

Egbert Benson HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RED HOOK
P.O. Box 397 Red Hook, N.Y. 12571-0397

SPRING 2005

Historical Society Acquires 19th Century Papers

The auction notice advertised “partial contents of 2 early Hudson Valley farmhouses in Kingston and Red Hook” and “large lot of family records/letters from Red Hook farmhouse 1870’s” At the auction gallery we found an old leather covered foot locker filled with dusty envelopes and papers – the papers of John Fraleigh Feller, found in the attic of the Feller homestead on Feller-Newmark Road. By the time the auction began several lots had been removed from the box – one containing two early Bibles, another a collection of small ledgers and another of miscellaneous papers. (Some of these have been appearing on Ebay recently.)

In spite of the removals there was enough material left in the box to provide an intriguing peek at life on a Red Hook farm from the Civil War until the early 1900’s. There is John Feller’s 1864 Notice of Enrollment in the New York State 21st Regiment. There are lists of vegetables sold or traded, a receipt for apples shipped to Manchester, England and a bill for the barrels in which they were packed. There are leases, ledgers and letters.

Bobby Thompson and I are examining and cleaning each piece of paper before housing it in an archival sleeve. When we have finished the papers will be arranged by date and subject in notebooks for further study. In the meantime we’re discovering interesting letterheads, advertisements and shipping documents and one intriguing mystery. During the 1880’s and 90’s there is a great deal of correspondence about “paint mines” on the Feller property that supposedly produced high quality pigments for durable paints for metals. One of Feller’s “partners” was William Donaldson the ne’r do well son of Robert Donaldson of Barrytown. Donaldson called the business “The Oriole Paint Works”. In spite of a glowing copy of a testimonial from the noted landscape designer Louis A. Ehlers (who laid out the roads as Rokeby and other

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Fergus Bordewich to Speak at Annual Meeting

The noted Barrytown author, Fergus M. Bordewich, will speak about the underground railroad at the annual dinner meeting of the Egbert Benson Historical Society on Tuesday, June 14th. Bordewich’s newest book Bound for Canaan, The Underground Railroad and the War for the Soul of America tells the story of the first black migration to freedom and the heroic Americans – both black and white – who made it happen. He debunks the myth of furtive escapes through underground tunnels and secret hideaways up the Hudson River to Canada and brings to life the morally complex and politically divisive acts of civil disobedience which characterized the movement.

Bordewich has written several books on social issues including Killing the White Man’s Indian and My Mother’s Ghost. His articles have appeared in the *New York Times*, *Smithsonian*, *American Heritage* and *Atlantic Monthly* and *The Reader’s Digest*.

His talk will follow the dinner and a brief business meeting.

19th Century Papers

(continued from page one)

Hudson River estates) .Correspondence about the mines ends in 1894 after which Anna Feller appears to take over the running of the farm.

We cannot overestimate the value of papers such as the Feller documents to an understanding of the successes and failures of the citizens of Red Hook. For a detailed look at the economic life of the ordinary people of Dutchess County we recommend the Dutchess County's Plain Folks, Enduring uncertainty, inequality, and uneven prosperity, 1725-1875 by William P. McDermott, published by Kerleen Press, 2004.

Barbara W. Bielenberg

Montgomery Place, Annandale

On January 10th, Historic Hudson Valley (HHV) which is the organization responsible for the operation of Montgomery Place on River Road in Annandale, announced that it would be necessary to close the historic home located on the property for a period of five or more years in order to implement a strategic plan that includes the development of a new interpretive plan and to provide time to perform extensive rehabilitation of the historic home and other component parts of the property. As a result, individual and group tours of the interior of the home will not be offered including the student programs previously offered. HHV noted that the grounds and gardens of the property would continue to be open during the summer months for self-guided tours. Your Society is concerned about the closing of this valuable National Historic Landmark to the public and has encouraged HHV to use its best efforts to identify ways and means that will permit the re-opening of the house for tours as soon as possible. The Board of the Society has offered to assist HHV in identifying alternatives to a long-term closing.

John Kennedy

The Feller Family

When we had bought the Feller papers at auction, we opened a fascinating picture of the late 1900's and an old Red Hook family. The papers belonged to John Fraleigh Feller. Who was he? where did he come from? and how long was he in the house? part of which dates back to the late 1700's?

There must have been a marriage to a Fraleigh girl at some, but how did I find out? Dipping into the work of Clara Losee, I found a booklet by Rosalie Fellows Baily, published in July of 1932 for the New York G&B that give me my first clues. That and the book *The Palatine Families of New York 1710 Volume I* by Henry Z. Jones gave me the information that I needed to trace John Fraleigh back to his roots.

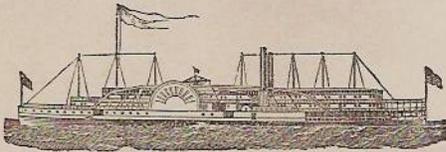
I will quote from Rosalie Bailey one of the things that makes it so difficult to trace one man. " They were a sturdy stock and had many children most of whom married and had issue. So the family soon became a very large one." The first Feller (Fellows, Veller, Feller, Fellers) was Nicholas Feller coming in 1710 with his wife Mary, his son Johan Philip, daughter Catherine. Johan Philip was In West Camp and Married Catherina Rau in 1716 in Ulster County. He came into Rhinebeck about 1718 and was elected one of its first assessors. He made five purchases of land between 1748 and 1751. The will of Philip Feller, executed in 1763, lists his wife and seven children. Only three of his sons as executors. One of his sons was Johannes Feller.

He was born March 1719 and died 1791. He married Anna Barbara Dater and had 3 girls and 5 boys. He was buried in Rhinebeck Lutheran Cemetery. His son John J. Feller was born 30 Oct 1758 and married Anna Aerkenberg and had six children. One of them was Peter I. Feller born 22 May 1800, christened in St. Peter's Church, Rhinebeck. He was married Nov 1826 to Catherine Maria Fraleigh. He served in the 6th Regiment of the Dutchess County Militia with land bounty rights. He lived in Rhinebeck with his father at the time of the 1790 Census and probably inherited his Father's farm. He died in 1874 and was buried in St. Paul's Cemetery, Red Hook. His son was named John Fraleigh Feller.

The old house on the 1850 map is in the name of John Fraleigh, father of Catherine Maria. In 1876 the house is in the name of John F. Feller. The main part of the house was probably built about 1820/1830. The earliest part is the kitchen and the upstairs (now) attic. The last information from Rosalie Fellows is that John Fraleigh Feller owned a 140-acre farm.

John Feller died in 1919 and left four sons; Warren, William, John and Ernest. He was a life long Red Hook resident and was 77 when he passed.

Barbara Thompson



STEAMERS

SAUGERTIES,
Capt. Henry L. Finger.

ULSTER,
Capt. Robt. H. Whitaker.

Leaves Barrytown, for New York, Daily, except Saturdays.
Leaves New York, foot of West 11th Street, Daily except Sundays.
Landing at Ulster Landing, Rhinebeck and Hyde Park.

BARGE SARAH SMITH,
Capt. J. F. Carnright.
Leaves New York, from New West Washington Market, Fridays
at 6 p.m.

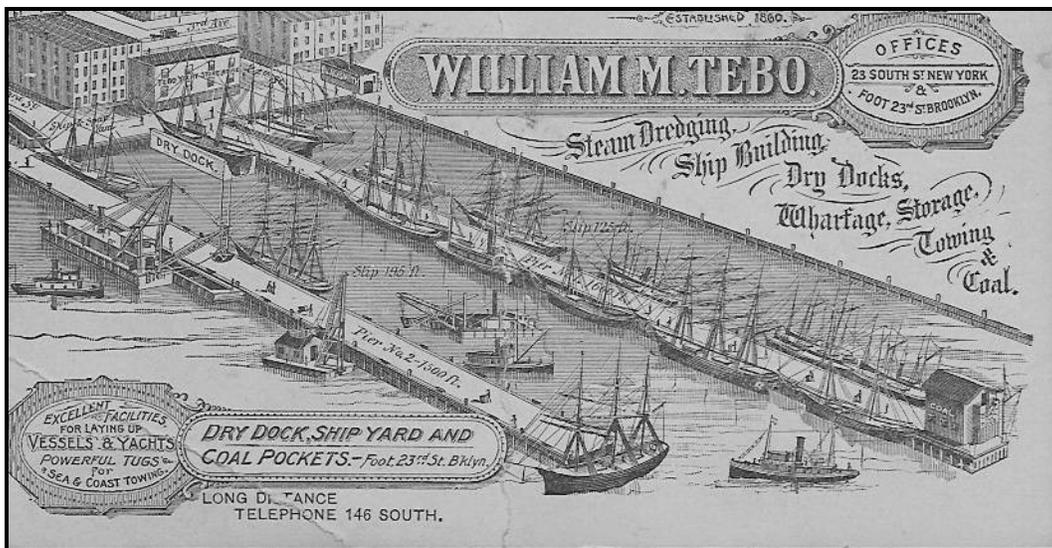
Receipt for shipment of straw on the Barge Sarah Smith of The Saugerties & New York Steamboat Co., Sept. 26, 1893. Feller Collection

Business card: The Oriole Paint Works. William Donaldson, son of Robert Donaldson of the Edgewater Estate in Barrytown, took an interest in the Feller paint mines. Feller Collection.

THE ORIOLE PAINT WORKS,
RED HOOK, N. Y.
WM. G. DONALDSON, PROPRIETOR.

EXTRA FINE AND DURABLE DRY GROUND PAINTS AT
LOWEST PRICES.

P. O. Address, Barrytown on Hudson, N. Y.



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COAL POCKETS.**—Foot 23rd St. Bklyn.

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TELEPHONE 146 SOUTH.

Postcard showing the Dry Dock and Shipyard of William M. Tebo, Brooklyn, NY, included in a letter regarding Feller paints Jan. 8, 1894. Feller Collection.

Excerpts from a recent newsletter of the Rhinebeck Society authored by their President, John Vincent, who is also a member of the Board of the Egbert Benson Historic Society.

It's Spring and there's no better place to be than the Mid-Hudson Valley. Awareness of our local history has been a motivating force for me as I've gotten away from my Hollywood filmmaking days. So many facets have we to reflect upon since man has moved into this mix of beauty, natural wonders, physical features..... the stories that are so interesting are becoming easier to research thanks to the efforts of our historical-minded neighbors.

Videos are becoming a standard favorite for recognizing our interesting history. 1000-acre Ward Manor had been a getaway for Summer fun. In a video recently a letter was received from one who stated his best Summer was open air adventures there when he was 8. It's signed 'former Governor of Wisconsin'. That slapped me with how lucky we are to be surrounded by this countryside along Hudson's River.

I've been a documentarian for 50-years. I'm becoming concerned about not letting our local historical images get misplaced. Fred Briggs had a huge postcard collection of our area he would share willingly. It was always available to see favorite sights so I didn't get around to seeing but a few then suddenly he was gone. Since PANDA started it had collected thousands of videos of our region, fathers, mothers.....a nostalgic treasure-trove to someday hear and see locals after their gone. I've been learning how to put 8 hours of video onto a DVD. What I didn't think of was that PANDA had no obligation to keep any of their years of local history. Had I reflected on Briggs' postcards gone maybe I'd have offered to get the thousands of hours of video into our archives, but they've all been incinerated last month.

I leave you with a project each of us can do. Sit with anyone who has memories of this area and record them before it's too late. We owe it to our heritage. Use an audio recorder or video, but do it now. You may contact me for technical help.

John Vincent

EBHS Membership....

Our latest tally of members reveals 137 regular memberships (some individual and some family) plus 49 Life Members. Many thanks to all of you for paying your dues, which help us pay our bills! We appreciate all of you who added donations to your dues payments, and also our faithful Life Members who generously sent us donations!

Our newest Life Members are Rosalie Rossi (also our newest trustee) and Murray VanNess.

We have not been able to get the dates on the address labels, due to a computer "glitch". In fact, we didn't even get labels for our last newsletter mailing. Consequently, my message to you about checking the date on your label must not have made much sense! If, by some miracle of modern science (and help from the experts!), this newsletter has a label with the year 2005 written above your name, your dues are paid through 2005. If it has an earlier year, we would be pleased to receive dues from you.

Evie Seils, Treasurer, EBHS

Proposed Dues Schedule for 2006

"Due" to increased costs, and you all know about increased costs, your Board of Trustees is recommending a slight increase in our dues for 2006. This will be discussed and voted upon by the membership at our Annual Meeting on June 14.

We are suggesting the following schedule for next year:

Student	\$ 5
Individual	\$ 10
Family	\$ 25
Contributing	\$ 50
Sustaining	\$100
Life Membership	\$200

While no one wants to raise the dues, we feel it is the responsible thing to do at this time. We feel strongly that the current expenses (mailings, PO Box Rental, telephone, office expenditures, etc.) should be covered by current dues and donations. It is true that we have accumulated some savings, but much of that money is put aside for specific reasons. If you have any questions about this, please speak to any board member.



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preservation, and dissemination of the history of the town of Red Hook.

Benefits of membership : Advance notice of monthly programs ~ The knowledge that you support the collection,
Donation (indicate any company matches please)

Individual \$10 _____
Family \$15 _____
Student (under 18) \$5 _____
Life \$100 (individual) _____
Sustaining \$50 _____
Contributing \$ 25 _____

Dues: Please check: _____
Telephone Number (with area code): _____

Mailing Address: _____

Name(s) (please print): _____

MEMBERSHIP FORM 2005
The Egbert Benson Historical Society of Red Hook
P.O. Box 397 Red Hook, New York, 12571