

**EDVARD (*Edward*) BECH**  
**1812-1873**  
**POUGHKEEPSIE IRONMASTER**



**The Bech Mausoleum - Section L**  
*(photo by V. A. Buechele)*

Designed by Detlef Lienau, this beautiful mausoleum was built in 1862. Lienau also designed a series of buildings for “Rosenlund” the Bech Estate (formerly known as “Hickory Grove”) on Route 9 in Poughkeepsie. The Marist Brothers purchased the “Rosenlund” site in 1908. The Bech gatehouse, gardener’s cottage and carriage house designed by Lienau on what is today the Marist College Campus are currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Today, and to the untrained architectural eye of this author, resemblances in the architecture of this mausoleum and the National Register buildings can be seen.

Born May 4, 1812 of Danish ancestors, Edward Bech came to New York in 1838 where he became a commercial agent and later established his own trading firm in 1842. In this same year he became Danish Consul in New York. A position he held until 1858 when his own business prevented him from handling consulate matters in a timely fashion.

Edvard Bech’s trading firm in New York City sold wine as well as iron. This firm continued until about 1890 - the year of his son George Albert Bech’s death at the age of 34. Through his trading in iron Edvard became acquainted with Joseph Tuckerman, Poughkeepsie Iron Foundryman.

In 1853, after the death of his father, Jorgen Bech (a wealthy Copenhagen merchant), Edvard appears to have utilized his entire inheritance for the Tuckerman & Bech Iron Company to build a second furnace and foster the growth of Poughkeepsie’s iron industry. In 1854 Edvard Bech bought out Tuckerman and the company became known as Bech’s Furnace. Edvard Bech saw potential in Poughkeepsie, moved his family here and committed his inherited fortune to the growth of Poughkeepsie’s iron industry.

By 1861, due to opportunities created by the Civil War and the need for additional capital, Bech took in local (Poughkeepsie) partners and created two companies - namely the Poughkeepsie Iron Company and the Falkill Iron Works. In this same year, the then Superintendent of the works, Albert Tower, began to buy into the business. Tower

succeeded Edvard Bech, as the head of the works, when Bech died in 1873. The Poughkeepsie Iron Company was reorganized March 26, 1875. Mr. Albert Tower became its president and manager, and the two plants became one property. [*The Tower Family, also with a mausoleum in Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery, will be the subject of a future newsletter article.*]

The interior of the Bech mausoleum with its tiled floor contains two elaborate marble crypts for Edvard Bech 1812-1873 and his wife Charlotte Hossack Bech (1812-1900) has an elaborate granite cross standing atop a shelf at the rear of the mausoleum. A stained glass window with a white dove is to be found above the mausoleum doorway.

Also entombed in the Bech Mausoleum are Edvard and Charlotte's son, George Albert Bech (1856-1890) and his first wife Mary Stevens Strong Bech (1855-1880). Mary died in childbirth for their son Edward Henri Peter Beck who is also entombed within the Mausoleum.

Other entombments include a son of Edvard and Charlotte, Edward Micael Hossack Beck (1851-1862), as well as Margaret Hossack, mother of Charlotte.

Once one takes the time to study the families interred in Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery and their connections to our area, it is easy to see how a great deal of our local history had found its final rest behind the gates on Route 9. It is all relative! Even though many of these individuals were not related through their genes, they are related through our local history.

*Prepared for Friends of Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery  
by Virginia A. Buechele, September 22, 2007*

Sources:

- "Edvard Bech, Citizen of Poughkeepsie, 1851-1873"; V. Bech Rambusch with Walter Averill
- "Death of Edward Bech"; Poughkeepsie Daily Eagle, July 14, 1873
- "Bech", Death Notice; Sunday Courier, Poughkeepsie, July 20, 1873
- "Bech", Death Notice; New York Times, July 12, 1873
- "Death of a New York Merchant"; New York Times, July 12, 1873
- "The Eagle's History of Poughkeepsie"; Edmund Platt, 1905, pages 143, 297
- Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery Office Records for Section L - Vicki Fells, Office Manager