

Digitizing The Red Hook Advertiser

By Claudine Klose, April 5, 2021

Early in July 2020, Town Historian Emily Majer received an email from a former Red Hook resident, asking whether the Town's *Red Hook Advertiser* newspaper had been microfilmed and indicating that he would be interested in supporting a project to digitize them. The former Red Hook resident was none other than Bill Wilken, whose family had run Wilken Brothers, an agricultural business cooperative active in Red Hook in the mid-20th century. Then-president of Historic Red Hook, Claudine Klose, began a conversation with Wilken, now living in Ohio, that resulted in a major gift to support the preservation and electronic dissemination of more than 40 years of *Red Hook Advertiser* newspapers.

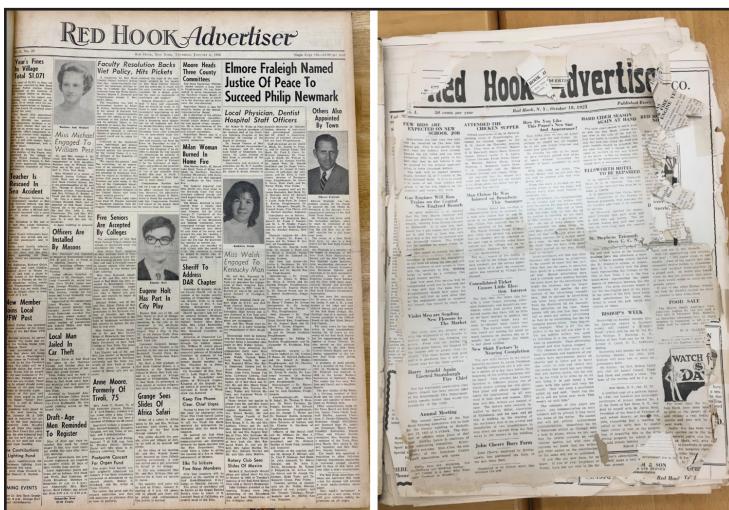


Red Hook Advertiser ads, December 19, 1957

The *Red Hook Advertiser*, the Town's weekly newspaper, was published from 1923 to 1969 and 42 hardbound volumes with issues from 1923 through 1966 had been stored at the Red Hook Public Library until they were transferred to Historic Red Hook's predecessor, the Egbert Benson Historical Society of Red Hook, in 2013. The collection had never been microfilmed and had not been archived in any other repository. Newsprint is fragile and degrades rapidly. Many of the newspaper pages had begun to deteriorate and the Historic Red Hook team knew that this was a rare opportunity to salvage a precious resource. They also knew that these newspapers contained invaluable information on people, businesses and

events in early to mid-20th century Red Hook that would be of great interest to researchers.

Once an agreement had been reached with Wilken, HRH volunteers began inventorying the volumes and making notes on their condition. Two years were missing – 1920 and 1940 - and 1965 was incomplete, but the remaining years were intact, totaling 16,105 pages. After the inventory was finished, the next step was to carefully pack the volumes into heavy-duty cartons to be shipped to the Digital Solutions team at HF Group, a book-binding company in North Caroli-



Two of the newspapers showing the varying conditions



Claudine and Chris Klose carefully preparing the newspapers for shipping.

available to them for upload. The collection will be designated as a gift of the William H. And Jane T. Wilken Charitable Trust in memory of Herbert C. and Ethel Z. Wilken. We look forward to sharing this important local resource with the public soon!

na. There, conservation-trained experts would carefully unbind the volumes and image each page, keeping weekly issues intact for return to Historic Red Hook. The boxes were shipped in late November and the original issues and corresponding digital files will be returned to Historic Red Hook this spring.

The second part of the project involves making the newspapers accessible electronically. Since Historic Red Hook is a member of the Southeastern New York Library Resources Council, which offers free online searchable access to local newspapers (at news.hrvh.org), the digital files will be made



Sam and Ellen Phelan and Claudine Klose pack the volumes for shipping.

***06/21 Update:**

The newspapers are now available online. Go to our Collections page historicredhook.org/collections and scroll down to “Red Hook Newspaper Collection.”

About the Author

Claudine Klose is a longtime Historic Red Hook trustee and former president of Historic Red Hook. She now serves as the head of the Collections Committee.