

Confidential

Beckwith March 16 - 1844

M. R. Fortin Esq

Dear Sir -

My Father in the year 1796, retired from his Estate at Croton River. The British Army had taken the possession of the City of New York - In the Spring of 1794 he rented the Old Domain of Col. Henry Beckman at Rhinecliff Landing my Aunt Gertie's Beckman was then alive - She died that Spring - My Father and his family occupied that Domain until the Spring of 1798 when he removed his Family to Amelia Town - in the Interior of Dutchess County - He remained there until the Spring of 1799. When he removed his Family to this House I now reside at - The reason he went here was that the Old Manor House at Croton was not in a situation to take My Mother & family there - As the House had been occupied by our Army as an Out post - The Tories having taken away every door and Window, & he could not move there until it was made habitable & comfortable - He immediately sent Carpenters to put the House in repair - The Farm was in good Order & the fences had not been destroyed. (The Odell farm of which you enquired about was in complete Order) Every thing was in good Order except the House - I mentioned that he stopped here because this House although then only one story appeared to him an eligible stopping place until he could repair the Old Manor House - This farm at that time had no fence on it whatever it had all been destroyed by our Army and the whole of it was a perfect common - While my Father was making his arrangements in putting the Old Manor House in Order for him to go & reside there - The American Army was discharged - My Mother came here & asked my Father whether he could go & remain at Croton until he placed himself in business - My Father told him he might - But as soon as the House was repaired & which he had employed Carpenters to do it - He would move his family down as this property was burned by the Army - He could not remain here & must go home

My Mother did not say anything at that time about -
But as soon doors windows &c were made to the House and
my Father telling him that he intended to remove from here
to Groton - My Mother behaved very improper & told my
Father to remain where he was - That he had permitted her
to go to Groton & that he would occupy it - My Mother who
was a pious religious woman, but it appeared she saw my
Mother more than other children & could not see nor believe
any improper act of him - My Father remained here under
very provocation, while my Mother enjoyed all his ^{life} about
Prize from 1793 until the death of my Father May 1-1814
In the year 1801 - I married - The next year I raised
the second story to my House in the year (I think) of
1805 or 1806 My Father & Mother left me & went to Groton
All this time from 1793 - until ~~the~~ the time of my
Father's death My Mother had all his estate under his
control & management & receiving all the profits as
well as the ^{control} side of Groton as the South -
My Father had the control of not any thing My Mother
had it all - -

Now in regard to the Underhill Lease I remember
very distinctly - The Legislature were then in session in
1792 in New York My Father - Brother & myself (I was
a member of assembly - my Brother a Senator & my Father
at Groton) lodged at Verine Elsworth, in Maiden Lane - I saw
my Mother in close confab with Robert Underhill and after
their confab he related to my Father the object. Mr. Underhill
had in view to get a lease for the water of Groton River &c &c
My Father was very adverse to it & would not consent to it
but through the persuasions of my Brother & his accustomed
opposition Underhill must have a lease - at an all judge more
my Father at length acquiesced - This is the truth of that
transaction & which I could attest to - I was opposed to it but
my Brother replied it was none of my business as I had nothing
to do with it - I was therefore compelled to be passive

My Father gave Mattocks & seed
for it - he could not pay for it and
I gave him it to my Mother -

How was this? - My Father sold a Piece of Land that was
of Acres I don't know ^{to Mattocks} He could not pay for it my Brother
accepted a bid from Mattocks but my Father never received a
Cent for it, This is now a part of the Ripp farm -

With respect to the mill my Brother built (Jep. Fields
mill) The Timber was all cut on the South side of Groton
my Father's Oxen were sent from here to draw it out They were
there a long time & one night The Oxen left the place where
They were fed - came down to Groton at the ferry & were nearly
been drowned - from that circumstance I know The Timber
was got for The ~~mill~~ mill on the South side of Groton -

As a farther proof that my Brother took all the
management & profits of my Father's property - I will
relate this circumstance - It was at the time the Yellow fever
was raging in New York & every person wished to get a retreat
in the country - I rode to Groton very early in the morning
from this place I arrived at Groton about half past eight o'clock
in the morning met Abraham Underhill at the Ferry House
before him without speaking - I rode up to the House
at Groton left my Horse standing, I read my Brother
walking on the piazza in deep thought I addressed him
good morning my Brother - he continued walking in a
great thought I repeated cannot you find time to speak
to me - At last he replied - Have you seen Abraham Underhill
I answered Yes What of that - He has been here & wants me
to purchase all the surplus water of Groton River which
he holds by his lease & what do you think he asks for it?
I answered all your property here farm & all - He
became outrageous said I meant to insult him as a fool
& heated me to the becoming that I was on the departure
He then became a little cool & asked me whether I intended
to insult him - I told him not - Then he related that
Abraham Underhill would give him all the surplus water of
Groton River - If he would obligate him self to pay for
the Buildings they would put up - I laughed most heartily
that my prediction was right - They could not see
so many buildings for a Summer residence for his friends
that he never would be able to pay for - so I told him

that my first prediction was right — At last when
he came to reflect — He said Brother you have
saved me from ruin — Forgive my reluctance and
stay the day with me, how fortunate you have been
here this morning or perhaps before to morrow I
should have agreed with his proposals — This
transaction must have been before my marriage
in 1801 — & This is another proof that he took all
my fathers property in his direction —

Now in respect of the Lease given by H. Beckman
and his wife Gertrude to my father for his & H.
you have it with the assignment to my Brother Gilbert
& his devise to me — That I must for itself — Only that
have paid in 1823 \$3000 — ignorantly & innocently as
the lease was always kept from my perception until
I had paid the money — But I presume my sister
Beckman and Ben Beckman will do me justice
when the appraisement is made for the lot on
Cotton River — The whole of that transaction
about the lease of my fathers will is a very delicate
subject — I therefore refrain any thing about it —
My Brother was the chief agent in neglecting my paying
so much money promising me whatever I allow it there
he would pay — But it was as all his promises
to me he never performed that or any other he engaged
to do for me — I have written this for
your own eye — It would not do to make a
public exposure — You may argue it from these
facts — But this letter must be seen by no other
person than yourself — which you will find me happy
Yours respectfully
D. S. Corbett

I wrote this some time but neglected sending it to you