

elmendorph echoes

FRIENDS of ELMENDORPH INC.

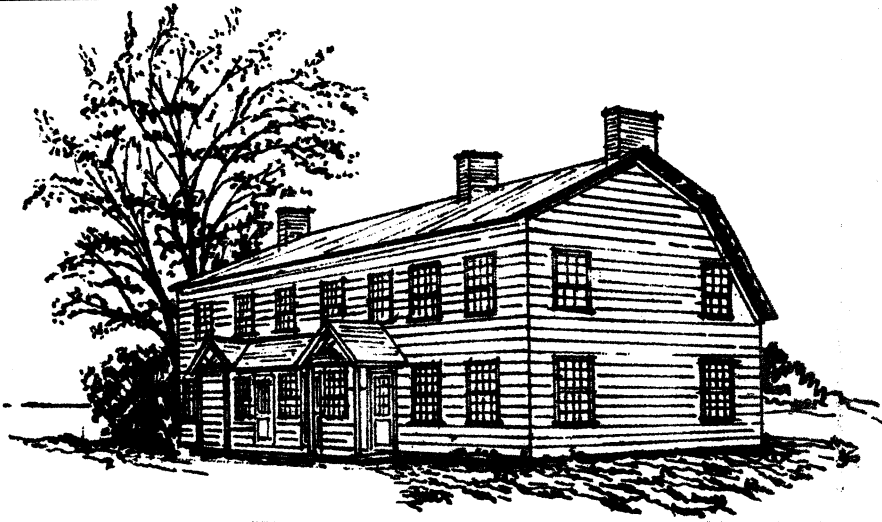
P.O. BOX 1776

RED HOOK N.Y. 12571

VOL. 2

№ 1

FEBRUARY 1978



Dear Friends,

1977 was a good year. We acquired the Elmendorph and began the second phase. The first phase, obviously, was the long acquisition period.

The building is a challenge in many ways, but with the dedicated group (ever increasing) there is no doubt that 1978 will be another good year.

Everyone (historians, professionals, State preservationists) is excited after a tour through the building, and all feel that something worthwhile will be saved and put to an adaptive use.

I wish to invite you all to the THIRD (yes, 3rd) Annual Meeting of the Friends of Elmendorph on Monday, March 13, 1978 at 8:00 P.M. to be held at the Elks Lodge in Red Hook. An interesting program has been prepared and we will have information available on the continuing second phase.

Members and friends should come to the meeting to hear what has been done, what will be done and if you're so inclined, become involved in what people will point to with pride someday as an example of a practical approach to preservation.

Herman J. Gorgens
President
Board of Directors

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to the following new members:
Mr. & Mrs. Finn Rennie, Mrs. Roland
Redmond and Mr. Charles Barrett.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

A big THANK YOU goes to Lottie Kittner for organizing and working night and day on a mass membership drive. The following people helped her with typing, stuffing envelopes and getting the membership letter into the mail -- Joan Jones, Helen & Marie Gergel, Lillian Gorgens, Rosemary Coons, Dick Barrett, Paul Fredricks, Nelson and Helen Garlinghouse, Blanche Traudt, Mabel Boice, Finn & Thelma Rennie, Bessie Coon, Virginia Apsey, Charity Myers and Frank & Elvira Nuccio. We are printing this newsletter at the same time that the mailing is being put together, so if we have not mentioned your name, we hope that you understand and realize that we appreciate all of you.

FORSYTHIA WILL FLOWER

The Red Hook Garden Club has graciously donated two forsythia bushes. They will be planted in the Spring.

ELVIRA'S IDEA

Those gaily decorated donation cans that were in the stores at the holiday season brought in \$36.80. Elvira Nuccio had the idea for these and proceeded to put her ideas into action. Thanks for a nice job.

THE BUGS ARE GONE

The termite extermination has been completed. This was a three day job, but was an essential step that had to be done by professionals before we could proceed with other restoration.

GEORGIA GOES FOR GRANTS

Georgia Coon has been a tremendous help in seeking out Foundations for us, and has done quite a bit of research in this field. We appreciate her dedication.

OYSTER SHELLS

In preparation for the extermination, Herman Gorgens sifted through a large pile of dirt in the cellar and found 150 (he counted them) very old oyster shells, as well as fragments of old china and pottery. We will attempt to have these artifacts dated.

SANTA'S LITTLE HELPER

Someone read our letter to Santa and decorated the building for Christmas. You probably saw the lovely wreaths, sprays, candles and lanterns. We know who did it but we're not telling. She is a super volunteer.

NATIONAL REGISTER APPLICATION

A big thank you to Supervisor Bob Bowman, Mayor Harold Fell and Town Historian Wint Aldrich and any others who may have written to Albany on our behalf for the National Register of Historic Places. There was a tremendous amount of research and time that went into the application. It may take awhile before we hear, but keep your fingers crossed.

D.C. HISTORICAL SOCIETY SURPRISE

We were pleasantly surprised to open the Yearbook of the Dutchess County Historical Society to find several pages devoted to us, together with pictures. We must thank Gordon Hamersley (the editor) for his thoughtfulness.

We would like to share with you a poem which was written by our member, Frank Nuccio, who dedicates this to the Elmendorph:

WHY?

It seems to me as I look back
Upon a time called "past"
I felt that all the things I knew
Were "stable" and would last

I thought that I could always stop
To look about and see
The same familiar things I love
That mean so much to me

I guess I never stopped to think
That times do change, and then
The same things that I knew about
Would not be there again

Of course, it's quite impossible
To know what future brings
Of sadness, or happiness
Or any other things

I know the world can not stand still
God meant that it should change
That anything we had done wrong
We then could rearrange

And sad it is to me I know
That when this world's in plight
We don't get down to common sense
And make the wrong things right

I'm grieved to look back through the years
And find that what I've traced
Is quite a lot of failures
That we never have erased

I write this not to cast a blame
Of failures others made
I've done my share of messing things
In all the parts I've played

It's just that I am very sad
To think of "might have been"
If we'd not wasted what we had
And spread the world so thin

Francis Nuccio 1977



Friends of ELMENDORPH, inc.

P.O. BOX 1776 / RED HOOK, NEW YORK 12571

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Robert Bielenberg

We thought that you would enjoy seeing the letter head that Bob Bielenberg has designed for us, so we are reproducing it for you. This was also used with the Membership Drive, and we intend to have it printed in brown ink for our stationery.

We have also included the history of the Elmendorph and its Friends. This is the same history that we mailed out with the Membership Drive, and we felt that some of our newer members would enjoy learning more about us.

A FEW RANDOM NOTES Did you know that our newsletter is celebrating its first anniversary with this issue? We have received several suggestions from our members with regard to a Visual Improvement or Preservation Award to be given at the Annual Meeting. You may recall that Dick Baright won the award last year. Come to the Annual Meeting to find out who the new recipient will be We want to say special THANKS to Clara Losee and Georgia Coon for serving on the Nominating Committee to Doug Traudt for making the arrangements and the Elks Club for providing the space for our Annual Meeting. to Miner Treat who will handle the projector for us at the meeting to John Losee for taking slides of us and to all of you who have been sending in donations and good wishes.

We will be voting to Change the ByLaws in regard to Membership to say that any person submitting an application in writing and paying the membership fee decided upon by the members, shall be considered to be a member of the Corporation.

This will replace the necessity of voting in new members every year.

THE STORY OF THE ELMENDORPH AND ITS FRIENDS

Prior Owners of the Inn

1750's	Feroe	Eckert	1827
1760's & 1780's	Jacobs	Wager	1835
1770's & 1790's	Sharp	Martin	1854
1796	Elmendorph	Pulver	1933
1802	Loop	Miller	1966
1820	Ring	Wood	1974
1826	Bonesteel	Grand Union	1974
1826	DeReimer	Friends	1977

No more than five to sleep in one bed. No boots to be worn in bed. No gaming or playing with cards or dice. No billiard table, Shuffle board, etc. shall be allowed within this tavern.

Such a tavern was the Elmendorph Inn, built ca. 1750 on the important Albany Post Road. Travelers were met by Innkeepers with the names of Philip Jacobs, George Sharp, John Elmendorph and Josiah Loop, and fresh horses were supplied to the Stagecoach Lines.

All meetings, not church-related, were held in these early inns. They were the community centers of their day. The Elmendorph is the oldest building in the Village of Red Hook and may have been its first building. Courts of law convened here and members of Horse Thieves Societies met within its walls.

George Sharp was very much involved in supporting the colonists in their quest for independence, and history tells us that Sharp and others met secretly to advance the cause of the colonists.

Cornelius C. Elmendorph, the first hotel keeper of the Stissing House in Pine Plains, moved to Red Hook, built the Red Hook Hotel in 1799 and advertised the Elmendorph "for lett" at the same time. John Elmendorph was the Innkeeper, hence the name, "Elmendorph inn."

When the Town of Red Hook incorporated in 1812, most of the Annual Town Meetings were held in the Elmendorph Inn for the next thirty years.

In 1845, David Wager gave the land on the east end of the property to the Methodist Episcopal Society for a cemetery.

About 1890, Edward Martin, a philanthropist who owned the building, established a free kindergarten in the building for the community's children, the first in Red Hook. He had inherited the property from his father Augustus Martin, State Assemblyman and Town Supervisor.

The Pulver family owned the building from 1933 until 1966 and ran a small country store at the site.

The only gambrel-roofed structure remaining in the Village with its enormous beams, wide floor boards and elaborately carved mantles, was threatened with demolition after 1966.

*"Let us while waiting for new monuments preserve the
ancient monuments."*
(Victor Hugo)

Private effort by John Delafield delayed the demolition and "Hudson River Heritage" was organized to save the Elmendorph.

By 1974 the Grand Union Company owned the property and it was put on the real estate market for sale. Commercial threats seemed imminent when the Red Hook/Tivoli Bicentennial Committee was organized early in 1975. Cornell University had recently completed a survey, calling attention to the building as "the most architecturally distinguished early 18th century building in the Village of Red Hook."

A FRIENDS OF ELMENDORPH sub-committee was formed as a Bicentennial project and then incorporated as a not-for-profit organization. Area businesspeople, at a Chamber of Commerce dinner, donated \$300 which was matched by an anonymous donor, and the project was underway.

Cub Scouts offered help. Letters poured into the Grand Union Company from Public officials (local, county, state and federal). A snowmobile club, Elks Club, Rotary, Brownies, Jaycees, Jr. Womens Club, Lions Club and many other groups, as well as individuals, poured out their hopes for salvage of this building to the company that owned it.

A public meeting was held late in 1975 to a standing room crowd for the purpose of learning more about this important building. Artifacts from the building were given to the group. Fourth and sixth grade students wrote pleading letters. Things looked hopeful as 1976 began, and then suddenly negotiations became difficult. Much credit should be given to those faithful friends who were not discouraged by all of the circumstances that went against their goal -- to purchase and restore the Inn for future generations. By November, 1976, the building was taken off the real estate market and everyone held their breath, wondering what horrible thing would happen next. Community Development Funds were sought, but this, too, was unsuccessful.

In the midst of much gloom, the Rev. James Elliot Lindsley met with the President of the Grand Union Company (James Wood) and came to terms for the Friends. After years of ups and downs, the building was purchased in June, 1977 with a 30-year low interest mortgage from the Grand Union.

*"It is chiefly through private effort, not by public effort
that your city must be adorned."*
(John Ruskin)

The Friends received their Federal Income Tax Exemption status and the windows were unboarded for the first time in many years. Robert T. McCarthy volunteered his electrical know-how and lights were turned on in the building once again. Volunteers dismantled a dilapidated shed, cleaned the building out of about fourteen truckloads of materials, removed partitions and assisted at fund raising events. BOCES students put a new roof on the garage with the help of Mayor Harold Fell, and termite treatment of the soil was completed. Stabilization and restoration have begun.

We have saved a part of America. Now join with us, so that your name will be included in this history for future generations to see.

ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the FRIENDS OF ELMENDORPH, INC. will be held on Monday, March 13, 1978 at 8 PM at the Elks Lodge, Route 9, Red Hook. After the business meeting, we will view the film "DOORWAY TO THE PAST" which we borrowed from Williamsburg, Virginia. You may also see yourself in some of the slides taken by John Losee of some of our activities and volunteer workers. Please call Helen Garlinghouse after 11 AM at 758-6925 if you can help make or serve refreshments for the Annual Meeting.

Be sure to mail in the proxy notice if you cannot make the meeting.

HOPE WE SEE YOU THERE!

I
We _____ cannot attend the Annual Meeting of the FRIENDS OF ELMENDORPH, INC., but I authorize the Board of Directors to vote for me.

Date _____

Memberships are payable by the Annual Meeting for the current year. Any membership received after December 1, 1977 will be considered paid for 1978. Please use this form when mailing in your membership renewals. Remember: "The secret of success is constancy of purpose" (Disraeli)

CM RM NM

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____ Phone # _____ Date _____

Address _____ Zip _____

Individual.....\$ 3
Family..... 5
Student (under 18)..... 1
Business/Organizations... 10

Membership \$ _____
Donation \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____
(tax deductible)

I would like to join a committee.
My interest is:

F ☐ Raising ☐ Membership ☐
Restoration ☐ Research ☐
Hospitality ☐ Clean-up ☐
Other _____

Please call on me to help
when I can - to:

bake cookies _____ sew _____
telephone _____ type _____
clean up _____ give time _____
Other _____

I have knowledge, back-
ground, experience in:

plumbing _____ carpentry _____
masonry _____ electrical _____
painting _____
Other _____

FRIENDS OF ELMENDORPH, INC.

P.O. Box 1776

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