

NAME

Reid Bielenberg Interview

DATE

October 13, 2026

DURATION

1h 15m 22s

3 SPEAKERS

Sam

Reid Beilenberg

Wint Aldrich

START OF TRANSCRIPT**[00:00:02] Sam**

Hi, this is Sam and I'm here with went Aldrich. We're both from historic Red hook. It's September 1st, 2026, and we're interviewing Reed Bielenberg here in the old kitchen at the Elmendorf. So I think one of the things we'd like just to get the ball rolling is Reed, could you just tell us where when you were born, maybe a little bit background on your family and then where you grew up and end it with how old you were when you, the Elmendorf project was started.

[00:00:46] Reid Beilenberg

Okay. Yeah. Well, my name is Reed Bielenberg and I was born in New York City. My parents lived in an apartment up in the Inwood area, but the North End. My father was a commercial artist. My mother was had been working in television in the. I think she worked in the, I'm not sure which studio, but it was in Rockefeller Center. And but then she started raising a family and had my daughter, my sister Christina was born about 1952. And my brother Carl was born 1953. And I came along 1955. And at that point, my parents had been searching for property up river, and they discovered garrison, New York. And they built a had a house designed on a piece of land that overlooked the river and West Point. So our childhood view was from the Bear Mountain Bridge all the way up to Storm King Mountain and up into Newburgh Bay. I could see it all from our front porch. So yeah, the first 18 years of my life were spent there, and I went through the Garrison Union free school and graduated. I guess about 1969, went to Highland Falls High School across the river. That's where all Garrison School kids went. And and yeah, but what kind of got me involved or brought me up to the Red Hook and Rhinebeck area and subsequently brought my parents up was I guess when I was about 14 years old, I became enthralled by this subject of ice sailing.

[00:02:49] Reid Beilenberg

I was tipped off by some friends that there was a regatta occurring down at Croton Point, and I. And I guess it was late January, early February of 1970, and I got on the bud car and took it down to the Croton-harmon station and walked out across where the the dump was. It was the Westchester County landfill. And, you know, way out on, on the south side was this ice boat fleet that was operating for the, for the the Eastern Ice Yachting Association regatta. So that interest was really sparked there. And particularly in the antique style ice boats. My parents had been great volunteers. My father was an artist and he was one of the founders of the garrison Art Center in Garrison. He was part of the Depot Theater. He was he loved to paint sets. So they had any production that went on in the South Pacific, Guys and dolls. Or he would be the man creating the scene on. So that was part of my childhood growing up with with him and also doing watercolors he loved. He was a great watercolor painter. So you can. These are some calendars that my sister prepared. You might flip through them and get a nice sense of his, his kind of work. Yeah.

[00:04:26] Sam

These are all his paintings.

[00:04:27] Reid Beilenberg

Yes. Yeah. And he was a great portrait artist as well. So we have examples of some of the work he did. See this is some of these are quite early 1940s. So yeah.

[00:04:49] Sam

So you came up here for ice yachting. Well, in the early late 60s, early 70s.

[00:04:55] Reid Beilenberg

Yes it was. It was after that first experience and getting connected with the most. The premier ice boater of the day was a man named Raymond Rouge, Raymond Arnold Rouge. And and I kind of latched right on to him. And and because of the enthusiasm particularly generated during that, that regatta at Croton Point and in the subsequent meetings that we had he really became enthusiastic about restoring the ice boat to Jack Frost. And I, I think in one of those years, 1968 or 69, he had come up to Rokeby and, and he had sailed down the river at Barrytown with you, with you folks. And and so I think I came up with Ray to Rokeby one one time because he wanted to survey and I think already he had arranged to to bring some of the parts back. So we, I think I, I mean, I think I'd met Ricky previously at an ice boat function, but, but at any rate, it was my first time to Rokeby and we returned with the mast and the boom and the cockpit and all on Ray's old trailer, which was a wooden platform deck built on a wooden artillery wheels. 1928 Durant with his trailer. It was what he used to haul his ice boat, the The charrette two, back in the 1930s, and he was still using it in 1970. So those wooden wheels were going like this as we went down the highway. But Ray was, was fantastic. And all the ice boat people that I met at the time. So I was just, I was young, I was 15, 14, 15, 16 years old and I had a part time job working in Cold Spring at the Tallix Foundry. That was just beginning. So I was learning casting skills. And I, yeah, so anyway, it was.

[00:07:08] Sam

So when did your folks come up here?

[00:07:10] Reid Beilenberg

Well, they, I was started a sojourn up here and then it was through the Ice Boaters. I met Bobby Bard and I met some others who had been involved with the aerodrome. And that was another fascination of mine. So I I got kind of entree to, to to cold Palin's aerodrome and and, and I was just enthralled by that. So I would hitchhike from high school up every Friday to, to work at the aerodrome. And I'd sometimes sojourn in the Red Room at Rokeby or out at Bob's place out in Milan, and I'd ride a bicycle back and forth and hitchhike here and there. So anyway, I Red hook kind of became my home. And, you know, while I was still in high school, my second home. And when I graduated in 1973, I, that winter, I went to Florida with Cole Palin and built two airplanes there. And and and it was just about that time my parents were ready to leave. Garrison, they had been in the house 20 years or so. It needed quite a lot of repairs. And my father had spent so much of his energy doing volunteer work. He also had gotten involved with the sloop Clearwater and its founding. And my mother was working full time, first at Boscobel, doing as an assistant to the administrator of that she had actually come to Rokeby at some time with Fred Stanier and looked at or acquired books from States Dykeman's collection that you had. And so I think that was her first introduction to Rokeby. But Yeah. And she worked at for what was called Sleepy Hollow restorations. And they managed the Philipsburg Manor. She became the director of Philipsburg Manor. And she also worked at Van Cortlandt Manor. So she was really kind of steeped in the colonial history of, of New York.

[00:09:29] Sam

So it was kind of a natural for her to get involved.

[00:09:32] Reid Beilenberg

Yes. That would really it kind of led her up this way. And, you know, once I had settled, I started to look for property. I think they met Lottie Kitner who the realtor and and she took him around and showed him some houses and they, they found the. Looked at the house on Fraley Street, 58 Fraley Street, which had a carriage barn behind it, and they ended up acquiring that about 1974. And I was delighted. I moved right into the carriage barn there and set up a workshop. And I think my first commercial project, my first paying work was from from your mother, Susan Aldridge, who had came over with a couple of leather seats from a Corvair Monza, I think it was, and she wanted a base made for him. So I got some plywood and constructed a base, and it was for a gift for Anya to have up in her apartment, because she didn't have any proper comfortable chairs. They were a car. They were, you know, they were from a Corvair.

[00:10:41] Wint Aldrich

They could have done better than that.

[00:10:43] Reid Beilenberg

Well, it was, it was it was her creativity and. And I built these bases. And for years they sat up there in his apartment and so then then I did other things there. I built a wooden boat, which I sailed up and down the Hudson on a flat bottomed skiff. I kept it at the point at Rokeby for a while and oh my gosh, so many things. But that was what brought my parents here. They had now a house and it was very soon after they got here that they, they spied the elmendorf. And it's a sort of decrepit state. I, I think it had, I think it may have still had a couple of old gas pumps out in front, but it was, it was pretty rough looking. I mean, it took a great imagination to be able to see by the form of the building and, and some, you know, elements, some of the windows that still could be seen that it was a historic roadhouse along the old Albany Post Road.

[00:11:48] Sam

Help me with the times. So they moved up here. Do you remember what year it was?

[00:11:53] Reid Beilenberg

I'd say 74, 1974.

[00:11:56] Sam

And when did the Elmendorf go up? When did negotiations with IGA or whatever it was?

[00:12:04] Wint Aldrich

Well, it was in the bicentennial context. I mean, that's when we were making so much noise. The embarrassment of a British corporation that owned the Grand Union. There had been a grand union down here where the. I don't know what it is now, across from the post office. And they wanted to be here where the CVS is now. And and it was all in one ownership, I guess. Right, right down to Cherry Street. And so this was going to be demolished. And that's all. Laurie Kitner and Clara Locey. And, and I and most particularly Rosemarie cones needed to hear. And of course, the birds were, were, were right there. I mean, I wish I could remember exactly when, you know, we sort of. Cocked our pistols and but and it took quite a long time with Lindsay Elliott Lindley's help to get to a point of, of serious negotiation. But I'll just insert here my own quick recollection. We had no idea that this was important. It's let's say when I became the town historian, which must have been in 72 or something like that, and then a group of scholars from Cornell, a professor whose name will come back to me and his students for some reason, said that they were going to do a little study of buildings of interest in the village of Red hook.

[00:13:41] Wint Aldrich

I don't know what led them to do that was to choose Red hook. And there was an Amoco station right where the Stewart's is now. And that was apparently in their mind, an interesting survivor from the late 30s. And and so they documented that and may have been another building. And this and when they wrote this up and they had access to it, I don't know whether Grand Union then was the owner. It came to our attention that if Cornell says this is important, we better pay some attention to it. And at that time, there was a junk shop in here run by a, I guess he was technically a tenant of the owner named John Smith. And it was it was all just a lot of, lot of crappy stuff. And the floors were beginning to be taken up because, because there was a guy who, who was the creator of East. East. What is it? East village up in Rensselaer County.

[00:14:47] Reid Beilenberg

Oh, yeah. Carpentier.

[00:14:50] Wint Aldrich

Carpentier. Yeah. He was going around getting all that he could from the colonial era in the 18th century to put in this sort of artificial village of old buildings that could be used as a teaching vehicle for students and for class groups and for and most importantly, for people like Reed to learn how to go back to those times and redo whatever needed to be done, ironwork and so forth.

[00:15:22] Sam

How to do that work.

[00:15:23] Wint Aldrich

And so he wanted these. He wanted these 18th century floorboards. And so they were in some of these rooms. They were taken up. And when finally we had, we had gotten to a point where we were going to make a deal and everything. Carpentier said, you get them all back. You're doing the right thing. I just wanted to save them and use them. And anyway, that's now back to read. I just wanted.

[00:15:50] Reid Beilenberg

To. That's very good. That's the kind of stuff I can't provide. That's the information. And, but

[00:15:56] Sam

But so your folks got involved though, with the whole negotiations and the drumming up of support.

[00:16:03] Reid Beilenberg

Yes. Yeah. I think, I think there was a brief moment when they saw this building that they, they thought they might like to take it on as their own personal project. And I think my mother alluded to that in her interview, but realized that it was you know, it was going to be far beyond their capacity. But, but then, you know, once she got into it, she could really apply all the skills that she had achieved at Boscobel and at Philipsburg Manor. And and yeah. And so she was really the I don't know, how would you call it the driving force? Well, yeah. And, and just, you know, kind of like to do things in the right way. She, she developed, like she says in the interviews, a very good relationship with the you know, the Department of Environmental Conservation and your office there and state parks.

[00:17:06] Wint Aldrich

Yeah.

[00:17:07] Reid Beilenberg

The parks. So yeah, that was, that was really her. And then looking at the details and my father too, because they're both were just tremendously sort of aesthetic in their appreciation of things. My mother could wax on about a sunset like nobody could. She just, she was just she just loved it. She just, you know, she was all emotive about things and And and my father, I mean, being an artist, he was just the aesthetics of these things. So

[00:17:44] Sam

It sounds like your mother. What was her name again? Barbara.

[00:17:48] Reid Beilenberg

Barbara.

[00:17:49] Sam

She was a much more practical one who kind of would organize things and whatnot. Yeah. And your father was kind of the artist. Well, you.

[00:17:57] Reid Beilenberg

Were an a schlepper, too, you know, he was a he was a he really liked to, you know, to get involved with the things, you know, and I mean, and like, you know, like the fireplace in the front room when they restored that, I, I think the bricks were all cleaned up. But, but he did the kind of the faux painting of the back so that it looked like it was a well used fireplace. I mean, again, a little detail and the signage here, I mean, he whatever he worked on, he was he he, that was what he was often called to do was to do the lettering, the graphic presentation. That's what Pete Seeger came to my father to do for for the Clearwater, all the sign boards and things that could accompany the boat and, and, or even before the boat was built to just even describe the history of it. Pete would come up with some sort of text, and my father would get the plywood panel and paint it and, and make a wonderful presentation that people could look at even before that, when the there was a great fight in garrison to prevent the power plant being the pumped storage plant being built at Storm King Mountain. My father did graphics of what the Hudson Highlands would look like if they had high tension wires going from North Redoubt to South Redoubt and, you know, sprawled across the valley. And so he did sort of a, you know, a kind of a cartoon illustration of the valley with these wires crossing it and and then a kind of a map, a historic map of the of the Hudson Highlands. And but somebody pointed out that he made a mistake. He spelled Constitution Island, where he dropped an S in it and it went into publication and said, Constitution Island. But yeah, he was very embarrassed about that. But he, you know, so that was it. Lettering graphics was his forte.

[00:20:09] Sam

Right. So you didn't learn your skills in woodworking from your father?

[00:20:15] Reid Beilenberg

No, not at all. Not at all. No. We I met it was kind of a running joke. And I think my my brother Carl, who was two years older and and a few degrees more cruel than myself. He was we just saw my father as being kind of all thumbs. He, you know, he could he could paint, he could draw, but he could barely change a light bulb. And, but we and so we were, we were a little bit merciless for, for him for a few years. But we had other mentors, people that we, we just idolized for their ability and mechanics and electrical engineering and, and and so those were the people that we gravitated to. Right. But the restoration thing, you know, really came through, I think definitely the appreciation for antiques. My father loved antiques. He ran an antique shop in Cold Spring for a while. It was called The Black Lamb that was down in the basement under Fred Stanyer, who had a shop of fancy federal furniture and chandeliers. And my father's shop was down in the basement, and it was all this kind of stuff, old butter churns and andirons. And he loved the early colonial stuff. Our dining table was a three board plank table. We had this beautiful modern house with glass windows overlooking the river, but we. We ate on a three plank table with original old Windsor chairs and and pewter bowls. I ate my shredded wheat every morning out of a pewter bowl. That's why I probably got more lead poisoning than anyone. But Yeah. So he loved this stuff.

[00:22:02] Sam

So your mom grabbed on to the idea about the Elmendorf. Yeah. And your dad did also. Yeah. Okay. Once. Did you get involved at all?

[00:22:18] Reid Beilenberg

Very little. I might have made or fixed a hinge or done something. I really I don't know why, but maybe.

[00:22:27] Sam

Like, a perfect opportunity to use your skills.

[00:22:30] Reid Beilenberg

Well, I mean, I was I was really involved with aerodrome work, and once I had my own shop, I started bringing in some extra things that, you know, Cole Palin wanted done or restored. I, he had built a replica of a 1911 Curtiss pusher and the wing panels and the struts and everything. And I assembled the central section of it down in my shop. And he had this old hall-scott aeronautical motor from 1911, and we placed it in the engine mount. And, and I did all the hookups of the radiators and all the connections and the controls, and I built the front elevators out on bamboo poles. And, and one day we came down, we tied the airplane center section to the big catalpa tree in the yard there and fired up that 1911 engine for the first time. And I mean, it just roared. It could be heard all the way up and down Prairie Street. I mean, it was enormously. I, you know, I, I figured out how to mount a propeller on the thing and everything. So I mean, and I'd roll it in and out of the one sliding door bay of the shop. And and so my focus was really on, on, on the aerodrome, the flying machine work. And then the, the Hudson River maritime Center started to happen. And there were boat projects and I got taken on doing some, some work over there. I had a bench in the boat shop for a while. Yeah.

[00:24:07] Sam

So, so this was your parents.

[00:24:10] Reid Beilenberg

It was their, their project. Pure and simple. Yeah. For a while I had gotten a news. Well, once I had this wooden boat and I sailed up, I knew I sailed and even stopped at the Saugerties lighthouse. And I knew the plight of that building. It was, you know, like the late 70s. And I I had got a clipping from some newspaper that said that one local group was going to try to take one last stab at restoring the lighthouse. And and so I, I, you know, kind of kept that in mind in 1981, I guess, or 82, I was looking for a place that I could build a replica of a Wright Brothers plane. And I kind of stumbled on an old building in Germantown. It was the old Oddfellows Lodge. And I ended up purchasing that George Melly, who ran the auto parts store. Owned it and he wanted it torn down because he tore down a building, a historic building right here where his. He wanted to build a new cinderblock Napa dealership. And so he tore that down. I think I when I went in the shop, I had just commented. I said, oh jeez. I said it was kind of a nice historic building. I'm sorry to see that. See it go. And he said, oh, I've got another one up in Germantown. He said, you can, you can have it for the materials that he wanted torn down. And I ended up buying the old lodge up there. And that was kind of a whole story.

[00:25:47] Wint Aldrich

But that was as long ago as 82, 81.

[00:25:51] Reid Beilenberg

82. Yeah.

[00:25:53] Wint Aldrich

It seems like yesterday.

[00:25:54] Sam

Yeah. And so what was the time frame here for the that the restoration took?

[00:26:02] Reid Beilenberg

Well, this program.

[00:26:03] Sam

Here.

[00:26:04] Reid Beilenberg

Kind of like you said, their bicentennial. James. What president. Grand Union.

[00:26:11] Wint Aldrich

When does it say the purchase occurred. Well does it say 76.

[00:26:16] Sam

It doesn't say the restoration started in 1977.

[00:26:21] Reid Beilenberg

Yeah.

[00:26:21] Wint Aldrich

I don't think we could have justified, you know, if it was still owned by Grand Union getting grants and spending money.

[00:26:28] Sam

Union vacant in 74 and still. So they must have bought it around 76.

[00:26:37] Wint Aldrich

Yeah, that was the year, wasn't it? I mean and it you know in that Brit. Well you remember from the interview with Elliot Lindsley, I mean he he was, you know, he was responsible to his stockholders and so forth. And they weren't doing very well with the small shop and wanted a big one. And and this was in the way, but, but the whole business about this little community in upstate New York waving the flag of insurrection against the British overlords.

[00:27:11] Reid Beilenberg

I mean.

[00:27:12] Wint Aldrich

It was it was it was both perfect and it was, I think, embarrassing to him. And, and, but I think it was a personal decision on his part. Thanks to Elliot to say, well, we don't have to be in Red hook. And it meant that not only was this available to be sold, and I think it was \$30,000 or something was not not a huge amount of money. And then eventually they must have sold that because they never did anything with it.

[00:27:41] Sam

Right.

[00:27:42] Wint Aldrich

So but I mean, you know, the particularly Rosemary and Lottie were really waving the flag of, of rebellion in Red hook. And it was, it was pretty, pretty nice because I think it got people interested in the whole bicentennial because there was this building and it was an issue and people were being fired up.

[00:28:06] Reid Beilenberg

Well, there were a lot of great things happening. You know, this this 250th year celebration seems to have kind of passed us without hardly a whimper. But in 1976, there was a lot going on. It was it was a big deal. No. And I remember what was his name. In Rhinebeck. Dewitt, who had.

[00:28:30] Wint Aldrich

Grinnell.

[00:28:30] Reid Beilenberg

Dewitt Grinnell had his fife and drum corps. He had all the young people marching and playing drums and fifes and and and Woody Close was a tremendous oratory, you know, and the kind of presentations he did and things was fantastic. And it was a great ice sailing year. In 1976, we had thick ice at Barrytown, and we launched a fleet of boats. And that was the year that I think Don Hogan, who was in the the Army Reserve, mounted a helicopter assault on Rokeby. Were you remember that? I think I think so, I think.

[00:29:15] Wint Aldrich

That.

[00:29:16] Reid Beilenberg

This was Ricky's I think Ricky's instigation. And these were the. These were supposed to be the the, you know, the, the most well trained winter fighters of the U.S. Army who were coming and descending. It was like January 1st, 1976. We were putting ice boats on the river. That same morning, while the helicopters were coming in, landing at Rokeby and.

[00:29:42] Wint Aldrich

My brother must have arranged for me. He did far away.

[00:29:48] Reid Beilenberg

But they got. It got so cold they all. They all evacuated. They left. They couldn't. They couldn't take the cold. They. The Army Rangers. But Yeah, we had a lot of fun. It was the first year I was sailing the Vixen on the Hudson.

[00:30:04] Wint Aldrich

And as long ago as that.

[00:30:07] Reid Beilenberg

Yeah, yeah. And Jean Fleming came out. She was flying a great dragon kite. And And I don't know if it was Ricky or one of the others. Thought it might be a little bit humorous if they sailed a little close to her kite string and they clipped the mast on her kite string and it went flying up the river towards Kruger's Island. And I. Jean came running over to me. It was. Winds were starting to pipe up, and I said, I don't think I can sail. She said, can't you please go and rescue my kite? Nobody else will do it. And I said, well, one last, one last ride. I said, against my better judgment, she climbed in the cockpit and I headed off the wind and the. And tried to find that exact moment when the wind let up before I could bear off. But my timing was wrong. And as soon as I bore out the wind, the runner plank went way, way up in the air, and the old vixen went right over on her head.

[00:31:01] Sam

Oh, wow!

[00:31:03] Reid Beilenberg

And it was a wreck. It was sliding sideways, carried by the wind, down the ice, upside down until the whole thing collapsed. So that that was that that was 1976.

[00:31:17] Sam

Yeah. Right.

[00:31:18] Wint Aldrich

Memorable. Memorable.

[00:31:21] Reid Beilenberg

At any rate, that's the diversion again. But like I say, since it was really my parents involvement, my my my part in this is quite tangential. But I really appreciated what they did here and their their dedication to this project.

[00:31:39] Sam

So who did they get to do the major renovations here?

[00:31:44] Reid Beilenberg

Well, that's not clear. And I think my mother's memory was a little bit off, but I, I do remember that this Herman Gorgens, who was very much involved with it, and he was involved with this company called Craft Construction or something. And I think they did a certain amount of the work under her supervision.

[00:32:03] Sam

And he did a lot of the drawings. Yeah. Didn't he? Yeah. That they used to get funds. Yeah.

[00:32:09] Reid Beilenberg

And so that's, that's.

[00:32:14] Sam

So he was, he was involved in it.

[00:32:16] Reid Beilenberg

Yes.

[00:32:18] Reid Beilenberg

But I, you know, I don't I really don't know. I mean, my, you know, friend Carter, he was shared the shop with me at Fraley Street for a while. And then Nick Forster was there. Yeah. Nick the cousin of Nick was wanted to build dulcimers. So I think for a while he was, he was sharing the shop there.

[00:32:45] Sam

Okay.

[00:32:47] Sam

Larry Thetford, was he. Larry. Was Larry involved?

[00:32:51] Reid Beilenberg

Larry. Tribe. I probably came in a little bit later. I think he was still very involved with the Ciba-Geigy farm up there.

[00:33:00] Sam

That's right. Yeah.

[00:33:01] Reid Beilenberg

I'm not sure exactly when, but you could ask him. You know, he he should definitely interview him.

[00:33:07] Wint Aldrich

He there were two organizations that were more or less operating at the same time. One was the Friends of Elmendorf. It may not have had that name initially, but it was the Elmendorf Committee anyway. And the other was the Egbert Benson Historical Society of Red hook, which was created, I think, a little bit earlier. That was before the maybe in 74 or 75. And it was basically a, you know, thought of itself as the beginnings of a of a community historical society. And its one of its major projects, in addition to celebrating the bicentennial was, was this was this house restoration, the acquisition and restoration of Elmendorf. And then it became obvious that that it was a tail that was wagging the dog. And so that the the Elmendorf organization itself became became separate. But the and and after the acquisition, the historical group tried to use the room And and your mother was terrific in creating that big meeting room, you know, and with the and she, I think was the one that got a wonderful copy of the Gilbert Stuart portrait of George Benson. Yeah. For the from the the original is down in the John Jay homestead. That's the kind of thing she would have known all about and would have made the arrangements for.

[00:34:39] Reid Beilenberg

Right. Right.

[00:34:40] Wint Aldrich

And so, so that went on for 20 years or something. And then finally the organizations merged early in this century. Yeah.

[00:34:49] Sam

So your dad was involved with furniture. Why not? You said you had a furniture store.

[00:34:54] Reid Beilenberg

Well, he did he, you know, he had this antique shop and he collected things and, you know, he would find things that he thought were, you know, like just totally appropriate to furnish here. So how did.

[00:35:06] Sam

He do stuff here?

[00:35:07] Reid Beilenberg

Yeah. No, he, I think he, you know, donated a bunch of stuff. I think at some point they made a, a list of all the things that that my father had provided. You know, and some of the maps and some of the he was always looking. He was always scouting. They used to go to auctions. He loved auctions. He would sit and do do drawings and portraits while things were happening. But when items came up that he really liked, either for the antique shop or or for his own collection or for the Elmendorf. Once that happened, he was. He was ready to bid on stuff. Yeah, we had some wonderful things. He bought a great cigar store. Indian that was in our house there at Railway Street. It was just the most beautiful thing. It just killed us when we had to break up the house and sell that. But I was really pushing to get a much higher price than they got. But Americana was already beginning to start to take a slide, you know, I think, Yeah.

[00:36:13] Sam

Right.

[00:36:13] Reid Beilenberg

But No it was. Yeah. They just lived and breathed Elmendorf for.

[00:36:22] Wint Aldrich

Your mother was was understandably a purist in these matters, as I'm sure your father was in his much gentler way. And when I presented the organization with a small neon light that said Red hook, and it was an advertisement for Red hook beer, which had nothing whatever to do with Red hook. It was came from Seattle or something. But I was just delighted. And I said, what could be more appropriate in the tavern room?

[00:36:51] Sam

Right.

[00:36:51] Wint Aldrich

Yeah. And it lasted, I think, five minutes. Your mother came in.

[00:36:59] Reid Beilenberg

What is this?

[00:37:00] Wint Aldrich

I hope somewhere it's in a cupboard that could be used for an event. I you know, I said it's great having everything 18th century, but, you know, for a moment, maybe.

[00:37:13] Reid Beilenberg

Oh, no.

[00:37:14] Wint Aldrich

20th century.

[00:37:16] Reid Beilenberg

But, you know, I it was interesting because it was I don't know what year this happened, but, you know, when Sleepy Hollow restoration became historic Hudson Valley. And my mother had, you know, she had kind of taken a bit of a hiatus from that. She was involved in Dutchess County tourism for quite a while because their, their life was kind of split between Red hook and, and Fishkill. They had a condo down there. And for a while, my grandmother, Bonnie Bielenberg, my father's mother, came from Detroit and moved in and lived in the house there at Fraley Street. They kind of made an apartment for her on the ground floor, and I'd be in the back working on airplanes and stuff, but I would take care of, you know, keep an eye on my grandmother. And then but then I think because my mother had this little foothold here when the, when Montgomery Place was kind of becoming available and sold, I think immediately they, they thought of my mother as being somebody who could be an initial kind of administrator of it. So they somehow persuaded her to to be part of that.

[00:38:36] Wint Aldrich

Very useful that that purchase occurred in late 85 and the restoration of the downstairs anyway. And the exterior was finished by 88. Place opened the great celebration on the lawn. And that's when she was there for another several years. I remember there were.

[00:38:58] Reid Beilenberg

No, I think she really kind of brought it through the entire stage, right from right from the beginning.

[00:39:06] Sam

So that's interesting. So, so she went from the Elmendorf to the Montgomery place.

[00:39:11] Reid Beilenberg

Yeah.

[00:39:13] Wint Aldrich

Well, I think she. I think she and Bob kept their hand in very much here. Yeah. But maybe it had gotten to a to a point because that was that was ten years after the bicentennial.

[00:39:25] Sam

Had gone to a steady state.

[00:39:26] Wint Aldrich

Yeah, yeah.

[00:39:27] Sam

The renovations were done, you know. I don't know when this was all created. Yeah.

[00:39:33] Reid Beilenberg

It was done over decades. It didn't. You know it? Yeah. The front room. You know, the big room, I guess, at first and then all along. And, you know, all the while she was just, you know, you know, examining the wallpaper and very meticulously separating the layers of the wallpaper. And I remember countless discussions about the little specks on the wallpaper, whether they were fly eggs or whether they were actually a deliberate artistic element in the design. Yeah. But it was, you know, they were earnest about this this level of interest.

[00:40:16] Sam

Did you reach a point where you just kind of went, oh my God.

[00:40:19] Reid Beilenberg

Well, I, you know, I had to cut cut my own projects. And that's, that was the thing, you know, and that's how I got involved with the, in a way, like with the project, like the Saugerties Lighthouse, which it was so kind of crazy because I was living at, I bought the Oddfellows Lodge. It didn't have running water. It didn't have electricity. I met the owner of the central house next door, which was the, the little bar, the tavern. There was a guy named Lou Reinders who came from Red hook. They had a place up on, up, on up nine. It was like a little place along the road. Do you remember that, Reinders? I.

[00:41:03] Wint Aldrich

I mean, I certainly remember the name.

[00:41:04] Reid Beilenberg

And then during the fair, They had a. They had a standing thing at the Dutchess County Fair for oysters and. And Lou used to go over on the ferry boat to State Fish and. And in Kingston to get the oysters to sell at the fair. And he remembers coming out with these big baskets of oysters, trying to get them off the ferry boat and and spilled a whole basket on the deck. I mean, Lou was full of stories. He was a tremendous he could play the piano like nobody I knew. His fingers were all gnarly and arthritic, but he used to play. He learned from his mother here in in Red hook. And he would play for the silent movies at the Lyceum. He would. He was just a teenager, but he would get the score and he would play the music for it. And he played in you know, on the top of Mount Beacon. He played in a lot of different places and bands, you know, big bands. He was a pianist.

[00:42:05] Wint Aldrich

But he was Mrs. Reinders, who lived down the road, who must have been born about 1860. She was a seamstress. Must have been a relative.

[00:42:14] Reid Beilenberg

It could have been her mother.

[00:42:15] Wint Aldrich

Or something, I don't think. But I don't know. Yeah.

[00:42:19] Reid Beilenberg

No, he he was one of the. As a young guy, he was a kind of a watchman in that distillery that was on, I don't know it. Was it Fraley Street or Prince Street? There was a kind of a basement distillery going. And whenever the revenue guys were said to be coming in the town, they had a way of blocking off the chimney so the smoke wouldn't be seen. And, and I think, I think Lou was kind of a watch watcher for that during prohibition. But no. So he was an amazing guy, a total alcoholic. And he would go on these benders up there and would just be you know.

[00:42:59] Wint Aldrich

But he was also running a business next door to.

[00:43:02] Reid Beilenberg

Well, he was running the, the central House hotel with his his young, younger wife, Louise. But I'd go there. I fixed his freezer door, his refrigerator door. The beer cooler was falling off its hinges, and I looked at it. I mean, it was a sliding door. The bottom rail was completely worn out and I said, I, I could fix that for you. So I fabricated a set of channels that fit perfectly so the wheels could slide in it and fit right in there. And that door just slid like it was brand new. He was so pleased. I was like, yeah. And I spent a winter up in one of the rooms above the bar room, and I used to kind of come down and diffuse fights when I could hear things were getting a little wild down side. And then I had the old Oddfellows Lodge next door, which, you know, we, we had kerosene lanterns and I had, I borrowed the big cook range from the basement that was in the basement of the central house, and I brought it over and set it in front of the chimney and hooked it up. And that was our total heat source for the winter. And John Kurowsky came around. He became one of our tenants. And I mean, you know, I wouldn't call them tenants. Nobody ever paid me any money. And a guy named Leif Wicklund who was a potter, and he lived up in one of the cold rooms upstairs, but made beautiful pottery and he would take it on the train to the city.

[00:44:25] Wint Aldrich

Was Virginia in the picture?

[00:44:26] Reid Beilenberg

No. She was this was before Virginia. I was sort of in between girlfriends when I was living up there. And you know, it was wild living by a kerosene light. And and friends would, guys would come over and say, well, you've got some, you've made some mushroom soup. Well, that's nice, but I can go out and shoot some, you know, some animals. I'll go out and shoot a rabbit or something. And they'd come back with a rabbit or squirrels. And we'd, he'd skin it right there and we'd cook it up. And I fixed up the oven. We baked cornbread and this was 1880s, Richardson and Boynton perfect stove was called the perfect. It was used for all kinds of institutional cooking. It was. Had all. Lots of burners on top. You could cook many things at once.

[00:45:17] Sam

Oh, okay.

[00:45:18] Reid Beilenberg

Yeah. Yeah. And so we did. And. And then John turned out to be just as kind of formidable restoration guy. John koprowski. And you know, we scavenged concrete. I went over my little flat bottomed boat. I'd sailed over across from Germantown to the big cement silo on the other side of the river. And I went to the guys at the depot there and I, I said, can I clean up some of your spills? I had buckets in the boat and they said, sure, go ahead. He climbed up the spiral stairs to the top of the big, huge silos. They used to large the barge, load the barges and there were spills of concrete of cement everywhere. And I'd fill up these buckets and go down the spiral stairs and load them in the boat and bring them back. And we did all the foundation work on them.

[00:46:11] Sam

You realize rowing the boat across the river is no small feat.

[00:46:14] Reid Beilenberg

Yeah, I know. After carrying, you know, £80.

[00:46:18] Wint Aldrich

What's the state of the tide right now?

[00:46:21] Sam

And how's the wind?

[00:46:23] Reid Beilenberg

Yeah. And I had the sail. And I load my little flat bottomed boat. And right up to the gunnels with cement from there. And I dig the sand out of the river at north at North Germantown, because that was really fine. Good masonry sand. So, you know, we lived on practically nothing that year. Yeah. That year of 82 was extremely good ice boating year. We had like a, I think sailing from like, you know, February 2nd to March 12th, it was you could sail almost every single day. And I had 3 or 4 ice boats going. I had the north wind, the vixen, and Taco Johnny's little boat, which we called the Macho Taco. And we I had boats spread from Rhinecliff to to Barrytown to Germantown and was making these transits back and forth. Had a terrific race with John Spurr sailing the Rip Van Winkle. We I came from Rhinecliff and I met him at Barrytown. He was just getting the sails up on the rip. So we tacked past Cruger's Island and past Tivoli all the way up to Germantown. Bob Fennell was on board and we got into Chevy. We were just. I mean, it was absolutely frigid, cold beating against the North Wind and and as we pulled into into Chevy, it was like, you know, how are we going to survive? What's the next step here? You know, but parked in the parking lot was, was this guy, you know, Taco Johnny was right there at Chevy as we pulled in with the two ice boats and and and we dropped sails and he took us up to the central House hotel and, and we all warmed up with, you know, with beers and grinders and this great company.

[00:48:09] Reid Beilenberg

And after we warmed up, we came down and had hoisted sail and and we had this tremendous chase down from Cheviot to, to Tivoli where there was always a crack across the ice there. And, and you have to cross that very carefully, but in basically two tacks from Cheviot out towards Malvern, towards the channel, and then right back past Claremont, down to Tivoli. It was just we were flying with Bob Fennell hanging onto the shrouds and on the Rip Van Winkle. I turned around and sailed back to Germantown. John Spurr sailed the rest of the way to Rokeby and so anyway, that was the. That was 82. And but anyway.

[00:48:55] Wint Aldrich

But.

[00:48:56] Reid Beilenberg

So anyway, that led into the John Kurowski and the Saugerties Lighthouse. And they had already gotten some grant money and they had the architect firm Mendel Cohen and weight did a whole analysis of this Saugerties lighthouse and came up with this great plan with blueprints and schemes and stuff. And I went to one of these meetings when they first got this plan, and John was with me. And because they kind of wanted us to maybe do some of this work, and we looked through the specifications and, and, and the drawings, and John took a look at it and closed the book spec books. And he said, I, I'll do the work, but I can't do it by these specs. They had such things as like, you know, you are to construct a, a steel cage within the cistern of the lighthouse. And should the walls of the lighthouse begin to collapse, you were to dive into the steel cage for protection. God says not know me. If I, if I if this wall starts to cave in, I'm right out this door. And and so, you know, after considerable deliberation and a years negotiation and poor Howlin Davis was just afraid that if he got in, if they got into business with us, if anything were wrong, that he would be sued. And he wanted us to, to sign a document, a waiver that said such. And John said, I'm not signing that. I'll do the work. And anyway, they eventually went with us for, you know, \$100 a day and an expense account at the, at the at the hardware store. And the Roth sawmill. And, and we set to work. We got a whole bunch of pine, two by tens and two by eights delivered. And down at the waterfront I had two rowboats. We would bundle the pine together and tie it behind and row ourself out to the lighthouse. That's how we got started with the thing, and it was all boarded up. We boarded.

[00:51:11] Wint Aldrich

There was no land connection. Even at low tide.

[00:51:13] Reid Beilenberg

There was no land connection, no path. We had everything by by these rowboats. And and it was just John and myself for those first weeks. It was kind of, you know, it was a little dicey. You know, it was opened the front door, just piles of debris that had washed out of the walls of the tower. The wooden lintels were completely rotted out. And I mean, you could see bricks that you could literally just, you know, wiggle.

[00:51:40] Sam

There was no electricity.

[00:51:41] Reid Beilenberg

Oh, well, there was still cables coming out, which we discovered. And eventually the Coast Guard, we worked with the Coast Guard and hooked it up. So we had a little bit of shore power, but we also had a generator and eventually and built a barge to get things out there. But it was still owned by the Coast Guard, technically, and this group was very interested in it. There was a boat you may have been on it that came out of the Maritime Center with all the people who were interested in the lighthouse and various officials and stuff, and they came up as they approached the lighthouse, they saw all this, you know, piles of debris up around the outsides of the lighthouse. And somebody commented, said, oh, wow, it looks like you've already started on it. And that people were totally embarrassed from the lighthouse group. But it suddenly became this like a hot potato, you know, it went from the Coast Guard did not want us to have any responsibility for it. So they passed the lighthouse to the OGs in Albany, the Office of General Services, that sort of can hold property for a while, and then they threw it like a hot potato to Saugerties, to the town of Saugerties. And we're really within within weeks. I mean, we were off the job. They told us, don't go out to the lighthouse. So we worked on the shore. We built.

[00:53:05] Wint Aldrich

You mean there were deeds that transferred it? Yeah. One one after another.

[00:53:10] Reid Beilenberg

Yeah. And and in the meantime, we built a raft with an outboard motor that we could convey materials back to the lighthouse. And we built a set of shoring. John came up with a model of how to shore up the inside of the light tower and the outside of the tower to support the lantern and the top cornice brickwork up on top. And, and so while all this transition was happening, we created that. And by the end of that first summer, we had all that, that oak shoring installed. We were needled through with I-beams and had the brickwork supported for the lantern. We had the basement all cleaned out. We had the first floor jacked. There was no first floor. It was. It was rotted away. The second floor. We had to jack up. But anyway, that was that. That led to. I was there three years working on the Saugerties Lighthouse. And then after that, the lady that was involved in the Esopus Lighthouse, Asopus Meadows get contacted me and I. And that was without John, that was just myself. And then he. Hands I could pick up. It was a very kind of informal situation. There was a, you know, friends of the Esopus Lighthouse, but it was basically this woman, Arlene Fitzpatrick, who was the head. And I, you know, I report to her every week or so and give her my hours, you know, on a time sheet. What I did.

[00:54:43] Wint Aldrich

I was in better shape though. It wasn't it wasn't masonry. Right.

[00:54:45] Reid Beilenberg

It was masonry. It was a frame building. But it was it had been the roof had been leaking and that it had a mansard roof, that it was. The top plate was all rotted out and the, the rafters, the mansard roof and, and I rebuilt all that. I did all the structural work on that. And then I put a tin roof on it. It's a lock seam soldered tin roof. I, I learned how to do that. I ordered the Follansbee and the Follansbee Steel Company and in Follansbee, West Virginia, I don't know if they still exist, but they made got these box panels boxed 14 by 20. I forget which size. They were 21 inch pre-cut tin sheets and I'd have to fold the edges, make them locked together and pound them and solder every seam. And we did the lock roof.

[00:55:40] Sam

So I remember when I first got involved with that, you explained to me this old masonry for the beehive? Yeah. Were there projects here at the Elmendorf that you got sucked into?

[00:55:57] Reid Beilenberg

No.

[00:55:58] Sam

Or the other?

[00:55:59] Reid Beilenberg

Absolutely not. It's so strange. I really didn't.

[00:56:02] Sam

Realize.

[00:56:03] Reid Beilenberg

That Don Carpenter. He came down. I think he really provided the supervision. He might have even built the oven. I mean, he knew what it should look like and how it should be done.

[00:56:15] Sam

But you were aware of all this?

[00:56:16] Reid Beilenberg

Oh, yeah. No, I was aware I'd always come.

[00:56:19] Sam

Barbara and Bob.

[00:56:19] Reid Beilenberg

Yeah. Yeah. And I would, you know, they would maybe ask me, you know, about things. Consult with certain things, but I, you know, it's so I can't I just can't remember doing anything here, surprisingly. But yeah. Oh, these are just some pictures of my, you know This is here's my father and my sister Tina. My mother used to be a photographer. She was a You know that she had a darkroom in her house in garrison. And until I was five years old, that was kind of like her real hobby. Once I was in school, then she started working at Boscobel. This is in New York, somewhere down. And this is my sister Tina and brother Carl. And this is the house under construction in garrison. You can see these are big glass windows, the framing of the roof and the uprights. It was all open to the to the river. And these are, I'm not sure pictures. I think this is me. And and this is my brother Carl and me. See, he had already had these, you know, antique toys and things. And that's Carl and that's myself and. That's me.

[00:57:52] Sam

Sleeping?

[00:57:53] Reid Beilenberg

Yeah. With my hand on the. The little train coach or something. And the winters, you know, we had great snows. There's the house. You can, you can. Ricky visited the house there. He he came. He's the only person I know who actually saw the house. This is our driveway. It was kind of this

[00:58:18] Wint Aldrich

Marvelous.

[00:58:19] Reid Beilenberg

All glass out looking. Didn't they built a little addition.

[00:58:22] Wint Aldrich

It still stands.

[00:58:24] Reid Beilenberg

It is. It's still there. It's been taken over and. Oh, this is the carport on the side. Yeah. But but she pretty much stopped taking pictures. And this is my grandfather, Norman Weil. And this is a little steam engine. And this is my brother Carl just studying it. Absolutely fascinated by it. And that's me watching.

[00:58:46] Sam

And I want to know about the Jeep.

[00:58:49] Reid Beilenberg

Yeah. That was my neighbor. He was a Jewish man named what was his name? He was a wonderful guy. He used to take us down to eat creamed herring down in Peekskill. There's my father. He's doing some painting. A set or something. This is my other grandmother, Louise Weil. That's my mother's mother. And that's me at my sister's fifth. I was three years old at my sister's birthday party. Fifth? Yeah, at Saint Philip's Church in.

[00:59:27] Wint Aldrich

New Rochelle.

[00:59:28] Reid Beilenberg

In garrison. Me, my brother and Tina. And this is in when I was five years old. I got too close to the burning basket out in the driveway and caught my pants on fire. And big flames coming up my leg. I ran my father, brother Carl ran to the house. He says reeds on fire. Reeds on fire. And my father just came bounding out of the house. And, you know, I could just see him today and, like, 2 or 3 steps. One, two, three. He was on top of me. He smothered the flames on my legs with a. And the doctor came up from from the Butterfield Hospital in Cold Spring. He, you know, this was a time when doctors did house calls. He had his black bag. He came. They called up the hospital. He came right up and and dressed my leg and did the operation. He had been in World War Two and had done skin grafting and stuff. He had to go to a hospital in Peekskill and get a skin graft machine. And he took a big sheet of skin off my thigh and put it over my leg And that right there. Wow. His name was Doctor Lizardi. It's funny, the things you remember.

[01:00:48] Sam

I think that was fairly traumatic.

[01:00:49] Reid Beilenberg

And this is my father visiting me at the hospital. Yeah. And that's it. I was five years old. My mother stopped taking pictures. There's no other pictures of us.

[01:01:03] Wint Aldrich

Well, you've given a terrific picture read of life, of imagination and creativity that is unparalleled. Yeah.

[01:01:14] Sam

I'm amazed at the history of your family, your mother and father primarily, and how they melded together.

[01:01:22] Reid Beilenberg

Yeah.

[01:01:23] Sam

And had the skills and the drive that it took to restore something like that. Yeah. You know.

[01:01:31] Reid Beilenberg

And then. And then helping Daisy Suckley at Wilderstein. That was a a joy in my life, you know?

[01:01:38] Wint Aldrich

Was that before or after we created the 1980, we created the corporation and then slowly she would convey the interest in it. But but she lived until 91 and she just loved having people like you pay attention to the house because she had for so many years assumed at her death it would be torn down and there'd be some house or community of houses built there. And, and, you know, she lived long enough to see this interest in the part of, of people who are really knowledgeable about architecture, who would say to her and to the rest of us, this house and Olana and the Trevor House in Yonkers are the only houses that are likely to survive and be understood by the public, representing a whole era of American domestic architecture. Yeah. Because as as Daisy said, he said most of the people of my generation and the next generation think this is the ugliest house that we've ever built. And.

[01:02:54] Reid Beilenberg

She was so.

[01:02:55] Wint Aldrich

Funny. She said, hang on. Because public opinion is shifting.

[01:03:01] Sam

Yeah.

[01:03:03] Reid Beilenberg

She was.

[01:03:04] Wint Aldrich

Yeah. People like you and John Kirovski helped to physically save the place. Yeah. And and she she loved that.

[01:03:12] Reid Beilenberg

Yeah. I would I got a call one day. There was a, you know, it was raining ferociously outside, and I get a call and she says, Mr. Bielenberg, I was living in Rhinebeck at that time with Virginia on Beech Street. She said, Mr. Bielenberg, she says, I have a. I have a leak in my house. It's a it's a. She says, it's a. It's a real butte, she said. It's a beautiful leak. And I came over there and the water was pouring down, you know, into the front hallway, down across the leather, the lincrusta, the walls there. And and I said, oh, Daisy. Well, I can't really do anything in the rain, but I'll get up there first thing. And so I rigged up a ladder and I climbed up and it was one of the valleys of the roof up there and risked my life climbing on that roof to get tar and membrane in that gutter. And, and then I fixed other gutters on the house, and I hear this little tiptoeing up the stairs into the tower room, and and and she'd come out to the window where I had climbed out and I'd be, you know, crawling through the gutters with my tarp and membrane, fixing the leaks. And she'd say, oh, Mr. Bielenberg, you're doing such a wonderful job, he said. I wish I were a few years younger, I'd climb out there and join you. She is like that. I did a lot of stuff for her. I fixed the the roof on the the tennis court. She had a little gazebo out there where she used to play tennis with her brother and sister. You know, she had a family and she still mourned her brother, who died in World War One.

[01:05:01] Wint Aldrich

And yeah, that's right.

[01:05:02] Reid Beilenberg

And

[01:05:04] Wint Aldrich

She was, I think with the exception of my wife, the most intelligent person I've ever known well, in my life. And she had spent, she lived to be 99.5. She spent virtually that whole time suppressing any sense that anyone else could have, that she had this extraordinary capacity of not only being very nice, but being extraordinarily intelligent. She did. She spent two years at Bryn Mawr because her mother didn't approve of women having an education, and her father felt that at least Daisy should go the go the length, you know. So they compromised on two years at Bryn Mawr. But I think FDR was one of those exceptional people who understood that she was somebody worthwhile spending time with. And and they were. Well, the, the title that the biographer gave to Daisy's diaries and everything is closest companion. I mean, she, it was really her closest companion.

[01:06:14] Reid Beilenberg

I, one of the last things I did was to build that little, like wheelchair ramp to get up into her library there. And she was already confined to the wheelchair. 99 I, I said, Daisy, I said, I hope you can. I mean, you know, she was feeling frail, but she said, I asked her about turning 100 and what's her opinion of that? And she said, I don't care to be 100. She says with a, I like being 99. Look what you can do with a nine. You take a nine and you add it to nine. You got 18, and you take the one and you add it to eight and you're back to nine again. And she says that isn't that wonderful. What can you do with with a bunch of ones and zeros. That was.

[01:07:09] Reid Beilenberg

And I gave her, I gave her a nice boat ride when she was 93. Remember you.

[01:07:13] Wint Aldrich

Oh, that was a, that was one of the.

[01:07:15] Reid Beilenberg

That was a, that was a high point for both of us, I think. But I, but I did I down at Rhinecliff and we managed. She bundled up in every piece of garment she could find and insisted that she'd go down and see it. And she had never gotten a nice boat ride before. And John Soma and others. And and I was out sailing the Vixen and she. And they all said, oh, the only person who should take her out is Reed. And I pulled up and it was again, one of these days it was getting kind of gusty out of the west wind and. But we bundled her into the cockpit and she kind of huddled under there. And I took her around for a few short spins around the ice and brought her back to the landing. And and, and she disembarked and you got her up the gangplank and everything. I saw her at a party sometime later, and I said, Daisy, I said, I did you enjoy your ice boat ride? I said, did you you know, she said, well, I did, she says, but I wish it had been a little longer. I would have loved it if you sailed down to my house so I could see it from the river. That was always fun.

[01:08:24] Wint Aldrich

You see her? Her family had a boathouse and it had ice boats. But only the men. Only the yeah, a woman perhaps a good look, but they. And so that was really important to me. And she said that she absolutely wanted to do that. Well, I went back and I took her home. Then I went back down there and there were some people who didn't recognize me. And there was one person who was saying to another do you know what those people who were trying to save Miss Suckley's house. Do you know what they've done now? They brought that dear old lady down here as a risk of life and limb. Taken her out on the boat just for a photo op. So it could be in the newspapers and they could raise some more money. And so I told her that, and she just said, oh, they don't know what they're talking about. I've lived long enough to do this and.

[01:09:20] Sam

I finally got to do it.

[01:09:23] Reid Beilenberg

I built a shoring system to support the porte cochere because the columns were all rotting out. I mean, it was it was in dire shape. So out of two by tens and things, I kind of bolted this thing together and was able to kind of jack up and needle and support the porte cochere. And it lasted there for a number of years. But I had built a little model of these trusses that, that supported the thing. And and she had that prominently displayed in her hall. She just loved that little model of it.

[01:09:57] Sam

Yeah, I love it.

[01:09:59] Reid Beilenberg

Anyway, this goes on, but.

[01:10:01] Sam

So is there anything else about the Elmendorf that you.

[01:10:06] Reid Beilenberg

Well, I, we had a Thanksgiving meal here. It was one of the last. You know, it was one of the great meals where our family could get together. My father and mother Virginia, me and Carl and his wives and Tina and. And we had a wonderful meal right here, a big Thanksgiving, please.

[01:10:29] Wint Aldrich

Oh that's.

[01:10:29] Sam

Wonderful.

[01:10:30] Reid Beilenberg

Yeah.

[01:10:30] Sam

That's great.

[01:10:31] Reid Beilenberg

And then. And then with the memorials, when my father passed away and we hung the art show here was was really wonderful.

[01:10:39] Sam

And a lot of his art.

[01:10:40] Reid Beilenberg

Yeah, yeah, a lot of his paintings and things. So that was a great highlight.

[01:10:47] Wint Aldrich

That's when the Clearwater was represented at the event. Yeah. Pete.

[01:10:53] Reid Beilenberg

Pete came.

[01:10:53] Wint Aldrich

Up, Pete came and.

[01:10:55] Reid Beilenberg

Pete came. He, when he heard that my father was on his deathbed here in on Fraley Street he came up with his daughter Tina. And my mother heard he was coming, and she made a big pot of chili because he loved to eat chili. And and my father was all kind of lost consciousness already. He was on the couch, but Pete came out with his banjo and guitar, and he played. Where of all the flowers gone, he, you know, he was there. And, you know, he played a little, you know, a few songs for us and we sang together. He loved my dad. Cool.

[01:11:33] Sam

Very cool. Well, it's been great talking with you. Yeah. Yeah. I got the feeling we could do this all afternoon. Yeah.

[01:11:43] Reid Beilenberg

Well, it's a lot of stories. And, of course, you know, we haven't even touched on your brother Ricky, you know, who has just been such a such a character for this town and.

[01:11:54] Sam

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm amazed just going through this conversation. I'm amazed at how many buildings have actually been restored in this area. Yeah. I mean, it's it's really quite remarkable when you think about it. Yeah. The starting with Claremont and then you got your place. Yeah. You know, you got this place. You've got Montgomery Place that was restored. Yeah.

[01:12:21] Wint Aldrich

Well, not only restored, but also Maintained. Yeah. I mean, in most communities, these big white elephant houses would be gone. Right. And the properties would be either subdivided or at least the house replaced with some contemporary house. And that's that's not happened here. It isn't to say that it might not in the future. I mean, but it's one of the reasons that we've created the National Historic Landmark District from Germantown to Stoutsburg and had it recognized by the federal government, the highest category, and then gotten, as you well know, each of the towns of Rhinebeck and Red hook to buy into that and to have it reflected in the master plan for the for the land use and zoning and so forth. And so, so basically, the communities are saying, along with the nuts like myself and and read Thou shalt not lift thy hand against. What is of consequence in terms of history and culture. And And in a, in a village sense. That's what the elmendorf is. I mean, it's, it's now received all these government grants and it's, it's a national register. And, and, and so the community sees it as something that isn't going to be misdirected. And.

[01:13:54] Reid Beilenberg

And you still have pretty regular events and things for fundraising. And it keeps, it keeps within budget and good.

[01:14:02] Sam

That's great lectures. I mean, it's a, it's a community center. Yeah, it really is.

[01:14:07] Reid Beilenberg

Well, that's what my parents really wanted others. But yeah.

[01:14:12] Wint Aldrich

The fact, you know, in the bicentennial context, we came to understand that before there was a village or even a community of lower Red hook, which is what this was. Originally, there was this building on the on the Kings Highway, the Albany Post Road, and it was sort of a crossroad and went down to the landing. And there was no community. And the community grew up as it happened next door. Well, none of this was known in the 1960s. You know, nobody had looked into it and nobody recognized the building for what it was. So it it added to the excitement. It was it was a discovery and a rediscovery, and then a and then this battle with the British corporation. Yeah. Right. And then but it really was must have been 15 years of restoration work, right.

[01:15:10] Sam

Yeah. Yeah.

[01:15:12] Wint Aldrich

Definitely reuse.

[01:15:13] Sam

Yeah. Terrific. Yeah. Thanks a lot. Okay, I appreciate it.

[01:15:20] Reid Beilenberg

Well.

[01:15:21] Sam

It took.

END OF TRANSCRIPT



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