



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

SPRING 2009

President's Letter

By Patrick Higgins

Another year has come to an end for the Egbert Benson Historical Society. June 16 will be the final meeting of the year and the Historical Society will have its annual banquet on Tuesday May 19th.

Looking back over the year in spite of a minor shortcoming the Historical Society enjoyed a very successful year. It purchased a display board and hopes to conduct a series of open house exhibitions at the Elmendorph during the summer displaying some of its archival material. At the Christmas open house party the board received a lot of favorable attention with a photographic history of Red Hook. During the year the archives received a number of new acquisitions which the people in the archive rooms are very proud of. The shortcoming was that the Historical Society had a problem filling a position on the board but Patsy Vogel who volunteers in the Archive Room offered her services and joined the board. I think it proper at this time to extend our condolences to Patsy Vogel on the loss of her husband Craig. The Historical Society extends its deepest sympathy to Patsy on her great loss.



This year we are celebrating the Quadricentennial of Henry Hudson's exploration of the Hudson River. This year's banquet will be dedicated to that historic event. I have been honored by being the guest speaker at this historic dinner. I will discuss what we know about Henry Hudson and the Hudson family; Hudson's other voyages and what brought him to the famous waterway that was named after him. I will also discuss Hudson's reception in England after his return from the New World and his final voyage.

Next year the Historical Society will be looking for five new board members. John Kennedy, Treasurer, Rose Rider and John Vincent are leaving the board after filling two three year terms. Patrick Higgins, President and Beth Pascarella are resigning from the board. The Egbert Benson Historical Society wishes to thank its outgoing members for their service over the years.

Don't Miss the Historical Society's Annual Dinner on May 19, 2009.
see page 5 for more information and reservation form.

ARCHIVE ROOM

Barbara Thompson

We often receive queries at the Archives Room. Men and women looking for their properties on an old map or their ancestors and relatives that might have lived in Red Hook. An individual searching for pictures of an old lamp post or the man who was looking for ferry crossings or just someone who wanted to know more about Elmendorf and Red Hook.

But I was intrigued by the lady who was investigating a coronet. At first I thought, oh we have a picture of that band. I retrieved it from the files and it was a photo of a brass band in the nineteen twenties, surely there must be a coronet player there. On the back there were some names, but no John Teal. Then I looked at the query again and reading it more carefully, realized this woman, Nancy Campbell, had found a coronet and a handwritten music book inscribed "Red Hook Coronet Band, 2nd Eb soprano, John D. Teal". There were Civil War tunes in the music book. Well, that was the end of a beautiful picture of the brass band.

So I looked at the 1850 Census and found John Teal. He was born in 1847. His father was Jacob, mother was Annie. He is on the 1865 Census age 28. He married Mary Rossman on 12 Feb 1867 and died at his residence Aug 1889 and buried in St. Peter's Lutheran Cemetery. So, times of the Civil War, what did I know about that. I remembered we had some letters from two soldiers that served in that terrible war and so I retrieved them from the files and read all through both of them. In a letter from Ed Curtis, 150th Regiment on Sept 22 1861 he writes, "Our Band cannot play as well as the Red Hook Band" and again on Oct 2, 1861: "How does the Band get along? I wish we had it for our Regiment. Our Band can not Play Yankee Doodle."

This sketchy reply was sent to Nancy Campbell and we got wonderful thanks for our research. So if anyone would like to research a lamp post or a coronet or something else, we are here ready to help if we can.

The Archives Room is open most Tuesdays 10AM– 4PM.

To phone ahead please call 845-758-1920.

As a membership organization, our Society is dependent for its' operation on the funds donated by its' members. If you have not already paid your membership dues for 2009 and/or wish to make a donation to the Society, we request that you consider so at this time. Dues for the last several years have remained the same. They are: Individual \$15; Family \$25; Student (Under 18) \$5; Contributing \$50; Sustaining \$100 and Life (Individual) \$200. Dues and donations are fully tax deductible.

The membership form is on the last page of this newsletter.

Preserving History

3

Note: Many of us have collections of personal or business papers which shed light on community as well as personal history. We are indeed fortunate that **James** and **Peter Hardin** are continuing to preserve papers relating to the history of **Red Hook**. In our last newsletter we announced the receipt of paper and digital copies of the **Budd-Hardin Collection**. In this issue we reproduce **James Hardin's** introduction to his family, and their important collection of papers.

Digital and Paper Copies of Elmendorf Family Documents

James Hardin

The Budd-Hardin Collection of family papers spans two centuries of life in Red Hook, from the 1730s to the early 1900s. Many of the documents in the collection have now been scanned and are available for study at EBHS. In addition, the historical society has received photo copies of personal letters and the genealogical information (such as birth and death notices) contained in two family bibles that belonged to Cornelius C. Elmendorph (with entries dating from 1751 to 1828) and Jacob C. Elmendorph (with entries and newspaper clippings dating from 1786 to 1880). All original copies of this material are in the possession of James Hardin of Washington, DC. The Budd-Hardin Collection includes approximately 144 items.

Downsizing to a smaller house is not a new idea. In 1947, when my father died, my mother, my brother, Peter, and I moved into our little Cape Cod house on Linden Avenue, on the site of the former Elmendorph School (District No. 1). Our Rhinebeck cousin Herb Decker had built the house in 1940 as a retirement home for my parents. My brother, then age four, watched the demolition of the school and the excavation of a new basement by men with picks and shovels. All three of us (Pete, my mother, and I) had been born when our respective parents lived at the big farmhouse across the street, on the corner of Linden Avenue (now Budds Corners Road) and Whalesback Road. The farm has been owned successively by the Elmendorfs, Eugene and Mina Budd, Warner and Mary Hardin, Gene and Edythe Budd, and C. H. and Laura Baxter, and is currently known as the Steiner Farm.

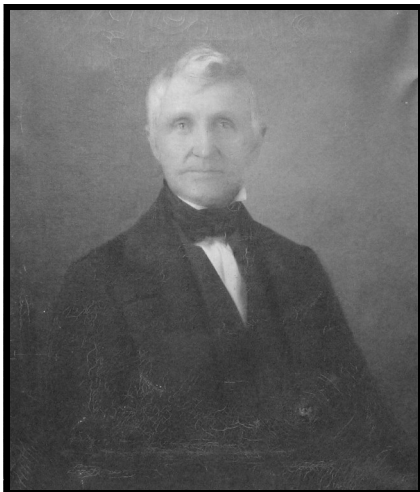
My mother, Mary Budd Hardin, and my uncle, Eugene Elmendorf Budd, inherited furniture, family portraits, farm implements, household goods, books, and papers from their parents, Eugene P. and Mina Potts Budd, as well as from their grandparents Mary Jane Elmendorf and Peter F. Potts, who had resided at another farmhouse, on Pitcher Lane. My mother and uncle sold the Budds Corners farm to C. H. Baxter in 1946. Thus did the contents of two large farmhouses and several barns have to be disposed of (alas) or accommodated by two smaller and more "modern" abodes.

When I was growing up, selected items were on display and in everyday use at our house and at my Uncle Gene's house on Linden Avenue, just down the street. Others were stored in our basements or packed away in boxes, out-of-sight. When my mother died in 1990, my brother and I agreed that he would take charge of the albums of family photographs, and I would take the papers. It was not until I retired a few years ago, however, that I begin to make an inventory of the varied and interesting collection of papers, legal and personal, that had come into my possession.

The Elmendorfs of Upper Red Hook

4

The Elmendorfs arrived in the Hudson Valley in the seventeenth century when Jacobus Conradt van Elmendorf immigrated to Kingston from the Netherlands. Over the years, a number of Elmendorfs moved to Red Hook and raised their families. Jacob Cornelius Elmendorf (1781-1851) was born in Upper Red Hook and married his cousin, Garritje Elmendorf (1781-1824). Their son Cornelius Edmund Elmendorf (1804-1876) married Anna Marie Pitcher (1799-1888), and their daughter, Mary Jane (1842-1928), eventually became the matriarch of Pitcher Lane I learned about in stories from my mother and uncle. Mary Jane also appears as a character in Agnes Losee Clark's memoir *Dutchess County Days* (Fithian Press, 1996), in the chapter "Afternoon Calls with Mother."



Mary Jane's uncle Thomas Elmendorf (1812-1896) was a bachelor-farmer who lived at the farm on Linden Avenue with his unmarried sisters, Rachel, Julia, and Amelia. He was also a lawyer and appears to have taken charge of legal affairs for his extended family. When Thomas died in 1896, that role fell to Mary Jane's husband, Peter F. Potts (1836-1910). The Elmendorfs were connected by kinship, friendship, and business dealings with many local families, and legal documents preserved and passed down by Thomas and Peter include such names as Van Benthuisen, Vredenburg, Heermance, Van Ness, and Livingston.

Photo of Thomas Elmendorf courtesy of Thomas Budd

Indentures, Estates, and the Transfer of Property

Among the papers in my possession (and available in digital form at EBHS), there is a lease dated 1739 involving Captain Baunt Van Benthuisen and Simon Kool; a deed dated 1791 involving Harman Hoffman, Catherine his wife, and William Van Vredenburgh; an indenture dated 1792 between David Van Ness and William Van Vredenburgh; a map of Troop Farm dated 1799, including part of William Pitchers Farm, William Van Vredenburgh Farm, Part of Ant [sic] Hoffmans Farm, Cornelius I. Elmendorphs Farm, and Part of Mr. Van Allen Lands. There are also two For Sale notices for farms in Red Hook dated 1818 and 1819.

Public documents of a more personal nature, dating from 1832 to 1876, include a number of wills and documents pertaining to the settlement of estates for Jane Pitcher, Andrew Pitcher, Jacob C. Elmendorf, Cornelius E. Elmendorf, and Augustus Elmendorf, as well as for Thomas Elmendorf and his sisters, Jane, Rachel, Julia, and Amelia. As a former member of St. John's Reformed Church in Upper Red Hook, I note that in 1876 the church received a legacy of \$500 from the estate of Julia Elmendorf.

There is also the military appointment, in 1828, of Jacob L. Potts, Ensign, 15th Regiment of Infantry, State of New York, signed by Enos T. Throop, Lieutenant-Governor. And there is a letter, dated September 13, 1864, from Louis Livingston of Tivoli to E. Elmendorph Esq., Supervisor of the Town of Red Hook, regarding payment for a substitute for military service.

These legal documents are visually beautiful and interesting. Although some are fading, some are in remarkably good condition. They are full of information but rather tedious to read, with references to parcels of land, boundaries and landmarks, and sundry agreements between parties of the first part and parties of the second part. In personal letters written between members of the family, however, the Elmendorfs, Potts, and Budds come alive

James Hardin is a member of the Red Hook Central School class of 1958. He retired in 2004 from the Library of Congress where he was a writer-editor.