



**Egbert Benson HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RED HOOK**  
**P.O. Box 397 Red Hook, N.Y. 12571-0397**

**Winter 2007**

## **President's Letter**

By  
**Patrick Higgins**

Happy New Year from the Egbert Benson Historical Society to all our members and their families. We wish you all a very happy and healthy New Year. As we start the New Year, we are looking forward with positive anticipation to a great year. We realize it is important to look back on the year that has just passed and reflect on some of the high lights that made the past year the success we enjoyed.

Our membership has grown which is a credit to the organization. We have enjoyed an array of wonderful programs and our banquet in May was a huge success. The year ended with two great seasonal programs; The November program was David Greenwood who gave a "hands on" history of antique toys. In December Tom Daley gave a wonderful Christmas program on stained glass windows in the Hudson Valley.

Credit for the success of the Historical Society goes to various members of the Board. I would like to thank Rosalie Rossi for being a one person hospitality committee, and Hannaford Stores for supplying the refreshments for the meetings. Rosalie has also lined up some exciting programs for 2007. John Kennedy has to be thanked for his excellent job as treasurer in making sure we remain solvent. Rose Rider, our secretary, has just returned from her globe-trotting and is back handling the minutes of the meetings. Rose has done a wonderful job in the course of the year maintaining our records. Nick Annas, our past president and current vice-present, always finds time from his busy personal schedule to be on call to help out when needed. Nick is also on the Board of "The Friends of Elmendorph" which is our landlord; he acts as liaison between the two Boards. Whenever there are any loose ends to be tidied up we can always depend on Maynard Ham. Maynard has always been very active in Red Hook's history and we all treasure his reproductions of "The Red Hook Journal", some dating back 100 years.

The shortcoming of our Board is, we are down two members. Once again we appeal to members of the Historical Society for volunteers to fill the two vacant positions. All you need is a love of history and to be willing to spend two hours a month in good company.

The Egbert Benson Historical Society depends on its members for support. Your annual membership dues and your financial contributions are greatly appreciated; without them the Society could not exist. To continue to enjoy the success we are having we need volunteers for various committees. The Hospitality Committee needs volunteers to set up the refreshments for the meetings. Help is needed for the Programs and Special Events Committee. The Membership Committee is in need of volunteers to keep track of the members and keep them informed of special events. These committees are the lifeblood of the organization and only through members becoming involved can we hope to grow and thrive in the future. Anyone willing to help in the growth of the Historical Society, please call me at (845)876-3325, e-mail:

[phj@webjogger.net](mailto:phj@webjogger.net).

**The Egbert Benson Historical Society depends on you.**

## The History of Aerial Photography by Patrick Higgins

Arnold Colburn of Red Hook has presented to the Egbert Benson Historical Society 35 aerial photographs of Red Hook taken in 1962. The pictures are a priceless contribution to the Historical Society's archives. They show us Red Hook as it was 45 years ago with its proud hotel where the Mobil Station now stands. Many other buildings long gone can be identified in the photographs, including the Red Hook High School while under construction.

Aerial photography is not new. Ever since the invention of the camera in the early 1800s, photographers have been striving to photograph objects from higher and higher elevations. Today we have satellites in space with cameras photographing the earth in minute detail.

Aerial photography is a special art. The photographer must be a dedicated aerialist with photographic skills fundamental to the art. Not only is the photographer to record a scene, but the picture must make the viewers dreams come alive. A gifted pilot can make as big a contribution to a picture as the photographer himself. The photographer depends on the skill of the pilot to get the photographer in the right position for the picture.

In the early days of photography the problem photographers faced in an attempt to take an aerial view was an aerial platform. The only platforms available at the time were balloons and kites. In 1858, in France, Gaspard Tournachon (known as "Nadar") captured the first recorded aerial photograph from a balloon tethered over the Bievre Valley. The following year the French Army used aerial photographs for their campaign in Italy. In 1868, Nadar became the first to photograph Paris from a balloon.

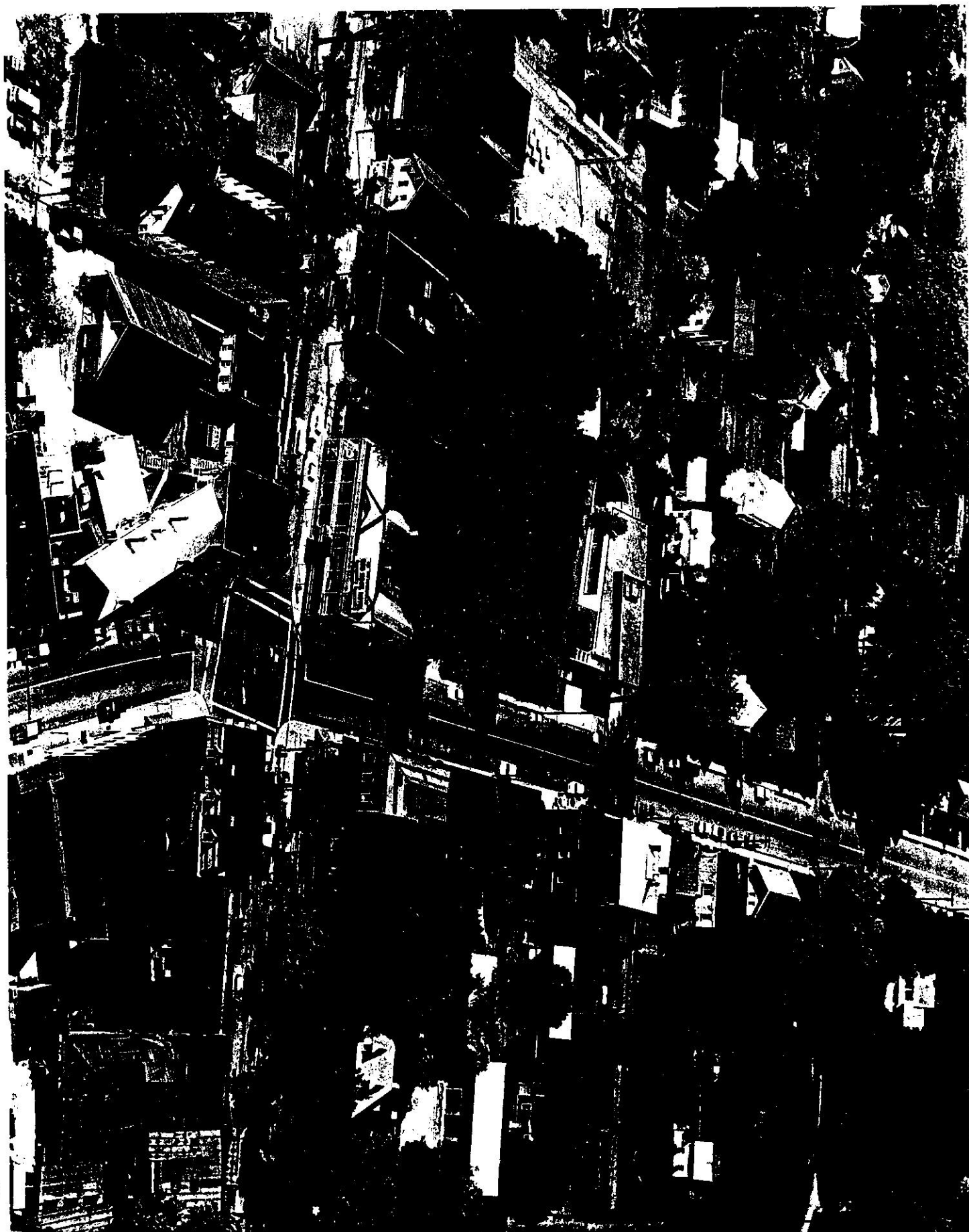
The oldest aerial photographs in existence are aerial views of Boston taken from a balloon in 1860 by James Wallace Black. The balloon was at an altitude of 1,200 feet and was tethered by a cable. With the slow speed of the photographic materials and the movement of the balloon, photography was very difficult.

Aerial observations and photography were used during the War Between the States in the 1860s. The Germans began experimenting with aerial photography in 1887 as a means for measuring ground features and forests. In 1903, Julius Neubronne of the Bavarian Pigeon Corps patented a breast mounted pigeon camera and used pigeons to take aerial photographs. In 1906, Albert Maul used a rocket propelled by compressed air to take pictures from a height of 2,600 feet.

With the invention of the airplane aerial photography came into its own. In 1909 Wilbert Wright photographed the town of Centocelli, Italy producing the first aerial photographs taken from an airplane. World War I provided a boost to aerial photography; French aerial units were taking up to 10,000 pictures a night of German troop positions. World War II brought more sophisticated techniques into the art with Germany pioneering many new applications of photo reconnaissance.

Today governments are using satellites orbiting the earth to photograph the earth and produce detailed land maps. 1991 saw the launch of European Radar Satellite with an altimeter able to map the earth's surface to within 5cm

Aerial photography has become an indispensable part of our increasingly visual world. It is valued not only for the wealth of information it provides but also for the beauty it presents. From the excitement we get out of seeing satellite views of our planet, to a simple shot taken from a plane, aerial photography has become part of our everyday lives.



EBHS Photograph, Arnold Colburn Collection

*Aerial View of Red Hook, c. 1962. Note Red Hook Hotel and Schaffer Store Building on South Broadway since demolished, and extension behind Massonneau Building (now Merritt Books) reconstructed parallel to East Market Street.*

## Future Programs

The Egbert Benson Historical Society meets on the third Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm in the historic Elmendorph Inn, Red Hook. The following is a list of the programs for the remainder of the year. The EBHS has been noted for its excellent presentations and a lot of effort by the Society goes into scheduling these programs. Each program takes many hours of preparation by the speakers so it is important we have a good attendance for the meetings.

We request that you lend your support to the Historical Society and the speakers by attending the meetings. Refreshments are served after each program. .

February 20<sup>th</sup>: Ted Bertrand-Dewsnap from Bard College will speak on the history of the architecture of the college from the time it was St. Stephen's College and the various aspects of the old campus. His talk will include a slide presentation showing some of the architectural features of the Fisher Center and the new Science Building.

March 20<sup>th</sup>: Paul Marienthal, Dean of Student Affairs at Bard College will talk about the "brightest lights" of the college and their impact on the local community as well as their worldwide influence. He will discuss the meditation gardens at Bard and Hearty Roots Farm in Tivoli. This student run co-op is one of the results of his influence on the students.

April 17<sup>th</sup>: Burt Brody, Professor of Physics at Bard College will talk about "What Church Saw". He will discuss Frederick Church's paintings and the phenomena of light and atmospheric effects revealed in the paintings. He will talk about how Church saw light and his interpretation of what he saw.

May 15<sup>th</sup>: The May meeting will be the annual Banquet of The Egbert Benson Historical Society. The speaker will be Mary Howell, Columbia County Historian. Mary will talk about the Livingstons, the first patent holders in the Hudson Valley.

June 19<sup>th</sup>: The June meeting will be held in the DePeyster House in Tivoli. The speaker will be Tom Cordier, the new mayor of Tivoli. Tom will talk on the history of Tivoli, the Madlin Hotel and the Tivoli of the future.

Please keep this page of the scheduled programs. We will not be sending out post cards in the future. Those whose e-mail address we have will be notified by e-mail on the upcoming meetings.

## **Red Hook and Rhinebeck Historical Agencies Cooperate to Preserve Local History**

It has been almost 200 years since Red Hook became independent from the Town of Rhinebeck, but recognizing their shared heritage, the historical agencies of Rhinebeck and members of our Red Hook Historical Society work together under the banner of the Consortium of Rhinebeck History. The consortium was initiated by members of the not-for-profit Quitman Resource Center for Preservation late in 1995. Several Rhinebeck churches, the DAR, Rhinebeck Historical Society and the Museum of Rhinebeck History and our own Egbert Benson Historical Society agreed to inventory their historical collections and develop means to preserve and share information about their holdings.

IBM donated a computer and work was begun to compile a data base accessible to members and researchers. A series of workshops were held to develop member expertise in the arrangement and preservation of archival materials such as documents and photographs. Early on it was decided that each member organization should develop its own collections policies and determine its own access policy.

A Local History Room has been established on the ground floor of the Starr Library in Rhinebeck equipped with a computer for public use. Patsy Vogel and Barbara Thompson have compiled and made available a partial record of the Red Hook Lutheran Cemetery to which will be added listings of burials at St. John's Episcopal and Sacred Heart cemeteries in Barrytown as well as Rhinebeck names listed in Frank Teal's files.

You may visit the Consortium of Rhinebeck at: <http://www.rhinebeckhistory.org>.

In addition, EBHS trustee, John Vincent, is the current President of the Rhinebeck Historical Society.

**Barbara W. Bielenberg**

### **Relations**

Sometimes when things are quiet at EBHS, which they rarely are, I indulge in one of my favorite pastimes, genealogy. It is a surprising and fascinating hobby where people mix and match, especially in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Families tended to be large and means of transportation was usually by horse and buggy. So they didn't intend on going too far in search of a mate.

The books of Henry Z. Jones, *Palatines In New York*, church books of Red Hook and Rhinebeck, cemetery records from both towns, census records, lists of the signers and non-signers of the Articles of Association in 1795, tax records and sometimes wills of the about to be deceased are some of the references that I use.

I have done, using these references, the somewhat sparse genealogies of the Drum, Pitcher, Barringer, Bonesteel, Benner, Cookingham, Elseffer, Neher, Feroe, Hoffman, Moul, Stickle, Straat and Feller families. A good many can be connected to the first immigrant, but there are a lot that fall thru the cracks and I cannot put them with the first man (or woman), but have filled out group sheets for them as well.

Now I haven't even tackled the Mohr or Lasher people but let me show you where these men and women have intermingled. The Drums married into the Pitchers(Bitzer), the Pitchers into the Stickles, the Stickles into the Nehers, and the Nehers into the Barringers, them into the Schaffers, and them with the Hoffmans. The Hoffmans conjoined with the Mohrs (Moore), the Mohrs with the Benners.. Then the Moul with the Cookinghams, the Cookingham with the Hoffmans, they with the Elseffers and they went with the Kuhns (Coon), back to the Stickles and then finally with the Feroes.

A complete listing of who they were related to would be redundant but let me give you an example of one family, the Benners. They married into the following: Feroe, Ham, Heermance, Moul, Mohr, Ostrander, Staats, Streit, Teator and Waldorf.

These are just a few of the people. I guess what I would like to do is to try and complete a record of all the early people. They were all related and family ties are hard to break. Red Hook must be a good place to call home.

**Barbara Thompson**





Egbert Benson

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RED HOOK

P.O. Box 397 Red Hook, N.Y. 12571-0397

### MEMBERSHIP FORM 2007

**The Egbert Benson Historical Society of Red Hook**

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

Name(s) (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number (with area code): \_\_\_\_\_

Dues: Please check: Individual \$15 \_\_\_\_\_

Family \$25 \_\_\_\_\_

Student (under 18) \$5 \_\_\_\_\_

Contributing \$ 50 \_\_\_\_\_

Sustaining \$100 \_\_\_\_\_

Life \$200 (individual) \_\_\_\_\_

Donation (indicate any company matches please) \_\_\_\_\_

**Benefits of membership :** Advance notice of monthly programs ~ The knowledge that you support the collection, preservation, and dissemination of the history of the Town of Red Hook .