

Egbert Benson

**HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RED HOOK**

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

## President's Letter

by Patrick Higgins

There is an old adage, "New brooms sweep clean". As the new president of the Red Hook Historical Society, I might be considered the new broom. I am very happy to say that I have nothing to sweep clean. The outgoing president, Nick Annas left a very orderly house.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Nick for all his work as past president. Nick is a man that knows what should be done and how to get it done. Members who served on the board and those who have attended the meetings will attest to that. When something had to be done, and Nick could not find the right person for the job he did it himself. Under his leadership the Red Hook Historical Society had no loose ends.

Nick stepped down from the presidency as he has a heavy personal schedule. He felt he would not be able to devote the time to the job that he deemed necessary. With a certain amount of irresolution I am picking up the mantle that Nick has laid down. It is a big mantle in more ways than one. It is one that I know that I can never physically grow into but I will do everything I can to be a worthy successor to Nick Annas. Nick has not left the scene; he is still a member of the board and will serve as vice-president.

As the new broom I have a lot to learn and will be reaching out to the membership for help. The Red Hook Historical Society belongs to the members, not to the board or the president. If the members did not exist, there would be no historical society. It is important that we get feed-back from the members as to what they would like to see in their historical society. I will be very interested in any suggestions and feed-back I receive from the members.

The historical society is part of Red Hook and recorder of the community's past. We are blessed with excellent volunteers who devote a huge amount of their time to the archives of the society. In a future message I hope to introduce these people and the gargantuan work they are doing on behalf of Red Hook's history. ~

### ~~~~~ FUTURE MEETINGS ~~~~~

November 21: Toys of Yesteryear, a slide talk by David Greenwood, Town of Washington and Village of Millbrook Historian. Bring a pre-1950 toy to Show and Tell.

January 16: The Burden Mills and Iron Mountain Storage by Mary Howell, Columbia County Historian .

December 19: A special Christmas meeting featuring Tom Daley and his slides of Stained Glass in the Hudson Valley

**All meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. at the Elmendorph Inn unless other wise listed.**

## **Red Hook's Renaissance Man; William Seward Teator Historical Society Receives Rare Negatives**

by **Barbara W. Bielenberg**

Our adventure began last June with a phone call from Clara and John Losee's daughter, Martha Hermans. She had a box of glass plate negatives she would like to give the Society. The box turned out to be an ancient wooden apple crate filled with original cardboard cartons of "Eastman's Dry Plates", "The Standard Extremely Rapid Dry Plate for Out and In-Door Photography", etc. all purchased from "HAHN, Kodaks & Optical Goods, Developing & Printing" in New York City – each box tightly packed with fragile glass plate negatives – 287 images of Upper Red Hook families, farms, and scenic vistas taken by William S. Teator in or around 1900! For several weeks we opened each box, listed each image and enjoyed a rare look backward 100 years or more!

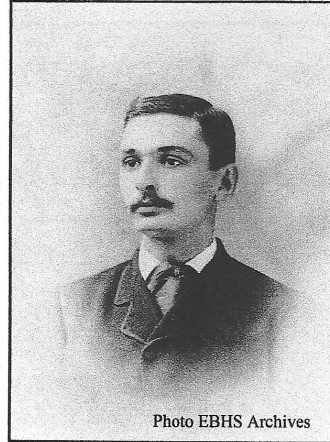


Photo EBHS Archives

John Losee was distantly related to Will Teator, as he was known to friends and family' and we had a thick file of papers – mostly genealogical records given us by Clara before her death. We also remembered that years ago, a large collection of shells was found in one of the schools' closets and passed to our neighbor Helen Garlinghouse, who was a serious amateur "conchologist". She discovered it was an extremely important and well documented collection of land and fresh water snails, collected and identified by W.S. Teator. Could the same "scientist" also have been a photographer as well as a farmer?

William Seward Teator was born on his father's farm in Upper Red Hook on April 28, 1860. An old Palatine family, the Teators had been among the original settlers of the Rhinebeck Precinct and were related to most of the old Red Hook families. Will received his education at the Academy in Upper Red Hook. Beyond that he was self taught. A business card in our collection lists him as a collector of Indian relics and he is known to have accompanied Dr. Harvey Losee and Ned Kerley on a collecting expedition in the Catskills. According to an 1890 diary, he catalogued nearly 400 relics, wrapping and packing every bundle in large dry goods boxes until they could be properly arranged. "They all have rare value"

Perhaps he was preparing for a new life as a married man for on October 27, 1891 he married Nevada (Nena) Myers. They had two children Roscoe and Marion. His wife and children appear in many of his photos. Will had been working as a Private Secretary to General J. Watts de Peyster of Tivoli. DePeyster had an engraving made of a drawing by Teator of the "Catskill Mountains from the Heights East of Upper Red Hook" and tried to get him a job working for the US Government "in connection with exploration which requires drawing and Commitment to paper". Instead the artist became a farmer!

As a young man, Teator exhibited an intense scientific approach to his collections of Indian relics, rocks and minerals and snails. He explored the nearby woods and marshes, carefully noting in his diary, details of terrain, soils, trees and wildflowers where specimens were found. He transplanted snails to new locations to test their best habitat and reported his findings in academic journals, corresponding with the leading conchologists of the day.



W S Teator photo EBHS Archives

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### Red Hook's Renaissance Man; William Seward Teator

Once he took over the family farm he applied the same scientific dedication to his crops. In the 1880's he had helped his father plant a couple of small orchards. Andrew Teator was one of the early shippers of apples to Europe. Will studied the productivity of old varieties and retained a few 100 year-old Newtowns on his farm. In a lecture to Grange members, he described collecting seedling trees along fences or from pumice dumps of old cider presses. He experimented with grafting and new varieties and reported "I now have in bearing, or approaching a fruiting condition 100 acres in trees and I am rather proud of them."

He tested sprays and reported his findings to his fellow farmers, eventually accepting losses of 30% of the crop from insect injury. He was interested in the rotation of crops and developed a regular system of rotation on the younger orchards. "Corn or potatoes this year followed next spring by early plowing and frequent harrowings till July, then buckwheat and a liberal seeding of red clover, 4 parts, with timothy and red top each 1 part from which we take a crop of buckwheat and hope to have the ground well covered for the winter with strong clover and grass plants ... We are getting something from the soil while the orchard is growing, and we are giving much to the soil and to the vigors of the trees..." His letterhead read "Our Great Specialty **Pedigree Seed Potatoes** Leading varieties in their original strength and purity. We aim to produce the finest grown in this county." Ever the artist, near the end of this paper he wrote, "In our apple business we design many of our finest apples for the private market." Having achieved his goal of producing apples of the highest type of perfection and quality, he renamed his father's "Meadow Brook Farm" "Blue Ribbon Orchards". Among his negatives are a number of shots of the orchard and artistically composed close-ups of individual sprays of apple blossoms.

William Seward Teator died on August 17, 1930. During his lifetime he made several trips to Florida, the Bahamas, Cuba, California and the New England States. He found time to play the fife, the flute and the recorder. In 1884 he was a member of the Red Hook Cornet Band and 20 years later, Robert Chanler's Red Hook Band. His daughter recalled that he cross pollinated peonies, naming one particularly beautiful pink, single variety "Marion" after her. Today his shell collections are held by the Delaware Museum of Natural History and the Museum of Natural History in New York City. In 1941 Will's beloved orchard was sold to Albert B. Cole who continued to raise apples. Twenty-five years later Bruce and Frank Geiger purchased the orchard and continued the business. The property has since been subdivided and Will's house and barns on 18 remaining acres are privately owned. John Losee printed a number of Will's negatives which we treasure in our collection. We intend to seek a grant to help us have many of the negatives digitally copied allowing us to produce an album of William S. Teator's images of Upper Red Hook farms and families, honoring Red Hook's Renaissance man. ~

Trying to write a genealogy in a Newsletter is a daunting project- but here goes. The name, as we know is Teator, has been spelled: Dather (with an umlaut over the a), Dieter, Titter, Doder, Deithardt, Teter, etc. The origin of the name was Dather.

Lorenz Dather was the immigrant of Palatine origin to come to America in 1710. He was in Dutchess, the North Ward, in 1717-1718. His first child was Henrich. He married Catharine Benner and they had nine children. Sixth in the line was Henrich, married to Anna Maria Prosius. He was born in 1753 and died in 1835. They had six children and another Henrich H. wed to Eva Feller. This Henrich was born in 1787 and passed on in 1860.

The fourth generation of this line was Andrew H. Teator born in 1819, died in 1891. He married Ruth Moffit and they had four children, one of whom was William Seward Teator. He was born 28 April 1860 and married Nevada Myers, daughter of Alexander Myers and Mary Ann Flynn, on 27 October 1891. They had two children, Roscoe Teator who wed Isabella Massonneau, and Marion who married Edwin Lamb Losee.

The Teators were related to practically every family in Red Hook. The first generation was connected to the Thomas's, Rifenbergh's, Fulton's and Stall's. The second generation was related to the Fraleigh's, Allendorf's, and Feller's. The third to the Phillip's, the Snook's, the Clum's, the Pitcher's and the Lasher families. Who is to say that the Teator's are not well linked and known.

By **Barbara Thompson**

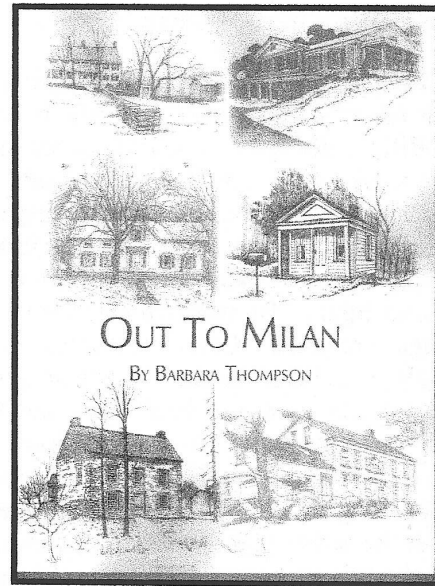
### **Out To Milan**

Barbara Thompson, our Historical Society's archivist has published a tribute to the Town of Milan, based on a series of Newsletters published by the Milan Community Association from December 1969 to June of 1975.

The hamlets of the Town were no long viable, the Milan post offices, school districts and telephone exchanges had been incorporated in the larger towns of Pine Plains, Red Hook, Rhinebeck and Stanfordville. The Newsletter was intended to help develop a sense of identity for the residents of the Town of Milan.

Each issue featured a cover illustration of a building or location in the Town drawn by artist Ossie Stippa. An accompanying article was written by Barbara Thompson, focusing on the older houses in Milan, the Town itself, a particular family, or national trends that influenced the Town's development. Barbara was assisted in her research by the late Clara Losee and she frequently refers to the team as the "snoop sisters!"

Thompson writes in her introduction, "It is my hope that older residents ... will take pleasure in renewing memories and new residents will take care of preserving the land and buildings that have been left to their guardianship." Bill Jeffway, Milan Historical Committee member has called the book, "very well researched and a fascinating read". ~



Copies of "Out To Milan" are available at local bookstores or directly from the author 845-246-7599. ~

### **St. Margaret's Home is Listed on the New York State Register of Historic Places**

Word has been received from Ruth L. Pierpont, Director, Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau that St. Margaret's has been listed on the New York State Register.

As a result, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation will now submit a nomination for St. Margaret's to be added to the prestigious National Register of Historic Places..

Congratulations to the Town Committee consisting of St. Margaret's Task Force for all their efforts on behalf of one of Red Hook's most important historic sites.~

## **Congratulations Bob and Barbara Bielenberg**

The Red Hook Historical Society takes great pleasure in congratulating Robert and Barbara Bielenberg for being the recipients of the upcoming awards given by The Dutchess County Historical Society.

The Bielenbergs are two of the original members of the Red Hook Historical Society and The Friends of the Elmendorph. Their contribution to the history of the Red Hook Historical Society and the work they have done in preserving the Elmendorph Inn from oblivion is beyond description.

Bob is Curator of the Elmendorph Inn and the unofficial Inn Keeper. He prepares the facilities at the inn for the upcoming programs and is always present to make sure that everything is in order. Barbara served as project manager during the restoration of the Elmendorph and has also served as president of the Red Hook Historical Society. At present she is working with archivist Barbara Thompson in managing the society's historic records.

The Bielenbergs are to be honored at a dinner on Thursday, November 2, 2006 at the Ristorante Caterina de' Medici at the Culinary Institute of America. The Red Hook Historical Society is proud to be able to congratulate these two dedicated people on their awards.~

## **Documenting St. John the Evangelist Church Cemetery in Barrytown** by Barbara Thompson

Do you remember the "dog days" of last August? Patsy Vogel and I spent several of those mornings in the Cemetery in Barrytown documenting the memorial stones. We listed 411 monuments. Twenty-five were for World War I and II veterans. The information was entered into the computer and is available at the EBHS Archive Room and will also be available on line through the Rhinebeck Consortium @rhinebeckhistory.org.

The church is a pretty Victorian building set on a small hill. Mrs. John Aspinwall gave the land and had the church built in memory of her husband, John J. Aspinwall who died in 1873. It was designed by William A. Potter and consecrated in October 1874. The congregation was drawn from the employees of the surrounding estates and it has been said that Mrs. Aspinwall sent a horse drawn carriage around each Sunday to collect people to go to church.

The property was originally placed in charge of trustees selected by Mrs. Aspinwall. The pastoral charge of the chapel later came under the warden of St. Stephen's College (now Bard College).~

## **Recent Accessions**

By Barbara Thompson

We are the delighted recipients of Will Teator's glass negatives from Martha Hermans. Barbara Bielenberg has written about these in another article. We also have been given the following for our archives:

From Jack Lewis we received a stamped steel key, 2" x 1". The stamping is designed with V T for Vooris Tiebout. Jack had worked for the Smithers Tool & Machine Products Company which made the keys used to open the powdered soap dispenser assembled at the soap factory in Red Hook. We already have in our collection a Voorhis dispenser and a box of the soaps especially made for it by a factory in Chicago.

Maynard Ham has given us a leather bound photo album with bronze/brass mountings, labeled in gold "S.T. Willets" and published by D. Appleton & Co. 443&445 Broadway, New York, 1862. The album contains period photographs of members of the Willets family.

Robert Rockefeller has donated some of his own and his father's medals including pins and badges from World Wars 1 and 2 and a collection of firematic items including a delegate's pin from the 49<sup>th</sup> Hudson, New York Convention of the Hudson Valley Volunteer Fireman's Association held in 1938 and an 1897 Red Hook ribbon badge showing a fireman rescuing a child. Also included is a medal commemorating the 250th anniversary of the founding of Kingston and another celebrating the Holland Society of New York Henry Hudson 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 1609-1909.~



St John the Evangelist Church EBHS Archives Photo