

Mohonk Preserve, Inc.

Historical/Cultural Note No. 19

August 1986

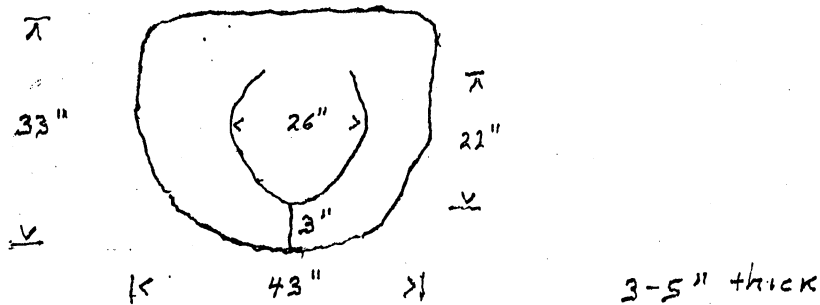
Mohonk Poultry Farm

by Daniel Smiley

History of the Land

The land on which this project was located lies southeast of where the former "Old South Road" crosses Lenape Lane, about .7 mile south of Mt. Rest. In 1905 Albert K. Smiley purchased 38 acres from Alfred and Leonora Palmateer. The consideration was \$900. It was described in the deed (No. 95) as a "farm." Appendix No. 1.

The house foundation remains. It was rather small. There are a number of broken red bricks (unmarked) from the chimney. Near the foundation is a flat slab of red sandstone, see sketch below. Chiseled on the surface is a "U" shaped groove, about a half inch deep, with a branch from the bottom of the U. I do not know what was its purpose, but suspect it might have been the base of a cider press.



There is a spring some 60 feet northeast. A short distance to the southwest is a square (20 x 20 ft.) of rough stones that may have been the foundation of a shed. To the south of the house is a better defined foundation (20 x 50 ft. in two parts) which may have been the barn with a driveway through the middle. Near these two is an oval mound of limestone 9 x 12 x 3½ ft. One old apple tree remains, d.b.h. 13.1 inches, age 50(+) years at 4½ ft. Thus, the seed for this tree may well have come from a discarded core at the time of the occupancy of the house by the work crew for Lenape Lane.

The Old South Road was once a town road and shows on the Ulster County map of 1858. I have found no record of its official abandonment. The upper section, from Woodside, has not been driveable in my lifetime. A one-time bridge across the Woodside brook has been missing for at least sixty years.

A lane led down to the former farm from the Old South Road and is still driveable from Lenape Lane.

Lenape Lane

Years ago I was told by some member of the family that during the construction of Lenape Lane in the winter of 1924 or 1925 the Poultry Farmhouse was used to house a gang of cranberry pickers (Portuguese?) from Rhode Island (or Cape Cod) who were hired to do pick and shovel work on the upper end of Lenape. It was piece-work based on wheelbarrow loads moved. In the spring, when the frost went out, it was discovered that crusted snow had been shoveled in with the shale!

1941 Tree Planting

During the period April 15th to 30th, 1941, C. T. Brown, Jr., Mohonk's forester, supervised the planting of 39,000 coniferous trees at 6 different former fields. The trees were purchased from the State nursery at \$4.00 per thousand. The planting for the Poultry Farm area was reported as follows:

- Lower Field (2½ Acres) 2,800 Red Pine and White Spruce planted in alternate squares, 16 to a square.
- Upper Field (7 Acres) 6,900 planted same way, plus 1,000 White Cedar planted in swampier part.
- Ridge East of Spring (2½ Acres) 3,000 planted same way.

Total 12,700 trees on 12 Acres  
Net cost after AAA reimbursement \$5.53/acre

Some of the trees in the "Upper Field" (above) were harvested in the 1960s and 70s for poles and Christmas trees. These were selected to serve as a thinning.

An inspection of these plantations in 1986 showed that the Red Pine have done well (4 to 14 in. d.b.h. and 20 to 50 ft. tall); the White Spruce have done poorly (1½ to 8 in. d.b.h. and 8 to 60 ft. tall); and the White Cedar have disappeared completely.

Poultry Farm

I have not discovered any written discussion of this experimental operation. Thus, my only source of information is from "Ledger E" for the years 1909 through 1913. These books, in Smiley Brothers archives, contain fascinating details of expenses and income, but no background of what led to its starting, who operated it, or why it was discontinued. The reason for the latter may be inferred from the figures. There was a "loss" each year, progressively larger!

Two names are associated with the Mohonk Poultry Farm in my memory. Uncle Hugh Smiley, who was noted for starting new projects, apparently was involved with its management. In the 1912 inventory there is an item of "Incubator Thermometers for \$4.50" with a marginal note "Hugh paid for." In the 1913 income column there was an item of \$207.25 for "Goods to Hugh Smiley." See Appendix No. 2 for an undated advertisement.

The other was Harry Pearson, a close friend of Hugh's, and a frequent visitor to Mohonk. See Appendix No. 3 for reference. Harry established and operated "Feather Farm" for many years. It was located west of High Falls, producing eggs and chickens.

I have chosen typical entries for the Poultry Farm from the Income and Expense Ledgers and Inventory Books. These seem to me to give a feeling for the operation.

1909

Expense

The first entry in the Ledger:

18 Oct.	"Hen Feed"	\$ 6.00
1 Nov.	"Brooder"	11.50

Income

31 Dec.	"Eggs"	.38
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Inventory 12/31

350 ft.	"Box lumber" @ 1¢	\$ 3.50
3 lb.	"Wire Staples"	.09
6	"Mouse Traps"	.22
77	"Hens" @ \$1.25	96.25
3	"Roosters" @ \$1.50	4.50
11	"China nest eggs"	.28
1	"Dog-Collie"	8.00
½ bu.	"Turnips"	.20/\$228.49

1910

Expense

20 Jan.	"5 Guinea Hens"	\$ 3.00
21 Feb.	"Feed Fountain"	23.85
1 Apr.	"Letterheads, Envelopes"	15.00
18 May	"42 Plymouth Rocks" @1.50	63.00
3 May	"100 Chickens"	125.00
4 Aug.	"Insurance"	17.25
12 Sept.	"90 Chickens"	90.00
28 Sept.	"Lice Powder"	11.70
29 Nov.	"8 Turkeys"	25.56
3 Dec.	"7 Bantams"	1.50

Income

Mostly cash sales of eggs	.36/doz. +/-
Loss	\$348.87

Inventory 12/31

The House	\$400.00
Chicken House, Shed, Yards	736.46
"Roup Cure"	.35

1911

Expense

19 Jan.	"200 lbs. Beef Scraps, 50 lbs. Dog Cakes"	\$ 9.45
1 Apr.	"40 Chickens"	40.00
13 Apr.	"2 Roosters"	3.00
1 June	"110 Chicks @ .12, 115 Chicks @ .10"	24.70
31 May	"31 Day Labor"	35.00
31 June	"1 Pr. Buggy Shafts"	3.00
1 Aug.	"300 lbs. Crack Corn"	4.80
31 Oct.	"5 Bu. Rye"	4.00
31 Mar.	"Stark Bros. Nurseries"	49.88

There were many charges for  
"express" 35¢ and up, presumably  
for shipping eggs.

Income

1 Jan.	"2 doz. eggs @ .42, .44"	.86
30 Apr.	"229½ doz. eggs @ .20; 45 doz. eggs @ .18; 12-3/4# Chicken @ .18; 23½# Chicken @ .20"	60.99
30 Sept.	"60# Broilers"	21.96
25 Dec.	"7# Turkey"	1.96

Loss \$440.20

Inventory 12/31

Depreciation on \$736. of 1910 was 10%		
New 1911: "Coop No. 4 \$33.00, Coop No. 5 120.00; Privey 9.00; Pig Pen 10.80; Duck Coop 4.50; Fattening Coop 7.20; Dog House 2.00."		
"31 Bantams @ .40"		12.40
"377 Chickens @ 1.25"		471.25
"49 Ducks @ 1.40"		68.60
"2 Guinea Hens"		1.50
"46 Roosters mixed"		62.10
"11 Turkeys @3.50"		38.50

1912

Expense

28 Mar.	"Poultry & Duck Houses"	\$280.25
31 Dec.	"200 Calendars"	.68
20 Dec.	"20 bu. Oats @ .44"	8.80

Income

30 June	"Eggs-Duck"	30.48
31 Dec.	"5 doz. eggs @ .73"	3.65
31 Dec.	"29 Barrels Chicken Manure"	14.50
31 Dec.	"40 Bantams"	16.00

Loss \$759.62

Inventory 12/31

See Appendix No. 4 for details.  
Note - several items have a marginal note "zoo,"  
which was another of Hugh Smiley's interests,  
started in 1912.

1913

Expense

28 Apr.	"Insurance Incubator"	\$10.00
4 Dec.	"14 Berry Crates"	.70
31 Dec.	"1985# Hay @ \$18.00"	17.87

Income

24 Oct.	"286 Fowls \$ .18; 250 Broilers @ .22"	106.48
20 Nov.	"Insurance Cancelled"	3.00
31 Dec.	"Goods to Zoo"	87.45
31 Dec.	"Goods to Hugh Smiley"	207.25
31 Dec.	"Poultry & Duck Houses to K.Kill"	250.00
	Loss \$1,752.38	

Inventory 1913

(none appeared)

Postscript - 1986

The pile of limestone, referred to above, was covered with grass and weeds. Below a thin humus layer was a brown crust about a ½ inch thick. I wondered if its alkalinity might have been neutralized by acid precipitation. Ed Catanzaro kindly took a sample to Lamont for checking. The brown was alkaline. Presumably the color was due to decayed organic matter, that had not altered the inorganic chemistry.

An unmarked picture of chickens was discovered in Smiley Brothers archives. A copy appears as Appendix No. 2. I took a copy to the Poultry Farm, but was unsuccessful in matching up either the tree or the building with anything now on the land. There appear to be two varieties of white chickens and a few gray ones in the picture. The 1911 Inventory lists:

174	White Plymouth Rocks	
150	Barred " "	
<u>53</u>	White Leghorns	
377		@ 1.25 \$471.25

On 20 May, when I was checking on the above picture, I noticed five white flowers near the house foundation. They proved to be "triple" Narcissus, with a sweet odor and very narrow leaves. Nearby was a clump of faded single Pheasant's-eye (Narcissus poeticus). The triple is a variety of poeticus. I believe that this house was not used as a residence since 1913. Thus, I feel reasonably sure that the single narcissus plant has persisted for some seventy years. The hybrid form may also have been cultivated there, or may have developed as a "sport" of the poeticus parent.

Alfred Palmateer  
and wife

to

Albert K. Smiley.

Full Covenant

38 acres

Consideration \$900.00

Dated, June 27, 1905

: June 29, 1905

Recorded : Book 388

: Page 512

-0-

All that tract or parcel of land situate in the Town of New Paltz, County of Ulster and State of New York, being all of the farm now occupied by the parties of the first part to whom it was conveyed by Lewis Palmateer by deed dated the 21st day of July, 1894 and recorded in the Ulster County Clerk's Office in Book of Deeds 328 at Page 183, in which deed the said farm is bounded and described as follows:

Bounded on the north by the lands of William F. Minard and the lands of Jacob Atkins formerly of John VanOsstrandt, on the east by lands formerly belonging to Hiram Minard and by lands of William Minard and John N. Hait, on the south by lands of John N. Hait and Thomas N. Hait, and on the west by the westerly line of the said town of New Paltz on the Shawangunk Mountains, containing about one hundred and sixteen acres of land be the same more or less,

It being the same premises lately owned and occupied by William Wood,

Reserving and excepting out of the above described premises, however, the lands heretofore sold to Smiley.

(Signed) ALFRED PALMATEER

LEONORA PALMATEER.



RAILROAD STATION:  
NEW PALTZ, N. Y.

## MOHONK POULTRY FARM

MOHONK LAKE, N. Y.  
ULSTER COUNTY



*Office Copy*  
*Cancelled*

### THE MOHONK POULTRY FARM

UNDER THE PERSONAL SUPERVISION OF MR. HUGH SMILEY, IS NOW READY TO TAKE ORDERS FOR REGULAR SHIPMENTS OF FRESH EGGS FROM NOVEMBER FIRST TO MAY FIFTEENTH.

ALL EGGS GUARANTEED SHIPPED WITHIN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS FROM TIME LAID.

SIXTY CENTS PER DOZEN. EXPRESS FREE ON ORDERS AMOUNTING TO FOUR DOZEN OR MORE.

Lake Mohawk Mountain House  
 Mohawk Lake, N.Y. May 18<sup>th</sup> 1914

Notice to  
Heads of Departments

On May 13<sup>th</sup> 1914 Calvin  
 J. Huson commissioner of  
 agriculture of the state of  
 New York issued the following

Now, therefore, by virtue of the  
 authority conferred upon me by sections 304 and 305 of the agricultural law, I do hereby declare that tent caterpillars are a nuisance and a menace to the horticultural interests of the state and that all owners or persons in possession of any land or premises on which there are trees or plants infested by tent caterpillars are hereby required and commanded to destroy the nests or webs, including caterpillars, on their premises on or before June 1, 1914.  
 (Signed) CALVIN J. HUSON  
 Commissioner.

Whereas, widespread areas of the state are infested with tent caterpillars and many owners and occupants of land upon which trees infested with these pests neglect to destroy the same or take any means for protection against their ravages; and whereas, great loss and damage will result to the horticultural interests of the state by reason thereof.

This order is issued under the authority of the agricultural law of this state and neglect to comply with its requirements is

punishable as a misdemeanor.  
 I am told that the Commissioner is in earnest about having the pests destroyed. It is also for our own advantage.

We had best make a clean job of it before the first of June.  
 Daniel Smiley  
 Proprietor

- send <sup>a copy of</sup> the above to
- James Schoonemaker Mohawk Lake
  - John Silkworth " "
  - Charles Percell " "
  - Geo. Young " "
  - Duane Davis " "
  - Phil Ayres " "
  - James Davis " "
  - S. Bruyn DuBois - Ruzylfours " "
  - Lauson Decker Brook Farm " "
  - Arthur Robinson Kleinkell " "
  - Fernando Trulliger Spring " "
  - Simon Yeaple Mountain Rest " "
  - Harry Pearson Chicken Farm " "
  - Monte Smiley " "
  - Hugh Smiley " "



# Poultry Farm

1912

64.43  
91.38  
12.25  
158.51  
✓

Palatka  
0  
0

10-  
3

## Buildings House

400 00

Chicken House, Shed and Repairs  
Old Shed, Wire and Erecting Yards  
Total Cost to 4-1912. 781 <sup>46</sup>/<sub>100</sub> Value 1911 783 <sup>33</sup>/<sub>100</sub>

Less 10% Cont

783 <sup>33</sup>/<sub>100</sub>  
78.33  
- 625.18

625 18

Spent during 1912 for wire lumber etc 158 <sup>51</sup>/<sub>100</sub>  
Including oh brand 1/1 Less 10% 158 <sup>51</sup>/<sub>100</sub>

142 66

Coop No 4 Bought 1911 Cost 33 <sup>00</sup>/<sub>100</sub>

29 70

" " 1911 " 120 <sup>00</sup>/<sub>100</sub>

108 00

Young 9 <sup>00</sup>/<sub>100</sub> Big Pen Duck Coop 450 <sup>00</sup>/<sub>100</sub>

243 0

Fattening Coop 72 <sup>00</sup>/<sub>100</sub> 3 Small Coop 315 <sup>00</sup>/<sub>100</sub>

166 5

Dog House 2 <sup>00</sup>/<sub>100</sub> 7 Brood Coops 9 <sup>00</sup>/<sub>100</sub>

515

3 Coops Brooder 945 <sup>00</sup>/<sub>100</sub> 2 Coops. Brooder for Ducks 9 <sup>00</sup>/<sub>100</sub>

184 5

## The following Bought 1912

Brooder Coops Brooder Coops Cost 29 <sup>48</sup>/<sub>100</sub> (supplanted below)

Brooder No 1 Cost 20 <sup>00</sup>/<sub>100</sub>

18 00

" Hot air " 4 75

4 28

Brooder Thermometer " 50

45

Chicken Coops 24 Cost 28 <sup>00</sup>/<sub>100</sub>

216 0

Duck Houses 2 No 2 Floor for 16.00 Cost 78 <sup>00</sup>/<sub>100</sub>

70 20

Poultry Houses 100 foot Cost 295 <sup>00</sup>/<sub>100</sub>

299 90

" " No 4 " 20 <sup>50</sup>/<sub>100</sub>

18 45

" " " 12 " 11 <sup>50</sup>/<sub>100</sub>

10 35

Incl. in

1816 80

## Building Material

1000 feet Hemlock Boards

" " 1-2-12

16# nails

4# " and Fine

2 Rolls Tar Paper 3 Ply

} included  
in Value of  
Building

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Poultry Farm

1912

Forward

1816 80

Feed.

4 bu	Wheat	1 <sup>20</sup>	4 80
1/2 ..	Oats	44	22
20	.. Ground		40
100	Special Soft Feed		1 50
65	Oyster shell	60 <sup>c</sup>	39
65	Brit	90	60
20	Meat scrap	3	60
215	Sunseed meal	2 <sup>c</sup>	4 30
200	Gluten	1 <sup>40</sup>	2 80
65	Corn Meal	1 <sup>85</sup>	1 20
175	Middlings	1 <sup>65</sup>	2 89
275	Bran	1 <sup>35</sup>	3 70
160	Baled Hay		1 60

2500

Stack

410	Chickens	1 <sup>25</sup>	51 2 50
93	Ducks	1 <sup>40</sup>	130 20
✓ 1	Dog		6 00
13	Turkeys	3 <sup>50</sup>	45 50

69420

Tools and Supplies

✓ 2	ax		80
✓ 2	Bushes Horse		30
✓ 22	Bags	5	1 10
✓ 1	Bone cutters	Cost 21 <sup>00</sup> 1910	17 00
✓ 1	Brooms		
✓ 1	Brooder		7 00
0 2	" Bought 1911 Cost 3.92 10%		3 53
0 2	" Shovel		1 50
✓ 1	Bush Hook		50
0 10	Barrels		2 00
✓ 1	Blanket Rubber	1 Road 1 <sup>00</sup>	50
✓ 3	Blankets Horse	2 Stable 1 <sup>00</sup>	2 00
✓ 1	Cultivator	Bought 1911 Cost 6 <sup>00</sup>	5 40
✓ 1	Corn Sheller	New 1912 Cost 7 <sup>50</sup>	6 75

4834

253600

Poultry Farm

1912

Forward

					48 34	253600
					2 00	
✓	3				35	
✓	1				25	
✓	1				20	
✓	1				15	
✓	18			85	6 30	
✓	1				30	
✓	19			30	5 70	
✓	11			25	2 75	15 05
✓	60					
✓	3	Any	Eggs Nest		75	
✓	39	Any	Eggs 36 any shipped but not on hand		19 50	
0	1		Grinder Coffee			
0	2		Garbage cans New 1911 Cost 2 <sup>25</sup>		2 00	
0	18		Fountains Drink 30		5 40	
✓	1		Halter		60	
✓	1		Hal		15	
✓	1		Hammers		15	
✓	1		" Sledge		15	
✓	4		Hoppers Feed		1 25	
✓	4		Shell		1 00	
✓	1		Incubator Thermometers (Hush case per)	75	4 50	
✓	1		" Hydrometers " " "		1 50	
✓	2		Incubator Cost 7 <sup>50</sup> Each 1912		1 3 50	
✓	1		Incubator sand tray No 3 1912 Cost 38 <sup>00</sup>	109	3 4 20	
✓	1		Sap Rube		50	
✓	1		Liniment			
✓	1		Leg Bands			
✓	1500		Letter Heads & Cards 75 <sup>00</sup> 35 <sup>cent</sup> Labels 500		7 85	
✓	1	bol	Lime		1 35	
✓	15	can	Lime Powder	25	38	
✓	1		Lantern not on hand			
✓	1		Mattress		2 5	
					161 36	
					12 1 21	

Country Farm

1912

	Forward		16136	253600
✓ 2	Mouse traps			
✓ 1	Measures ✓ 1	8 quart 50 4 " 25 no quad	75	
✓ 1	Pump spray		5 00	
0	Powder sun	worn out		
0 2	Pruning shears		70	
1	Power dog		1 00	
Home 3	Pipe and fittings	on hand Huger says Not Serv.		
✓ 3	Pails		30	
✓ 1	Plow		4 50	
✓ 10	Pans		50	
✓ 4	" Large		20	
✓	Rubber stamps and pad		3 00	
Home 1	Rake		20	
gro 1	Rat trap		50	
BR 1	Saws		65	
✓ 1	Shovel long handled		40	
✓	Scythe			
✓	Sickle			
✓	Stones			
✓	Sleigh		5 00	
Huger 1	Tool chest and tools		7 00	
Came back 1	Wagon		4 50	
Home 1	Wheel Barrow		50	
✓	Wire Panels			
6 12	Wall Fountain	Cost 7 <sup>00</sup> 1911 -	6 00	20206
10	Wire Panels	6' - 16"	Value includes in houses and yards.	
2	"	6' - 15"		
11	"	10' - 6'		
5	"	8' - 6'		
14	"	12' - 4'		
3	"	6' - 4'		
1 Roll	Wire 2 feet	" Mesh		
3	" 4 "	" "		
3	" 6 "	" "		
2	" 2 "	" "		
1 1/2	" Barb	" "		
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