



NEWSLETTER

“... a Separate Town by the Name of Redhook”

Since 1737, Red Hook had been part of the original Rhinebeck precinct of Dutchess County. But changes in demographics and the precinct's economic centers led the New York State legislature to decree, on June 2, 1812, that there be “... a separate town by the name of Redhook.”

Beginning last October, the EBHS Bicentennial Celebration Committee has been planning a series of community-wide events and programs to commemorate this historic birthday.

For a sneak preview of what's in store for next year, come to our first program of the fall season, “Red Hook at 200: The Bicentennial and You.” It is scheduled at 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, September 21 at the Elmendorph Inn. EBHS vice president Chris Klose will emcee a round-robin discussion of Red Hook past, present and future.

The Bicentennial Celebration will be a featured element of this year's Hardscrabble Day in the Village of Red Hook, Saturday, September 24, beginning at 10 a.m. A horse-drawn float, antique surrey and townspeople in period dress will join the traditional Hardscrabble parade.

The EBHS welcome mat will be out at the Elmendorph Inn for members and the public, so be sure to visit us. The second floor Archives Room will be open all day. And from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. we'll be hosting an oral history project, ‘Hooked on Red Hook’ — two-minute recorded interviews about why Red Hook is so special.

Official Bicentennial Celebration activities are scheduled to begin on Apple Blossom Day, next May 12, and conclude on Hardscrabble Day, September 22. “Must attend” events include two at Montgomery Place — a July 14 Community Day of old-time displays, games, food and fun, and an

Hot Off the Press! 2012 Bicentennial Calendar



Pick up your copy of this very special calendar at our Sept 21 Bicentennial meeting. Only \$10! Thanks to the Baright Family for their generous sponsorship.

August 11 sunset concert by the West Point Band of the U.S. Military Academy. There will be giant puppet-making workshops, a ticketed tour of historically important homes and buildings in Red Hook, Tivoli, Annandale, Barrytown and Upper Red Hook, a musical performance by acclaimed Broadway artists at the Bard College Fisher Center for the Performing Arts, and an old-fashioned barn dance at Rokeby.

For updated Bicentennial news and program information, make sure to visit our Bicentennial website at www.redhook200.org.

See complete Fall schedule on Page 5

President's Letter

Claudine Klose

I'm honored to assume leadership of the Historical Society and was flattered to be asked, given my short tenure as a board member, not to mention full-time Red Hook resident!

Before my husband Chris and I returned full-time to his family place, Echo Valley Farm, two years ago, I retired from a 26-year career at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, first as an exhibition manager and then as deputy director of a center dedicated to the history of invention. So the history business is not new to me.

What is new and fascinating is local history, especially Red Hook's, with its rich rural traditions and strong community identity.

It is a privilege to serve you, our members, and the greater Red Hook community. I am especially grateful to former president Barbara Bielenberg, and to Patsy Vogel, Bobbie Thompson and other Board members for getting me up to speed on the Society's workings. They have been wise of counsel and generous of their time.

Thankfully, although Bobbie is retiring from the Board, she will continue as our archivist. I would like to welcome Carolyn Taylor as our newest Board member. Another recent Red Hook arrival, she taught elementary school for many years at home and abroad. And I know I can count on your new vice president, my husband!

With your support, I am confident we can expand the Society's reputation as an active, relevant community-wide organization. In this regard, my goals are to:

- expand our membership;
- increase access to the EBHS archives, on-line and in person;
- prioritize our collections process, and
- strengthen bonds with other strong community groups.

The upcoming Bicentennial Celebration is a perfect opportunity for us to generate greater, sustainable interest and participation in the Society. Chaired by Loretta Campagna, the EBHS Bicentennial Celebration Committee is preparing a series of activities and events that are sure to make 2012 as memorable for the Society as 1812 was for Red Hook itself.

For starters is the wonderful Red Hook Bicentennial Calendar that goes on sale to the public at Hardscrabble Day, this coming Saturday, September 24. It is filled with rare photographs from the EBHS archives and a running timeline of little known facts and amusing anecdotes from the Red Hook, Tivoli, Upper Red Hook, Annandale and Barrytown of the past.

And there's our first fall program, "Red Hook at 200: The Bicentennial and You," at 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 21. In this round-robin discussion, emceed by Chris, we want to hear from you -- how you want to be involved in the Bicentennial, your thoughts for Red Hook's future, what historic family treasure or tale you might contribute to help highlight Red Hook history.

To make it easier to attend EBHS programs as the daylight hours decrease, we are scheduling some of them for weekend afternoons. See Page 5 for more information. We look forward to seeing you soon!

Board of Trustees

2011-2012

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Notes from the Archives



200 Years of Horse Thieves Minutes Digitized Thanks to Model Bicentennial Legacy Project

One of the most intriguing social organizations in Red Hook is the Horse Thieves Society, formally known as the Red Hook Society for the Apprehension and Detention of Horse Thieves. Or is it “... Apprehension and Detection?”

Though the name is often confused (and confusing), there is little doubt that the “Horse Thieves” is one of the oldest organizations of its kind in the country, dating from 1796.

Thanks to a generous grant from the Horse Thieves themselves, and with help from Town Historian J. Winthrop Aldrich, the EBHS commissioned the digitizing of Horse Thieves meeting minutes from 1796 to 1940. Some 650 pages of neatly scribed notes held at the New York State Library, in Albany, now reside on two CD's in the EBHS archives.

With the click of a cursor, it is possible to verify that the Society was formed on October 10, 1796 “in order to prevent horse stealing and detecting horse thieves and for the recovery of stolen horses...” So its purpose was for detection, as it was for similar societies, such as the one in Dedham, Massachusetts, a Johnnie-come-lately from 1805 which falsely claims itself to be oldest of breed.

When our Horse Thieves changed their name is inconsequential. Of greater importance is its original purpose. In a 2000 Poughkeepsie Journal piece, longtime president Woody Klose reported the society had two purposes, one open, the other clandestine – to promote ownership rights in land.

“Farmers at the turn of the 18th century were mostly tenants and chafed under that situation. They wanted to own their land but were discouraged by the system and the patent holders who controlled the land – discouraged to such an extent that open discussion was forbidden. So, societies with fine sounding public names (such as “Apprehension” and “Detention”) were formed so landlords felt safe condoning such meetings while the tenants could meet openly and when their discussion of lost horses was over, engage in activities designed to end the landlord/tenant structure.”

Who and what were Woody's sources? Certainly not the Horse Thieves minutes.

We would love to know!

Doing your family tree? Researching your property? Interested in local maps?
Visit the EBHS Archives Room, open Tuesdays 10AM-4PM, or by appointment at 845-758-1920 or redhookhistory@gmail.com. We are located on the 2nd floor of the Elmendorph Inn, 7562 North Broadway (Route 9), Red Hook, NY 12571

Behind the Lens



Beginning with this issue and continuing through Red Hook's 2012 Bicentennial, we will feature interesting historic photos and their stories.

We start with a dramatic image of the Great Fire of 1908, which leveled most of Barrytown. It is featured in our Bicentennial calendar and the photographer is unknown. Was she or he simply a passerby who got lucky with an early Kodak Brownie?

The photo came to our attention through the work of Kazio Sosnowski, who graduated last May from Bard College with a degree in photography. For his senior project, called "A Barrytown Archive," he did extensive research in the EBHS archives. His resulting exhibition combined archival material (including the haunting fire scene) with his own photographs, films and handmade ice-cutting tools in a creative retelling of Barrytown's 200 years of history.

We are pleased to have played a role in Kazio's project, more than pleased to report that "A Barrytown Archive" will be on indefinite view at the old Barrytown Post Office, at the bottom of Station Road.

And now for the Great Fire of Barrytown, as recounted by EBHS trustee Henry Christopher in a 2009 issue of his *Barrytown Gazette*.

Local Tale says 1908 Barrytown Fire Started by Tinsmith

May 12 will mark the 101st anniversary of the Barrytown fire which swept through the old river-front village on that fateful Tuesday morning, consuming almost everything in its path, and changing the hamlet forever.

Reporters from several newspapers, including two Hudson papers and the New York Times who covered the fire, stated that the cause of the fire was unknown.

However a local tale of how the fire started has been circulating in Barrytown over the years. As the account goes, a tinsmith was on the roof of Kipp's Hotel and tavern working on the tin roof that morning. Some time around 11 am, he decided to go for a drink leaving the fire under his tarpot unattended. A strong southwesterly wind evidently blew over the tarpot and the fire erupted.

Fanned by a strong southwest wind, the fire spread quickly through the village on both sides of the railroad tracks, endangering passing trains.

The second Empire State Express narrowly escaped a disastrous accident at 2:50 pm as it passed through the flames that were jumping across the tracks and surrounded the village. A local newspaper reported that "many of the passengers were hurled from their seats by the sudden checking of speed, but none were injured. All were aroused to great excitement and several women fainted."

Nearly the entire village was consumed by fire, with the exception of the train station and a few other buildings at the north end of the hamlet.

Fire tugs from Kingston and Poughkeepsie did their best to fight the fire from the river to no avail.

Barrytown did not have any fire protection according to the news reports. No lives were taken and no injuries were reported.

According to newspaper stories, the buildings which burned down were: Kipp's Hotel on the north end where the fire started (about where Richard

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Barrytown Fire, contd. from Page 3

Jenrette's guest house is); American Ice Co. houses, a small store, Hudson River Steamboat Company's docks, New York Central freight house, Kisselbrock's Hotel, the upper steamboat dock, six houses, a flour and feed store and a lumber yard.

In all sixteen buildings were destroyed at a loss of \$78,000.

A Hudson paper said the steamer Jacob. H. Tremper of the Newburgh-Albany Line used its firehoses to put out the fire burning at Tyler's coal and lumber yard, preventing it from spreading to the Barrytown Hotel and other buildings further north. The Livingston Ice House, which was situated around present day Herring Point, was also spared.

After the fire, the steamboats continued to operate at Barrytown until the 1920s, but the village never returned to its former size and lively commerce.

Restoration Round Up

**From Paula Schoonmaker**

After months of planning, St. Margaret's Home on South Broadway became a beehive of activity all summer. Thanks to a team of skilled masons and carpenters, the historic 1853 building has a new roof that should protect it for decades to come. The visibly straighter, stronger lines of the main roof and the wonderful expanse of the north lawn, cleaned up after three years of volunteer effort, and a newly planted linden tree, are marvelous signs of renewed life for this Red Hook treasure.

Mark Your Calendar!**Upcoming EBHS Programs
at the Elmendorph Inn****Wednesday, September 21**

7:30 PM: "Red Hook at 200: The Bicentennial and You," an emceed audience-participation discussion about Red Hook: what makes us unique, how we can maintain our sense of community and blue-sky predictions for the next 100 years.

Saturday, September 24

10:00 AM-4:00 PM, "Open House at the EBHS Archives." Interested in genealogy, your house's history, old photos and more Red Hook memorabilia? Visit the EBHS Archives on the second floor.

1:00 – 3:00 PM, "Hooked On Red Hook." Brief on-camera oral history interviews with Chris Klose and John Vincent. In two minutes or less, please tell us what you think makes Red Hook so special.

Saturday, October 29

3:00 PM, "Ready-Made Red Hook: Catalogue Houses in the Early 20th Century." Join Olivia Klose and Christopher Brazee, from NYC's Landmarks Preservation Commission, for an illustrated talk on Sears and other 'mail-order' houses.

Sunday, November 13

3:00 PM, *My Reach: A Hudson River Memoir.* Susan Fox Rodgers, Tivoli author, Bard College creative writing professor and avid kayaker, discusses her newest book, an engaging tale of her kayaking experiences woven through with the history and natural history of the Hudson Valley.

Membership Form 2011

The Egbert Benson Historical Society of Red Hook

P.O. Box 397 Red Hook, New York, 12571

www.redhookhistory.com, 845-758-1920

Name(s) (please print): _____

Mailing Address: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Telephone Number (with area code): _____ I

_____ I would like to receive my newsletter via e-mail rather than by regular mail.

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Satisfaction that you support the collection, preservation and dissemination of the Town of
Red Hook's rich history .

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