

## NEWS FROM

# The Egbert Benson Historical Society of Red Hook

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Box 1813

Red Hook

New York 12571-0397

## AUTUMN 1996

### ANNUAL MEETING A SELLOUT

The Annual Meeting of the Egbert Benson Historical Society, held Tuesday evening June 25th, drew a capacity crowd to enjoy refreshments in the newly completed Elmendorph Inn tap room, and dinner in the gracious South Room. During the business meeting which followed, Carol Brener and William Johnson were re-elected to the Board of Trustees and Mirko Gabler was elected to his first term.

The Annual Heritage Awards were presented to Elise Barry and Ruth Oja for their work on the Town of Red Hook Survey of Architectural, Cultural and Natural Resources for the Environmental Protection Overlay Map (known as the Historic Structures Survey) and to Lou and Susan Maher Pepe, owners of the Red Hook Drug Store, for their display of original documents and memorabilia from the Drug Store for the fourth-grade walking tour. Graduating Senior Jonathan Nandor won the High School History Award presented at the graduation.

Following the meeting, the Mayor of Tivoli, Marcus Molinaro, gave an inspiring address, covered elsewhere in this issue. Our heartfelt thanks to Carleen Baright and Nancy Hetzler for their refreshments, to Carol Brener for her delicious punch, to Joe Kavaky for providing dinnerware (and washing it all afterwards) and to Mary Cioffi who handled all the dinner details and reservations.

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### NEW OFFICERS ELECTED

At their first meeting following the annual meeting, the Historical Society Trustees accepted the resignation of Cheryl Slater and elected Mary Cioffi to fill her unexpired term. The following officers were elected:

President	Barbara W. Bielenberg
Vice President	Larry Thetford
Secretary	Carol Brener
Treasurer	Mary Cioffi

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### SAGE WORDS FROM A YOUNG MAYOR

Tivoli's popular young mayor, Marcus Molinaro, spoke eloquently to an appreciative audience at last June's EBHS Annual Dinner about the role his grandfather played in inspiring his respect for history and the preservation of the past, and its implications for a public servant:

My Grandfather was a Sergeant in the United States Army during  
one of the darkest hours of our history--World War II [continued on page 2].

When I was growing up my Grandfather instilled in me many lessons of wisdom and faith. He shared with me the stories of the coldest, darkest days that he spent during the Second World War. Listening to his stories was fascinating, and later I would think not only about the story, but about the idea that he, in his own way, was passing on history. By telling me about his life, he was preserving history. I learned a great deal about the early parts of the century from my Grandfather before he passed away in 1993, but I also learned the importance of preserving our past and our family.

When I began serving my community I realized that a public servant must do the same. An elected official has a responsibility to the people he or she represents to preserve, and . . . enhance the community or family he or she serves. Like my Grandfather, an elected official must work to do what is best for that family, or community, and must also work to bring people together. An elected official must do this by preserving the history of the community, and also making its present and future better. Our past as a community is important because it will help us if cherished properly to be better in the future.

Marc continued by sketching the history of Tivoli, its recent accomplishments and the role community members can play in guiding its development. Near the end of his talk he answered a frequently asked question that would seem to apply to Red Hook as well as Tivoli:

By promoting the community don't you threaten the attributes that make the community great? The answer quite simply is no. I will not, and would not underestimate the ability of dedicated people to preserve this community. We have far too many residents, businesses and even visitors who care too much about Tivoli to let it be destroyed. Is it naive or optimistic to believe that solely community spirit will ensure the success of our community? Absolutely . . . as an elected official it is my job to take that optimism, that hope, and harness it and lead the community forward taking steps along the way to preserve what we cherish so deeply.

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## **PRESCRIBING OUR WAY TO THE PAST**

Linda Keeling

Lou and Susan Maher Pepe presented a special gift to the Historical Society at our annual meeting . . . one of the oversized books with handwritten prescriptions pasted in, from the Depression era, which they found in the basement of their Red Hook Drug Store. The prescriptions run from January 1933 to January 1934, while Archie B. Paine was pharmacist. What a wonderful and special gift!

So where did the drug store get these books, you might ask? A next-door fashion clothing store gave old advertising catalogs to the pharmacy. The book was actually an International Tailoring Co. catalog for "Spring & Summer 1931," from the Aaron Fieldman clothing store located next door to the drug store, in the old Seamon-Dubois farmhouse. This hardcover book would be the [continued on page 3]

perfect inexpensive and safe means of storing a record of the prescriptions. It's a wonderful way to understand the ailments of the time and the accepted cures. And naturally, Latin abbreviations were used, a mystery at first, but we found an article entitled, "Making It Easier to Read Prescriptions," from the *FDA Consumer Magazine*.

We truly thank the Pepes for sharing their past with our members, friends, schoolchildren and future historians. It's one more peek into the past, prescribing a better understanding of ourselves. So "Sig: t tab po qid pc & hs" (take one tablet four times a day, after meals and at bedtime).

Afterthought:

So where does the "R<sub>x</sub>" for "prescription" come from? Its origins may be as an abbreviation of the Latin word "recipe" meaning "take or receive," or a representation of the astrological sign of Jupiter. That sign was placed on ancient prescriptions to invoke that deity's blessing on the medicine to help the person get well. More recently, the cross after the "R" has been explained as a substitute period.



The Red Hook Drug Store is in the red brick building erected at the corner of Broadway and West Market Streets in 1867 to house the Benjamin F. Gedney Department Store. This photo shows druggist Archie Paine and his wife, proprietors in the 1930s. The Red Hook Telephone Company was located upstairs.

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## THOMAS JEFFERSON AND JAMES MADISON VISIT THE HUDSON VALLEY IN 1791

Barbara W. Bielenberg

Wint Aldrich has sent us a fascinating article from the July/August 1996 issue of *American Heritage* in which Willard Sterne Randall describes a journey through the Hudson Valley by then Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson and Virginia Congressman James Madison seeking, as Madison put it, "health recreation & curiosity." (Political opponents suspected they might do some politicking as well.) Their destination was Vermont which had been admitted to the Union as the fourteenth state three months earlier after Red Hook's own Egbert Benson had, as one of six Commissioners representing the State of New York, negotiated a troublesome boundary dispute between New York State and the State of Vermont. [Continued on page 4.]

Jefferson and Madison traveled from the then capital city of Philadelphia to New York City and on May 21st, 1791 boarded Captain John Cooper's sloop and spent three days sailing up the Hudson to Poughkeepsie. There they were met by Jefferson's slave James Hemings, who had been sent ahead in a carriage filled with reference books and luggage. They spent the night at Stephen Hendrickson's Inn, Poughkeepsie's most fashionable accommodation. Dinner and lodging cost \$7.23, which was more than their three-day passage on Cooper's sloop.

According to an article by Helen Wilkinson Reynolds in the 1934 *Dutchess County Historical Society Annual*, Hendrickson's was located on the west side of the Albany Post Road in what is now the center of Poughkeepsie. It afforded a beautiful view of the Hudson and its scenery. From 1778 to 1783 while Poughkeepsie was the capital of New York State, the Inn was much frequented by State officials and may even have hosted meetings of the State Senate.

When the Inn opened for business in 1777, a portrait of General Richard Montgomery decorated its signboard. Montgomery had been killed two years earlier at Quebec and was a mythic heroic figure to the patriots. His portrait was still in place when General Lafayette was entertained at the hotel in 1824. The Inn was frequently remodeled during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to keep it up to date and eventually became the well-known Nelson House, before it finally closed.

Jefferson, who kept a log of all their stops, awarded Hendrickson's a star for excellence. He and Madison left early the next morning on horseback, with Hemings following with the carriage. They stopped for breakfast 16 miles north of Poughkeepsie at Conrad Lasher's in Rhinebeck, which Jefferson also awarded a star. At Lasher's Jefferson began his notes on the Hessian fly which had first attacked the area's wheat crop in 1785, completely destroying it in '86, '87 and '88; Jefferson wrote that in 1789, Lasher began planting a new bearded wheat which was able to resist the fly.

As far as we can tell, the travelers passed through Red Hook and made their next stop at "Swartz's," 12 miles north of Lasher's, probably near the Clermont four corners. They spent the night four miles further on at "Pulvar's" in Livingston. The next day they visited Hudson where Jefferson noted that 1,000 barrels of salted herring were exported annually and that a distillery exported 1,000 "hhds" (hogsheads) of rum each year. At Waterford, Jefferson was so impressed with a new method of manufacturing nails that he ordered the equipment for his estate at Monticello.

Two days were spent with General Philip Schuyler touring Revolutionary War battlefields around Saratoga before they embarked on a two-day sail up the length of Lake George, which Jefferson declared to be "without comparison the most beautiful water I ever saw . . .," but noted that the lake " . . . is infested with swarms of musketoes [sic] and gnats, and 2 kinds of biting fleas."

They intended to sail to Canada on Lake Champlain after visiting Crown Point and Ticonderoga but stormy weather made them turn back and they traveled overland to Bennington, Vermont, noting that economic conditions improved as they left the tenant farms of New York for the freeholds of Vermont. There Jefferson was particularly struck by the local production of maple syrup which he believed could relieve the nation of its dependence on imported sugar. To this end he ordered sugar maples for Monticello but they failed to thrive in the warmer climate. The journey of these two educated and observant travelers continued down the Connecticut River and across to Long Island and the journals and notes that they kept provide a fascinating view of the economy and natural attributes of the lands through which they passed.

#### References:

Willard Sterne Randall. "Thomas Jefferson Takes a Vacation." *American Heritage*. July/August 1996: 74-85.

J. Robert Maguire, Editor and Introduction by. *The Tour to the Northern Lakes of James Madison & Thomas Jefferson, May-June 1791*. (Ticonderoga, N.Y.: Fort Ticonderoga, 1995.)

Helen Wilkinson Reynolds. "Stephen Hendrickson's Inn of 1777 to Nelson House of 1934." *Dutchess County Historical Society Annual* Vol. 19 (1934): 45-60.

## FROM THE ARCHIVIST

Marlene Hejnal

Anastasia Shartin has given to the Egbert Benson Historical Society all the materials she collected while preparing for the exhibit "Museum: Barrytown" at Bard College this past May (1996). This collection includes paper files, photos, maps and audio cassettes of interviews conducted to give a comprehensive view of the hamlet of Barrytown and its residents.

Harriet Norton has donated a booklet about The De Garmo Institute in Rhinebeck, dated 1878. The Institute describes itself as " . . . a School for the People, where their Children can be educated for Business or for College, at rates that are within the means of the average Farmer, Merchant, or Professional Man. It is a School which counts show for nothing, hard work for very much." The booklet contains engravings of the school, its activities and its surroundings and lists among its graduates, a number of Red Hook names.

Lastly, our most recent donation: six boxes of Red Hook material collected over the years by Clara Losee, a longtime Red Hook resident now living in Millerton. Included is a large collection of photographs, negatives and slides shot by the late John Losee. Many are copies of old postcards and photographs, providing an invaluable visual record of the history of our community.

Our heartfelt thanks to all for these valuable additions to our archives. We are more than ever determined to develop the Rosemary Coons Historical Reference Room so that these items can be made available for research.

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## FULTON FARM SOLD OUT OF THE FAMILY AFTER 7 GENERATIONS OF OWNERSHIP

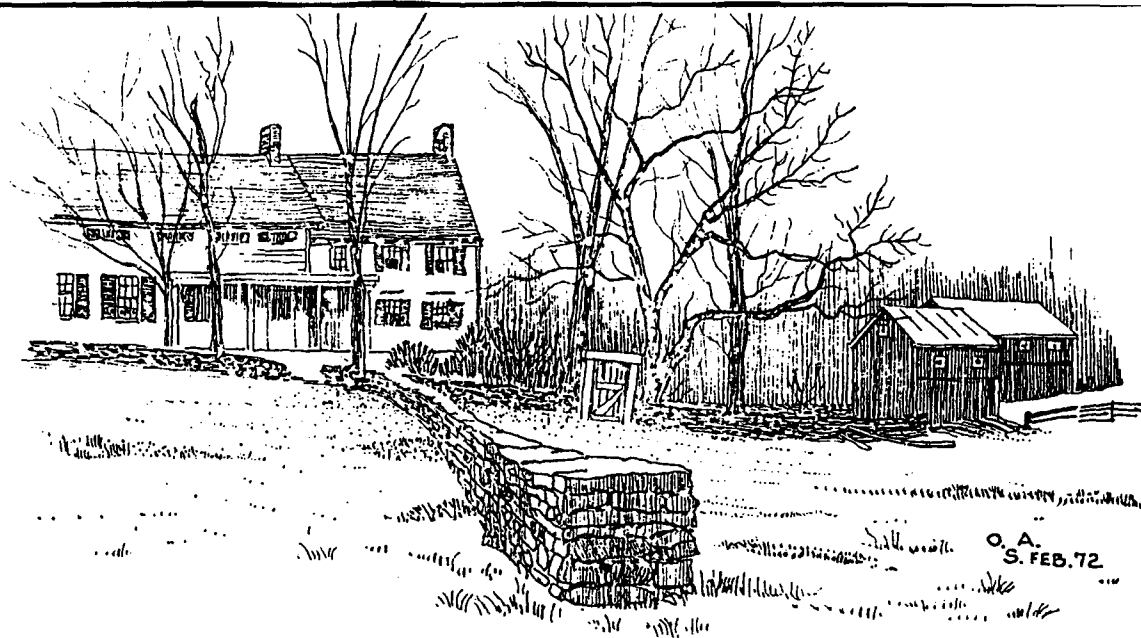
One of the area's great historic farms was sold earlier this year, ending seven generations of ownership by the same family. Located just over the town line in Milan, the Fulton Farm was leased from George Clinton by John Fulton in 1786. His father-in-law, Zachariah Teeter had first leased the property in 1771 and was required to build " . . . one good and sufficient Frame House, with a stone cellar . . ." and a 30x35-foot barn within five years. The barn was replaced in 1830 but the original house is incorporated in a larger dwelling remodelled around 1870.

The farm bore the Fulton name until John Parker Fulton died in 1933, leaving it to his daughter, Ethel F. Gallagher. John Parker Fulton was not only a farmer but also President of the Red Hook Bank, managing to keep the bank solvent through the bank crash of the 1930s, according to his granddaughter Harriet Gallagher Norton. The Gallaghers continued to farm, specializing in veal production, until Mr. Gallagher died in 1959.

One is immediately struck by the completeness and self-sufficiency of the Fulton farm. Massive stone walls line the lane that leads past the blacksmith shop, woodshed and house to the farmyard dominated by an enormous three-story Dutch barn. Set into the side of a hill, it can be entered by wagons on the first and second levels. Massive doors at each end of the second floor, originally were opened to provide cross-ventilation for the winnowing of grain in the traditional Dutch manner. The pegged beams are of chestnut, with vertical posts rising the full three stories. Clustered around the great barn are a chicken house, a corn crib, a wagon shed and numerous other buildings and foundations. Spring-fed watering troughs are carved out of a rock ledge, testifying to the loving care lavished on the farm by generations of Fultons.

The new owner is James Gallagher (no relation) of Scarsdale. He looks forward to making the farm his retirement home, restoring the house and barn, and perhaps reviving the farming tradition.

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The Fulton Farm as drawn by Oswald Stippa in 1972. The original eighteenth-century portion is the right side of the house.

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### MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Tuesday, December 10th at 7:00 p.m. Historical Society Christmas Party!

Noted storyteller and EBHS Trustee Mirko Gabler will tell Holiday stories to delight the whole family. Refreshments and Fun for All!

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