

NAME

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DURATION

54m 28s

8 SPEAKERS

Mary Chang
Wint Aldrich
Malachi Fata
Naomi Fata
Elliott Lindsley
Speaker 6
Speaker 7
Speaker 8

START OF TRANSCRIPT**[00:00:02] Mary Chang**

This is Mary Chang and I am a volunteer at Historic Red hook. It is January 23rd, 2026, and I am interviewing Elliott Lindsley. We are recording at his home in Millbrook, New York, and I am here with the team of several other people, and I invite them to introduce themselves at this point.

[00:00:27] Wint Aldrich

This is Wint Aldrich. I'm a facilitator, I guess, of these interviews and very involved in this project from 1974 on.

[00:00:39] Malachi Fata

I am Malachi Fata, the tech coordinator.

[00:00:43] Naomi Fata

And I am Naomi, Fata, Malachi's mom and helping with the interview process.

[00:00:50] Mary Chang

All right. Thank you everybody. Elliott, would you please start us off by introducing yourself and telling us a little bit about where Hi there.

[00:01:00] Elliott Lindsley

I went to Bard College. Graduated in 52. Like the area so much. I stay stayed as rector of Saint Paul's Tivoli for 23 years and maintained a connection with the Valley ever since. I think that's the way to put it, don't you?

[00:01:26] Wint Aldrich

Yes, yes.

[00:01:27] Elliott Lindsley

And raise our children here. And the love of the place.

[00:01:36] Mary Chang

Can you tell us when you were born?

[00:01:39] Elliott Lindsley

1930.

[00:01:40] Mary Chang

And where?

[00:01:41] Elliott Lindsley

Oh. Morristown, new Jersey. Had to be Morristown. Are you Morristown?

[00:01:48] Mary Chang

Why do you say it has to be Morristown?

[00:01:51] Elliott Lindsley

My family have always lived. We went. Went to Morristown in 1713. Before. Before that, and stayed there ever since. And I came here.

[00:02:12] Wint Aldrich

In addition to being a very distinguished member of the clergy. Elliott is a published historian. Your your book on the history of the Episcopal Diocese of New York is a wonderful thing, and I don't think anything had been published before then that was that told that story, at least in the detail that you tell it. And I'm sure you've published other things in journals as well as that volume. But, but, but so, so your involvement in history is not limited to saving the Elmendorph. But, but but the, the work that you did when you were in Tivoli. Local historical and genealogical matters. And then the work that you did with the Diocese of New York is tremendously important.

[00:03:07] Elliott Lindsley

Thank you. You're very. You're very generous.

[00:03:11] Wint Aldrich

Well, it's all true.

[00:03:12] Elliott Lindsley

They pay no attention to him. Very generous indeed. It's been a lot of fun. But having lived on the same street since 1713, the family has to absorb history somehow. Yes, yes. Like you and Rokeby.

[00:03:31] Wint Aldrich

That's right.

[00:03:32] Elliott Lindsley

You can't avoid it. True.

[00:03:37] Mary Chang

So we are. We'd like to learn about your relationship to the Elmendorph Inn and to its the restoration process. So could you tell us a little bit about the Elmendorph and what it meant for the town and village of Red hook?

[00:03:52] Elliott Lindsley

It meant just a pile of wood. It really did. It was a terrible eyesore. I'm. One of the mysteries of life is that it didn't burn down. It was right there. A valuable piece of property. A big piece of property. And it it was susceptible to accidents, shall we say. Because. Because it just stood there. It was used. It was empty when I first knew it. That was when I was at Bard College. It was used borrowed out for rummage sales and for things. I remember that events and it was just stood there. I don't know who was the owner at that time, but later on I was surprised to find it was James Wood was the was was the titular owner.

[00:05:01] Wint Aldrich

Now this is Wint again. There was somebody who was who occupied it, whether he owned it or not, I don't know, named Beck Vermouth and Mr. Beck vermouth did have a junk shop, I think you'd call it. It wasn't an antique shop. It was really a junk shop. And and he he he may have been the person who made it available also for other people to have sales and things like.

[00:05:31] Elliott Lindsley

I did not say junk.

[00:05:33] Wint Aldrich

That's right, I did, but I think that's. But the chronology gets vague. And so we'd have to look that up in the real estate records as to who owned what. When.

[00:05:48] Elliott Lindsley

It was an empty, empty building with many, many rooms.

[00:05:53] Wint Aldrich

That's right.

[00:05:55] Speaker 6

So how did you become involved in the project?

[00:06:01] Elliott Lindsley

Well, how did I. Stupidity. I'm not sure. I was there And I. Well, I. Realized we were living in an age of temporal things. Anything was one day old. It's. Get rid of it. And so nobody saw any use. And I could see their point. Any use in this long, long building which is in very bad shape. And no one really knew who owned it and so forth. And. I got interested in a cocktail party with Patsy, her husband.

[00:07:05] Wint Aldrich

Walsh.

[00:07:06] Elliott Lindsley

Patsy Walsh. Thank you. Her husband was a distinguished physician.

[00:07:13] Wint Aldrich

And, well, he was a lawyer. Bill Walsh was a lawyer.

[00:07:17] Elliott Lindsley

You are right.

[00:07:18] Wint Aldrich

Yeah.

[00:07:19] Elliott Lindsley

Watch out for my mistakes. He was a lawyer and a good one. And it was cocktail party. Someone. Someone said. With Patsy. And it means standing together. Why doesn't somebody do something about the ailment? The The that wreck.

[00:07:47] Wint Aldrich

Yes.

[00:07:48] Elliott Lindsley

And who else was there? Send me. So. That started the ball rolling. And a series of. If you are ever involved, I hope you all will be in missions like this. Grasp every possible opportunity you have. Just a whisper. Will help. Because, lo behold, what are we going to do about the Elmendorph? I think it was Patsy. Who said so? He said that at a cocktail party, and I said, well, let's do something better. Find some. We found out who who to talk to. And it was the a m p we didn't know. James Woodyard and a very pleasant secretary up in Albany was in charge of a P at that point, and we called her and asked her if I may talk to. I outlined what the problem was, and she could have turned me off. She didn't know me. She could have just turned me off and said, well, get in touch. And instead she put me on to the right people. And that was very important because I'm sorry to say, the Elmendorph had what became the Elmendorph had had generated enemies. Because of the real estate value. And there were people who didn't want to say the last thing they want to do is save the element or if they wanted that real estate.

[00:09:56] Wint Aldrich

So and they wanted it to stay on the tax rolls to the community.

[00:10:02] Elliott Lindsley

And my, my interest. Came through a back door kind of way. Because none of you remember when there was a hotel where the shell station is now. And it was the Red Hook Hotel, the famous Elbow Room bar. And it was a just a nice place. Never could have become a small Rhinebeck, but it could have become an imitation, a nice imitation of Rhinebeck hotel there and a small town atmosphere. And it Well, that's what we wanted to do. Yeah.

[00:10:50] Wint Aldrich

There was a fire, I think but it may have been an intentional fire. You remember?

[00:10:57] Elliott Lindsley

Yes. That rings a bell.

[00:10:59] Wint Aldrich

Yeah.

[00:10:59] Elliott Lindsley

There were not a not a calamitous fire, but a warning fire.

[00:11:06] Wint Aldrich

Exactly. One of the problems that we had in the early days with the Elmendorph is that it had no name until research was done. We had no idea that it had been a mid 18th century Albany Post Road tavern. And, and Mr. Elmendorph was one of the many tavern keepers.

[00:11:30] Elliott Lindsley

Dozens of.

[00:11:31] Wint Aldrich

Names, dozens of names. And so we sort of settled on that one and then began to champion that 18th century heritage. And eventually, of course, once we took the asbestos shingles off the outside, you could begin to see, well, this is something here. But.

[00:11:48] Elliott Lindsley

And by coincidence, I knew the Elmendorf through Morristown. Margaret. Elmendorf. Hoffman.

[00:11:57] Wint Aldrich

Yes.

[00:12:01] Speaker 6

So what was your particular role in the restoration? Was it mainly the role of getting it from the James Wood, or were there other things?

[00:12:12] Wint Aldrich

Was it did you do more than this, this transaction with Mr. Wood? You weren't really involved in the way the Bielenbergs were in the restoration of the building, were you?

[00:12:25] Elliott Lindsley

No, as a matter of fact, a lot of contention about how how you were going to do this. I had and I lost, I had envisioned getting groups in, in Red Hook to volunteer and include the Boy Scouts. And this was a horrifying idea to the Bielenbergs. They, they, they, they thought this was like handling the crown jewels. So. Well, there were a lot of, a lot of things that didn't work out quite as I lost as many battles as my dealings with you. I lost as many as I won.

[00:13:20] Mary Chang

So do you mean that your vision was about the restoration to involve more community groups in the restoration itself?

[00:13:27] Wint Aldrich

Yes. Is your idea was to involve different groups in both the restoration and maybe the eventual use?

[00:13:36] Elliott Lindsley

I thought that was the only way we could do it. We had no idea. Friends of Elmendorph in those days.

[00:13:45] Mary Chang

So can you talk a little bit about how the community rallied behind the restoration?

[00:13:50] Elliott Lindsley

They didn't. Know. When we went to one town father and said to what we wanted to do and want to enlist his help. Light a match, he said. I'd like to say he became a convert. He never did. He went to his grave thinking a terrible mistake.

[00:14:18] Wint Aldrich

That may have been the banker, Lloyd Hartman. Hartman was not helpful to us at all.

[00:14:23] Elliott Lindsley

I did not know. No, it wasn't, it was it was funny. Oh, the man who runs the machine. Smithers.

[00:14:34] Wint Aldrich

Oh, Smithers. Oh, yeah. John Smithers, John Smithers. Yeah.

[00:14:39] Elliott Lindsley

Light a match that pulled the rug out.

[00:14:44] Mary Chang

So can you tell the story, then, of how you encountered James Wood in the story of how you went down there?

[00:14:51] Elliott Lindsley

Yes, yes. I, I as I say, it's a very, very rainy day. And I drove my wife's VW up to Albany. I beg your pardon? Over to new Jersey Elmhurst Park, the industrial park where's P was housed and walked in as if I just got out of a swimming pool. And everything worked out beautifully, and I didn't even have to have to Outline anything. I don't deserve any praise at all. I didn't have to outline anything to Mr. Wood. Once I found out that he was the power behind the throne, I actually owned the place. Real estate. Like. He. He hopped on the bandwagon and promoted us right away. Gave us a mortgage. Was it a \$30,000 mortgage?

[00:16:03] Wint Aldrich

Yes.

[00:16:03] Elliott Lindsley

We paid it off in no time at all. Far ahead of time. And it's. I would say it's been a wonderful success story. Not because of me. Because the sisters fell together very nicely. People caught the vision.

[00:16:25] Wint Aldrich

Yes.

[00:16:26] Mary Chang

Who caught the vision? Can you say more about who caught the vision?

[00:16:29] Elliott Lindsley

Well, the vision you're looking at it. I mean. I mean the earth as you see it today is the vision. The only thing is that they took down the two little trees I planted. I'll never forgive them for that. I played it, I planted it, I researched what fruit trees they would have there. And. I planted one in my mother and my father, and then I had to sit through a meeting of the Elmendorf. While the man described his joy, taking his hacksaw. And it broke my heart.

[00:17:16] Wint Aldrich

Why did they do that? I mean, we need more trees in our community.

[00:17:22] Elliott Lindsley

They were planted, as a matter of fact, in response to just that. And as I this research. What might have been the ones I got were a semi dwarf, which didn't exist in those days.

[00:17:39] Wint Aldrich

I see.

[00:17:39] Elliott Lindsley

I see. But Someday they'll come back.

[00:17:45] Wint Aldrich

Yeah.

[00:17:45] Mary Chang

Do you remember what kind of trees they were?

[00:17:47] Elliott Lindsley

Oh, yes. Yes. Now, you asked me, why did you do that?

[00:17:54] Mary Chang

You said there were fruit trees.

[00:17:57] Elliott Lindsley

The two. The two fruit trees.

[00:18:01] Mary Chang

Apples or plums?

[00:18:03] Elliott Lindsley

Oh, you have put me on this.

[00:18:05] Mary Chang

Okay. I'm sorry. We'll come back to it.

[00:18:07] Elliott Lindsley

I remember two semi-dwarf fruit trees. There would have been there, except they wouldn't have been so much dwarf, which didn't exist in those days.

[00:18:21] Wint Aldrich

There was another project that that you felt, I think quite strongly about, and so did I After the acquisition occurred, you had your eye on the little soap box immediately behind the Elmendorph on Cherry Street, and it may not have been quite as old, but it probably was 18th century, late 18th century, and it looked unaltered and it was very derelict, but it was occupied and it came on the market. And you said, we really need to get it both because it's old and it's it's always been adjoining the Elmendorph, but also because the curtilage in between will be needed for outside events and parking and so forth. And the board just said, we have our hands full with this restoration. We can't be looking at the Cardinal out there. We can't be getting more of this. And so it went to some other people who had a barber shop who changed the profile. I won't say they ruined it, but they it was no longer what it had been. The good end of the story is that our friends, the Phelans, Ellen and Sam, bought it. I don't know, ten years ago now, something like that, as an adjunct to the Elmendorph. And they modernized it inside so it could be useful and and no longer fire prone and so forth. And is used, I guess, for the archives or something. I can't remember what it's being used for. So, so the vision that you had has been realized, but it's a pity it wasn't realized then.

[00:20:15] Elliott Lindsley

Well, I think everything should be saved.

[00:20:18] Wint Aldrich

Yes, I do too.

[00:20:22] Speaker 6

So who who was it that was involved in doing the actual work inside the Elmendorph for restoration.

[00:20:31] Elliott Lindsley

Inside, I don't know.

[00:20:33] Wint Aldrich

Well, I think it was the Bielenbergs. Once they joined the team, I Reed Bielenberg will tell us exactly when his parents moved to Red hook. They very soon would have become involved. They both were particularly Barber, very familiar with 18th and 19th century decor and, and construction and so forth. So, so that's, that's an important thing.

[00:21:01] Elliott Lindsley

And what happened to them?

[00:21:03] Wint Aldrich

Well, the first Bob died and then and then Barbara a few years ago, but they stayed involved with this project right up until.

[00:21:11] Elliott Lindsley

I didn't know that.

[00:21:12] Wint Aldrich

Yeah. And, and.

[00:21:14] Elliott Lindsley

They were assiduous.

[00:21:15] Wint Aldrich

They were and it was very helpful because most of the local people didn't have that knowledge and no hands on knowledge.

[00:21:25] Elliott Lindsley

We were going against the tide, there's no doubt about it. I mean, the light a match approach was the the public approach.

[00:21:34] Wint Aldrich

Yes.

[00:21:35] Mary Chang

So can you you just said earlier about how important it is to save these older buildings. Can you talk a little bit about why it's so important to the community?

[00:21:44] Elliott Lindsley

Why?

[00:21:45] Wint Aldrich

Why is it so important to save older buildings in our heritage?

[00:21:50] Elliott Lindsley

I think we've gotten to our past. We've just got to know our past and the even the album Elbow Room was part of the past and it was a, a very popular 5:00. P m meeting place for men particularly and the, and the rotary and Kiwanis and all that. And it was the, the, it has memories. And I think you got to know your past. You got to know it. Otherwise you're blind. You're. You're feeling your way. And I, I think relatively few mistakes have been made when you take the the massive success that Elmendorph has had in the community. Massive. I mean, there it is. I mean, your I if you're not careful, seize it while you're driving by the handsome, handsome building. It wasn't always that way.

[00:23:05] Wint Aldrich

Yeah, that's absolutely true. And and today people especially, of course, newcomers to Red Hook will be surprised to hear that it was ever an issue.

[00:23:16] Elliott Lindsley

Oh.

[00:23:17] Wint Aldrich

And it was an issue 45 years ago.

[00:23:20] Speaker 7

Light a match.

[00:23:21] Wint Aldrich

That's right. So so that's you know, they'd shrug and say, well, that's really weird. I mean, people really were opposed to it. And, well, another more recent example that I've been involved in is Saint Margaret's home, you know, and that was and that was a charity of the of the family for not orphaned. People say, well, it was an orphanage. It wasn't really. But during the 1840s and 50s, there were terrible periods of time when there was a depression in the agricultural economy, at least of New York State. And there were large farm families, and only the boys got fed. The girls did not. They got maybe one meal a day. And of course, there was no adequate public schooling in those days either. And so Mrs. Astor in Red Hook said she heard about this and she said that's going to be changed. And she created this institution, which would simply take the girls in these families in as a as a sort of a youth, a youth hostel almost. They would be educated, there would be an educator, they would be fed and then they would go home on weekends or they I mean, they could come and go.

[00:24:49] Elliott Lindsley

Or they would learn.

[00:24:50] Wint Aldrich

But they would start at the age of five and they'd be there maybe until they were 17 or something like that. And they'd learn trades, you know, that would be useful. And that continued until 1940. Believe it or not. And then then it became privately owned. And in fact, it was the Diocese of New York that ended up owning it and selling it. And and it, it was a private home for, for 40 or 50 years. And then it became sort of a quasi institutional thing for a bit. And then Hannaford built on the Hill, and they ended up owning it. It was exactly like a replay of this story about the Elmendorph with a large food store saying, well, we don't need that. We'll tear that down. That could be part of the parking lot. And no, we won't do that. And the town was very good about it, but it was a long time figuring out how are we going to pay to restore this building and what kind of use will it be made of it? And, and Hannaford, quite properly said, we want it to be public or nonprofit. We don't want to find somebody open to food store down there. And so all of those things were agreed. And the present administration of the town has now completed the work. And I'm not sure it will be partly government occupied and partly nonprofit occupied, I think. But the thing is, this has taken a long time and there was a lot of opposition to it, and we shouldn't be getting involved in this sort of thing. But that building is now 175 years old, and.

[00:26:29] Elliott Lindsley

I want to stop you right there because you should get involved in it. That's if you and I don't. And I'm. I'm around the corner. Hopeless. You. You are the ones who we depend upon now to find out what is available, why it's available. Maybe it isn't. Maybe it isn't worth saving. You've got to find out who owns it, who controls it, who's against it, who's for it? It's. It's a good game. Yeah. I've enjoyed every minute of it. Well, not fighting with you. That's that's the part I like most.

[00:27:16] Mary Chang

What did you guys fight about?

[00:27:17] Elliott Lindsley

Oh. Oh, we.

[00:27:19] Wint Aldrich

We thought it would make a very long book. Well tell us.

[00:27:24] Mary Chang

Tell us about one fight.

[00:27:25] Elliott Lindsley

I still cry myself to sleep at night when I hear. When you say you don't know everything.

[00:27:33] Mary Chang

What did you guys fight about?

[00:27:35] Wint Aldrich

Oh, it was so long ago that none of us remember. It was just. It was very good keeping our tools sharp. Oh.

[00:27:44] Elliott Lindsley

Yes. People came to meetings just to hear us.

[00:27:50] Mary Chang

Can you do you remember something that was contentious? Can you tell us about that?

[00:27:57] Elliott Lindsley

Well, what was that fight about?

[00:28:00] Wint Aldrich

Something to do with Clermont, maybe. Oh, yes.

[00:28:04] Elliott Lindsley

Oh, yes. The Mrs. Rockefeller.

[00:28:10] Wint Aldrich

Oh, yes.

[00:28:12] Elliott Lindsley

Mrs.. Mrs.. Rockefeller. Mrs.. Mrs.. David Rockefeller.

[00:28:20] Wint Aldrich

The Hermitage. That house.

[00:28:23] Elliott Lindsley

Right? Yes. She she came now. I had known the people who owned the Hermitage there from Morristown. And it was not worth saving. It really wasn't.

[00:28:39] Wint Aldrich

Don't say that to me.

[00:28:40] Elliott Lindsley

It was, it wasn't it wasn't.

[00:28:42] Wint Aldrich

It was altered.

[00:28:44] Elliott Lindsley

Altered.

[00:28:47] Wint Aldrich

You remember, it was a it was a story and a half at the time of the revolution. And then it didn't get continued until some rich person bought it in the 19th century. And they made it into a Georgian revival house with a full two and a half stories.

[00:29:05] Elliott Lindsley

The architect was Shepherd. He was a good man, but But it was Miss Ogilvy. Ogilvy who lived in Morristown.

[00:29:15] Wint Aldrich

I remember.

[00:29:16] Elliott Lindsley

Her, and she. She owned it for a while until she died. And it. It was not by no means in the category of the Elmendorph, as far as saving was concerned. It was ersatz fake.

[00:29:40] Wint Aldrich

Except the first story and a half.

[00:29:44] Elliott Lindsley

Well, I'll say first story. And no doors. No doors.

[00:29:49] Wint Aldrich

Oh, really?

[00:29:50] Elliott Lindsley

For some reason or other she had bathrooms and bedrooms and drawing rooms with no doors.

[00:29:59] Wint Aldrich

So what did Peggy do?

[00:30:02] Elliott Lindsley

Oh, Mrs. Rockefeller, to me, she came in. She was, she threatened to, to discredit us and then to tear the place down. And, you know, we keep an eye on it. So she came in late Saturday afternoon with all the, the bulldozers from Pocantico Hills. Brought them up here. And before we knew there was nothing to destroy. But I have always been philosophic about that. I don't think we lost anything except our fighting spirit.

[00:30:58] Mary Chang

Talking about the fighting spirit, can you tell us a little bit about the 1976 Bicentennial and how that influenced.

[00:31:06] Wint Aldrich

The Bicentennial National Bicentennial in in the 1970s. Do you remember being engaged in that?

[00:31:14] Elliott Lindsley

Apart from I remember waiting, holding a torch or something like that.

[00:31:20] Mary Chang

And how did that influence or did it gain support for.

[00:31:24] Elliott Lindsley

No, I was already signed, sealed, delivered for that one. I don't think that had much to do with us. Do you?

[00:31:35] Wint Aldrich

Well, yes, in a way, in terms of the Elmendorph, the National Bicentennial was just getting underway and people were wondering what can we do locally about this? But not very many people wondered that. I mean, life was going on. And then Rosemary Coons stood in for me at a talk before the Red Hook Chamber of Commerce, all important in a community like Red hook. I was going to give the talk and as it happened, the day was the 30th of November 1974, six months before Lexington and Concord Bicentennial. And so it was just all getting underway. But it was the 100th birthday of Winston Churchill. And I was going to make this connection. See, the Grand Union already owned the property and were threatening the building. So I was going to somehow make this rather complicated connection about Churchill's birthday. He'd been dead for ten years, but. But his mother was American. And so there was sort of a British American.

[00:32:48] Elliott Lindsley

Has cut out for.

[00:32:48] Wint Aldrich

You. It was a really complicated little thing. And then my wife, Katherine her pregnancy was well along, and we were going to be in New York for the birth of our first child, and I had to give it up. The speaking engagement, and Rosemary stepped in and she was the one who lit the fire of excitement about about the Bicentennial. The redcoats are coming. They're going to destroy our ancient tavern. And people said, what? What? What building is that? Where is that? I mean, they couldn't envision it, but she got the whole thing going, and that was.

[00:33:32] Elliott Lindsley

Going all right.

[00:33:33] Wint Aldrich

What was so interesting to me about these documents that you you gave us. And then now we've all read, is that it's pretty clear that it was five years later that you went to new Jersey, because that was just at the end of Mr. Wood's management of Grand Union. And before he came into the A and P, and you made the point that he didn't want us to really talk about about him. So it took five years between that opening gun in 1974 and your great victory in 1979. I suspect it was.

[00:34:14] Elliott Lindsley

He was. He was entirely pleasant to deal with.

[00:34:18] Wint Aldrich

Yes.

[00:34:19] Elliott Lindsley

And I always thought he deserved a little a little plaque on the wall as the man. But now he's been dead for years.

[00:34:33] Wint Aldrich

Well, maybe we should do that based on your testimony. That's that's a good idea. You mentioned it in your memorandum, too.

[00:34:42] Mary Chang

I wanted to go back to something you said about old buildings and connecting people to history. Could you say a little bit more about how that happens? Or how do you see that?

[00:34:53] Wint Aldrich

How is the best way to connect individuals with the preservation of old buildings and an engagement in heritage, which is not always easily done.

[00:35:02] Elliott Lindsley

What a question. I have got to make sure of your facts. You got to be sure. You can't. Can't run away with some legend and sort of dust off the legend as if it's truth. You got to ascertain the authenticity of whatever your. Come on in, Barbara.

[00:35:36] Wint Aldrich

She she's she's she's just. She just went like this.

[00:35:41] Elliott Lindsley

Yeah. No, that's a drink.

[00:35:46] Wint Aldrich

Excuse me.

[00:35:48] Elliott Lindsley

Come sit down.

[00:35:52] Speaker 8

Keep talking.

[00:35:52] Elliott Lindsley

No time. She wants the time.

[00:35:55] Wint Aldrich

She wants today's news. Not. Not Yesterday's.

[00:36:01] Elliott Lindsley

Well. I'm off my track.

[00:36:07] Wint Aldrich

Well, just how to connect people with the efforts to to learn their heritage and protect it. Yeah.

[00:36:14] Elliott Lindsley

You got to.

[00:36:15] Mary Chang

How is that related to buildings?

[00:36:19] Wint Aldrich

How does it relate to buildings? You know, beyond folklore and so forth.

[00:36:23] Elliott Lindsley

That's, that's where Rosemary was very helpful. Tracing how the Elmendorph had been central to many things in Red Hook. As I said, when I saw when I first knew it, it was just a big pile of wood. That's not much of an exaggeration. And people could borrow it for a rummage sale or for a function or something like that. But it was they just stood there and it was it was either by somebody or two parties owned it. I, I'm sorry. One a, a restaurant that had a very bad reputation for burning down. If you get the. Yeah. And well, arson is, is very nice, very lucrative. Take out a good insurance. Six months later. Isn't it too bad it burned down.

[00:37:45] Wint Aldrich

Yeah.

[00:37:45] Elliott Lindsley

You see. And that we had one party, had a bad reputation. And you've got to go by reputations. You've got to. Sorry. You've got to. If somebody has a reputation for bad business, pick up your ears.

[00:38:03] Wint Aldrich

There's a reason for it.

[00:38:04] Elliott Lindsley

Yeah. And then it was it was something you had to keep an eye open for.

[00:38:14] Wint Aldrich

I'd forgotten about the restaurant, that whole thing. So that would have been sold by Wood to a restaurant if it hadn't been to us.

[00:38:24] Elliott Lindsley

I'm not sure. I won't say yes to that, because I'm not sure. That doesn't sound like like Wood to me.

[00:38:32] Wint Aldrich

But you see, I my recollection was that Grand Union had bought the land that is now the CVS and and, and they wanted an enlarged parcel for parking and for visibility coming up route nine. And the Elmendorph was in the way of that. And so it would have been an enlarged parking lot or something like that.

[00:38:58] Elliott Lindsley

That makes sense.

[00:38:59] Mary Chang

But but it's interesting because when you spoke with Mr. Wood, it sounded like he was the one who owned the title was in his name, not the Grand Union.

[00:39:11] Elliott Lindsley

By some fluke in the regulations of a m p at that time he was the actual owner of the of the building and the property and which made it easy for us, but also difficult for us because there was a civil war going on between A&P and Grand Union. And there was, we had to keep it quiet. And I did pledge to keep it, to keep it quiet.

[00:39:52] Mary Chang

So when you say civil war between the two, it's. Is it because Mr. Woods was going to become president of A&P?

[00:39:59] Elliott Lindsley

He was the president of A&P.

[00:40:02] Wint Aldrich

But in 1980, yes.

[00:40:04] Elliott Lindsley

There was a group of people who were opposed to his being president, and they won eventually, and he returned to England. So he was a wonderful help to us. I mean, I, I, I'm, I'm, I have to caution you, I'm not the one who talked him into this. I didn't have to do any talking at all. He just guessed the whole thing.

[00:40:36] Wint Aldrich

Now, not everyone is old enough to remember that the A&P had a presence in Red Hook. Their store was at the back of the little parking lot directly across from the post office. I'm not sure what the building is used for now, but after the A&P closed there, it eventually became the CVS and. And meanwhile Grand Union, a competitor of A&P, didn't have a presence, I guess, in Red Hook and Rhinebeck. And in those days there was nothing in the Big Plains between, you know, from 9 G down to the village of Rhinebeck. I mean, all of that's come more recently. And so Grand Union identified this piece of land that's now the CVS next to the Elmendorph. And they wanted that. And I'm not sure whether A&P also had been competing for it or whether A&P had given up on Red Hook. And of course is the further complication was. Mr.. Wood going from one to the other business.

[00:41:43] Elliott Lindsley

All secret, of course.

[00:41:44] Wint Aldrich

All secret. So someday we could research in the Red Hook Advertiser newspaper. Exactly when the A&P closed and what happened to it and so forth.

[00:41:57] Elliott Lindsley

So don't do that. You'll have 20 answers.

[00:42:00] Wint Aldrich

That's right. So anyway, that's it's an interesting little detail. And I'd love to know the date that you went to New Jersey, but I think we can assume it was in 79 or very early 80 just before he made his switch. That means it was five years after Rosemary's famous talk. And that suggests that for five years during the national Bicentennial, we were all in, in a turmoil about what's going to happen to this building.

[00:42:34] Elliott Lindsley

And, well, I don't mean to demean Rosemary, whom I loved. We all did. But she made it very difficult for us. Yes. Because she's. She did engineer taking children to to pick it. Oh, and the at least she's rumored to do that. And that's a no no. And she Rosemary. Rosemary was.

[00:43:04] Wint Aldrich

Our girl.

[00:43:05] Elliott Lindsley

She was. She wouldn't want her as your enemy, but she was my friend.

[00:43:13] Wint Aldrich

She also, you know, championed once she'd learned about it. Egbert Benson, who was a Tivoli man, you know, growing up Egbert Benson. George Benson.

[00:43:26] Elliott Lindsley

Oh, yes.

[00:43:27] Wint Aldrich

And and he, he became during the revolution, he became the first attorney general of the state of New York, but he was very active in the Committee of Safety in Dutchess County.

[00:43:41] Elliott Lindsley

I had to dedicate that road for Chanler.

[00:43:44] Wint Aldrich

Yes. You did.

[00:43:45] Elliott Lindsley

I think the road doesn't exist.

[00:43:47] Wint Aldrich

Well, do you remember who did it with you? Was Louis Lefkowitz, who was the long time attorney general of the state of New York under Rockefeller.

[00:43:57] Elliott Lindsley

Did he go to jail?

[00:43:58] Wint Aldrich

No, no, no, no, he was he was a wonderful man. And he and he just.

[00:44:02] Elliott Lindsley

Lots of wonderful people went to jail.

[00:44:04] Wint Aldrich

Well, he didn't he. General Lefkowitz, as he was called. And he he thought Rosemary was terrific. He kept talking. Where's my redhead?

[00:44:16] Elliott Lindsley

Yes. Rosemary was a gift to the community. No question about it. People. Yeah. The good die too soon.

[00:44:26] Wint Aldrich

Yes, it's very sad.

[00:44:28] Mary Chang

So, can you remember the seeing the renovation of the Elmdorph happen? What did it look like? What did it smell like? Do you remember.

[00:44:38] Elliott Lindsley

What it looked like before?

[00:44:40] Mary Chang

Well, after.

[00:44:42] Wint Aldrich

What was your. Your Response to the gradual throwing off of the chrysalis and the and the emergence of this marvelous treasure.

[00:44:54] Elliott Lindsley

I think things turned out very, very well. They stepped aside my hope that it could be self-sustaining. I don't think it is self-sustaining. We had a lawyer who wanted to rent the second floor and do it over good offices. That would attract a nice clientele who went to see him, but also saw the. I think we missed an opportunity to serve the community. But other people on the board and, and they were powerful and they, they were right in situ. I was not. They they had their way.

[00:45:51] Mary Chang

What do you hope for in terms of the future of the Elmendorph? What would you like to see happen?

[00:45:57] Elliott Lindsley

I have no opinion. I really never thought about what the future might be. Pay your bills. Stay on the right side of the tax people. Keep. Keep it looking good. Then people will be on your side. But once you let it slip, you're going to find Vietnamese who will say, why should the public keep this going?

[00:46:28] Wint Aldrich

You know, they built that additional building to the north as a revenue producer. And that continues to be, I think, a paying tenant. They own it, but it's not great architecture, but the point is, someday it could be removed if they feel that they no longer need it. But that was one response to, to your concern about steady revenue. Steady.

[00:46:56] Elliott Lindsley

Yes. Yes.

[00:46:57] Wint Aldrich

Healthy budget.

[00:46:58] Elliott Lindsley

You've got to look at these things.

[00:47:00] Mary Chang

So do you have any advice for people trying to accomplish something similar?

[00:47:05] Elliott Lindsley

Yes. Be sure you're on firm, historic ground. Don't. Don't make claims for a place that don't hold water. I mean, if you're going to say the Declaration of Independence was signed here, make sure it was You, you. We were more than a crowd. A little old ladies who like to be the Da. You know, that wonderful. Rockwell. Drawing of he's entitled it to Descendants of war or something like that. What is it?

[00:47:57] Wint Aldrich

The DAR.

[00:47:59] Elliott Lindsley

Shows the three DAR ladies drinking tea. The last warfare is the last thing.

[00:48:11] Mary Chang

Since I'm. I live in Tivoli. Can you just tell me a story of a memory of Tivoli that you have Tivoli?

[00:48:18] Elliott Lindsley

Yeah.

[00:48:19] Wint Aldrich

Mary lives in Tivoli, so she's particularly interested in Tivoli.

[00:48:24] Elliott Lindsley

Tivoli has lost its magic in many ways. It used to be. Well, I think so many Bard College students have moved in there. And they've left. Left their cats and dogs with to run wild. And They've inflated the prices. And the place has lost its charm. I think. Also the fields are, are filled up with with Developments. Now the developments, the church, for instance that was all open field. Well, that's, that's that's growth. It's, it's good growth home for people. And I think people ought to have homes in Tivoli.

[00:49:20] Mary Chang

Is there a particular memory that you have of old Tivoli that emerges for you?

[00:49:25] Elliott Lindsley

I knew all the old people lived there. Yes.

[00:49:28] Mary Chang

Is there somebody in particular you remember you could tell us about?

[00:49:35] Wint Aldrich

This was before the dance group came. So Callendar House and the Pines.

[00:49:42] Elliott Lindsley

There to borrow the dance crew. Oh, Wendy.

[00:49:48] Wint Aldrich

What about Rose Hill, the Catholic Worker movement? Someday she's going to be a saint.

[00:49:57] Elliott Lindsley

What?

[00:49:58] Wint Aldrich

She's gone. She's going to be made a saint. You know the woman who owned Rose Hill?

[00:50:05] Elliott Lindsley

They didn't know her as well as.

[00:50:06] Wint Aldrich

I, Dorothy Day.

[00:50:09] Elliott Lindsley

They didn't know her as well as I knew her.

[00:50:12] Wint Aldrich

Well, she had an illegitimate child, it's true, but I think they'll overlook that.

[00:50:17] Elliott Lindsley

They did do that. I hope we're not taking all this time. I'll be sued. You'll be sued.

[00:50:27] Speaker 6

So is there anything else that you'd like to say about the restoration before we wrap it up? Is there anything else to add about?

[00:50:37] Wint Aldrich

Well, about all of this. Any any final thoughts to the.

[00:50:45] Elliott Lindsley

All places lose their charm. They do. That's called growth. And it's going on in various ways. But Tivoli is where everybody knew everybody else and their business. It's now more of a commuting town and weekend town. We know people who are friends of our daughters who coincidentally have bought houses in Tivoli. Not, not because of us.

[00:51:30] Wint Aldrich

This talk of Metro-North coming no longer stopping at Poughkeepsie, but coming to Tivoli. If they can find enough extra tracks there, and that would. That would so dramatically change the village that they can't do it at Rhinecliff, because it's right. The cliff is there, but it's I hope it doesn't happen in my lifetime.

[00:51:53] Elliott Lindsley

But you've said that before. I've said that to you.

[00:51:59] Mary Chang

So can you say something about the restoration process that you think people don't know about, or very few people know about.

[00:52:05] Elliott Lindsley

Restoration of what?

[00:52:07] Mary Chang

Of the Elmendorph Inn. Is there just anything that.

[00:52:10] Elliott Lindsley

No, I think I think Elmendorph has a very clean, good history. And as long as you keep one eye on serving the public eye, you're going to be miles ahead Is it publicity? Because you need good publicity. It's a sitting duck, and I'm just afraid that somebody will manage to buy it away. And that's what you don't want.

[00:52:46] Speaker 8

Okay.

[00:52:48] Wint Aldrich

Speaking of documenting, when we really got into it, it became very clear that when that building was built, there was no community of lower Red Hook. There was nothing. It was a crossroads with a tavern. And that was it. Yes, it was upper Red Hook. That was what was the community? Hoffman's is is Tivoli. And and so and there are these maps that exist of the Albany Post Road during the revolution, their military maps. And it just shows there's that one house on West Kerley Corners Road. And there was the Elmendorph. And that was really all that that there was to be seen. And so and so this was a building that not only was a roadhouse for overnight people going north and south, but it was where the community met. And to the extent that there was any community and.

[00:53:48] Elliott Lindsley

I was going to.

[00:53:49] Wint Aldrich

Say and there were there were meetings and and the meetings had to do with the American Revolution. So it was all of that was brought forward.

[00:53:59] Elliott Lindsley

Had those been collated?

[00:54:01] Wint Aldrich

I believe so now.

[00:54:02] Elliott Lindsley

Yes, I hope so.

[00:54:03] Wint Aldrich

Yeah. Yeah. I think that it's good. But what you have contributed 50 years ago and now this morning is so important to the record.

[00:54:17] Mary Chang

Thank you very much for speaking with us. I'm delighted to.

[00:54:21] Elliott Lindsley

Be glad I was going on and on and on.

[00:54:25] Mary Chang

Thank you. We appreciate it.

END OF TRANSCRIPT



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