



Egbert Benson HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RED HOOK

P.O. Box 1813 Red Hook, N.Y. 12571-0397

COMING ON FEBRUARY 25TH - *Remembering Upper Red Hook*

WINTER 1997

Our February meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m. with an introduction to the history of Upper Red Hook by Rev. Roger M. Leonard, Minister of St. John's Reformed Church and historian of that church and the earlier Red Church in Tivoli. Longtime residents of the area have been invited to share their memories of the District No. 6 school, stores, farms and businesses, and social life in the community. Everyone is asked to bring photographs and other mementos for a show-and-tell session. The comments will be recorded for future enlightenment. Copies of Agnes Clark's recollections of her childhood in Upper Red Hook and Rev. Leonard's book on the Red Church will be available for purchase as well as other local-history booklets and map. Refreshments will be served. We meet as usual at the Elmendorph Inn (North Broadway [Rte. 9], Red Hook); for more information call 758-2923.



Upper Red Hook,
District 6 School

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A NEW LOOK FOR THE NEWSLETTER

With this newsletter, we are pleased to introduce our new letterhead, generously donated by Ruth Bornschlegel who retired to our community after a career as a designer with Harper and Row, publishers. The Society's Trustees asked Ruth to include a historic house, a traditional Dutch barn, a view of the Hudson River and the Catskill Mountains, and suggestions of the agricultural activities which are so important to our community . . . a tall order which Ruth has filled with uncommon patience and skill. We are very grateful to Ruth, and to Richard Wambach who "set" the type to Ruth's specifications. Finally, we asked Ruth to write about the Heermance-Bulkeley farm which she used as her inspiration.

A Note from the Artist

In the late '80s, as a new resident from New York City, I frequently drove West Kerley Corner Road from Upper Red Hook to Tivoli to visit friends. I loved the scenery, but I was especially drawn to a little old stone farmhouse on the north side of the road, long before I learned it was the historic Heermance-Bulkeley house. What mainly attracted me was its location on a "real" working farm where I could stop and select with great delight from a charming presentation of colorful garden-fresh flowers or seasonal vegetables. At times the table was attended, but more often it was a self-service honor system with understated handwritten prices on small pieces of paper. A peaceful aura of caring and tending pervaded.

When Barbara Bielenberg suggested I create a new letterhead for the Historical Society she recommended the Bulkeley farmhouse as an excellent example of an early Red Hook farmhouse. She supplied me with historical accounts of the treasured home which was named to the *National Register of Historic Places* in 1981, and has also been cited for its architectural integrity and historical significance by various State and County agencies.

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The Heermance-Bulkeley farmland was originally part of the Schuyler patent, granted by the English monarchy in 1686. Early in the 18th century Barent Staats purchased a portion of the patent as a freehold, unlike much of the region which remained in large tracts held by privileged landowners who subdivided and leased small farms to tenants. In 1725 Staats sold his parcel to Heermance and Van Benthuyssen in partnership and in 1747 a 1,000-acre parcel was sectioned off to be held in common by the three sons of Andries Heermance.

By 1751, the brothers appear in Rhinebeck Town records as Pathmasters indicating that they were well established on their land. The original part of the house, consisting of a cellar, two rooms on the ground floor, and a granary above, has pit-sawn beams and other early 18th-century details confirming that it is probably the oldest surviving structure in the Town of Red Hook.

In 1772 the tract was divided by the brothers with the farmhouse and 269 acres going to Peter Heermance. According to court records, by 1774 Peter was heavily in debt to Jacob Elmendorph for labor and materials to enlarge the house. Mill-sawn lumber is used in the addition. The house is notable for the retention of its 18th-century decorative features, the lack of later additions or alterations and for its remarkable state of preservation.

The three brothers cleared and cultivated their farms, and contributed to the early Dutch churches. Peter and his son Andrew served the patriot cause in the Revolutionary War. In 1806, Andrew sold the farm and it changed hands several times during the 19th century but remained productive and diversified to meet the changing demands of the economy. Wheat, timber, fruit and vegetables have been harvested at various times and sheep, horses, poultry, beef and dairy cattle raised on the farm. In 1896, the farm was purchased by Henry Redder, grandfather of Alice Bulkeley, who, with her husband Peter, a World War II Air Force bombardier, have continued the 100-year-old family tradition of hard work and dedication which characterizes the enormous contribution of farm families to the Red Hook community.

The depiction for our newsletter of this exceptional community asset, has been most challenging to me, but I feel that I have been richly rewarded for the effort by a newfound knowledge and appreciation for my surroundings and their history.

Ruth Bornschlegel

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A VISIT FROM ST. NICHOLAS

St. Nicholas, accompanied by an angel and a devil, visited our meeting at the Elmendorph Inn on December 10th. Mirko Gabler had just completed telling tales about the holiday celebrations in his native Czech Republic when a tinkling bell was heard approaching and into the South Room strode a tall, white-bearded gentleman in richly embroidered white robes and a tall bishop's mitre. He was followed by a beautiful young woman gowned in pale blue and carrying a basket of goodies which she shared with the enthralled youngsters in the audience. Then, with a great clatter and roar, a wild and menacing creature entered, brandishing a bundle of switches, terrorizing young and old.

Peace and order returned after the evil one was banished. St. Nicholas and his angel left to continue their missionary rounds and former Czech residents in the audience added their stories to Mirko's. Finally everyone retired to the Tap Room for a repast featuring Czech holiday breads prepared by Ann Gabler and Al Hejnal, and holiday cookies baked by Evie Seils, Kate Dewsnap, Andrea Clark, Helen Roberts, Nancy Hetzler, Mary Cioffi and Alma Bowman.

We are very grateful to all our bakers and to Robert Hastings, Cecilia Maple and devilish Joy Taylor for their wonderful performances. St. Nicholas' glorious robes were made by Mirko Gabler using antique embroideries sent to him from the Czech Republic by his mother. Our thanks to Mirko and to the Bard College theatre for the angel and devil costumes. We look forward to another special holiday presentation next December!

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19TH-CENTURY EXCERPTS FROM THE CURTIS-FRALEIGH ALBUM

At our October meeting, Clara Losee presented to David and Karen Fraleigh an album of Curtis and Fraleigh Family Memorabilia, which she had collected and assembled. David and Karen graciously allowed Linda Keeling to photocopy the album for the Society's archives and for publication in our newsletter.

John Curtis was born in 1817. He owned a hardware and tin shop on East Market Street, where he sold a variety of products, including cast-iron stoves. He installed and repaired tin roofs and his diary recounts installations throughout the community including Trinity School. He was active in the Methodist Church and in school affairs and the diary is rich with references to Red Hook citizens from the years 1848 to 1857. In 1840 he married Jane Carter Beaumont from Yorkshire, England. The marriage of their daughter Lucy Irene to John Fraleigh united the two prominent Red Hook families. The Curtises' son Edwin graduated from West Point and the album includes reprints of letters from Civil War battlefronts and from Alaska as well as clippings from the local newspaper *The Red Hook Journal*.

Early excerpts from John Curtis' Diary follow:

Jan. 1, 1848 Arose at 7, not a very sharp beginning for reform New Year having been installed in the domestic service by dire necessity. Began getting breakfast (like Gen. Scott partook of his soup in a "hasty manner") and not much to the satisfaction of the victims (wife sick and unable to do anything). Disagreeable work at shop fitting up old stoves; weather muggy, roads muddy; evening retired and consoled myself with newspaper till bedtime.

2nd . . Sunday Up in good season and prepared breakfast, which consisted (as usual) of pancakes, very sour, this being usually the case under my administration. The long visages at table I considered a reflection on my system of cookery. Wife continues unwell. Read newspapers, etc. until 3 p.m. with admixture of juvenile squalls, which always temper a married man's enjoyment, so the cup never runs over. In the p.m. I concocted (though I say it who shouldn't say it) a most delightful dish of oyster soup, which was partaken of a LaGen. Scott and duly honored by the household Gods, and which coming on pretty late in the day, I was exhonored from getting tea. Read Neville till bedtime.

4th Tuesday Rumors rife of some 20 broken banks; Dutchmen exceedingly lively in consequence. Weather changes to cold and windy towards evening. Symptoms of WSC making an a.s of himself soon. Oyster soup demolished today.

14th Friday Rain & fog, times dull, very dull, uncommonly dull, exceedingly dull, excessively dull. Went to Barrytown and overhauled old inn. Sold 6 stoves this week.

22nd We have had every variety of weather the past week from the chilling blast of Greenland to the Gentle Zepher of our mildest summer; at present it is moderate and not uncomfortable out of doors.

Our girl left last Sunday much to our gratification; we can say with the Church of England: "from such as these deliver us." In consequence I have been engaged in domestic duties the past week. My performance tonight is a fair sample of the week. I thought tending baby was choosing the least of two evils, but was soon convinced of my error by the uproarious squalling of baby. Threw up the office and went down cellar for various articles of consumption; on my way up lamp went out, a cord of gingerbread fell off plate and went thumping from step to step until safely deposited in the dirt at the bottom, and when finally recovered was nicely sugared over with sand. In the meantime the four young progeny kept up an uproar enough to deafen an inmate of bedlam, and which was only silenced by a vigorous application of birch. Poured out tea and performed the other duties incumbent upon me in a scientific manner, put the progeny to work, and made my escape to the shop. A number of failures in

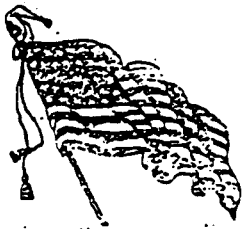
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Poughkeepsie, VDB among the rest. WS going to throw himself upon the tender mercies of a woman next week. Unhappy youth; one week's experience such as mine would convince him of the fallacies of his ideas on that subject. He is like a sheep led to the slaughter. Ah well, this matrimony is not what it is reputed to be, particularly when you have to build the fire mornings, put on the kettle, grind coffee, mix and bake pancakes (and eat cold ones yourself), fry sausages, sift coal, wash dishes, tend baby, dress & undress progeny to the number of 4, besides all the innumerable minor duties to fill up the crevices of time between matters of more importance. I think tonight I could advance some strong arguments in favor of celibacy, which question was discussed tonight by our Ciceroes & Demosthenes.

Also from the Curtis-Fraleigh album, this *Red Hook Journal* article provides an optimistic picture of the Village of Red Hook's economy one month after the firing on Fort Sumter, marking the beginning of the Civil War. The advertisements are also from the *Journal*, of November 30, 1860 (top) and April 28, 1871 (below).

HOME DEPARTMENT.

THURSDAY, MAY 23, 1861.



BUSINESS IN OUR VILLAGE.

While we hear of the depression of Business in our large cities, and the ruinous effect of the times upon many branches of trade, it is gratifying to know, that in our own and adjoining vilages these damaging influences have not yet been materially felt.

In this village quite a brisk and active business has been carried on during the Spring. Mr. Allendorf with his well selected stock of goods, with a good Tailor in his employ, and with a large country trade, is evidently not materially affected by the state of the country. Mr. Massonneau with an immense stock of goods always on hand, with reliable customers, and prudent management in every department of his trade, can bid defiance to Cottonocracy and hard times at a distance. Mr. Gedney, while the New York portion of his business has been somewhat affected, has, by strict attention to the wants and tastes of the community, and by keeping a fresh and choice stock of every variety of goods, built up a large and paying home business, and has extended it for miles into the country by judicious advertising.

The Tobacco manufactory of Messrs J. & P. Hendricks & Co., keeps its full quota of hands employed, and every few days, as usual, opens from a dozen to fifteen hogsheads of Tobacco. The Establishment of Mr. Graves, sends out vast quantities of Tin-ware every week, and we see no diminution of business in that direction. Mr. Phillips, principal Carpenter and Builder in the village, keeps his usual number of men constantly employed; while the other carpenters appear to be doing a fair business. The business of Messrs L. & J. Curtis, is too firmly established to be affected by transient causes; and the recent enlargement of their establishment and the large display of Stoves, Tin and Hardware, Lamps and innumerable other articles gives evidence of prosperity, at least, not inferior to any preceeding year. Our enterprising Baker, Mr. Myers, is evidently prospering, as we learn he has just purchased a fine building lot in East Market Street, upon which to erect an elegant residence for himself.

There are various other branches of business which we might name, and to which the preceeding remarks would apply in about every case, but we have named enough to show that the effect of the panic elsewhere, is happily but little felt here; and space will not permit us to-day to mention the entire business of the town. We might add, however, in conclusion, that while the Printing Business in the country is slightly affected by the present condition of affairs, yet we have no complaints to make, and if a hundred or two subscribers who have not yet paid their subscriptions will send us a dollar each we shall not find a word of fault.

FRENCH'S CONICAL



WASHING MACHINE.

We invite all doubters of the utility of washing machines to examine the above named machine, at our store. They have the privilege of giving it a free trial 21-3m

L. & J. CURTIS.

SPECIAL ATTENTION!

"Died of a frying pan."

To avoid the above melancholy end, use the

AMERICAN BROILER

sold by us. It is much more convenient to use this Broiler than to spoil meats in a frying pan.

Use the Double pointed Tacks, They have no heads to break off, or to tear dresses, they don't cut the carpet, can be used again and again for years. and don't injure the floor; please examine them.

The American Ice Cream Freezer,
The best in use.

Mace's Refrigerators,

The Silver Light Lamps & Burners

German Students Lamps,
Aerating Egg Beater.

The best MACHINE OIL, at one half the usual price.

A new kind of
WELL & CISTERN PUMP.

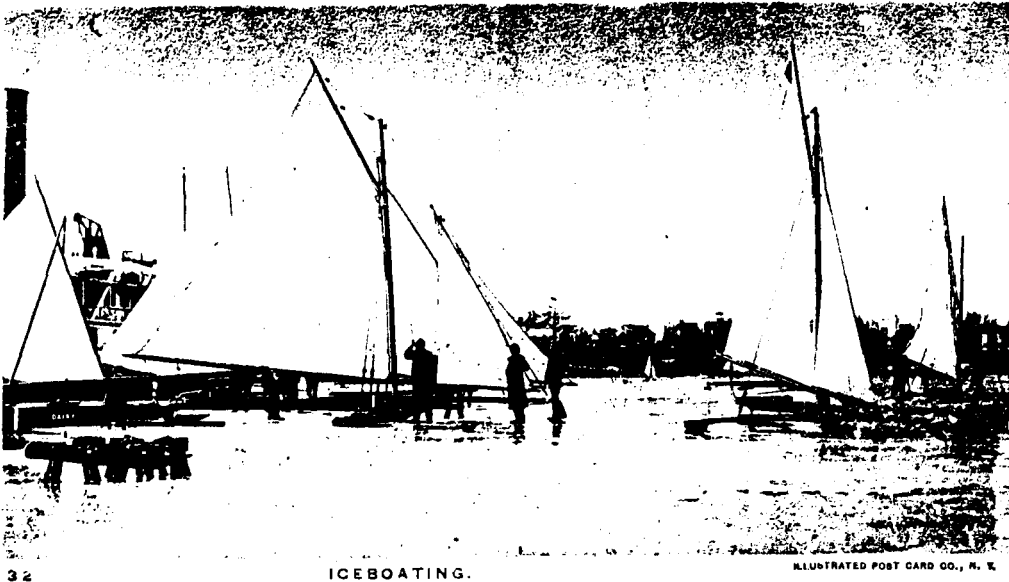
that don't wear out or freeze up—works easy and fast. Don't cost more than the common curb and buckets.

The Downer Kerosene—a Safe and Economical Burning Oil,

does not explode, and is equal to any oil in use.
J. & L. B. CURTIS.

ICE YACHTING ON THE HUDSON

New-fallen snow carpeted the lawn as Society members and guests gathered at the Elmdorph on January 28th for a wintry talk on the history of Ice Yachting in the Hudson Valley. Reid Bielenberg, Commodore of the Hudson River Ice Yacht Club, began his talk with slides of ancient scenes of Dutch sloops outfitted with skate-like runners for winter sailing on the Zuider Zee. Robert Livingston wrote home from France suggesting such craft for use on the frozen Hudson but it wasn't until the mid-19th century when wealthy



ICEBOATING.

ILLUSTRATED POST CARD CO., N. Y.

estate owners began competing for the grandest and fastest ice yacht that the sport became so popular it was regularly covered by the newspapers and magazines of the day.

Reid illustrated his talk with woodcuts from *Harper's Weekly* and *Frank Leslie's*, interspersed with photos from albums which belonged to the President's uncle, James Aspinwall Roosevelt, an avid yachtsman who introduced his nephew to the sport. The albums are in

the collection of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library in Hyde Park, as is the President's small ice yacht, the *Hawk*, a Christmas present from his mother, Sarah.

James Roosevelt's 48-foot-long racing yacht *Icicle* which was three times ice-yacht champion of the world was displayed for many years at the Library along with the 30-foot silk pennant proclaiming the championship. In 1995, when space was needed in the gallery, the historic giant was carefully removed from the Library's basement and carried to the Hudson River Maritime Center in Kingston for restoration and display, a project undertaken in cooperation with the Hudson River Ice Yacht Club. Now the Club is trying to raise \$10,000 to cover the cost of a new set of sails and replace some missing hardware in the hope that the *Icicle* can be displayed in all its majesty as a symbol of a once-important aspect of Hudson Valley history which is seeing a rebirth on Tivoli Bay, on Orange Lake near Newburgh and on the Hudson itself when the weather cooperates. Today, close to thirty ancient ice yachts have been removed from storage in sheds and barns, restored and made ready to move onto the ice, recalling 19th-century images of wintry enjoyment. For more information about the *Icicle* project call (518) 537-5008.

ADDITIONS TO THE ARCHIVES

Complete set of Dutchess County Historical Society Yearbooks (1914-1990) with an index by Clara Losee, donated by Clara. Framed photograph of East Market Street c. 1909, donated by Edith Platt; it pictures the Cann Pharmacy and Curtis Hardware (now Stockenberg's). Two egg cartons from the Schaffer Store, donated by Linda Lawson; it was located in the Hobbs building (demolished, now the Village Parking Lot). Copy of the Curtis/Fraleigh album, courtesy of David and Karen Fraleigh. Two notebooks of photos, correspondence, notes and documents pertaining to Maizefield/Maizeland, donated by David and Sharon Hessney. We are deeply grateful to all these generous donors for recognizing the need to preserve the history of our community.



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MEMBERSHIP FORM

APPLICATION / RENEWAL YEAR JULY 1, 1997 - JUNE 30, 1998

Name(s) (Please Print)

Mailing Address

Telephone Number ()

ANNUAL DUES

Check appropriate line(s); make check payable to "Egbert Benson Historical Society"

☐ Family \$12 ☐ Individual \$8 ☐ Student (Under 18) \$1
☐ Contributing \$25 ☐ Sustaining \$50 ☐ Life (\$100 or more)
☐ Business or Organization \$15 DONATION _____

If you wish to serve on a committee, please (X) below:

☐ Archives (collecting, cataloging historical documents) ☐ Publications ☐ Membership
☐ Newsletter (writing, printing, mailing) ☐ Hospitality (meet, greet members at regular meetings, arrange for refreshments)
☐ Program (meet once or twice yearly to plan monthly programs, prepare information for Newsletter)

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP: • Advance notice of monthly meetings • Three newsletters each year • The knowledge that you are supporting the collection, preservation, and dissemination of the history of the Town of Red Hook •

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