



Egbert Benson HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RED HOOK

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

ROBERT ENGEL TO TALK ON "THE OTHER HUDSON"
at ANNUAL DINNER MEETING at Elmendorph Inn, June 22

SPRING 1999

The Hudson River is 315 miles long but only half of it, the well-known half, lies south of Albany. The other half winds and tumbles through the wilderness of the Adirondacks. One of the last regions of the United States to be charted, the Adirondacks was inhabited largely by miners and loggers until after the Civil War when wealthy sportsmen hired local guides to take them hunting and fishing, eventually building "camps" where they could "rough it" in style.

Although **Robert Engel** is best known in the Hudson Valley as the Curator of Clermont State Historic Site and an expert on the "Age of Enlightenment" and Livingston portraits, his own ancestral roots lie in the Adirondacks where his grandparents managed the Vanderbilts' great camp "Sagamore." Through words and slides he will introduce us to the lore, and lure, of the great camps and the upper half of the Hudson River.

The program will begin around 7:30 p.m. with the presentation of the annual Heritage Awards and election of new Trustees. Reservations are required for the dinner, which begins at 6 p.m. with punch and hors d'oeuvres in the tap room. Reservation forms and other information are at the end of this newsletter.



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S KEYBOARD

Barbara Bielenberg

It would be an understatement to say that this has been a banner year for our Historical Society! We have settled into our attractive and highly functional **Rosemary Coons Historical Archive Center** in the Elmendorph Inn. Most of our collection has been inventoried on computer for easy reference and retrieval. **Bobbie Thompson** is carefully working her way through the **Frank Teal** files and finding deeds, wills, maps and other treasures.

Membership is at an all-time high with 261 on our mailing list. Your generous support has raised our bank balance above \$4,000 for the first time in recent memory and **donations** of historically important papers, books and photographs continue to enrich our collection.

We are especially pleased by the public confidence expressed by two recent donations: **Mayor Earl A'Brial** of the Village of Red Hook has donated 62 albums of newspaper clippings collected by the late **Martha E. Ingleson**, a lifelong Red Hook resident who died in 1990 at the age of 86. Her daughter **Lucille McCagg** had donated the volumes to the Village but agreed that the Historical Society was a more suitable home, adding four more volumes to the collection. **Kate Dewsnap** is currently indexing the volumes.

The **Red Hook Fire Company** has given us an important framed photograph of forty members of the **Joseph Griffing Fire Company of Red Hook** and its twenty-member band, taken in 1909 on the occasion of the

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Barbara Thompson and Bard College's archeology professor Christopher Lindner studying a map of Ward Manor in the Society's Archive Center

annual convention of the New York State Volunteer Firemen's Association in Poughkeepsie. We've proudly hung the photo in the tap room of the Elmdorph Inn. The photo inspired me to find out more about the early days of our Fire Company with unexpected results you can read about elsewhere in this newsletter.

In addition to the many genealogical and other inquiries which we receive, we're pleased to have been able to assist with three major research projects: **Clare O'Neill Carr's** work on the history of Red Hook, **Roger Leonard's** study of Upper Red Hook and, most recently, archeologist **Christopher Lindner's** research into possible archeological sites on **Bard College's Ward Manor campus**, selected as the new site for the **Bard Performing Arts Center**. Here our map collection proved particularly helpful, especially Frank Teal's 1915 map of the property.

THANK YOU to all our members who've paid their 1999 dues and often added a donation or upgraded to Life Membership. **THANK YOU** to our retiring Trustees: **Carol Brener, Mirko Gabler and William Johnson**. Carol deserves a very big bouquet—not only has she served as President, Secretary and Co-Secretary but she and colleague **Evelyn Krueger** have spent hours editing and preparing our newsletters for publication. **THANK YOU** to our hardworking Treasurer **Mary Cioffi** and to **Marlene Hejnal** who keeps our expanding mailing list up to date. **THANK YOU** to **Linda Keeling** our "temporary" Archivist who challenges us to ever higher standards of collection care. Last, our warmest heartfelt **THANKS** to **Bobbie Thompson** who drives from her home in Saugerties to spend every Tuesday at our Archive Center, patiently organizing our files and listing the contents on the computer, with a paper printout of each listing for those of us who are still computer illiterate; her dedication inspires us all.



HISTORICAL SOCIETY FUND RAISER AT ROKEBY

The sun shone brightly on the green meadows and river and mountain views of **Rokeby** as a capacity crowd filled the darkened drawing room to enjoy **Tom Daley's** fascinating slides of many of the unusual and/or magnificent historic homes of the Hudson Valley. Viewing the pictures in one of the greatest of the Hudson Valley houses made the day especially memorable.

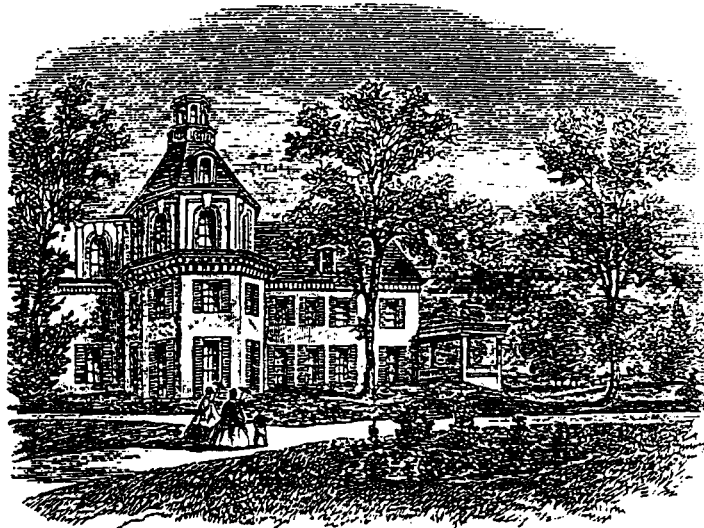
J. Winthrop Aldrich welcomed our guests to the home he shares with his brother and sister and the family's five daughters. His personal recounting of Rokeby's history was a fitting beginning to Tom's loving account of his explorations from Irvington to Hudson. After the talk the guests relaxed with refreshments served on the broad porch overlooking magnificent views.

We are deeply grateful to the **Aldrich Family** for opening their home and to **Tom Daley** for sharing his vast collection of slides and memories so generously.

Many other individuals

and businesses contributed to the success of the event, among them **Mary Cioffi** and **Elizabeth Wacker** who handled the reservations and **Barbara Lewis** who masterminded the refreshments and recruited donations of a huge vegetable platter from **Dominic Tiberio** of **Tiberio's Red Hook IGA** and a large plate of cookies from **Terry's Country Bake Shop**. The **Old Chatham Sheepherder Company** gave us a generous supply of delicious sheep's milk cheese. **Carol Brener** made the famous nonalcoholic "champagne" punch as an alternative to the wine we served.

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Engraving from Benson Lossing, The Hudson, from the Wilderness to the Sea, 1866

ROKEBY



Tom Daley relaxes after his presentation with Wint Aldrich and Peg and Buz Gummere at Rokeby

Tivoli's Mayor Marc Molinaro and Deputy Mayor Thomas Cordier supplied the essential folding chairs for the program. Linda Greenblatt recruited 8th- and 9th-grade students Peter Stewart, Matt Keeling, Veronica Roseberry, Ann Rossi and Caryn Dally to serve as docents and help with the refreshments.

Our most sincere gratitude to all. With your help we raised \$1,298 and had a truly memorable afternoon!

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Check your address label—have you paid your 1999 dues?
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FIRE PROTECTION COMES TO RED HOOK

Barbara Bielenberg

The incorporated village of Red Hook and the Red Hook Fire Company both had their genesis on a windy day in April, 1894. Picture the Village in those days of the horse and buggy. Prosperous homes and businesses line Broadway and Market Streets, behind them are small barns and hay-filled stables. Smaller homes are beginning to fill in the side streets, each home drawing its water from its own well or pump and cistern. The *Red Hook Journal* of Friday, April 6th, tells the story:

"On Tuesday afternoon last about 4 o'clock, an alarm of fire rang through this village. A dense smoke was found to be issuing from the large livery stable of John Ingalls and whilst the villagers were prompt in getting there in large numbers with pails and ladders, yet before a line could be found the stables broke out in great flames, and his dwelling had also caught fire. It became so hot there that no attempt was made to save the dwelling; all hands turned to carry out the furniture, much of which was rescued. The house of Horatio Showerman on the west, in close proximity, was soon in flames also, and to prevent the spread of the fire in that direction the villagers determined to take down the small adjacent house of Charles Saulpaugh.

"The bucket brigade then formed, turned attention to arresting the spread of the fire to the north side of Prince Street, where the barns of L. B. Curtis, Henry Proseus, and John Hobbs stood in great danger. These were soon covered with men and water on the roofs and on the sides, and were thus entirely protected.

"In the midst of that work an alarm arose that the house of John Ham, two blocks away was on fire. Men with buckets were requested to go there, the heavy south-easterly wind had carried blazing shingles that far, and his roof was found enveloped in flames. He was assisted in getting his furniture out from the first floor; it was too hot and dangerous to ascend to the second floor . . .

"The charred and blazing shingles from the Ingalls stables started fires on the shingle roofs of Gedney's barn and several other buildings.

"A large portion of the village west of Broadway and northerly from the Ellsworth hotel barns on the east and the new Methodist Church on the west at one time, were in imminent danger, some fine houses and private stables stood in the line of a spread of the flames . . . but the bravery and good work of our citizens averted the dire disaster." An alarm had been telegraphed to neighboring communities and two fire companies from Rhinebeck and the J. L. de Peyster Engine Company of Tivoli responded but the citizens of Red Hook, armed only with buckets and ladders, saved their village before they arrived.

Out of the Ashes

April's near disaster energized the community and one week after the fire a public meeting was held in Massonneau's Hall for the purpose of considering the incorporation of the village to provide suitable protection against fire. On July 17th a referendum to incorporate was submitted to the 250 eligible voters. 194 responded with 138 for and 56 against. In August the first village officials were elected: Harris L. Cookingham, President; John Hobbs, Treasurer and Frank E. Burnett, Collector of Taxes. Daniel VanDeBogart, Howard Ellsworth and Daniel W. Wilbur were elected Trustees.

While they researched how to supply the village with water, the Trustees set about enhancing public safety by ordering 50 cedar lamp posts and 50 oil lamps @\$2.58 per lamp. The first tax levy was \$900: \$250 for incorporation expenses, \$450 for installation and maintenance of the street lamps and \$200 for incidental expenses. Samuel Buck contracted to maintain, light and extinguish 75 street lights for 95¢ a night.

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On January 22, 1895, the voters and taxpayers of the newly formed Village of Red Hook voted to raise \$30,000 for "supplying pure and wholesome water for domestic uses and fire protection." Bids were solicited for the construction of a water works, including furnishing and laying about eight miles of pipe, constructing a reservoir and providing hydrants, valves, pumps, boilers and standpipe and also for "Hose, Cart, Truck and Ladders," to equip a fire department. Twenty-seven bids for all or part of the work were received but in the end none came within the \$30,000 appropriated for the proposed gravity system.

The plans were revised and work on the water system proceeded. Just two and a half years after the great fire, William G. Burnett was appointed Chief of the Fire Department of the Village of Red Hook and authorized to immediately proceed to organize a Hose Company and a Hook and Ladder Company. On September 9, 1896 the By-Laws of the Daniel W. Wilbur Hose Company and the Relief Hook & Ladder Company were adopted. Within a few months, the Relief was renamed the James S. Armstrong Hook & Ladder Company.

What's in a Name?

It was the custom of the time to name fire companies after distinguished citizens or a generous donor of uniforms or equipment. Daniel W. Wilbur was a logical choice. He was a prominent dealer in Coal, Lumber and Building materials, a Village Trustee, President of the Water Commission and Assistant Chief of the Fire Company.

James S. Armstrong was the grandson of General John Armstrong and Alida Livingston of Rokeby. Her portion of the vast Livingston landholdings included the future Village of Red Hook, which was surveyed and subdivided by the General in 1795. The widowed and elderly General lived out his last days in a handsome home (no longer standing) south of present-day St. Christopher's Catholic Church on South Broadway. The Hook and Ladder Company may have been named for grandson James because he was a well-known horse breeder and driver, an interest he pursued while managing Ferncliff, the estate of his uncle, William Astor. James retired to the Armstrong home in Red Hook,

where he died at the age of 83. According to his obituary he was "so young in heart, so bright in his mind and so keen in his recollections that it hardly seemed that he was as old as he was."

By the summer of 1909 when the New York State Volunteer Firemen's Association held its annual convention in Poughkeepsie, two Red Hook companies were scheduled to

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The Robt. W. Chanler Hook & Ladder Co. Courtesy Maynard Ham

march in the great Firemen's Parade, which boasted 75 companies, 21 pieces of apparatus, 19 bands, and 14 drum corps. Red Hook was represented by 40 members of the Joseph Griffing Fire Company accompanied by a 20-piece band. The photograph, recently donated to our Historical Society by the Red Hook Fire Company, shows the men, resplendent in their parade uniforms, posed in front of one of the Poughkeepsie fire houses. Maynard Ham has given us a photo of 21 members of the Robt. W. Chanler Hook & Ladder Co. of Red Hook in parade dress. According to newspaper accounts, three photographers were kept busy making souvenir photos of all the participating fire companies

The Daniel W. Wilbur Hose Company had been re-named to honor Griffing, who had come to the area in the 1890s to establish a chocolate factory in Annandale for investor W. H. Baker. The business prospered and a large new factory was built near the CNE railroad station in Red Hook. Griffing was also a partner in the Red Hook Milling Company and built the Lyceum Theatre. In 1904, he was made a Director of the First National Bank of Red Hook.

Robert Chanler had already made a name for himself as a decorative painter in Paris and New York when he returned to Dutchess County. In 1901, when he decided to enter politics, he built Chanler Park in Red Hook, sponsored baseball teams and brass bands and equipped a half-dozen fire companies including that of Red Hook.

The headline of the *Poughkeepsie Daily Eagle* of August 21, 1909 read "FIREMEN'S CONVENTION CLOSED WITH A MONSTER PARADE FRIDAY, Terrific Downpour of Rain Breaks Up Parade Just Before End of Line Was Reached—Fully 20,000 Visitors in the City." Near the end of a long colorful account of the festivities is this paragraph, relevant to our story:

"One little incident of the day has . . . a political bearing. There used to be two fire companies and two bands in Red Hook, the Chanler company and band and the Griffing Hose Company and band. Recently the Chanler organizations disbanded and asked to be taken into the Griffing organizations, and they paraded as the Griffing organization on Friday. This is an indication of the decay of Chanlerism in Red Hook, its home town."

Water Comes to Red Hook

By February of 1897, three years after the great fire, \$9,508.52 had been spent on the "Water Works." The Citizens Party emblem was a cast-iron fire hydrant and William G. Burnett was elected Fire Chief and Superintendent of the Water Works. He reported that \$650 had been paid to Robert G. Moore for "rent on reservoir land and damages." Eleven applications for water had been received @\$6.00 each and water rents received to date were \$9.72. On July 21, 1897, the Hoffman & Co. Tobacco Co. requested a special tap to introduce water into the factory "for fire protection and factory purposes."

In August of '97, a young surveyor and civil engineer by the name of Frank L. Teal was paid \$3.00 to extend the survey to St. John Street. Teal's maps and field notes are in the Historical Society Collection.

Research for this article came from Martha Hlavac, Red Hook Village Clerk; Fred Briggs; the Volunteer Firemen's Museum in Hudson; and the newspaper archives of the Red Hook Public Library and the Adriance Library in Poughkeepsie.



ST. MARGARET'S HOME THREATENED BY TOWN BOARD'S DECISION

We are concerned about the future of the former St. Margaret's Home located just south of Hardscrabble Plaza and surrounded by the newly enlarged commercial zone. Although long neglected, it remains one of the Town's significant historic and architectural treasures and a prominent feature at the "gateway" to the Town and Village of Red Hook.

We have expressed our concerns in public testimony and in a letter to the Town Board, dated April 10, 1999—to no avail. The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation has declared that the Home is eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places, but such a listing requires the assent of the owner of the property. Listing would not prevent its demolition but would provide access to tax credits for appropriate adaptive-reuse of the building for commercial purposes or possible grants for non-profit preservation efforts.

We urge everyone interested in the historic and architectural heritage of our community to remain alert to possible threats to this treasure and join efforts to preserve its integrity.

Barbara Bielenberg



NOMINEES FOR TRUSTEES OF THE SOCIETY

Clare O'Neill Carr is a graduate of Bard College and for thirteen years was a reporter and editor at Taconic Newspapers. She has been a Director of Hudson River Heritage and currently serves on the Boards of the Hudson Valley Chamber Music Circle and the Country Seats Tour. A frequent contributor to our Newsletter, she is working on a "Brief History of Red Hook." A life-long resident of Red Hook, she and her husband Geoffrey live in the Village.

Lloyd Loop graduated from Red Hook High School in 1948 and completed college at Albany State after which he taught Social Studies and Latin in Saugerties. His wife, **Janet**, who will serve as an unofficial co-trustee, was the Mill Road School nurse until her retirement. Although their home is in Saugerties, the Loops share a love of Red Hook and an interest in history, genealogy, gardening and grandparenting.

Evelyn Seils grew up on a dairy farm in Central New York State which had been in her family for six generations. She and her husband Tom have lived in Red Hook since 1978. A math major, she taught computer applications at Ulster County Community College for eleven years. Now retired, she and Tom share an interest in genealogy, most recently researching Tom's roots in Germany.



NOMINATIONS REQUESTED FOR HERITAGE AWARDS

Each year the Historical Society solicits nominations of individuals or projects which have made significant contributions to the historic heritage of the Town of Red Hook. Nominations may be made in one or more of the following categories:

Written or Recorded: typed or published texts; taped, photographic or audiovisual material; documents or research work.

Architectural: historic restorations, preservation or design applications that reflect or enhance the vintage character of the Town.

Artistic: artwork, artifacts or replicas, in any media or material, which depict, typify or enlarge comprehension of the past.

Environmental: site works that conserve, restore or beautify settings reminiscent of the area's past.

Nominations may be made in each of these two categories:

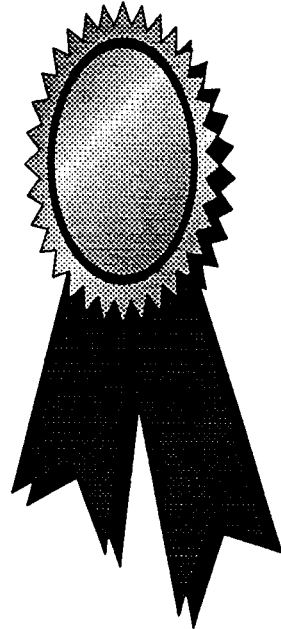
Senior: an individual or group over the age of 21;

Junior: an individual or group under the age of 21.

Nominations must be received by June 8th. Mail to the Egbert Benson Historical Society of Red Hook, Box 1813, Red Hook NY 12571. Please include the following information:

- Award category;
- Identification of the nominee by name, title or location;
- Brief description of the project or activity, including why you feel it worthy of recognition;
- Your name, address and telephone number in case we need more information.

Nominations received by the due date will be evaluated by an objective Heritage Awards Committee. Winners will be notified and a formal presentation made at the Annual Dinner Meeting on June 22nd. Awards include a complimentary membership, award certificate and complimentary dinner. For more information, call 758-2923.



Back-to-School Special: "Remembering the Red Hook Schools"
Tuesday, September 28th at the Middle School



**DON'T MISS THE
ANNUAL DINNER MEETING
OF THE
EGBERT BENSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RED HOOK**

Tuesday, June 22, 1999
at the Elmendorph Inn
North Broadway, Red Hook

6:00 p.m.	Punch and Hors d'oeuvres	7:30 p.m.	Meeting and Awards
6:30 p.m.	Buffet Dinner	8:00 p.m.	Speaker, Robert Engel

Dinner Menu

Roast Pork	Red Herbed Potatoes
Chicken Cacciatore	Homemade Pasta
Green Beans with Mushrooms	Summer Squash
Strawberry Shortcake	
Coffee and Tea	
Cost: \$15.00 per person	

DINNER RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE BY JUNE 15TH

Please make checks payable to **RENNERS**

and mail to: **Mary Cioffi**

RD#3 Box 72

Red Hook NY 12571

RESERVATION FORM

Name(s) (please print) _____

Phone _____ Number of Persons @\$15.00 _____

Amount Enclosed _____

PROXY

I/We will **not** attend the Annual Meeting of the Egbert Benson Historical Society of Red Hook on June 22, 1999. In my absence, I hereby appoint the President of her/his deputy or _____ as my proxy to vote on all matters that may come before the membership at the meeting.

Signature

Date: _____

Signature

Date: _____



Egbert Benson HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RED HOOK

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

MEMBERSHIP FORM - 1999

Name(s) (Please Print)

Mailing Address

Telephone Number (Area Code)

ANNUAL DUES

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

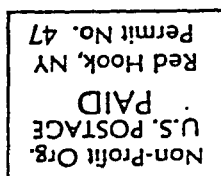
☐ Family \$12 ☐ Individual \$8 ☐ Student (under 18) \$1
☐ Contributing \$25 ☐ Sustaining \$50 ☐ Life (\$100 or more)
☐ Business or Organization \$15

Additional contributions are most welcome and are eligible for company matches: DONATION \$ _____

We invite you to help with the work of the Society. Please check here () if you would like to be contacted about volunteer opportunities.

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Egbert Benson HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RED HOOK
P.O. Box 1813 Red Hook, N.Y. 12571-0397

