CONGRATULATIONS TO THE VILLAGE OF ELMSFORD ON THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF ITS INCORPORATION IN 1910!

Throughout 2010, Village officials and hard-working committees have scheduled events to enable residents to enjoy a year-long Centennial Celebration. The celebration will culminate with a “Gala Centennial Ball” scheduled for Saturday, September 25, 2010, at the Westchester Manor, 140 Saw Mill River Road, Hastings-on-Hudson. (For more information on Elmsford’s Centennial, go to www.elmsfordny.org or www.elmsford100.com.)

When Elmsford officially incorporated on June 6, 1910, it became the latest of six incorporated villages to be established within the Town of Greenburgh. Prior to that date, from March 7, 1788 on, the Elmsford area had been part of the unincorporated area of the Town of Greenburgh and therefore, shared the same history, much of it being important to both. Greenburgh’s Bicentennial history book, “GREENBURGH: A GLIMPSE OF OUR PAST”, provides us with the following information:

“Town Halls or Town Offices did not exist in the first century of town government. Town officials maintained record books and an ‘office’ in their own homes. Town meetings were held at private residences or taverns, and a modest rent was paid to the owner. Because the Saw Mill River Road and the White Plains-Tarrytown Road were two of our earliest town highways, the crossroads at Storm’s Bridge (now Elmsford) became an important and accessible focal point. Consequently the Town of Greenburgh meetings were held in that general area for many years. The very first meetings were held in the Romer-Van Tassel house on Saw Mill River Road from 1788 through 1845. This historic building still serves as a private home. Later meetings were held in Hall’s Tavern at the four corners from 1849 until about 1865. This historic tavern, known over the years as The Town House, The Ledger House and O’Brien’s Chateau, survived in an altered and expanded fashion until the 1950’s.”

“STORM’S BRIDGE: A HISTORY OF ELMSFORD, N.Y. 1700-1976” tells us that it was the owner of O’Brien’s Chateau in the 1930’s who took advantage of “one of the most famous and controversial stories associated with Elmsford – the invention of the cocktail. According to local legend, Betty (or Betsy) Flanagan was a barmaid at Abraham Storm’s tavern during the Revolutionary War. She concocted the first mixed drinks and served them to the soldiers who frequented the tavern. On one occasion, lacking silverware, she stirred them with the feathers of roosters taken from a nearby farmyard. Thus they were dubbed ‘cocktails’. The proprietor (of the Chateau in the 1930’s) advertised it far and wide as the home of the cocktail. On the exterior of the building were huge signs proclaiming: ‘The 1st Cocktail Originated Here’, ‘Home of 1st Cocktail 1776’, and ‘Anniversary First Cocktail 1776-1936.’ The tavern, torn down in the 1950’s, is now the site of a small CVS shopping center. The old landmark is gone, but, for some, the legend carries on and continues to add to the Village of Elmsford’s very colorful history.

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