

# Greene County Historical Journal

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Winter, 1985

## STAFFORDSHIRE EARTHENWARE WITH LOCAL SCENES

—Raymond Beecher

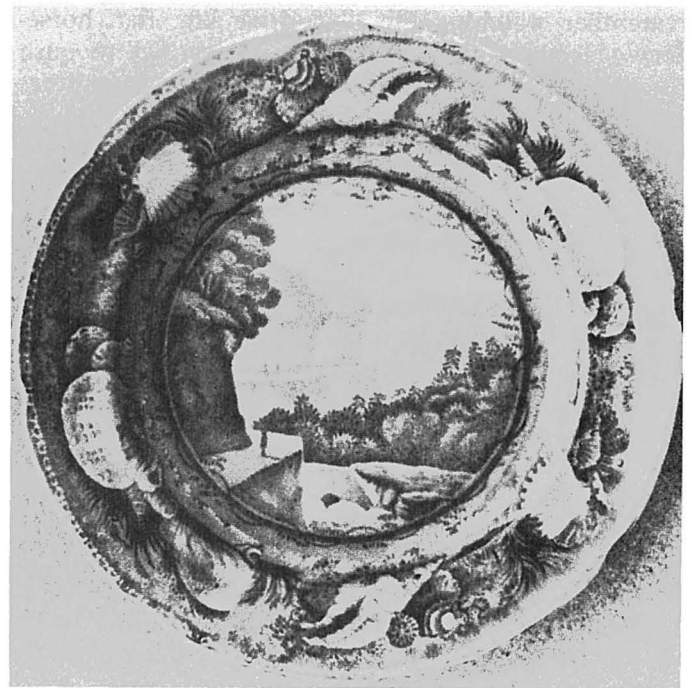
Produced in the numerous potteries in the Staffordshire industrial section of England between 1815 and the late 1850's, vast quantities of this decorated earthenware were shipped by canal and river across England to Liverpool, for transatlantic export to North America. To the gentry in America it served as inexpensive everyday tableware, a substitute for the more prestigious Chinese Export porcelain; to the poorer classes and the upwardly mobile middle classes, it was "company china," an improvement over pewter, treenware (woodenware) and heavy stoneware. On the English scene it was never intended to compete with Minton, Worcester or Wedgwood and never reached the height of popularity there it gained in the United States.

With the revival of trade between Britain and America after the War of 1812, designs were used to stimulate national pride: Arms of America, Benjamin Franklin and his Precepts, General Lafayette's Visit, Naval Heroes of the War of 1812, The Erie Canal, Scenes of the Revolutionary War, Pioneers of America, (fanciful views of the Landing of Columbus, the Landing of the Pilgrims, William Penn's Treaty with the Indians), George Washington and Liberty, Public and Private Buildings, as well as American Scenery. About 250 patterns have been identified, by far the majority from the northeast with its concentration of population.

For years it was assumed this original transfer method of decoration was the 1756 invention of John Sadler and Guy Green at their Printed Ware Manufactory in Liverpool although some scholars promoted the name of Robert Hancock of Worcester.



Soup plate: "PINE ORCHARD HOUSE CATSKILL MOUNTAINS"; view of the Catskill Mountain House; 9¼"; shell and seaweed border; dark blue in color; bears reverse identification "E. Wood and Sons, Burslem Warranted Semi China," Eagle and Shield trademark.



Tea plate: "PASS IN THE CATSKILL MOUNTAINS" (romanticized view); 7½"; shell and seaweed border; dark blue; reverse identification "E. Wood and Sons, Burslem Warranted Semi China," Eagle and Shield trademark.

(continued on page 36)

## ICE HARVESTING ON THE HUDSON AT CATSKILL — c. 1922 Tischler and Smith

*The following first-hand account of ice-harvesting on the Hudson River at Catskill in the first quarter of this century recalls an industry which, though of short duration, figured large in the economy of Catskill and Greene County from the last quarter of the 19th century into the 1920's.*

*Morris Tischler of Leeds, the narrator, was a boy of twelve years in 1922 but he worked with his father and grandfather, Isaac and Hillel, on the ice harvest, and later in dismantling ice houses and salvaging the lumber when electric refrigeration phased out the local industry. Some of the salvaged wood went into buildings on the Tischler boarding house property, now Cruz, on Highland Avenue.*

—Mabel P. Smith, Greene County Historian

Morris Tischler writes: The enormous ice houses along the banks of the Hudson River and Catskill Creek in the County of Greene were gradually abandoned with the advent of electricity.

In the early 1900's the ice houses were stacked and loaded each winter with large, heavy squares of ice cut from the river and creek. Weight of the squares varied according to the degree of cold and freezing weather.

This harvest created work for many men drawn here from all over the County. If it snowed I remember watching the men drive big, flat, horse-drawn scrapers (with handles for steering) to push the snow into great piles or dump it into huge holes cut through the ice for the purpose.

The ice-marker, also horse-drawn, could be adjusted to size. It cut into the ice one-half to three-quarters of an inch deep, then other men followed with single horse-drawn planes, back and forth, until the cut was four to six inches deep, according to the thickness of the ice at the time.

The first cakes were sawn and chipped out to get a fresh water path to the ice house. The ice saw was about seven feet long, including the wooden handle. The ice-chopper was a long bar with a knob on top and a flat, four-to-five inch blade with triangular teeth.

Once a canal was opened to the ice house the ice was chopped into squares and pushed by men with ice poles and tongs through the channel of clear water to the ice house elevator. At that point it was drawn up the long slide into the ice house. As the house filled the slide was raised higher and higher until the last layer was in.

Thousands of tons of ice were stacked and each layer covered with straw, hay or sawdust. Much of it lasted through the summer and fall. Much was shipped to New York City.

When I was about twelve years old (c.1922) I remember helping my father, Isaac, age 42, and my grandfather, Hillel, age 66, filling an ice house. I helped lift the boards from the ground to the deck

and up to the upper floors.

My father built Mr. Cruz's present house on Cauterskill Avenue for Hyman Freeman or Friedman. Some of the ice house lumber was used in that house. When the Cruz house was built it was on the same property as the large boardinghouse next door, now Leone, and altogether at that time the complex of buildings must have held over three hundred guests during the summer season.

In the eight years from 1920 the boarding houses in the Catskill area enjoyed good seasons with guests often remaining several weeks at a resort before automobiles made vacationers more transient.

The Hudson River Day Boats — the Alexander Hamilton, the Robert Fulton, and others of different sizes — carried many people to the Catskill resorts. The Catskill boat landing was a large covered platform with ticket and baggage offices and luncheonette, porters and taxis.

The New York Central and West Shore Railroads brought many summer people. A ferry-boat, carrying passengers and cars, shuttled back and forth between Catskill Point and Greendale, which was the New York Central station on the east shore which served Catskill. The West Shore Railroad had its station on the west side of the village (now Haines' Tire Shop), on Railroad Avenue, now Maple Avenue.

The Day Boats landed from 500 to 1500 passengers at The Point in the summer season, with peak traffic on week-ends.

Some boarding houses sent their own conveyances, — some still horse-drawn in the 1920's, but most had their own motor carry-alls which met the boats. My parents had their own vehicles for their "Golden Hill House." One was a seven-passenger six-cylinder 1926 Studebaker sedan which sometimes carried as many as eleven people squeezed in or on one another's laps. Drivers for competing boarding houses contended so vigorously and noisily for arriving vacationists that the village fathers enacted an anti-noise ordinance. That generated a forest of signs held high overhead which soon became weapons necessitating police regulation.

The Night Boats were large floating hotels with many double and single rooms, transporting passengers overnight from Albany to New York (with stop at Catskill), arriving in the city about 7:30 a.m., in time for weekenders to go directly to work or to do business or shop and return up-river the same day.

When more room was needed for our summer guests, the ice house lumber went into the building. The long 6" x 6" and 8" x 8" timbers had been the uprights holding the walls of the ice house. They were cut and used as posts and as some of the framework. The rest was cut into floor joists and roof rafters and sidewall 2" x 4" timbers to make the two-story house and attic. These large timbers were cut into one-inch boards and whatever else was needed, and planed. All the double and single window frames were made by hand from this lumber to fit the double-hung

(continued on page 33)

## ICE HARVESTING (continued from page 32)

window-lights which had cord and weights. The sidin was purchased from Catskill Hardware & Lumber Co which then had its hardware store on Main Street opposite the old Jewish Temple and its yard where the Dunn Lumber Co. is today.

Cardinale Brothers, who had a saw-mill and trucks, cut the lumber to size and did the carting and hauling for my father. Their yard was on the Jefferson road crossing to King's Road, which is now part of 9-W. Route 23 closed that cross-road.

My father and grandfather painted the house with two coats of hand-mixed white lead and linseed oil, driers and turpentine, and it still shows a trace of the white paint.

In 1942, when Mr. Cruz bought the house, he knocked out most of the columns (ice house lumber) and installed a basement by putting a concrete block wall around the base of the building. He uses the basement for his work with ceramics, mural painting, other arts and sculpture.

The metal ice house roof was used a few years later. I helped my father skid the large rolls of roofing to use on our large corn barn, horse barn, and connecting barn which housed horses, sheep, pigs and breeding stalls. He also sold some of the rolled-up metal roofing from the other buildings which have been torn down, collapsed or dismantled for other use.

The roofing was 24" x 24" squares bent over and hooked into one another to make a solid sheet, secured on the under side with screws into the roof-boards and top-soldered, which made it leak-proof. The metal was about 20-gauge, tinned and galvanized. When the roofing was removed it was cut 7' x 8' wide and rolled into 30' - 40" rolls for transportation.



Tischler sawmill: Morris Tischler squaring off a log, Isaac Tischler receiving cut boards, Hillel Tischler with shovel clearing away sawdust from saw blade area.



Morris Tischler and his mother Pauline S. Tischler; large barn in background has metal roof salvaged from ice house. Photos from Tischler family album.

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## "LET THE TROLLEYS COME!"

—Raymond Beecher

This was the slogan adopted by the weekly county newspapers; they were clearly in favor of what they claimed was "progress." Like the ill-fated Canajoharie and Catskill Railroad, as well as the once proposed Catskill Horse Trolley line, the plans to connect the villages and hamlets in Greene County with street railways had both scoffers and believers. From 1895 until 1912 plans for new lines or for the extension of the one already built were continually surfacing. A major portion of the promotional activity came from capitalists residing outside the confines of Greene County, the ongoing financial difficulties of the Catskill Mountain Railroad [Railway] making local investors extremely cautious. Of course neither group foresaw the rapid development of the gasoline powered automobile which would soon become the rapid transit of the twentieth century.

In midsummer, 1895, the *Oak Hill Record* was reporting railroad men were studying the terrain through the Catskill Valley to determine the best route for an electric railway, that they claimed success in securing rights-of-ways from Catskill to Cairo, and were alleged to have purchased the turnpike from Cairo to Windham for that purpose. At Union Society (near East Windham) the trolley line was to run on the south side of the stream, passing through Hensonville and Brooklyn, the road to be in operation by June of 1896. That turnpike purchase was also reported in the *Examiner* of August 24, 1895, when it noted "Mrs. M. K. Sherman sold her Windham turnpike last week to D. W. Sharpe of Newark, N. J. and Lewis Roberts of Brooklyn for \$10,500; that part of the money had been paid to her; that the toll gates would remain for the present and be used in connection with an electric railroad, work on which was to begin as soon as details are arranged, probably this fall. At any rate, the cars will be running from Cairo to Windham by June 1, 1896."

(continued on page 34)

## TROLLEYS *(continued from page 33)*

In its issue of November 9, 1895, the *Examiner* would inform its readers that "Articles of Incorporation for the Catskill, Cairo and Windham Street Railway Company have been filed with the Secretary of State. Directors are Louis E. Roberts, William Roberts, William C. Wood, M. W. Conway, J. H. Heins, Daniel Gilligan, Jacob Favor, all of Brooklyn, and Daniel W. Sharpe and S. W. Mattison, of Newark, N. J. Powerhouses are to be located at South Cairo and East Windham."

Except for steam railroad interests (Catskill Mountain Railroad and allied lines), and for minor objections of laying the rails over the stone bridge at Leeds, there was little citizenry opposition to these proposed street railways. The *Examiner*, strongly in favor of such progress, predicted there would be little trouble in securing the rights-of-way, "the [Catskill Line] project would not only be of great accommodation to people living along the line, but naturally would increase the value of adjoining property, and thus would be the gainers by the increased trade it would bring to town." Catskill merchants were also alarmed when they heard Saugerties interests were planning to build a trolley line from their Long Dock on the Hudson to their West Shore Railroad station and then on to Palenville. "If such a route is to be built it will direct traffic from Catskill."

Managers for the electric railway project (Catskill to Cairo to Windham) were busy in October of 1895 securing signatures on a petition for acquiring rights-of-way. Boarding house proprietors were in favor of any improved transportation which would benefit the summer resort trade, the life blood of the rural communities now that farming was declining in importance. George Badeau was held up as an example. This well known and popular boarding house proprietor in the Leeds vicinity was heard to tell the trolley line promoters: "Gentlemen, you can go anywhere on my farm and welcome, and I'll run the risk of any damages that may be done by the cars on my land."

This Catskill line to the west was not the only one proposed for Greene County. A much more ambitious project was under way — it was to blanket Greene County and connect its various townships with trolley lines being proposed for Albany, Delaware and Schoharie Counties. Passengers, freight and express would generate the lines' income. On July 28, 1897, the Secretary of State's office accepted from W. G. Raines, brother of State Senator Raines of Canandaigua, incorporation papers for four such trolley companies. These were all being promoted by the same business interests.

The first company, capitalized at \$150,000, was to build a road from the terminus of the Greene County Traction Company's proposed line in Coxsackie, to Greenville and on to Durham, a distance

of twenty miles. The second, called the Oak Hill Traction Company, also some twenty miles in length, was to connect Oak Hill with Cooksburg, Rensselaerville, East Durham and terminate at the Durham terminal of the first company. For that route the New York City and Chicago interests expected to capitalize at \$250,000.

The Middleburg and Oak Hill Traction Company was the third incorporated unit. Its plan called for the building of a terminus near Rensselaerville, Albany County, to and through Berne and on to Middleburg, a distance of twenty-five miles, at a cost of \$300,000. The final link in this vast network, estimated to cost \$250,000, would be the Windham Traction Company. It would connect at the Durham terminus and run to Conesville and Manorkill with some routes in the towns of Windham and Ashland, a distance of twenty miles. Eventually, it was anticipated, this line would connect with one from Oneonta. Through traffic would then be a certainty, adding to the profitability of the lines.

The directors of these four companies were W. G. Raines, T. E. Smith, W. F. Leland, W. S. Southy, M. E. Ingersoll, P. Anderson, E. Richter and Albert A. Larson, all of New York City, and George C. Spencer of Chicago. The principal office was to be located at New York. These men had previously formed the Greene County Traction Company which was still awaiting approval to construct a Hudson River valley roadbed along the west shore, connecting Catskill with Athens, Coxsackie, New Baltimore, Coeymans and Albany.

In late March, 1897, representatives of five proposed trolley routes invited the public to a meeting at Greenville. A large turnout heard the incorporators repeatedly state they were "ready, willing and able to build roadbeds at \$8,500 the mile." There was no serious opposition from the public in attendance although officials of the Middleburg and Schoharie Railroad felt they might have some cause for alarm. By September, 1897, the town of Greenville Road Commissioners had signed the necessary permits for a trolley route over their highways. Rumors were afloat that the Coxsackie and Greenville, as well as the Oak Hill Traction Company, were prepared to pay from \$1.00 to \$1.50 for poles on which the electric wires were to be strung. Farmers with woodlots were happy; they anticipated a good supplemental cash income that winter. When a boatload of railroad ties arrived at Coxsackie, and when the New York City office announced its purchase of options on land at Crystal Lake and on Mount Pisgah for the planned development of elaborate summer resorts, even the skeptical were convinced the lines would be built.

During the latter part of 1897 and the earlier months of 1898, local residents, including Coxsackie's Levi Bedell, were busy promoting the Coxsackie and Greenville Traction Company.

*(continued on page 35)*

## TROLLEYS (continued from page 34)

Surveyors were laying out the railbed. But the sale of stocks and bonds was limited; funds were running low for construction expenses. The *Examiner* did not help the situation when it reported in April, 1898, "The resplendent offices of the Coxsackie Trolley Company have been closed and there is no road in sight." And on June 11 it printed the following: "We are informed by a Coxsackie man that the talk of constructing a trolley line in that town is at an end. The gang of Italian laborers struck for their pay on Thursday of last week." Shortness of funds had brought the work to a standstill. But interest in the road continued and in the latter part of 1899 company officials were to be seen at Greenville promoting the sale of bonds with some limited success to the amount of \$19,000. The Coxsackie - Greenville interests continued to express hope. Frank H. Wakely, whose farm was near Greenville's Scripture Bridge, even took down his wagon house to make room for the trolley line's roadbed - that was as late as May, 1900.

During the winter of 1904-05, surveyors were laying out a roadbed for a trolley line from Cairo to a point near Oneonta, with a branch line from Jefferson, Schoharie County, to Stamford; it would require 78 miles of track. In early November, 1905, it was incorporated as the Catskill Mountain and Mohawk Electric Railroad with a capitalization of two million dollars.

Of the several proposed lines for Greene County, only one was ever constructed, and that only from Catskill to the hamlet of Leeds. From the beginning strong opposition came from the Catskill Mountain Railroad interests who were, themselves, fighting for economic survival. Hearings were held by the State Railroad Commissioners and were largely attended. The June, 1896, meeting had to be held in the Nelida Theatre, the old court house not being able to accommodate the crowd. (The Commissioners had arrived early that day and had been taken on a trip over the Catskill Mountain Railroad by special train.) I. W. Courtney, attorney for the proponents of the line, introduced statistical evidence accumulated by General W. S. C. Wiley to prove the proposed line to Cairo would pay for itself and was a necessity; it would provide year-round service. Andrew C. Fancher of Jefferson, R. Phelan of Leeds, George Duncan of South Cairo, a Mr. White of Preston Hollow, William H. Hollenbeck Jr. and J. Henry Deane, both of Catskill, all gave opinions concerning the volume of passenger and freight traffic now moving over the Susquehanna[h] Turnpike by wagon and by stage. Petitions were presented with hundreds of Greene County signatures in favor of building the Catskill, Cairo and Windham trolley line.

The opposition, represented by Attorney Emory A. Chase, called upon Isaac Pruyn, president of the Catskill Bank and also president of the South Cairo and East Durham Railroad, and president of the

Susquehanna Turnpike Company. He and others sought to prove that the number of boarding houses and people to be accommodated were insignificant. They were successful in securing an adjournment of the hearings until June 29th, when the next session would be heard at Albany. A number of proponents were disappointed at this delaying tactic, they having come from many of the surrounding towns and were anxious to see the road built as rapidly as possible. Middleburg had been represented by the editor of the *Middleburg Gazette*, J. E. Young, as well as by J. B. Bagley and J. H. Cornell. Oak Hill was equally anxious and was represented by Emerson Ford, L. U. Tripp, J. L. Utter, Charles Pierce, George Irwin and Judson Cleveland. George Duncan was watching out for South Cairo as was George B. Austin for the Jefferson-Leeds area.

In November, 1896, after the hearings were concluded, the State Railroad Commission handed down its decision in the matter of granting this franchise for an electric railroad between Catskill and Cairo, denying permission on the grounds that the proposed road nearly paralleled that of the Catskill Mountain Railroad. In their opinion there was not enough business, either passenger or freight, to justify the construction of an additional road. The Catskill newspapers reported this decision "in favor of a monopoly was not well received by Catskill business interests."

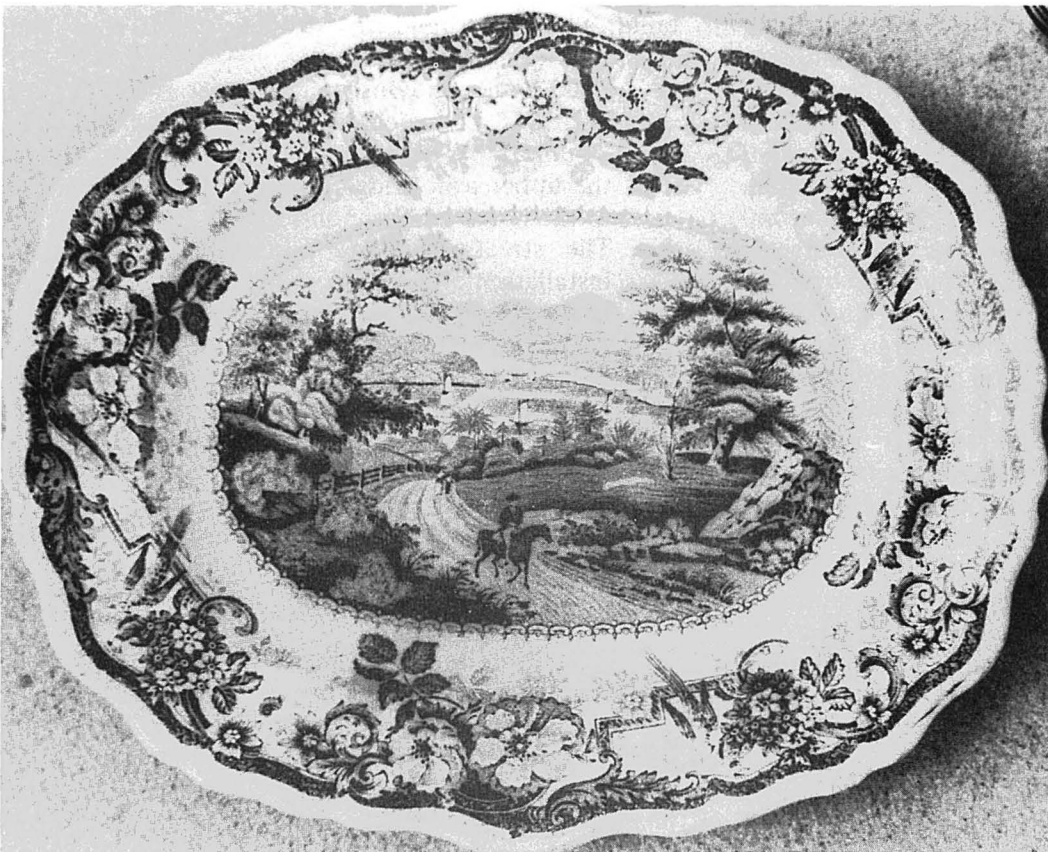
Earlier that year the Catskill village trustees and their corporation counsel had specified seven requirements before any approval could be issued to build a roadbed and lay trolley tracks over the Catskill streets. These were:

1. Road must be constructed under rules and regulations of article four of the Railroad law.
2. Double track to be laid through Main Street to the upper iron bridge and through Bridge Street to the house of Mrs. John Irwin.
3. The streets must be restored properly after installation of rails.
4. Iron poles, instead of wood, required.
5. High class insulation wire required.
6. Cars must run at least every hour from the Point to the West Shore Railroad depot, between the hours of 6 a.m. and 10 p.m., and the amount charged for a continuous trip cannot be more than five cents.
7. Work of construction must begin within one year and road put in operation to the West Shore depot by July 1, 1897, and completed within two years.

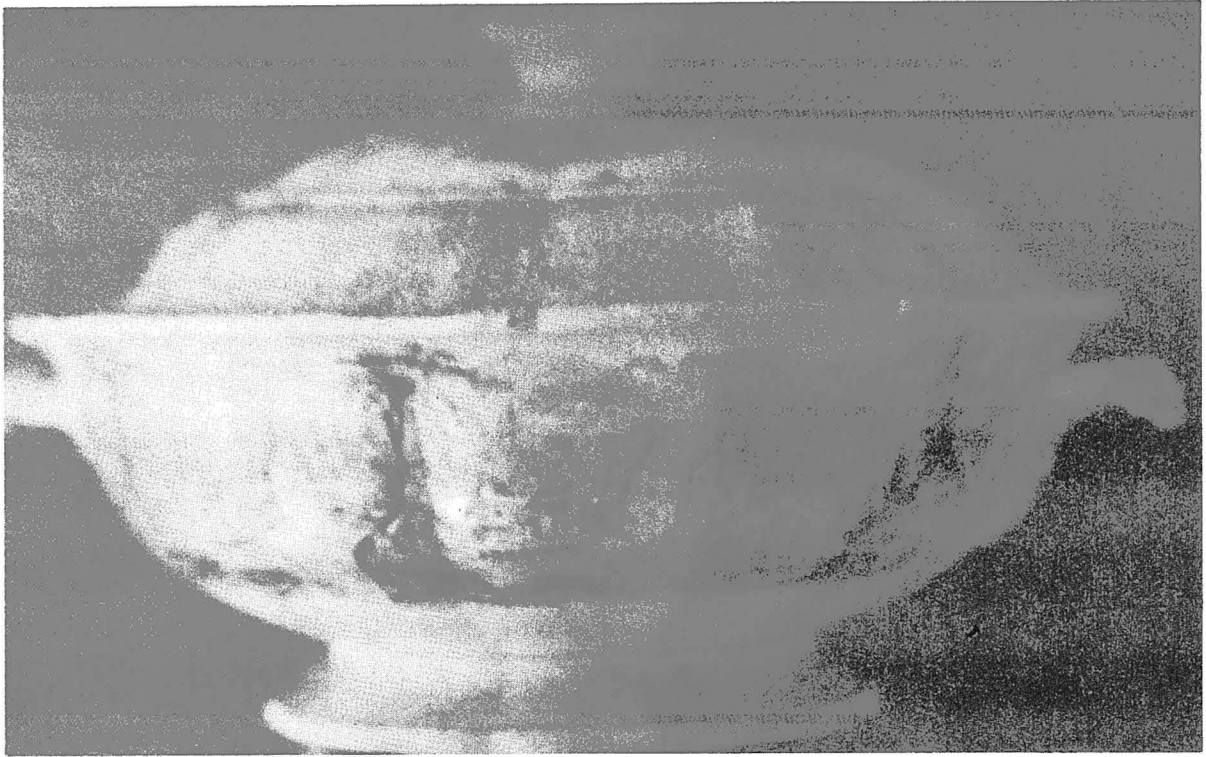
After the negative decision from the State Railroad Commission, the next move of the trolley promoters was to reorganize the Catskill, Cairo and Windham Railroad Company under a new name, that of the Catskill Electric Railway Company. The name changeover took effect in January, 1897. Capitalization was set at \$120,000 with out-of-county incorporators Daniel W. Sharpe, John Conway, W.



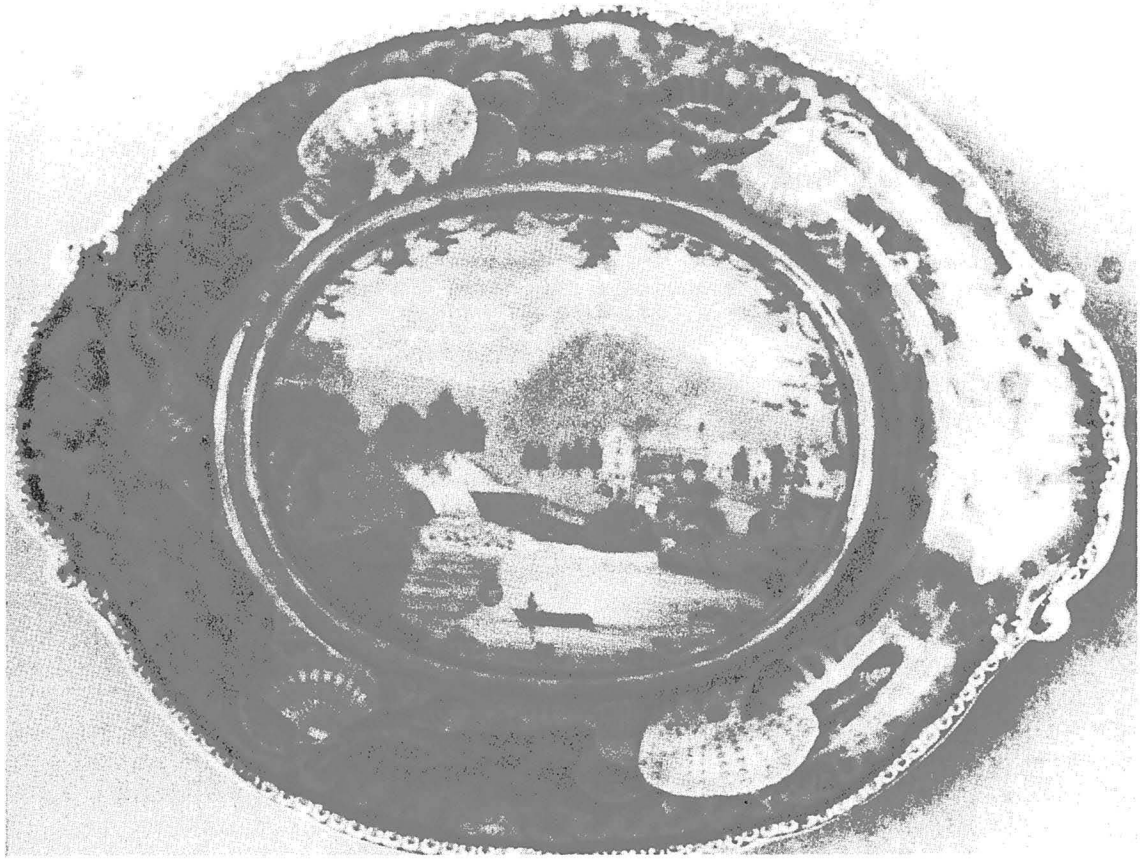
Dinner plate: "View of the Cattskill [sic] Mountain House, NY"; 9¼"; floral border; mulberry color; reverse identification "Jacksons Warranted." Van Zandt's volume *The Catskill Mountain House* identifies this view as one from an engraving by Fenner Sears & Company, published in Hinton's *History and Topography of the United States*. The engraving is copied from the 1828 oil on canvas by artist Thomas Cole.



Platter: "Picturesque View near Hudson, Hudson River" (Catskill Mountains in background; 9¾ x 8"; parrot and roses border; black, reverse identification "Picturesque Views [James] Clews"; view attributed to W. G. Wall's *Hudson River Portfolio*.



Tureen: Village of Catskill (base) and Washington's Old Tomb at Mount Vernon (cover); 5 x 8" with cover; border of irregular scales overlapping sprays of moss; light to medium blue; reverse identification "Catskill Moss - Village of Catskill" with diamond shaped Ridgeway trademark. View taken from W. H. Bartlett's Catskill Bridge Street print (1813 Court House, Presbyterian Church and so-called grasshopper bridge).



Tureen platter: "HOPE MILL, CATSKILL, NEW YORK"; scene taken from an engraving of the Austin paper mill in the glen at Jefferson Heights; 11 x 14"; shell and seaweed border; dark blue in color; bears reverse identification mark of Enoch Wood & Sons. It is one of more than a dozen scenes of the Hudson River and New York State and is rated as one of the rarest American views, seldom coming on today's antique market.

*(continued on page 38)*

## STAFFORDSHIRE EARTHENWARE

(continued from page 37)

Thomas H. Ormsbee in *Collecting Antiques in America* credits it to an Irish engraver named John Brooks. Even Benjamin Franklin claimed credit for having first given the idea for the printing of square tiles from copper plates, but wrote in 1773 from London that "artists in the earthen way about London, rejected it as impracticable." Regardless of the inventor, the process was quickly adopted by pottery firms whereby the basic design was frequently copied from a published engraving or painting, being modified to fit circular objects known as hollowware. This decoration was accomplished by the design being inked on thin paper and then laid on the unglazed earthenware surface, followed by a second kiln firing. The potters' use of deep blue coloring (the deeper the engraving the more blue to flow) was an attempt to hide defects or blemishes.

As the Industrial Revolution developed in England, not only did the quality of undecorated earthenware improve, but the decorating process did also, what with the use of oil and the dampening of the paper. Dark blue was in vogue until 1831 when improvements in the lithography process reduced costs and led to the use of lighter colors such as light blue, pink, mulberry, purple, gray, as well as brown and black. On today's market the dark blue still commands the best prices but "from an artistic standpoint the lighter toned pieces of tableware are equally desirable, the drawings being by prominent artists and the earthenware borders being both delicate and naturalistic."

Most of the larger English potteries identified their products with printed and/or stamped trademarks on the reverse side. Characteristic borders can also be attributed to specific potteries. Among these are seaweeds and shells, grapes and vines, roses and scrolls, oak leaves and acorns, fruit and blossoms, as well as the popular American Eagle symbol.

Chinese Export porcelain decorated with floral designs inspired the early decorated English earthenware. After 1820 potteries made use of prints appearing in books of travel. J. H. Hinton's *History and Topography of the United States*, and dedicated to Washington Irving, appeared in 1830. Its two volumes were replete with such illustrations. W. Adams and Sons is known to have produced the so-called Turnstall Views. Of the fourteen with their borders of baskets of roses and fan-shaped medallions, seven are attributed to the works of Thomas Cole, including the "View Near North Conway," "The Falls of Niagara" and the "Catskill Mountain House."

Drawings by W. H. Bartlett provided Thomas Goodwin with his series of American views while Wall's *Hudson River Portfolio* was utilized by Clews. It is assumed that many of Job and John Jackson's scenic designs were taken from Hinton's aforemen-

tioned volumes. One importer, advertising in a New York newspaper of May 3, 1831, urged readers to buy the new Jackson view, "The Battery." The Jackson Brothers soon followed with their "Catskill Mountain House." J. and W. Ridgeway produced dinner sets in "The Beauties of America" series. A few of the more financially successful pottery firms contracted with artists to tour the United States for original views. The "Beauties of America" and the "Picturesque Views of the Hudson River" were secured in this manner.

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Photos by Robert Stackman

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### FRIENDS CONTINUE TO AUGMENT LIBRARY HOLDINGS

□◇ The Vedder Library's good friend, Calvin S. Borthwick of Glen Ridge, New Jersey, has forwarded more local material to be added to the William S. Borthwick Memorial Collection. His latest mailing includes the 1921 Commencement Program for Catskill High School. Among the names of the graduates are Calvin, Christina C. Wessel and Philip H. DuBois. Of military interest is a World War I postcard mailed by Private John Nicholson 14 October 1918, APO MPESX 119. The writer of the card lived on the west side of Strong Road, Cornwallville. A postcard of the State Normal School at Oneonta reflects the summer session attended by Floyd Parks and Calvin S. Borthwick, both studying to obtain temporary licenses to teach in the state's public schools. Borthwick taught District #2 School at Hervey Street in 1921-23 while Floyd Parks instructed at the Town of Durham's District #4 schoolhouse. Borthwick eventually enrolled at Union College for the Fall, 1923, term.

□◇ Keller's *The White Pine*, one of a series of architectural monographs, concerns the hamlet of Rensselaerville of the Helderbergs. Mrs. Florence Hunter has deposited a copy.

□◇ Mary and Helen Becker of Catskill have provided the 1888 Bryant Literary Union's photographic volume *Panorama of the Hudson*. Its usefulness is enhanced by the documentary illustrations of sites along the river on both shores.

□◇ Mabel P. Smith has contributed the Cash Book of Peter Van Gelder of the township of Catskill. The manuscript volume dates from the late 1850's.

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## VEDDER LIBRARY NOTES

□◇ The *World Guide to Libraries* is listing this facility under the Special Research Library classification.

□◇ Additional historical material, including Powell-Waldron diaries from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, printed assessment rolls for the township of Greenville and the record book of the Gayhead Temperance Society (1845-1854) are the latest gifts of the Howard Waldrons, Place's Corners, Gayhead area. These and earlier gifts from the same source will carry the Waldron-Powell designation.

□◇ Volunteer Vedder Library services are always appreciated. Mrs. Lisa Turan has been helpful researching and answering genealogical inquiries while Douglas S. Thomsen lends a hand with a variety of library tasks. Copying mid to late 19th century births, marriages and deaths from weekly county newspapers is the ongoing project of Kenneth Van Vechten Parks. Nancy Pelham keeps "plugging away" preparing 3 x 5 cards of genealogical interest.

□◇ Mr. and Mrs. W. Walter Shoaf, Dover, Delaware, manage to come north at least once during the season persuing genealogical lines. Mrs. Shoaf is a direct descendant of several prominent pre-Revolutionary Cossackie families. Their generous check has enabled the library to make purchases of volumes on the Wanted List.

□◇ In Catskill the Charles C. Bloom Meat Marke was an established retail firm; a number of the *Journal* readers may recall C. C. Bloom himself. Now from his daughter, Viola Bloom Tepe, Dix Hills, New York, has come a variety of paper material to be catalogued as the Bloom Memorial Collection. The major portion is photographic in nature and ranges from an early tintype to Kodak photos. Examples of H. B. Aldrich's studio work as well as that of Forshev of Hudson, are included. The Blooms are related to several early Catskill area families including Timmerman, Overbaugh, Stewart and Smith. Several Catskill Academy diplomas are included in the gift of material. Fortunately, the photographs are identified.

□◇ *Powells of the Hudson Valley: Descendants and Related Families* is a compilation by Alice A. and George H. Peters. Two bound sets are now housed at this library after a lengthy duplication effort and bindery project. Over 10,000 cards of a genealogical nature are thus available in this useful five-volume set. Funding was provided by the Peters.

□◇ More than 50 large scrapbooks reflecting the history of the Cossackie area and of the Albright family itself have come from Jean Goodwin Albright and Erving Albright of Poughkeepsie. Attractively mounted and arranged chronologically, the scrapbooks will provide oncoming generations of researchers with local history gleanings.

□◇ At the Athens Antique Center auction one Saturday some months ago, we were able to acquire the following paper memorabilia put up for sale:  
*Link's The Hudson By Daylight*

Reis' *The Old Dutch Settlement of Cossackie Old Albany* published in connection with the Hudson-Fulton Celebration of 1909

Clio Club program, Cossackie, 1921-22

Radcliffe's *Sight-Seeing Map of the Hudson River*

Prize Speaking Contest programs, Cossackie, held at the Dolan Opera House (1912-1922)

Lease of a house on Church Street, Cossackie, 1891, with H. H. Franklin's signature

Cossackie High School yearbook, 1940

Cossackie High School *Hoot Owl* issues

Cossackie Junior High School: *Junior Eagle*

26 photographs of Farm Bureau Field Day activities in Greene County.

□◇ Our thanks to Ruth Masten, Macon, Missouri, for genealogical notes relating to her lines of descent from several Greene County families including Houghtaling, Witbeck, Conyn, Wells, Van Loon, Van Duzen, et. al.

□◇ Kate Warner Krumery of Kansas is the author of local historical volumes which include some information concerning her forebears in Greene County. Through Mrs. H. C. Hornbeck, St. Joseph's Villa, Catskill, we keep receiving related material. The latest is the *Senior Beacon of Southwest Kansas* which tells the story of the Warner family homestead.

□◇ Professor John W. Frick, Jr., of Wisconsin and Professor Carlton Ward of Florida are preparing a directory of historic American theatres to be published by Greenwood Press in 1987. The book, which is being sponsored by the League of Historic American Theatres, will provide vital information about extant theatres, opera houses, vaudeville theatres and other performance spaces built before 1915. The buildings included must be still standing. The Vedder Library has furnished information relating to the Dolan Opera House at Cossackie.

□◇ The New York Historical Resources Center at Cornell University has been surveying the documentary materials in New York State repositories. The Historical Documents Inventory has thus far been completed for forty-one counties and guides have been published. Funding is now available to complete upstate New York. The Vedder Library will be actively involved for Greene County.

□◇ Have you ordered your copy of Winifred Wardle Fiero's new volume *Attic Odyssey; Letters Tell a Tale or Two?* If not, contact the author at 267 Main Street, Catskill, New York 12414 or telephone (518) 943-2434. The price is \$19.95 plus sales tax and postage. The Spring 1986 *Journal* will carry the introductory section.

□◇ The Greene County Men's Garden Club each year plants and tends two unusually attractive flower beds on the grounds of the Bronck Museum adjacent to the parking lot. A riot of summer color, the floral beds have been an "eye catcher" to both museum and library patrons this 1985 summer season. It is an effort deeply appreciated by the Society's Board of Trustees and the staff members.

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## TROLLEYS *(continued from page 35)*

C. Wood and L. A. Stewart investing \$46,000. The new petition for a franchise, a much more modest one, specified a street trolley line from Catskill Point to Jefferson, a distance of two miles, with a branch to the West Shore Railroad station. Because the Catskill Mountain Railroad saw little competition from this proposal (their line was down deep in Austin's Glen), they withdrew their opposition. The franchise was granted on February 23, 1897. At least now one trolley line could be built. Needless to say, it took longer than anticipated.

As was to be expected, construction progress was a matter of reader interest and received major newspaper coverage. The powerhouse for the line was constructed at the foot of Jefferson Hill; the tracks were laid from Catskill Point to the gates of the Grant House at the top of Jefferson Hill (present site of the Greene County Memorial Hospital). One of the major problems was to bridge the roadbed of the Catskill Mountain Railroad at Railroad Avenue. George W. Holdridge was the successful bidder to excavate and build two abutments for a stone bridge over the Catskill Railroad line. As soon as that bridge was completed in late December, 1900, Superintendent Sharpe of the trolley line was putting men to work at the task of laying tracks over it. The Catskill Mountain Railroad sought to delay the bridge's use until a decision could be received from the Railroad Commission as to the portion of the bridge expense to be borne by the trolley company, but to no avail. Trolley cars were now able to run to the West Shore depot.

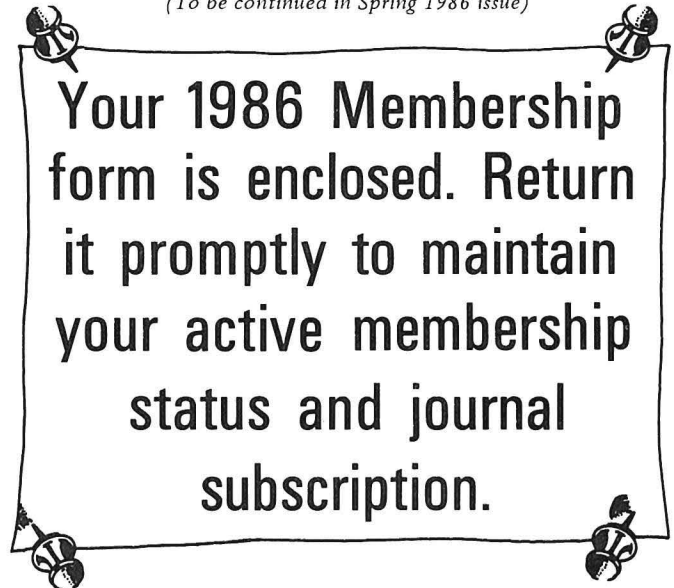
As soon as the metal electric poles had been installed, H. K. Hill had his men at work painting the poles a bronze green. Street cars were purchased secondhand from the Brooklyn and Coney Island line; they were hauled to the newly built powerhouse and car barn where they were to be renovated. Prospective riders were assured the cars would be put in first-class condition.

The first run of the trolley line, unfortunately, had to be delayed until the first week in December, a connecting rod having broken in one engine, cracking the cylinder head and causing other damage. That first run, when it did occur, was from the powerhouse to the terminus of the road at Jefferson Heights. At noon the next day a run was made down Main Street to the Point. The trolley cars commenced operating on a regularly scheduled basis on Friday morning, December 14, 1900. Two cars were in service, the third awaiting the completion of the aforementioned bridge to the West Shore Railroad station.

As early as February, 1901, the town of Catskill Road Commissioner, Benjamin W. Grant, was calling a meeting at the Smith House to hear arguments for the Catskill Electric Railway Company to operate over that portion of the Susquehanna Turnpike from Jefferson Heights to Leeds. The citizens turned out in

force. One group presented a petition with 52 signatures urging the town commissioners to restrict the trolley company to the use of only one side of that turnpike so as not to interfere with horses, wagons and carriages, and to forbid the crossing of the Leeds Bridge. The petition further requested that the rails be raised above the present level of that turnpike. Newton Brandt objected to the granting of permission to operate over the Susquehanna Turnpike without township remuneration being paid to Catskill, Cairo and Durham. (Those townships had just paid \$15,000 for the Susquehanna Turnpike roadbed through their areas.) William E. Van Dyke, with building lots at Jefferson Heights, spoke in favor of the Railway Company while Ambrose Jones objected. The Hon. Ira B. Kerr made a stirring address, outlining the economic benefits for Greene County. He then made the motion that the road commissioners "Grant, Issue permission to the trolley company." It was promptly seconded and carried. To cool tempers which were rising rapidly, the meeting was then promptly adjourned.

*(To be continued in Spring 1986 issue)*



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