



Egbert Benson HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RED HOOK

P.O. Box 1813 Red Hook, N.Y. 12571-0397

2 **SETH MCKEE, LAND PROJECT MANAGER
OF SCENIC HUDSON, TO SPEAK AT ANNUAL
DINNER MEETING OF HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ON JUNE 17 AT ELMENDORPH INN**

SPRING 1997

Scenic Hudson's new effort to preserve farmland in the Hudson Valley will be the subject of Seth McKee's talk at the Historical Society's annual dinner meeting on Tuesday, June 17th. In the past, agriculture was the primary economic activity throughout the town of Red Hook, leaving us a legacy of open space, scenic vistas and compact villages. The result is a rural quality of life cherished by Red Hook's citizens. McKee will speak about Scenic Hudson's Farmland Protection Project, already underway in the Town of Stuyvesant in Columbia County.

The evening will begin at 6:00 p.m. with punch and hors d'oeuvres in the tap room of the Elmendorph Inn, followed by a buffet dinner of Turkey Tetrazzini, fresh vegetables, salad, rolls, dessert and coffee at 6:30 p.m. Reservations are required and must be received by June 9th (see reservation form elsewhere in this newsletter). The annual meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m. with the election of three new trustees, the approval of a change in the By-Laws and the presentation of the annual Junior and Senior Heritage Awards for notable accomplishments made within the Town of Red Hook that preserve, amplify and/or extend the area's historic heritage. Seth McKee's talk is scheduled to begin at 8:00 p.m.

Red Hook Views' recent lecture series *Farming on the Suburban Frontier* has focused public attention on methods which have been used to preserve the rural quality of towns in other areas where agriculture is threatened by development pressures. Seth McKee will speak about Scenic Hudson's Farmland Preservation Project which aims to save the agricultural landscape of our region and to help safeguard farming by preserving a critical core of viable farms. Thanks to support from the **Lila Acheson and DeWitt Wallace Fund for the Hudson Highlands Scenic Hudson Land Trust, Inc.** has recently embarked on a pilot project purchasing conservation easements on farms in the Town of Stuyvesant and is exploring the possibility of a similar effort in Red Hook. There will be time for questions and answers at the conclusion of McKee's talk. For more information call 758-2923 or 758-6204.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S KEYBOARD

Barbara Bielenberg

As we approach our Annual Meeting we can rejoice at all that's been accomplished this year. Our membership has doubled since last spring. We've received many significant additions to our collections of photographs and documents. Electricity, heat and a state-of-the-art fire-alarm system have been installed on the second floor of the Elmendorph Inn which, when plaster and carpentry repairs are completed, will become a much-needed headquarters for the Society. Even though our collections are presently scattered and largely inaccessible we've managed to answer inquiries from individuals and institutions as diverse as Yale University and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

We hope you will ALL renew your membership in the Society. Our membership year runs from July 1, 1997 to June 30, 1998. Please look at your address label to check your status: if you're a Life Member there's no need to renew, although donations are always welcome! Consider upgrading to a higher category and help us purchase files, bookcases, a copy machine and other equipment and archival supplies for the Rosemary Coons Historical Archive Center.

Thank you all for your support and encouragement. We are especially grateful to retiring Trustees **Susan Ellis** and **Marlene Hejnal** who have each completed two three-year terms. Susan has [continued on page 2]

recently served as our Vice President and Marlene is our Archivist and keeps an inventory of our collections as well as our membership list on her computer. We are delighted that she has agreed to continue these essential services.

1997-98 will be an exciting year with the inauguration of our new home and archive center, a fine series of programs including more of our *Remembering Towns and Hamlets* meetings, a Civil War reenactment-meeting-and-exhibit on September 20th and an expansion of our work with the Red Hook schools. Please consider volunteering time, as well as money to help us become of ever greater service to the community. We look forward to greeting you at our Annual Meeting, June 17th.

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CIVIL WAR MEMORABILIA SOUGHT

Barbara Bielenberg

Next fall our 1997-98 season will open on Saturday, September 20th with a daylong Civil War reenactment in and around the Elmendorph Inn featuring members of the **Civil War Living Historians** portraying members of the **150th New York State Volunteer Infantry Regiment** recruited in Dutchess County and mustered into service on October 10 and 11, 1862. There will be a special meeting of the Society at 2:00 p.m. in the South Room featuring a talk about our participation in the War.

We would like to include an informal exhibit of Civil War memorabilia. Please bring photographs, diaries and artifacts of any kind to show. A limited number of cases will be available to protect your treasures. Please give us a call at 758-2923.

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NOMINATIONS REQUESTED FOR HERITAGE AWARDS

Each year the Historical Society solicits nominations of individuals or projects that have made significant contributions to the historic heritage of the Town of Red Hook. Nominations may be made in one or more of the following categories:

- **Written or Recorded:** typed or published texts; taped, photographic or audiovisual material; documents or research work.
- **Architectural:** historic restorations, preservation, or design applications that reflect or enhance the vintage character of the Town.
- **Artistic:** artwork, artifacts or replicas, in any media or material, which depict, typify or enlarge comprehension of the past.
- **Environmental:** site works that conserve, restore or beautify settings reminiscent of the area's past.

Nominations may be made in each of these two categories:

- **Senior:** an individual or group over the age of 21.
- **Junior:** an individual or group under the age of 21.

Nominations must be received by June 3rd. Mail to the Egbert Benson Historical Society of Red Hook, Box 1813, Red Hook NY 12571. Please include the following information:

- Award category.
- Identification of the nominee by name, title or location.
- Brief description of the project or activity, including why you feel it worthy of recognition.
- Your name, address and telephone number in case we need more information.

All nominations received by the due date will be evaluated by an objective Heritage Awards Committee. Winners will be notified by mail and a formal presentation will be made at our Annual Dinner Meeting on June 17th. Awards include a complementary membership, framed award certificate and complementary dinner.

For more information, please call 758-2923 or 758-7231.

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THREE TRUSTEES TO BE ELECTED AT ANNUAL MEETING

Nominated to serve three-year terms are: (vote for three)

Mary Cioffi has been serving as Treasurer and Trustee of the Historical Society since last year, fulfilling the uncompleted term of the previous Treasurer. Presently employed part time as assistant clerk of the Town of Red Hook she has served as Secretary of the Red Hook Area Chamber of Commerce and the Rhinebeck chapter of AARP and Treasurer of the Friends of Elmendorph, which she currently serves as Membership Chairperson. She and her husband John were recently honored by the Hendrick Hudson Lodge with the DeWitt Clinton Masonic Award for Community Service. She is retired from a career in banking.

Thomas L. Cordier is Deputy Mayor and a Trustee of the Village of Tivoli and is collecting photographs and other memorabilia for a Tivoli History Museum in the Watts DePeyster Fireman's Hall. Retired after thirty years with IBM, Tom is a Trustee of the Friends of Elmendorph and serves on the Cornell Cooperative Extension Community Resource Development Committee for Dutchess County, the Red Hook Greenway Committee and Tivoli's Local Waterfront Revitalization Committee. His wife, Lydia, is a Mill Road School teacher.

Catherine Dewsnap is retired from teaching sixth-grade English at Red Hook's Middle School. She previously taught at the Mill Road School. Her husband is a Professor of English at Bard College. They have five grown children and three grandchildren, which gives Kate a special concern for inspiring in young people an interest in the history of their own family and of the community in which they live.

Nominations for the three vacancies may also be made from the floor at the Annual Meeting.

It's Time to Renew Your Membership! (See back page.)

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REMEMBERING UPPER RED HOOK

Barbara Bielenberg

Our Society meetings series on the villages and hamlets of the Town of Red Hook got a rousing start on February 25th with Rev. Roger Leonard leading off with a lively account of the history of the community. The evening produced enough interesting stories and pictures to fill a book. Roger Leonard's theory of the origin of the name **Red Hook** is so logical it bears repeating: according to Roger, the name was given to an area near Hoffman's Mills in present-day Tivoli where the mills, nearby church and schoolhouse were all painted red; *hoeck* is Dutch for "corners." As early as 1751 a baptism was recorded at a place called "the Red Hook."

We will not try to recount all the interesting facts that Roger recounted but one of his stories continues to make me chuckle. Talking about how the various Red Hook families intermarried, he told of one elderly resident who used to boast "I was Clara Ham before I married, and afterwards I became a "Cooking Ham." He touched briefly on the Academy which was built as a private high school in 1822, eventually becoming the Grange Hall until it burned early in this century. (He'll tell us more at our May 27th meeting which we're calling *Remembering Upper Red Hook, Part II.*)

Alice Bulkeley described the Upper Red Hook, District 6 School, "There were two rooms, the first four grades were on the ground floor; 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th were on the second floor and we had two teachers . . . they were really devoted to teaching. When you got into the fifth grade you went upstairs and you were really cooking on a hot burner there! Our teacher was Henrietta Fraleigh and she had three children of her own and she devoted so much time to us that I can't imagine how she did it all." She told how the children had to walk to school and were rewarded at lunch time with hot tomato soup or hot chocolate prepared on a little hot plate in the back room. Alice recalled "Henrietta had a Walter Damrosch hour. She got somebody to give us a radio and we had notebooks and there would be programs on the radio on classical music

[continued on page 4]

and we had to keep track of that. We also sang and saluted the flag every day. We had an old piano that somebody donated . . . and we put on operettas . . . we had art, and this was one teacher doing all of this."

Charlotte Bathrick concurred: "Henrietta Fraleigh and Laura Lawrence, another teacher--the things they did were unbelievable. On July 4th, 1922 they put together with all the rest of the community a field-day project." Charlotte showed photographs of the event, held in a natural amphitheater off Spring Lake Road. "If you look at these pictures you'll see that everybody was seated all up on the hill and I'm one of these little girls dancing around in the front. Henrietta Fraleigh . . . organized these things . . . my father was one of the Indians on horses. They had covered wagons . . . and teepees and everything. It was a whole full day of everything going on."

The audience got a real sense of the more difficult aspects of life earlier in the century, from another of Charlotte's stories. "Dr. E. K. Losee brought all of us kids into the world, everybody in Upper Red Hook. And the day that I was born . . . February 6th . . . there was a blizzard and it was snowing so hard. My father was in the hospital, down in Vassar Hospital, with a gallbladder operation and they had taken him on one of these big sleighs and they put him on a stretcher and took him down to Barrytown Station, loaded him in a box car and took him to Vassar Hospital to be operated on. While he was down there being operated on I was being born up in Upper Red Hook . . . they took the horse and sleigh and they went down and picked up Dr. E. K. Losee and he came up and he stayed the whole day and the whole night with Mom until I was born."

The construction of the Route 9 bypass around the village of Upper Red Hook in 1928 generated a number of stories. Charlotte noted that the blasting blew out all the windows in the Bathrick house. **Sid Delanoy** told about some of the troubles: " . . . I guess everybody here must know where Ernie Churchill's place is, there's a little stream they had to cross, and it's quicksand in there . . . steamrollers and steam shovels . . . didn't run with diesel and gas they way they do today, they ran on steam power. Well they left the roller in that position near that stream . . . during the night. The next morning it was gone, so there's a steamroller still there before they put the piling in to hold the road up. . . . I was told this and I presume it's quite factual." Sid continued, " . . . when they had the old Grange Hall, there was a barn there that Lane Construction Company . . . kept the mules in . . . and one night they got out . . . well they took off and they ran all over [Mr. Becker's] place and they tore up his lawn all to pieces. And it wasn't just one or two or ten, there must have been 50 or 60 of them and they tore that lawn all to pieces. He was caretaker at the cemetery in Upper Red Hook and he sure was a perturbed man. He never swore, but he sure swore that day!"



We have tape-recorded these and other tales from **Gene Budd**, **Fred Briggs**, **Larry Thetford** and others, and **Roger Leonard**, and we look forward to collecting more on May 27th. **Wint Aldrich** told about his surprise at finding Upper Red Hook in the headlines of *The New York Times* of 1896: William Jennings Bryan, the prominent politician and orator whose "Cross of Gold" speech advocating free and unlimited coinage of silver as a remedy for the economic ills then plaguing farmers and industrial workers had brought him national attention and the Democratic candidacy for President, spent a politically active week in the village as the guest of Mr. and Mrs. E. C. Perrine. He spoke from the porch of the Perrine store and in Barrytown, Tivoli and Rhinebeck. Ultimately, he was defeated by the Republican candidate William McKinley. Wint has provided the Society with prints from microfilms of the *Times* of August 18th through 24th, 1896, which cover Bryan's activities. They don't reproduce well but we've reprinted excerpts for your enjoyment.

Charlotte Bathrick, Sid Delanoy
and Jack Lewis share memories
at our February meeting



WES.

Part One
Pages 1-8

N.Y. Times 23 August 1896

1896, BY THE NEW-YORK TIMES PUBLISHING CO.

PRICE FIVE CENTS.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN

WILL PREPARE HIS LETTER IN THE
SECLUSION OF UPPER RED HOOK.

N.Y. Times Aug 18, 1896

Makes a Few Corrections in His Madison Square Speech, and Says He Will Make a Denial of Senator Thurston's Charge that He Has Been in the Employ of the Bonanza Kings—A Speech at Poughkeepsie.

UPPER RED HOOK, N. Y., Aug. 17.—Here in this little Dutchess County village, six miles from the nearest station on the New York Central Railroad, nearly two miles from a branch road of the Philadelphia and Reading, and away from the busy whirl of politics, William J. Bryan has established himself for a week or ten days of quiet to enable him to compose his letter of acceptance.

Mr. and Mrs. Bryan are the guests of Mr. and Mrs. E. C. Perrine. Mrs. Perrine was Mrs. Bryan's teacher at the Female Academy in Jacksonville, Ill., the town where the Democratic candidate also received the principal part of his education.

The Perrine residence is a pretty frame structure, right in the village and adjacent to the general store kept by the nominee's host.

Upper Red Hook feels flattered by the presence of a candidate for the Presidency, and to-night there was an outpouring of citizens from this place and neighboring villages to give him a welcome. Party lines were not drawn in the reception given for Mr. and Mrs. Bryan by Mr. and Mrs. Perrine, and there were many Republicans at the gathering. The J. Watts De Peyster Gun Squad, from Madalin, a nearby community, was at hand and fired a salute, and a brass band discoursed popular airs during the evening. Jacob Fleeter, a lawyer of Red Hook, introduced Mr. Bryan to the gathering in and about Mr. Perrine's house, and, standing on the porch, Mr. Bryan in a short speech of thanks said:

BRYAN TAKES THE STUMP

OPENS HIS CAMPAIGN WITH A
SPEECH TO DUTCHESS FARMERS.

Wears His Alpaca Coat and Tries to

Duplicate His Chicago Effort—Declares that This is a Time for Common People to Think—Attacks the Handlers of Money and Draws a Parallel with Demetrius—A Large Crowd Listens.

HARRYTOWN, N. Y., Aug. 22.—William J. Bryan opened the political campaign in earnest to-day at Madalin, a town in Dutchess County. He delivered his first actual campaign speech since his nomination, and showed an earnestness in delivery closely resembling that which brought about the demonstration in his honor at Chicago the day before he was selected as the Democratic standard bearer. Mr. Bryan was in excellent voice and evidently made a good impression on his auditors.

Mr. and Mrs. Bryan and their hosts, Mr. and Mrs. Perrine, drove over to Madalin at 3 o'clock from Upper Red Hook. A number of houses along the five miles of road were decorated with flags, and the town of Madalin and the adjacent village, Tivoli, were also made attractive by a display of bunting. At the outskirts of Madalin a Reception Committee and a brass band greeted the candidate, and, with the band in front, a procession was formed for the entry into the town. Fifteen hundred persons were gathered about the speaker's stand, which was situated in a large pasture, used in all campaigns for political meetings. Mr. Bryan was loudly applauded as he came in sight.

John J. Lenz, candidate for Congress in Ohio on the Democratic ticket, was delivering an address at the time, and he spoke for more than an hour after the Bryan party appeared, devoting himself entirely to the money question and

Heritage Award Nominations Sought (see page 2)

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REMEMBERING TIVOLI

Our second meeting in our series on the villages and hamlets of the Town was held at the Watts DePeyster Fireman's Hall in Tivoli on Sunday afternoon, April 20th. Before-and-after photographs arranged on the walls of the building's stairhall attest to the superb restoration of the building into a thriving civic center with a library, museum, office for the Mayor and Village Clerk, a courtroom and conference room and, on the third floor, the firemen's ballroom which now serves as a handsome meeting room and gallery. A large crowd gathered in this room to hear Tivoli Historian Richard C. Wiles recount the history of the community and then open up the meeting to members of the audience who contributed some fascinating tales which we'll share with you in our September newsletter. In the meantime we recommend Richard Wiles' illustrated history of the village *Tivoli Revisited: A Social History*, published in 1981; a limited number of copies are still available at Bernie Tieger's Village Books on Broadway in Tivoli.

Of course, much has happened in Tivoli since 1981 and we've asked Deputy Mayor Tom Cordier to bring you up to date on one exciting project which is bound to add another chapter to the history of Tivoli.

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VILLAGE OF TIVOLI LOCAL WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION PLAN

Thomas L. Cordier

The Hudson River was the focal point of commercial development in the Village. In the eighteenth century sloops docked at the Tivoli landing and later the ferry to Saugerties, commercial fishing operations and Tivoli being a steamboat stop provided employment and economic activity which allowed the Village to prosper. The coming of the railroad in 1851 added to the prosperity. The ferry to Saugerties ran until 1947, and since that time Tivoli's waterfront has declined.

On April 29, 1991, Tivoli's Waterfront Revitalization Plan was approved by the New York State Secretary of State. In



Tivoli Station, H. V. C. & P. R. R. R.

Fred Briggs Collection

1995, a \$25,000 Matching Grant was received to fund a feasibility study which was completed in 1996. By the year 2000, the Village plans to construct a new 200-foot shorefront dock and a two-acre parking lot. The waterfront park will be used by Town of Red Hook residents for picnics and for launching canoes, kayaks, windsurfers and other car-top crafts. The Tivoli Waterfront Revitalization Committee presently consists of Danielle Cordier and Marty Clarke, co-chairs, Michael Belanger, Bob Butscher and Deputy Mayor Tom Cordier.

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Annual Dinner Meeting, June 17th. Reserve Now!

RESERVATION FORM**ANNUAL DINNER
EGBERT BENSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RED HOOK**

Tuesday, June 17, 1997
At the Elmendorph Inn
North Broadway (Rt. 9), Village of Red Hook

6:00 p.m. punch and hors d'oeuvres
6:30 p.m. buffet dinner

7:30 p.m. annual meeting and awards
8:00 p.m. speaker

Names(s) (please print) _____

Phone _____ Number of Persons@\$10.00 _____ Dinner Amount enclosed _____

PLEASE MAKE DINNER CHECKS PAYABLE TO: RENNERS

PLEASE NOTE: For your convenience, Dinner check and form and/or Membership check and form (please **do not** combine the two in one check) may be sent to:

Mary Cioffi RD #3 Box 72 Red Hook NY 12571

DINNER RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE BY JUNE 9TH

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PROPOSED BY-LAW CHANGE

In order to provide more flexibility in scheduling membership meetings and to allow for cancellations due to weather and/or other causes, the following change has been recommended by the Historical Society trustees and approved by ten members of the Society:

Article II, Section 2., which now reads: "Regular meetings of the Society shall be held monthly except July and August."

Shall be changed to read: "Regular meetings of the Society shall be held at least eight (8) times a year."

The proposed change will be voted on at the Annual Meeting of the Egbert Benson Historical Society of Red Hook to be held on Tuesday, June 17, 1997 at 7:30 p.m. at the Elmendorph Inn.

PROXY

I/We will **not** attend the Annual Meeting of the Egbert Benson Historical Society of Red Hook on June 17, 1997. In my absence, I hereby appoint the President or her/his deputy or _____ as my proxy to vote on all matters that may come before the membership at the meeting.

Signature

Signature

Date: _____

Date: _____



Egbert Benson HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RED HOOK

P.O. Box 1813 Red Hook, N.Y. 12571-0397

MEMBERSHIP FORM

APPLICATION / RENEWAL YEAR JULY 1, 1997 - JUNE 30, 1998

Name(s) (Please Print)

Mailing Address

Telephone Number ()

ANNUAL DUES

Check appropriate line(s); make check payable to "Egbert Benson Historical Society"

☐ Family \$12 ☐ Individual \$8 ☐ Student (Under 18) \$1
☐ Contributing \$25 ☐ Sustaining \$50 ☐ Life (\$100 or more)
☐ Business or Organization \$15 DONATION _____

If you wish to serve on a committee, please (X) below:

☐ Archives (collecting, cataloging historical documents) ☐ Publications ☐ Membership
☐ Newsletter (writing, printing, mailing) ☐ Hospitality (meet, greet members at regular meetings, arrange for refreshments)
☐ Program (meet once or twice yearly to plan monthly programs, prepare information for Newsletter)

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP: • Advance notice of monthly meetings • Three newsletters each year • The knowledge that you are supporting the collection, preservation, and dissemination of the history of the Town of Red Hook•

Egbert Benson HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RED HOOK
P.O. Box 1813 Red Hook, N.Y. 12571-0397

