



Egbert Benson HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RED HOOK

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

SUMMER 2003

Clare O'Neill Carr 9/13/43 - 4/6/03 FAREWELL DEAR FRIEND

On the bookshelf at the Historical Society is a thick blue notebook containing 97 pages of articles written by Clare when she worked for the Gazette Advertiser in Rhinebeck. Their headlines tell the story of modern day Red Hook: "Conservation easements growing in popularity; Future of northern Dutchess farms in doubt; Are Tivoli homes historic? Developments that changed Red Hook forever; Milan vs. Top Job masks broader question. Where will town take its garbage?" These are not quick "news bites" but long, well-researched and balanced reports on the many issues facing a growing community.

Scattered throughout the collection are stories about the people of Red Hook: "RH High first grad is turning 100, Red Hook 13-year-old has right stuff at space camp, Briggs honored for 30 years of fire service, Fifth-graders talk about war and peace". Most of the articles in our notebook were written in 1988 and every one reflects Clare's loving concern for the community in which she grew up. Many featured lively photographs taken by Clare to illustrate the text.

Clare was born in Red Hook. Her father was a lithographer for Western Printing in Poughkeepsie. Her mother was an artist with a passion for fixing up old houses. Clare knew the neighborhoods of Red Hook intimately; she had lived in most of them! Clare was a product of the Red Hook school system

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Clare introduces the new Walking Tour Guide at a Historical Society Meeting in 2002.

Photo by Jay Olstad. EBHS Collection

Annual Meeting, June 2003

J. Winthrop Aldrich to Speak at Annual Meeting

Red Hook Town Historian J. Winthrop Aldrich will be the guest speaker when the Historical Society holds its Annual Dinner Meeting at the Elmdorph Inn on Tuesday, June 17th. Winty, as he is better known to the Red Hook community, recently retired from his position as Deputy Commissioner of the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. He is a founding member of Hudson River Heritage and was a major contributor to the effort to create the Hudson River National Historic Landmark District. This work won him the HRH Crowley Award in 1995.

Back in the 70's, Winty and the late Clara Losee had the foresight to salvage the extensive files of Frank Teal who was the sole surveyor in northern Dutchess County from the turn of the century until his death in 1949. The Teal papers now fill 12 file drawers in our Historical Society Archive Room and are consulted by homeowners and surveyors seeking information about properties in Red Hook and Rhinebeck.

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FAREWELL DEAR FRIEND

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and after graduation began attending Bard College but left to travel to England where she met Jeffrey Carr who would become her husband and the father of her three children. She returned to Red Hook and graduated, developing life-long friendships with faculty members and students.

Clare loved her family and her community and like a bird, carefully building its nest, she cared deeply about each element that contributed to their well being. This spring, with her energies already flagging she took up the cause of the Red Hook Tree Committee understanding that the Village's street trees were historically and environmentally important. If Clare felt a cause was important she had to get involved no matter what the toll on her strength and energy. She loved music so she became secretary of the Hudson Valley Chamber Music Society. She appreciated old buildings so she became a director of Hudson River Heritage. She loved history so she accepted the presidency of our Historical Society.

Watching Clare run a meeting was a delight. Often disorganized, she nevertheless exuded such enthusiasm and creativity, she inspired others by her example. The hardest task she ever took up was the writing of *A Brief History of Red Hook*. She began by drawing on scores of sources developed during her reporting days, interviewing local historians, farmers and ordinary citizens with long memories or private collections of historical material, checking and rechecking her facts for accuracy. In the end the publisher deemed her completed manuscript much too long!

For Clare, deciding which stories to prune was as painful as eliminating old friends from her address book. But knowing the book would be an important resource for her beloved community she persisted, encouraged by the joy of discovering unpublished photos and postcards to illustrate the volume. At her insistence the book begins with a page acknowledging the many friends who helped her along the way. If they weren't friends before the project began they soon became so, for to know Clare was to love her for her gallantry and generosity.

She quickly followed the History with the creation of the acclaimed Walking Tour Guide to the Villages of Red Hook and Tivoli. A month before her death Clare invited a group of community leaders to her home to develop strategies for protecting and preserving St. Margaret's Home for use by non-profit community organizations. On March 9th she wrote a memo recapping the discussion and plans to place the building on the National Register of Historic Places. She wrote, "...I will offer to help write the nomination and the letter. I'll help as much as I can, but can't spearhead the project since I can never be certain of my rocky health." How like Clare, giving every ounce of energy to a cause she believed in!

Not a day goes by that I don't miss you. May you go in peace dear friend. You deserve the rest!

Barbara W. Bielenberg

Annual Meeting, June 2003

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In 1999 Wint's love of local history, and the contributions of his own family, lead Wint to spearhead the publication of *The Astor Orphans, A Pride of Lions* by Lately Thomas. The profusely illustrated volume tells the fascinating story of the eight orphaned children raised by an elderly relative, servants and distant guardians at Rokeby, their Barrytown estate, following them through their often eccentric adulthood.

On March 15th of this year, Wint Aldrich was honored for his years nine years of service to historic preservation in New York State at a gala reception at the Mills Mansion in Staatsburg.

Historic preservation has been Wint's career and personal passion with special emphasis on the Hudson River Valley. Although he and his wife Tracy now make their home in Manhattan and Connecticut they maintain a residence and an abiding interest in the local area, and especially in the fate of St. Margaret's Home founded by Wint's ancestor Margaret Rebecca Armstrong Astor in 1853.

The Annual Meeting and talk which are open to the public will begin at approximately 7:30 p.m. Reservations are required for the buffet dinner which begins at 6:00 p.m. More information and a reservation form can be found elsewhere in this Newsletter.

New Members

Gary and Nancy Finkle (new Life Members)
Jane Ferguson
Marianne, Darren and Courtney Sauter
Denise Barton and Michael Taylor
Marc Molinaro
Fortune Ryan
Bernie and Trish Tieger
Thomas and Barbara Campo

Donations Received

In Memory of Clare O'Neill Carr:
John and Mary Cioffi
Wayne and Kathy Helsley and Family
Lloyd and Janet Loop
Joe and Bobbi Chupay, Dawn Tonneau, and Julie Long
Tom and Evie Seils
Jean T. Cook
Shirley Burroughs
Frank Knobloch and Evelyn Krueger
Leonore Schiff and Dan Chu
Michele Dominy and Martha Gearhart
Dick and Carleen Baright
Several Friends of the Carr Family
Hudson Valley Chamber Music Circle
Tom and Barbara Dolan
Frank and Diane Bauer
Bernie and Trish Tieger
Bob and Barbara Bielenberg
Al and Donna Stanley
Kay Verrilli
Arthur and Nancy Kelly
Barbara Thompson

In Memory of Jane Knobloch:
Dr. & Mrs. Kenneth Appell

SAVING OUR BARNS

by Terry Schaff

In 1986, my husband Doug Schaff and I became owners of the remaining 18 acres of Frank and Miriam Geiger's apple farm on Starbarrack Road in Red Hook New York. Every time we passed the Geiger's farm, on our way to our summer cottage on Spring Lake we were taken with the beauty of their barns. When a For Sale sign appeared on their property I arranged a visit, and immediately fell in love with the property.

A few weeks later Doug went to see Frank Geiger to get a first-hand tour of the farm. Frank Geiger shared with him the fact that he was dying of cancer and that it was his wish to keep living on the farm until his wife could be comfortably resettled near her family in New Jersey and so that he could finish harvesting his last crop of apples.

Ownership of the farm was passed on to us that August with the understanding that the Geigers would continue to live there as long as they wanted. During that time, which turned out to only be a few months, Frank Geiger convinced Doug that it would be foolhardy to try and make a go of part-time apple farming (Advice that Doug has appreciated ever since).

For a few years we succeeded in finding local farmers to care for our apple orchards and to store their apples in the basement coolers of our largest barn. But it became more and more difficult to find farmers interested in either enterprise. At one point we pulled out an aging orchard when a neighboring farmer expressed interest in planting corn in the field, but that didn't come to pass. By 1990, more than 250 years of continual farming had come to an end on one of Red Hook's oldest farms. And we had become the custodians of beautiful old artifacts; buildings that told the history of one of Red Hook's oldest working farms, but which would increasingly become a burden to sustain.

In November I came to the Egbert Benson Historical Society of Red Hook to learn more about the lineage of our farm with the hope that our farm might have enough historical relevance to merit consideration by the National Register of Historic Places. My close friend Ellen Phelan, a board member of the Friends of The Elmendorph Society, helped me to get this process started. She introduced me to the dedicated volunteers of the Egbert Benson Historical Society who became active participants in my search. To our surprise we discovered that the historical society had as much or more information on our farm as any in the Town of Red Hook.



*The old Dutch-style barn on the Schaff property.
Photo courtesy of Terry & Doug Schaff*

Original leases on parchment dating back to 1754 and 1756, discovered by EBHS Archivist Barbara Thompson told much of the early history of the property. Photographs taken by the amateur photographer, naturalist and farmer, William Seward Teator, whose family owned the farm for close to 200 years, documented the farm and its inhabitants in the early 1900s.

We traced the history of the farm, with the help of the Historical Society, back to 1688 when Pieter Schuyler, (a Dutchman) received a patent from King James II for land that included our property. Sometime thereafter he sold property including our parcel to a fellow Dutchman, Captain Barent Van Benthuyzen. In 1722 this parcel was leased to Andries Drom, a Palatine (German Palatines tried to escape war, famine, and religious persecution by coming to America). It doesn't appear that either Van Benthuyzen or Schuyler ever occupied or used this land, making the Drom family the first non-indigenous people to live here and to cultivate a farm.

In 1754, the land passed into the hands of Peter Kool, who only held onto it for a couple of years. In 1756, the Teator family, who were also Palatines, took possession of the land, successfully raising apples and potatoes for close to 200 years. William Seward Teator (The Teator family name has undergone many spellings.) called the farm "Meadow Brook Farm". And his orchards were known as Blue Ribbon



Nina Teator and her children Marion and Roscoe standing in front of the stone summer kitchen at "Meadow Brook Farm".

Photo courtesy Terry & Doug Schaff

Orchards in recognition of the prize-winning apples that were grown there and sent around the world. I recently learned that our road was known as Teator Road until the mid 1960s when it was renamed Starbarrack Road.

In 1941 the property was sold to Albert B. Cole who continued to raise apples. Twenty-five years later, Bruce and Frank Geiger purchased it, (naming it Geiger Meadows) continuing a tradition of apple farming. And 20 years later, in 1986, my husband and I became the sixth owners to reside at what is now known as Starbarrack Meadows.

Recently Jim Kricker, an internationally-recognized timber man, and Peter Sinclair, editor of the Hudson Valley Vernacular Architecture Newsletter, were kind enough to visit our farm to help us to identify and date the barns on the property. It turns out that the oldest barn on the farm was originally of a Dutch design, one of ten Dutch barns

registered by Mr. Sinclair in Red Hook. Markings, used in pre-revolutionary times, show where structural beams were married. This barn had bays for housing horses and cows, and a center section for storing a hay wagon. At some point the barn was enlarged, the roof was raised and it was moved over a full basement to handle the later orchard. The second oldest barn on the property is an English side-entrance barn with a two-story carriage house.

Our research continues side-by-side with a search for ways to keep up these magnificent barns. Next on the list is learning more about the 18th century stone summer kitchen that houses a bee hive oven.

Recently we have been receiving requests from people asking if they could get married on our land or in one of our barns. The apple orchard that we had pulled up in hopes of corn being planted there has become a lovely rolling meadow. While we never thought of weddings as providing means towards repairing and sustaining these structures, the fact is that we do not have enough acreage to sustain the barns through farming. When you think about it, these days with the change in land usage, we need to be creative in finding a new purpose for the barns so that they can be maintained. We do not yet have the answer. But if having weddings or family gatherings in these lovely spaces could help, then we are open minded. What a wonderful way to provide a source of revenue to sustain these noble structures.

Ed. Note: Finding viable ways to preserve historically important farm buildings after their agricultural use has ended is a challenge closely tied to the preservation of the rural landscape of Red Hook. Anyone who has ever paid to have a house painted can appreciate the expense involved in painting an enormous barn, or repairing its aging roof. And yet barns, silos, sheds and other agricultural buildings are all important symbols of the once most important economic activity of the community.

NOMINATIONS REQUESTED FOR HERITAGE AWARDS

Now is the time to honor those individuals or projects that you have observed and admired in our community. Each year the Historical Society solicits nominations of significant contributions to the historic heritage of the Town of Red Hook. Nominations may be made in one or more of the following categories:

- Written or Recorded: typed or published texts; taped photographic or audiovisual material; documents or research work.
- Architectural: historic restorations, preservation or design applications, which reflect or enhance the vintage rural character of the Town.
- Artistic: artwork, artifacts or replicas, in any media or material, which depict, typify or enlarge comprehension of the past.
- Environmental: site works that conserve, restore or beautify settings reminiscent of the areas past.

Nominations may be made in each of these two categories:

- Senior: an individual or group over the age of 21;
- Junior: an individual or group under the age of 21.

Nominations must be received by June 10th. Mail to the Egbert Benson Historical Society of Red Hook, Box 397, Red Hook, NY 12571-0397. Please include the following:

- Award category;
- Identification of the nominee by name, title or location;
- Your name, address and telephone number in case we need more information.

An objective Heritage Awards Committee will evaluate nominations received by the due date. Winners will be notified and a formal presentation made at the Annual Dinner Meeting on June 17th. Awards include a complimentary membership, award certificate and complimentary dinner. For more information, call 758-2923.

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MEMBERS TO ELECT NEW TRUSTEES

Nominations for new members of the Historical Society's Board of Trustees will be voted on at the Annual Meeting on June 17th.

John H. Kennedy has been nominated to replace Jane Knobloch, who passed away last November. John brings to the Society 28 years of experience with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, serving most recently as the Taconic Regional Director. In retirement, John and his wife Elizabeth serve as Historic Site Interpreters at Montgomery Place in Annandale. John is Vice President of the Red Hook Rotary Club and a member of St. Christopher's Church choir. He has been a director of Winnakee Land Trust, Wilderstein Preservation, the Town of Red Hook Water Board and the Dutchess County Boy Scouts and for two years was Executive Director of Christmas in April* Dutchess County.

John Vincent lived on a 440-acre Greek Revival farm in Bowling Green, Kentucky until 1946 when his father

accepted the post of head of the Music Department at the University of California, Los Angeles. Exposure to the UCLA film library and sound recording stimulated John's interest in motion-picture sound. He served on active duty with the US Navy Seabees and is a charter member of the International Combat Camera Association. He is a member of the IATSE Sound Union for feature film and major documentary companies and has worked on WNET biographies of Hollywood celebrities and other important projects. John and his wife Linda, who owns an antique and specialty shop in Rhinebeck, live in an 1840 Greek-Revival home in Red Hook.

Rose Rider grew up in Rhinebeck and moved to Red Hook in 1970. She worked in the business office of Northern Dutchess Hospital, rising to Controller and finally CFO/ Vice President of Finance before her retirement in 2000. Since her retirement she has taken up watercolor painting. She enjoys golf, gardening and babysitting for the youngest of her ten grandchildren.

DON'T MISS THE ANNUAL EBHS DINNER MEETING AND VOTE

Tuesday, June 17, 2003, Elmendorph Inn, Red Hook

6:00 p.m. Hors d'oeuvres & Dinner 7:30 p.m. Meeting and Election
8:00 p.m. Speaker, J. Winthrop Aldrich

Dinner Menu

Rolls and Butter

Mesclun Mix Salad with Fruit, Nuts, Feta & Raspberry Vinaigrette

Smoked Turkey Breast

Sweet Corn Stuffed Porkloin

Basmati Rice Pilaf w/Shallots & Fresh Herbs

Lemon Curd Pudding with Raspberry Jam & Ginger Snaps

Coffee Service

DINNER RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE BY JUNE 11TH

Please make checks payable to RENNERS

And mail to: Mary Cioffi, 10 Old Post Road, Red Hook, NY 12571

RESERVATION FORM

Name(s) (please print) _____

Phone _____

_____ Number of Persons @\$15.00

Amount Enclosed _____



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

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Red Hook, NY
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benefits of membership: + Advance notice of monthly programs + Three newsletters yearly + The knowledge that you support the collection, preservation and dissemination of the history of the Town of Red Hook

Would you like to help us with the work of the Society? Please check: _____

Donation (indicate any company matches please)

Contributing \$25 _____
Sustaining \$50 _____
Life \$100 (individual) _____
Student (under 18) \$5 _____

Dues:

Please check: Individual \$10 _____

Family \$15 _____

Telephone Number (with area code): _____

Mailing Address: _____

Name(s) (please print): _____

MEMBERSHIP FORM - 2003

The Egbert Benson Historical Society of Red Hook
P.O. Box 397 Red Hook New York 12571

