

# ***Wheels and deals...and a steal too?***

## ***Joseph W. Mather's horse and carriage correspondence***

Among the letters received—and saved—by Joseph Wakeman Mather in the 1890s are a number that deal with buying and selling of horses, maintaining and acquiring wagons and carts, and even possibly a horse thief. A sampling...

**No dice for "Dixie."** Three letters from Mr. H. Parsons, of Brookside Stock Farm in South Norwalk tell the tale.

From an April 16, 1889 letter...

*"Dear Sir...it will be impossible to make you a respectable offer for "Dixie." I do not want the carriage at all, but there is a price at which I would buy the horse. Suppose you name the lowest dollar you will take for him..."*



Then a year later on October 16, 1890...

*"Dear Sir...If you will give me your lowest price for Dixie I will look at him. Have just returned from the West with a carload, and am not in want unless very cheap..."*

And on October 21, 1890...

*"Dear Sir...No doubt "Dixie" is cheap at your figures, but with the large stock and extremely dull state of the horse trade, I should not feel justified in buying him..."*

**Before MAACO and AAMCO.** Letters from Geo. F. Johnson, Carriage Builder, New Canaan...

From a May 10, 1889 letter...

*"...it will cost now to paint...\$12...the cost of shaft will be \$7.00... other work... \$1...that's the lowest we can figure it...of course it will look like new then."*



And from September 10, 1891...with a bit of mystery...

*"In reply to your letter of the 8<sup>th</sup> inst. will say I have examined your cart and think it will cost about \$8.50 to put it in order. The horse I have heard nothing of."*

**Before Craigslist.** In October 1894, Joseph Wakeman Mather ran an ad in the Tribune for a used Coupe Rockaway [Coupe Rockaway was an enclosed four-wheel carriage]. He received at least two replies.

From Portchester NY on October 28...

*"I have one for sale good as new J.B. Demarest maker...cost \$800 will sell for \$400. Can be seen at my stable on the Sound at Portchester..."*



And from New York on October 30...

*"...I have a first class one for Sale used only ten or twelve times if you will call and see it I will sell it cheaper than you can purchase anything like it in NY..."*

**And before texts and email.** Rustlers in Darien? On December 26, 1893, Joseph Wakeman Mather received this telegram...

Darien CT 26

J.W. Mather

No. 48 Wall St

NY

Come here tonight. Horse in stable. Man locked up.

C.G. Waterbury

FORM NO. 1.

**THE WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH COMPANY.**  
INCORPORATED  
21,000 OFFICES IN AMERICA. CABLE SERVICE TO ALL THE WORLD.

This Company TRANSMITS and DELIVERS messages only on conditions of payment to be made in advance. Errors can be guarded against only by repeating a message back to the sender. In transmission or delivery of Unrepeated Messages, beyond the amount of time paid therefor in any case, the Company will not be held liable for errors or delays. After the message is filed with the Company the transmission is at the risk of the sender. This is an UNREPEATED MESSAGE, and is delivered by request of the sender under the conditions named above.

THOS. T. EC RT, President and General Manager.

NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ SENT BY \_\_\_\_\_ RECEIVED BY \_\_\_\_\_

*2 J. W. Mather* *119* *DM*

**RECEIVED** at the WESTERN UNION BUILDING, 195 Broadway, N. Y. *Dec 26* 1893

Dated *Darien Ct 26*

To *J. W. Mather*  
*No 48 Wall St*  
*N.Y.*

*Come here tonight. Horse in*  
*stable man locked up*

*C. G. Waterbury*