags of oats (960 bushels) were hauled up the mountain by Peter Elmendorf, Ransom Van Loan and Daniel Jones. The oats cost 55 cents the bushel plus a commission fee of 2 cents each.

A few of these fodder contracts survive, including the arrangement with the Burgetts:

I made a verbal contract with Jeremiah Burget [sic] at his barn near Leeds, in the presence of Seymour Adams, to purchase his hay as follows: The two unbroken stacks (about 15 tons) at \$18 pr. ton and all the Hay in his barn (about 60 tons) at \$20 pr. ton to be delivered loose at my stable at Catskill Point. He is to commence drawing the Hay in the stacks next week and to continue until my loft is filled — after that he is to keep it about full by drawing two or three loads a week, as may be necessary until all the Hay is delivered.

After the 1871-72 and 1872-73 experiences stabling his horses at Prattsville and at Morris, C. A. Beach concluded it was preferable to keep them at Catskill. For the winter of 1873-74 he estimated his 36 horses cost \$65 per horse to winter less \$7 manure from each animal. Each horse was fed from 2 to 3 quarts of corn and an average of 22 pounds of hay each winter day — “all were very fat.”

The need for more modern stage wagons influenced C. A. Beach to investigate the station-type wagons produced by Abbot-Downing Company of Concord, New Hampshire. This required an on-site inspection of one used at the Glen House (New England summer hotel). With certain modifications, Beach concluded this type of vehicle would be suitable for the Mountain House run.

Two coaches or station wagons were ordered from Abbot-Downing Company by letter to that firm dated January 29, 1873:

Since my return I have concluded to adapt the style of running part used in the Glen House wagons — platform springs and perch — with the style of body designed by Mr. Harvey.

You can build two wagons to weigh from 1500 to 1600 lbs. each as follows — Body to be 4 ft. wide at bottom and 4½ ft. wide from seats up and hung so that the forward wheels will not strike it in turning. Track 5 ft. 2 inches. Reliable brake attached to perch. Steel tire and steel axles. Running part painted a desirable red — Body painted dark green, without scroll border. Names Chas. A. Beach on sides of middle seats. Name of house — Catskill Mountain House — on top rail. Other specifications in accord with memorandum made by Mr. Harvey 23rd inst. The load intended for the above wagons will be from 2000 to 2500 lbs. and, if possible, I would not like the weight of the wagons to exceed 1500 or 1600 lbs. each, if it can be arranged with safety & it is for this reason that I adopt steel tire and axles. I suppose from my conversation with Mr. Harvey there will be no difficulty in finishing them by May 1st as I should like to have them at that time.

When these wagons are shipped I do not wish to release the Railroad companies from any responsibility for which I understand they make a certain reduction in the charge for freight. Before sending them notify me and I will decide whether to have them delivered at Hudson or at Catskill.

The price for the wagons, as above, I understand to be \$675 each.

Very truly yours
/s/ Chas. A. Beach

The safety of the passengers on the Mountain House run was always uppermost in the minds of the Beach family. It was a steep, winding road from the base of the mountain. Therefore, when the blacksmith at Abbot-Downing modified the braking system without authorization, strong objections came from

Catskill and Mountain House Stages and Carriages.

Mr.

To CHAS. A. BEACH, D^o

For Passage from Catskill

For Passage to Catskill

Received Payment for Chas. A. Beach.

C. A. BEACH & CO. [continued from page 14]

Charles A. Beach: "In opposition, and without consulting me, the Blacksmith made an omnibus brake for the coach, certain parts of which I could not accept. Therefore he was obliged to make the brake in accordance with my wishes as expressed when the coach was ordered — and as he understood them at the time. There is no reason I should pay for his outside experiments."

The most serious accident on the line occurred during the season of 1873 — it was concluded this involved one of the new vehicles. Damages were set at \$1,103.10 with one-half being paid for by Charles L. Beach and the other by C. A. Beach & Company.

Miscellaneous journal entries in the late 1870's make interesting reading:

August 10, 1877: due from Catskill Mountain House Company for Boarding Mr. Harding's coachman & team 3¼ days (11 meals & 4 lodgings \$4.40 & 11 feeds — 88 qts. oats & hay) total cost \$15. [Mr. Harding later became well-known as the owner of Hotel Kaaterskill.]
 March 18, 1878: John Clark agreed to do my Blacksmithing as follows: To calk & set each shoe 20¢ or 80¢ each horse. Price for new hand-made shoes to be 15¢ each & setting same 20¢ — total 35¢ or \$1.40 each horse. 1878 [end of season]: Carried about 750 trunks at \$1.00 each way — say \$1500; 1608 passengers down — probably an average of 1500 each way. Pd. Catskill Mountain House Company for drivers' board for the season ending Sept. 21 — 1202 meals at 20¢ — \$240.40. Tolls (turnpike) for season — 353 four-horse at 40¢ \$141.20 and 273 two-horse at 20¢ — \$54.60. (Total) \$195.80

As indicated heretofore, The Beach Line had a virtual monopoly on travel to and from the Mountain House, few guests arriving in their own carriages. Most came by Hudson River steamboats to Catskill Landing. Stage fare received at the Mountain House in the year 1876 on behalf of the stage company is listed as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| May 31 — June 30 | \$ 525.00 |
| July | 3008.50 |
| August | 3876.50 |
| September thru October 14 | 1204.25 |
| Total | 8614.25 |

In the year 1871 it had been \$7,634.50. We also know some individual fares for special parties — Frederick Hill paid for 2½ seats for Miss Hull and three children at \$2 the seat. Miss Lizzie Brace, that same season of 1871, paid \$6 for herself and one child.

In February 1880, C. A. Beach summarized a decade of stage coach operations; he saw little potential for further profit:

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Total receipts from business | <u>\$108,218.99</u> |
| Total expenses — regular acctts. | 89,041.58 |

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| Tax Account (Civil War era levies thru 1872) | 321.29 |
| Insurance | 2,881.03 |
| Interest | 7,270.07* |
| Losses by sale & death of horses, accidents, depreciation | <u>8,880.98</u> |
| | <u>\$108,394.95</u> |

*Accrued interest not yet paid was \$65.98 and additional interest not claimed by C. L. Beach amounted to \$7,694.86.

The inventory of horses, wagons and equipment taken on March 1, 1880 indicates C. A. Beach owned 22 horses valued at \$3,000 and wagons and equipment valued at \$4,200 — total \$7,200. No mention is made of good-will. Clearly C. A. Beach & Company was losing ground financially. When the opportunity arose to participate in the location of the track route for the new railroad, C. A. Beach was willing and even anxious. In after years he would write:

My services began Sept. 27/80 and were devoted entirely to the Co. [Railroad] during the survey & location of the road (which was completed about Dec. 1/80) and, afterwards, my time was occupied with office and other work daily until the 1st of July 1881, when I went to the Mtn. House for the summer. For the above I am entitled to compensation for 9 months Services.

Driver applications for the season of 1881, hay deliveries from Wendell Saile, H. Palmer and others, as well as a record of oats and hay hauled to both the Point stables and to the Mountain House indicate it was business as usual that year for C. A. Beach & Company. But the opening of the railroad was pressing upon the firm's future operation.

The final years of C. A. Beach & Co. indicate limited livery service was provided once the railroad opened for traffic. The end was in sight. The last business entry in the journal relates to the season of 1884. Thereafter the journal pages contain only personal entries — arrangements for C. A. Beach's room and board at the Irving House and subsequently the renting of a bedroom in the Mott Opera House building. The Catskill Mountain House Company finally purchased the horses, vehicles and miscellaneous equipment; undoubtedly some of it was sold or junked. But until the completion of the Otis Elevating Railway link, horse-drawn transportation between the Catskill Mountain House and its Railroad station was still needed.

Little is known of the fate of the unemployed stage coach drivers after the startup of the railroad. But we do know that one, William Kenna, utilized his stage coach experience to apply for the position of coachman at Olana; Frederic Church hired him and he remained in the Church employment for many years.

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All illustrations for this article are from the Charles A. and Charles A. W. Beach Memorial Collection, Vedder Memorial Library, The Greene County Historical Society.

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MOUNTAIN VIEW FARM HOUSE, Kiskatom

—Edith Saxe Minerley

*The story of the Frederick Saxe boarding house at Kiskatom is based upon letters written to Edith Minerley by her grandfather many years ago, from the Saxe family material printed in Chadwick's **Old Times Corner**, and from her brother's recollections. Harold Wellington Saxe of Fishkill, New York, spent time at the farm with great grandfather Frederick and great grandmother Betsy and in later years with the grandparents, Washington J. and Ede Saxe. Two years ago Mrs. Minerley took her nephew to see the Saxe family burial ground near the old farmhouse. The nephew said it was a bit startling to see the name Frederick Saxe on a tombstone, he being named for his great, great grandfather, buried there.*

The Editor

Kiskatom, a geographical designation for a rural section in the western part of the township of Catskill once had its own post office, mills, one-room schools and church; now only the latter remains. Originally a farming community settled by prerevolutionary Palatines, during the latter part of the nineteenth century it became known for smaller type boarding houses. Mention is made of several of these in various publications of the period, particularly in the Hudson River Day Line's booklets.

I write of Mountain View Farm House, operated by my great grandfather. Its name came from the unobstructed view of the Catskill range which could be seen when one climbed to the high knoll across from the barn, on which was constructed a summer house. The land had come into the Saxe family possession in the year 1803 when Frederick's grandfather purchased Schram acreage. Two generations later Frederick Saxe tore down part of the old house and remodeled the rest, resulting in a larger two-story framed structure with cellar. Rooms used by boarders in summer were family rooms in winter. On the first floor heat came from wood and coal stoves; bedrooms benefitted slightly from warm smoke pipes coming up through the first floor ceiling openings. Pumps with cistern water were installed on each floor level, providing soft rain water. Bedrooms had the traditional wash stand equipped with bowl and pitcher; a smaller pitcher held drinking water. Kerosene lamps provided the illumination; the lamp wicks needed careful trimming to prevent smoked chimneys. Red flannel was used to lengthen the wicking and add color to the clear glass lamp fonts.

The pure air, few mosquitoes and good food attracted from between 40 to 50 guests the week; room and board could be had for between 7 and 9 dollars the week. Many families with children came from the New York — New Jersey metropolitan areas.

It was not unusual for mother and children to stay for a long summer vacation while father commuted to and from the city on weekends by train or river steamer. The Ulster and Delaware Railroad, the Catskill Mountain Railroad, the Hudson River Day Line and the Catskill Evening Line were all available for summer guests. Frederick Saxe or his hired men would meet the train or boat if prior arrangements were made.



*Mountain View Farm House
Author's collection*

Feeding 40 or more summer guests, the Saxe family and the hired help was no small task. A good table was one of the best advertisements for repeat business. During the summer season Mrs. Saxe would oversee the kitchen and the guest rooms; in later years a chef with his tall white hat might be seen in the kitchen, a man from Catskill village. Girls helping in the boarding house were never called maids; their tasks were numerous — setting tables, cleaning rooms and helping in the kitchen. As fruit and garden produce ripened on the farm, canning was an additional chore. Preserves, pickles, relishes and pickled fish all helped spice winter meals for the family. Tall hickory trees growing near the church parsonage supplied nuts for fudge, cakes and breads. The sad iron was the best nut cracker. It was considered poor hospitality if hot breads such as muffins, popovers and Sally Lunn all spread with fresh farm butter were not offered to visitors. Iron kettles were still used in the kitchen and it was best not to be underfoot when their clatter could be heard. Meat was delivered for sixty people in the early morning; the butcher frequently stayed for breakfast. Coffee came in large bags from Gillies. Ice cream was often home made until it became easier to bring it in from Catskill.

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Carrying on the tradition of leadership in the community that bore his name, Archibald, Junior, became even more possessive of property and conscious of his exalted position among his neighbors. The men in the Stephens family for generations had been physically large and powerful, and they were accustomed to having their own way. One of them, probably a brother of Archibald, had lost his life during a barn raising when he attempted single handedly to hold in position the entire weight of an end section while the other men were scampering for safety. The Stephenses were men of power and impulse, and had only slight regard for the rules and regulations of organized society.

There was, however, one cloud on the horizon for Archibald in that he had a daughter Caroline, a young lady of fourteen, quite as willful as her father, and one who had formed a romantic attachment with a young man of twenty-five. This young man, named Judson Palmer, was the antithesis of her father physically and mentally. Short and slight of build, he weighed less than one hundred and ten pounds. While not exactly improvident, yet like all young men he was more interested in pleasure than in profit and in spending money rather than making it. Needless to say, his attentions to Caroline were at once unwelcome to her father partly because of the difference in age and later because of the unpromising qualities the old man observed in him as a future son-in-law.

The Civil War had just ended but the aftermath of violence and crime that war always engenders was far from over. There were no pistol regulations, and most men who could afford one carried it. The English concept of the Victorian parent was unchallenged, and children – even fourteen-year-olds – were to be seen, not heard. But Caroline, like her father, acknowledged no rules other than her own for governing her conduct. The flirtation progressed through secret notes and clandestine meetings until the pair were finally prepared for the adventure of matrimony.

October 4, 1866 dawned bright and clear. By prearrangement Palmer had supplied himself with a horse-drawn conveyance; he picked up Caroline at her house and took her to the home of Anson Green, a Town Justice of the Peace, who lived very probably in the stone house still standing by the bridge in Alcove. There they were hurriedly married and departed down the road towards Coeymans Hollow on the way to Palmer's brother-in-law who lived at Stanton Hill in the Town of New Baltimore.

Archibald during this time was attending to his fall ploughing, but his hired man's daughter who witnessed the departure ran to the field to tell her father. He in turn told Archibald who, with his son Leander, rushed back to the barn to saddle their horses. The wedding ceremony apparently delayed the couple long enough so that the pursuit was hot on their heels. Before they had traversed the long stretch of highway that runs east past Schoolhouse No. 7 (now the Little Red School House Museum on Route 143), they could see the two horsemen coming.



*Electus Shear House, Coeymans Hollow
Author's collection*

Realizing that escape was impossible, Palmer pulled up at the home of Electus Shear (now the Paul Caswell property) and with his bride hurried upstairs to a small room that could be locked from inside. Archibald arrived minutes later and rushed up the same stairs. There can be little doubt about the intentions of both men. Each was armed with a loaded pistol – actually Palmer had two which he had borrowed from a neighbor – and a long smoldering antagonism had prepared them for violence. From the evidence later supplied by Mr. Shear and a neighbor Van Rensselaer Carmen, Archibald seized the smaller man and tried to kill him with his fists. Apparently, he also tried to shoot him, for Palmer had a superficial wound on his face. There were several shots and many screams followed by silence. Then Palmer and Caroline came down the stairs, the former badly bruised about the face and head and the latter in tears. Archibald was found lying on the floor with one of the three bullets fired from Palmer's gun through his heart. The distressed couple resumed

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MOUNTAIN VIEW FARM HOUSE *[continued from page 17]*

Entertainment helped the boarders pass the hours. Running through the farm was Vly Creek, dammed for irrigation of crops but also providing a spot for wading and boating. Trout fishing in nearby mountain streams interested some of the men folk. Since road traffic was light, walking was a favorite pasttime. One walk led around to the Dutch Reformed Church and the road going up the mountain; another went southerly to Lawrenceville. After the Otis Elevating Railway was built carriages could be hired to transport boarders to the foot of the mountain where they would embark on the inclined railway up to the Catskill Mountain House. Wagon and carriage trips made round about the northern Catskills – to Cairo, Purling and Round Top – gave the boarders an opportunity to view the choice scenery. A stop-off at the Winter Clove House for lunch was another possibility. If there were activities at the local church or Grange Hall, free hay rides took the guests to those events. A lighted lantern was hung below the wagon frame for safety's sake and for its faint illumination. At one time a chained black bear was a feature at Lawrence's Tavern before one started the ascent of the mountain.

Walton Van Loan, author of the famed Catskill Mountain guide, was a family friend. He once arranged to have boarders congregate on the house lawn in Kiskatom, to be made visible at night when the Catskill Mountain House searchlight was beamed over the vast expanse below.

The extensive lawn and flower beds added to the Mountain View Farm House's attractive appearance as did a white picket fence which separated the lawn from the roadway. The large stone horse block with Saxe initials enabled visitors to more easily ascend and descend from the horse-drawn vehicles. The croquet lawn, shaded by four large maple trees, was a popular spot; near the barn was a court for playing horseshoes. Boarders could also watch the roadway while seated in the two Victorian type lawn swings. And there were always the rocking chairs on the house porches, a fine spot on sunny days. The large parlor contained a piano and this provided musical entertainment in the evenings or on rainy days.

Summer or winter, social life at Kiskatom under the Blue Mountains included many church activities, square dancing, spider webs (a game with tags and string), and singing schools where one could hear folk songs and other types of family entertainment. Even during the off season the Saxe family had occasional boarders. Mrs. Goodrich, wife of Dr. Goodrich of Catskill, stayed here for some weeks to regain her health. She made a thirteenth at the family table,

a fact which caused some uneasiness for the more superstitious.

Now much of this farm and boarding house life style is gone, motels and large resorts being more attractive to today's smaller family units. But deer still flourish, some streams still have watercress and trout, low mountain huckleberries grow, as does the sweet grass on the mountain side once woven into baskets by the Indians. The Saxe Mountain View Farm House, except for the graveyard of four plots, has been sold out of the family. The house and some acreage is owned by New York City residents who retreat to the country during the summer; the house on Paul Saxe Road sports a coat of red paint.

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VEDDER LIBRARY NOTES

□◇ In a third selection of paper material from Messers Pulver and Stiefel and predecessors' Catskill law firm, more maps, indentures, stock certificates and other historical items were preserved by their removal to this library. The law firm is now located in the attractively renovated structure on the southwest corner of Main and Bridge Streets in the old Opera House Block; it is a commendable example of historic preservation by the recycling of an older commercial building.

□◇ Library acquisitions include the reprint of Pinckney's *Sketches of Catskill*, and Kathleen Roe's *Teaching With Historical Records* (NYS Archives Publication, 1981).

□◇ A 362-page Record Book for School Districts in the village of Coxsackie with the first entry dated 1891 and the last 1904 has come to this county research library from Mr. John A. Mac Naughton and the National Bank of Coxsackie. It augments other holdings relating to Coxsackie's educational establishments.

□◇ For several years Mrs. Ellen Whitbeck, a trustee of this Society, has been donating issues of various monthly magazines which feature antiques collecting articles. As time permits these articles are being catalogued by subject and the cards added to the reference catalogue. Users of the library who collect antiques are invited to make use of this substantial body of material.

□◇ Space is becoming a problem in the Vedder Memorial Library and has required the secondary storage of bound volumes and less frequently consulted material. One might paraphrase the quotation used for the transAtlantic cable – What hath Charles E. Dornbusch Wrought? It was his effort and interest which established this important Greene County facility.

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VEDDER LIBRARY NOTES [continued from page 19]

□◇ BROCKETT LINEAGE OF BRADFORD BROCKETT AND HARRIET HUXFORD, GREENE COUNTY, NEW YORK is the gift of Mrs. Brokaw of Florida.

□◇ The County of Onondaga, Department of Parks and Recreation, Office of Museums and Historical Sites has de-accessioned and donated to this society two 1885 Adolph Wittemann souvenir albums in pristine condition. The one is *Views of the West Shore Route*; the other is *The Catskill Mountains*.

□◇ Two softcover publications of the New York State Library dating from 1981 are of special interest to our readers. The first is *Bibliographies and Lists of New York State Newspapers – Annotated Guide*; the second is *Newspapers of New York State – A Statewide Plan for Bibliographic Control and Preservation*. The Vedder Library has important newspaper holdings relating to Greene County.

MUSEUM COMMITTEE PLANS FOR 1982 SUMMER SEASON

On Sunday, June 27th, Bronck Museum will open for a two-month season. We are fortunate to again have our experienced and charming guide, Bertha Bogert, who will be in charge Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. On Sunday afternoons from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., the volunteer guides are Frances Adams and Ellen Whitbeck. It should be noted that the Museum will be closed for a luncheon period, normally between 12 and 1. The tour time is about ½ to ¾ of an hour, so visitors coming to take the last tour should arrive at least ½ hour before closing time.

A beautiful display of Lacy Sandwich Glass (1825-1850) has been planned for your extra enjoyment while touring Bronck House. It will consist of cup plates, bowls and plates of varying sizes, a sugar, a compote, and rarities seldom seen outside the Sandwich Glass Museum at Sandwich, Massachusetts. Among the rare pieces are the Industry bowl made at the time of the William Henry Harrison presidential campaign in 1840 and a bread plate, which is considered to be the 2nd rarest piece, and possibly the handsomest ever produced at Sandwich. This display can be viewed at the time of the Annual Meeting in June through July.

Special arrangements for bus tours and other groups may be made for May, June and September by calling (518) 731-8386.

The Annual Meeting of the Greene County Historical Society will be held at the Society's headquarters at Bronck Museum on Sunday, June 6 at 2 p.m. The purpose of this meeting is to elect members to the board of trustees and to consider any other items of business. A reception for members and guests follows. Please bring folding chairs.

ARCHIBALD STEPHENS [continued from page 18]

their journey to Stanton Hill where, in a short time, they were found and arrested by Constable Martin Joralemon.

The coroner's inquest was followed by a jury trial before Justice Vanderzee, and young Palmer was acquitted on the grounds of self-defense, as he should have been for sustaining such a murderous personal attack. Even the violence-prone society of Civil War days was somewhat shocked by the deadly intent of Archibald to take the life of young Palmer for the offense of marrying his daughter without consent. Whether or not the episode was the cause, when the post office was established in the hamlet fifteen years later, the inhabitants voted to change the name to Alcove, where today the name Stephens appears only in the old cemetery east of the highway. Ironically, not far from Archibald's grave lies that of Judson Palmer who followed his father-in-law by a scant seven years. Caroline survived to marry again and, it is hoped, under circumstances more promising of connubial happiness.

¹Bennett, Allison. *The People's Choice*, Albany County Historical Association, 1980, p. 54.



Mill ruins at Stephensville (Alcove);
photo taken 1946; Author's collection.

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