



## Egbert Benson HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RED HOOK

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

WINTER 2001

### HISTORICAL SOCIETY RECEIVES \$5,000 GRANT

The Egbert Benson Historical Society of Red Hook has just received a \$5,000 grant from Furthermore, the publication program of the J.M. Kaplan Fund, to assist the publication of a guidebook to the Town of Red Hook. The guidebook will include walking tours of the Villages of Tivoli and Red Hook and a scenic driving tour through the Town emphasizing its unique historic, architectural, and cultural features. The three historic hamlets of Annandale, Barrytown and Upper Red Hook will be featured.

The Guidebook will be written by Clare O'Neill Carr and Linda Keeling and designed by Steve Lawson. It will be profusely illustrated with photographs and maps.

According to Barbara Bielenberg, President of the Historical Society, the publication will fulfill the stated goals of the organization: "to promote and encourage historical research and to foster and promote public knowledge and interest in the history of the Township of Red Hook."

"We are pleased and honored to be entrusted with these funds," stated Bielenberg. "The grant challenges us to raise an additional \$15,000 in order to offer a quality publication worthy of our remarkable community at a price that will make it readily accessible to area residents as well as the many visitors drawn to our community by our world-class attractions such as Montgomery Place and Bard College and our popular pick-your-own farms and orchards."

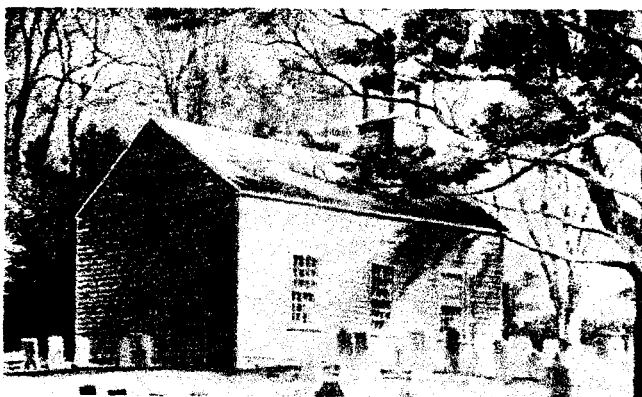
A major fund drive is being planned. For more information, or to offer assistance call Mrs. Bielenberg at (845) 758-2923.

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### TIVOLI'S HISTORIC RED CHURCH ENDANGERED

If you've driven by the old Red Church, located south of the Village of Tivoli on Route 9G you may have noticed that the building has been recently braced with large timbers. **Daniel F. Wheeler**, consulting engineer, has inspected the church and he has concluded that the historic building is structurally unsound and needs a great deal of repair and restoration work. **John Kurowski**, roofing management specialist and historic preservation carpenter, has estimated that \$7,000.00 is needed to stabilize the exterior before possible bad winter weather.

The Red Church Committee has hired **Victor Cornelius of Endeavor, Inc.** to look for and write grants applications, a process that will take a year or more before any funds are actually received. Since the Red Church is on both National and State Historic Landmark lists, the Committee feels there is a good chance for grant approval. In the meantime the Committee has received some private donations and is seeking more.



The Committee is selling T-shirts for \$12.00 each and copies of **Roger Leonard's History of the Red Church** for \$7.50. To purchase T-shirts or books call **Gloria Trezza** at (845) 757-3712. Cash donations, made out to **The Red Church Building Fund** may be mailed to the Fund at P.O. Box 423, Tivoli, NY 12583. The need for funds is great, and immediate!

## HISTORY OF 108 SOUTH BROADWAY

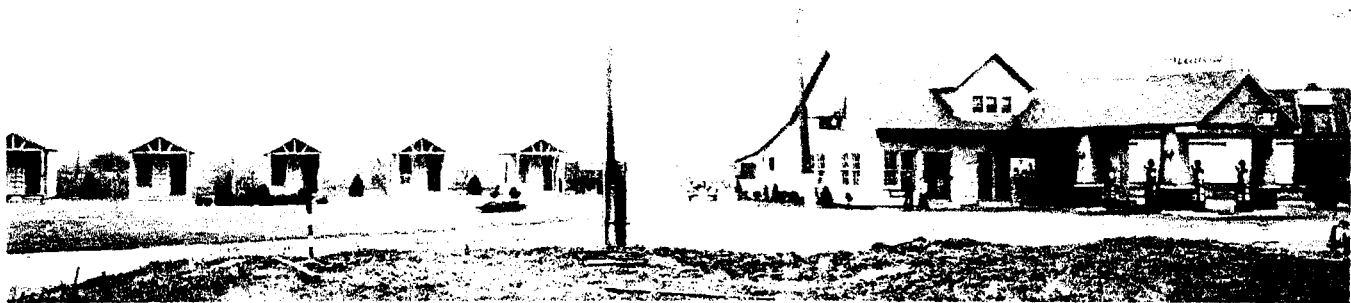
Arnold Colburn

Arnold Colburn has compiled a history of 108 South Broadway, the location for many years of the J.J. & A. Colburn Oil Company and the trailer park located behind. We are pleased to publish some excerpts from his narrative, which gives a rich picture of the years immediately following World War II.

The original wood frame building was allegedly built in the early nineteen hundreds by Arthur Fisher of Mountainview Rd., Red Hook. He was still alive when my father moved in on Mary 16, 1950 and would come in to sell him

even some things that they didn't. He had all the things that today's convenience stores have plus auto parts, hardware, haberdashery, paint and etc.

About 1954 the Gulf Oil Corporation talked him into a dealership to furnish oil products to the farms and homes in the area. That is when JJ&A Colburn, Inc. was formed. JJ&A was the abbreviation for John, Joe & Arnold, the three principals in the corporation. Oil storage tanks were installed, a delivery truck purchased, and the entire building was renovated



*The Midway Gas & Service Station and tourist cabins as they looked when John Colburn purchased them in 1950.*

strawberries and talk to us. He told us that there was a vegetable stand there before he built the wood frame structure. Prior to my father moving in there had been a number of businessmen who had failed to make a go of it. One Alvin Brooks of Red Hook told us he had run the garage at one time, and a Tarky Vangel told us he had been the mason who did the cement work, building the pit to get under automobiles, and how he had lost his diamond ring while building it.

My father John, while a salesman for General Mills had made the acquaintance of Gerow Schoonmaker of Walkill, NY who supplied him with materials to sell. Schoonmaker owned both 106 and 108 South Broadway in Red Hook and let my father have the 108 property on a handshake for one year before they consummated a written agreement. Within that first year father had a bulldozer come and push away the grass and trees along the road to make a parking lot large enough to accommodate trucks. At the same time he was dismantling half of the canopy so the big trucks could get up to the pumps for fuel. In addition to gasoline he quickly added diesel fuel. With the wood from the canopy he built a lunch counter inside and stayed open 24 hours a day to attract the truckers and it became a well-known truck stop.

In the first few years it was known as Colburn's and he would stock anything to sell that anyone would ask for and

### Gypsies Come to Red Hook

The mobile home park was started in the summer of 1950 or 51 when a gypsy drove in and asked to talk to the owner. I summoned my father and they walked to the south end of the property and he showed this man the brush lot south of the row of cabins next to the store and gas station. On his return, my father informed me that the man would be returning with a group of men to clear the lot, and park their campers in there. It wasn't an hour later when 8 or 10 pickup trucks with campers in tow pulled into the parking lot. A dozen or more men started hacking away at the brush with machetes and in no time at all the women and children had the brush piled up. Within a few hours the campers were all set up.

They stayed all summer, paying my father much needed cash for all their food and gas. Then, as quickly as they appeared, one day they were gone.

When the fall rains came so did the farmers whose barn roofs the gypsies had painted with aluminum paint. The farmers were looking for them because the paint was washing off with the rain. It seems that gasoline was cheaper than paint, and when they mixed it 5 to 1 with gas it covered real well and looked good until the first rain came and it began to wash off. The farmers were back to square one, less the cash they paid. The gypsies were never to be seen again, but my father had a very successful summer!

## A BANK COMES TO RED HOOK

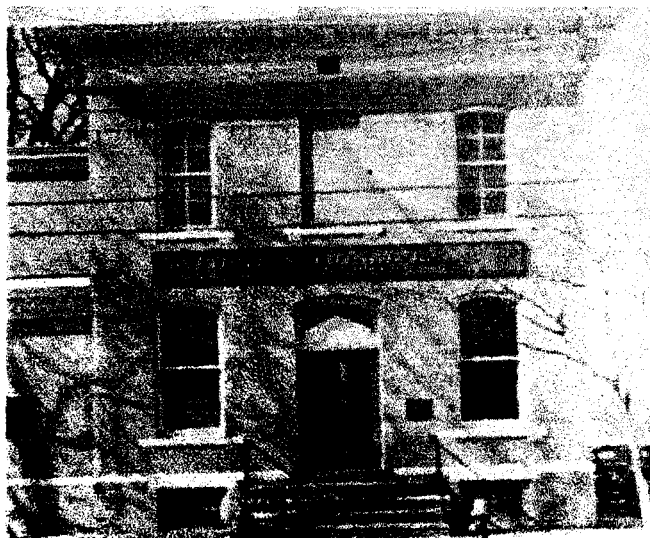
Barbara W. Bielenberg

Today, with four financial institutions serving the banking needs of the Red Hook community, it's hard to imagine a time when such services were not available locally. In 1864, in the midst of the Civil War, Red Hook farms and businesses were prospering. There was growing dissatisfaction about the inconvenience of traveling to Rhinebeck, Hudson, Poughkeepsie or New York City to do banking. Local businessmen, meeting in private homes, appointed a committee, consisting of **William Chamberlain**, owner of Maizefield and a wholesale importer of tropical fruits, **Jacob W. Elseffer**, a prominent lawyer, and **Robert L. Massonneau**, a partner in the tobacco factory, to sound out community support for the creation of a local bank. The need was so evident that 59 investors quickly pledged to purchase more than \$150,000 worth of shares of capital stock.

On January 10, 1865, a charter was granted to the **First National Bank of Red Hook**. The first stockholders' meeting was held in the large frame building at the corner of South Broadway and East Market Street, later called the Red Hook Hotel. Elected as the first Directors were **John Bates**, **William Chamberlain**, **Henry H. Conklin**, **Thomas Elmendorf**, **Jacob W. Elseffer**, **Peter G. Fraleigh**, **Augustus Martin**, **Robert L. Massonneau** and **George A. Phelps**. Jacob Elseffer was elected the first president.

The new bank opened for business on February 14, 1865 on the second floor above the store operated by the Massonneau brothers (now the Merritt Bookstore). Within a few months the bank began to outgrow its quarters and on May 22, 1865, a location committee recommended the purchase of a vacant 50 x 100 foot lot at the corner of South Broadway and Prince Street for \$360. A new brick building was erected and, with additions in 1870 and 1928, it remained the bank's home for 96 years until April 2, 1960 when the **First National Bank of Red Hook** opened for business at its current location at 28 West Market Street. The old bank building became the Red Hook Village Building.

The list of bank presidents reads like a who's who of Red Hook business. But the banking industry changed over the years. In 1918, for instance, the only equipment used in the bank was one posting machine and one typewriter. Cash was counted by hand and a hand-powered imprinter canceled checks. Banks began to consolidate and in April 1984, local control of the bank was relinquished and the **First National Bank of Red Hook** became **Key Bank** with corporate offices in Albany. **Key Bank** has since grown into a nationwide bank offering a full range of financial services with headquarters in Cleveland, Ohio.



*The second home of the First National Bank of Red Hook, c. 1928.*

### PRESIDENTS OF THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF RED HOOK

Jacob Elseffer	1865 - 1866
William Chamberlain	1866 - 1875
Robert L. Massonneau	1875 - 1898
Benjamin Beekman Hoffman	1898 - 1901
John N. Lewis	1901 - 1912
Charles Beekman Hoffman	1912 - 1921
Joseph Griffin	? - 1928
Eugene P. Budd	? - 1935
Theodore Cookingham	? - ?
Ezra B. Cookingham	1950 - 1963
Donald Norton	1963 - 1974
Lloyd W. Hapeman	1974 - 1984

## A GENTLEMAN CROOK'S COUP

*The following story appeared in an illustrated article in the Historical Society files, clipped from an unidentified publication dated 1912.*

"**Frederick Marks**, farmer, man-about-town, critic of art and literature, and crook, strolled into the **Red Hook National Bank** the other day, and after exchanging a few trivial remarks about the weather with Cashier **Albert Kerley**, walked out again with \$8,900 of the bank's good money bulging his overcoat pockets, to which he was not legally entitled. Soon afterwards he disappeared. Warrants are out for him for forgery and larceny.

Apparently **Marks** had planned the setup down to the last detail so as to carry it out as a routine transaction. He was well known to the bank officials, having acted for several years as superintendent of his brother's big farm at "Turkey Hill", in Upper Red Hook, near the Milan line. **Henry Marks**, the owner of the farm was a prominent New York lawyer."

A few weeks before the theft, **Frederick Marks** notified bank president **Charles B. Hoffman** that he expected to pay off a mortgage and for that purpose would need \$8,900 in large denomination bills in exchange for which he would tender either a cashier's check or a certified check from a New York bank. On the appointed day he arrived at the bank in the best of spirits and presented a check in the amount of \$10,000 drawn to the order of **Frederick Marks** and certified by the cashier of the **Irving National Bank of New York**. The check was accepted and deposited to Mark's credit, from which he withdrew \$8,900 in cash.

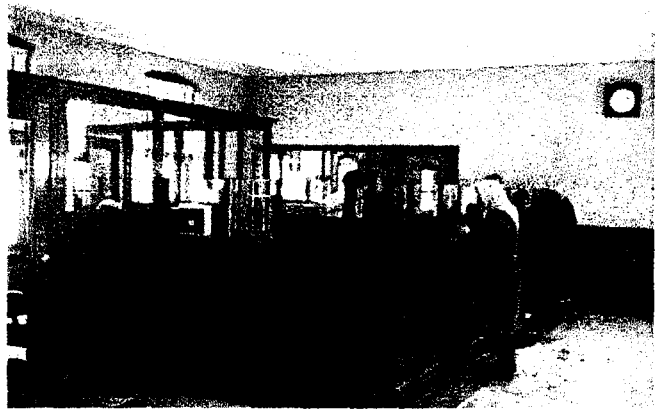
**Marks** chatted gaily with **Kerley** before leaving for Turkey Hill in a car driven by **Charles Fraleigh**. He paid off the help and then drove to the Rhinebeck bank where he paid off a note before boarding the 10:30 train for New York.

Monday morning **Kerley** answered the telephone bell at the **Red Hook Bank** and received the unwelcome news

from the **Irving Bank** that the check, presented by **Marks** was a worthless forgery.

The sheriff was called and an investigation began which revealed that **Marks** had defrauded the Irving Bank of a large sum a year earlier although someone apparently had made good the amount and the charges were dropped. It was also revealed that **Marks** had spent four years in prison in New South Wales, Australia.

The article concludes -- "**Marks** would pass for a man of culture and breeding. He does not gamble, speculate or seek the society of actresses. He likes to give costly banquets at fashionable hotels, patronizes the theatres and art exhibits, has a cultivated bass voice and sings well. He fritters away money on foibles. During his three years at Red Hook he manifested expert knowledge of agriculture and forestry, and when he doffed his good clothes liked to get into a farming and cut wood like **Teddy Roosevelt**."



*The interior of the First National Bank of Red Hook, c. 1928.*

## ARCHIVE ROOM

The Rosemary Coons Archival Room as a depository for the records of the Egbert Benson Historical Society was busy with varied requests every Tuesday during the summer months. If inquiries came in on other days, every effort was made to open the door for the researcher.

The information requested was on a wonderful variety of subjects i.e.: the age of a house on Pitcher Lane, background information or records of St. Christopher's Church for the Parish journal, use of Frank Teal's records, a query of how many mills were on the Sawkill Creek,

## Barbara Thompson

continued research of the grounds of Blithewood and date of the Mill Road School in Rhinebeck.

Our collection of maps, Teal records, censuses and church records have been of invaluable help to try and answer some of these questions.

We have also answered (to the best of our ability and available records) genealogical queries on the following: Johannes George, Edward Mooney, Peter Sharp, and family names of Moore, Queen and Tenney.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S KEYBOARD

**Barbara W. Bielenberg**

**Wanted – A Few Good Men (or Women)**

**A brand new year – and time to renew your membership in this Historical Society!** Your membership dues and donations pay for postage, printing, our rent to the Elmendorph Inn and all the expensive archival supplies we need to house our growing collection. **We operate on a very tight budget so every dollar counts.**

Great strides were made in 2000. Our Tuesday evening programs have been attracting capacity crowds, expanded by TV presentations by **Nancy DeAngeles** on public access channels in Dutchess and Ulster Counties. Our Newsletters and **Maynard Ham's** excerpts from The Red Hook Journal of 100 years ago have been well received and our archive center is serving researchers as we hoped. (See **Bobbie Thompson's** report elsewhere in this Newsletter.)

But none of this would be possible without the help of our volunteers. **We invite you to consider donating time as well as money** to the Historical Society. Every non-profit organization in this busy mid-Hudson area is feeling the pinch. Of the 50-year-olds who celebrated our nation's bicentennial by founding the Friends of Elmendorph, and this Historical Society some 25 years ago – some have passed away, or are in their 70's and still working in the thrift shop or archive center. But our organization has been fortunate to attract some energetic "youngsters".

**Linda Keeling** donated more than 26 hours to the Historical Society compiling a 16-page Collections Management Policy, required by New York State. The hours **Marlene Hejnal** spends updating our membership lists, printing membership labels and clipping, copying, and filing obituaries are uncounted. **Marlene has announced her retirement from the obituary business as of Dec. 31st!** Her work is so important we need a replacement right away! **Bobbie Thompson** records our ever-growing collections and helps researchers find what they are looking for from 9:30 a.m. until 4 p.m. every Tuesday. **Mary Cioffi** and **Nancy Hetzler** make sure there are tasty treats on the refreshment table at meetings. They could use help! **Evie Seils** keeps track of our mail and our money and **Carol Brener** clips newspaper articles for **Kate Dewsnap** to file. **Steve Lawson** formats our Newsletter for us.

Yes, we have been fortunate – but, looking to the future of the Historical Society: **three veteran Board members will have to be replaced at our Annual Meeting next June.** Former president **Larry Thetford**, current president **Barbara Bielenberg** and secretary, **Nancy Hetzler** have to retire after six years of service. We are pleased to report that Red Hook Town Historian **J. Winthrop Aldrich** has agreed to chair our Nominating Committee to seek replacements.

It is not too early to start looking for friends who value what the Historical Society has been able to accomplish and will assume leadership responsibility for setting priorities and guiding the Society into the future. **Think about what an active Historical Society can mean to the Red Hook community and consider donating your ideas and energy to making it prosper and grow.**

Call me at (845) 758-2923. We hope to hear from you.

## ADDITIONS TO OUR COLLECTIONS

Since our last Newsletter, our collections have been enriched by some very significant donations. Two of the donations have inspired articles and pictures you'll find in this issue – **A Bank Comes to Red Hook** and **A History of 108 South Broadway**. Material about the individuals, businesses and organizations of the Town of Red Hook is of special interest to the Historical Society. Please join us in thanking the following donors

**Arnold Colburn** – Framed photographs and a narrative history of 108 South Broadway (**JJ & A. Colburn, Inc.**).

**Howard (Sid) Delaney** – Bicentennial Flag and an iron hook used for moving logs at his sawmill in Upper Red Hook.

**Martha Losee Hermans** – Large collection of church records of Dutchess and Columbia Counties compiled by her mother, **Clara Losee** and maps, including geological surveys collected by her father **John Losee**.

Historical material about the **First National Bank of Red Hook** (Key Bank), presented by **Mary E. Bayer**, Assistant Vice President, and **Eugene Budd** and **Lloyd Hapeman**.

**Red Hook Public Library** – A collection of yearbooks of the **Upper Red Hook Historical Society** presented with the permission of the original donor, **Charlotte Bathrick**.

Two photographs of the interior of the **Red Hook Public Library** believed to have been taken when the library opened in its present location in November 1935.

Both donations were arranged by **Elizabeth Wacker**, acting for the Library.

**Susan Taylor** – c. 1930 map of Dutchess County indicating major land owners.

**Red Hook Rotary** – Archives of the organization. Donation arranged by **Stanton Tremper**, acting for the Rotary.

**Egbert Benson HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RED HOOK**  
**P.O. Box 1813, Red Hook, NY 12571**

**MEMBERSHIP FORM - 2001**  
**( It's time to renew your membership for 2001 )**

Name(s) (Please Print)

Mailing Address

Telephone Number (Area Code )

**ANNUAL DUES**

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

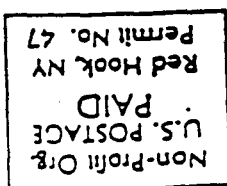
           Family \$12                 Individual \$8                 Student (under 18) \$1  
           Contributing \$25                 Sustaining \$50                 Life (\$100 or more)  
           Business or Organization \$15

Additional contributions are most welcome and are eligible for company matches: DONATION \$           

We invite you to help with the work of the Society. Please check here (      ) if you would like to be contacted about volunteer opportunities.

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

**NO 2001 ON YOUR MAILING LABEL? PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP.**



**Egbert Benson HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RED HOOK**  
P.O. Box 1813 Red Hook, N.Y. 12571-0313

