

City of Newburgh

Press Release

83 Broadway, Newburgh, N.Y. 12550
(845) 569-7354 – (845) 569-7370

For immediate release
April 5, 2011

“Sound and Story Project” Links Newburgh Past and Present

“Why is Broadway eight lanes wide?” That question is printed on a small green aluminum sign on the corner of Broadway and Grand next to the municipal employee parking lot. For the answer, use your cell phone to call the number on the sign and you will also hear former Mayor Don Presutti describe Broadway’s grand parades.

A sign near the binocular station adjacent to Broadway Park on South Colden Street asks, “What is missing today that you could have seen from this very spot in 1970?” The pleasant reply on the other end of your call is the recorded voice of Newburgh’s Frederica Warner who will tell about her neighborhood of lower Ann Street, a place that vanished in the wake of urban renewal.



Mr. Presutti’s and Mrs. Warner’s memories are part of a unique electronic switchboard connecting people of the present with moments from the past at just the place where they can best absorb that history lesson.

Because community is strengthened by the power of listening, librarian Eileen McAdam and radio producer Jim Metzner started the Sound and Story Project of the Hudson Valley.

This initiative began as a way to collect the experiences of ordinary people into a living archive that everyone could easily enjoy. Collected stories from recent interviews and old tapes provided by families and colleagues are kept in a databank that can be accessed by phone and by computer. Newburgh and Beacon were two of the first cities to participate, and residents shared many stories of times gone by.

The decorative signs invite people to dial in to learn about the place where they are standing in the words of someone who was there long ago. Kathy Wurster tells about her pride in walking along Manhattan streets and finding manhole covers cast by and bearing the name of her family, the Kimballs, three generations of whom operated a local foundry. Tim DeGroat tells about the changing surface of the river and its perils to those piloting and riding the old ferries. Warren Boyd describes the elegance of the Palatine Hotel as his father, Thomas, knew it when he worked there. Kay Gill recalls the many famous stars who performed in Newburgh’s Ritz Theater.

There is more to hear and pictures to see on the Sound and Story website www.soundandstory.org and more to come as people offer to share more of their community’s heritage.