

# City of Newburgh

## Press Release

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*For immediate release*

March 24, 2009

Elizabeth P. McKean, City of Newburgh Records Management Officer  
Named Washington's Headquarters 2009 "Woman of History"



**City of Newburgh Records Management Officer Elizabeth (Betsy) McKean was named the 2009 "Woman of History" at Washington's Headquarters State Historic Site. She is shown with Kathleen Mitchell, WHQ Interpretive Programs Assistant.**

City of Newburgh Records Management Officer Elizabeth P. (Betsy) McKean was named the 2009 "Martha Washington Woman of History" during the annual celebration of "The General's Lady" at Washington's Headquarters State Historic Site in Newburgh on Saturday, March 21. The event is held in honor of Women's History Month, and this year, the Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Quadracentennial.

Betsy joins Janet Dempsey, Carol Ash, Patricia Favata, Barbara Bedell, Mary McTamany, and Mary Mangione in receiving the annual award.

A Professional Land Surveyor, Betsy first came to Newburgh in 1977 to research land surveying fieldwork in the old Engineering Department records, squirreled away on the forgotten fourth floor of City Hall. Hooked, she then volunteered to organize the map archives along with other members of the Delaware Hudson Land Surveyors Association. Finally unable to resist the map collection, she agreed to work part-time as an Engineering Technician upon the retirement of Bea Cornell, became full-time in 1997, and eventually was named Records Management Officer for all of the municipal records.

Allowed & encouraged to become involved in meaningful projects with Newburgh's citizens, she has participated in the proposed Quassaick Creek Estuary Preserve & Mill Trail planning, spent a decade on the Dutch Reformed Church stabilization & adaptive re-use planning, worked on the sustainable component of the Master Plan with the community, developed interpretive materials for Old Town Cemetery and the City's heritage, and worked closely on behalf of innumerable projects with agencies, organizations, institutions, boards, and individuals throughout the region.

In her capacity as Records Management Officer, she has archived the extraordinary collection of the City's historic documents and volumes, making photocopies of as much of it as possible for researchers to access at the Historical Society and the Newburgh Free Library Local History Room. Scanned Council Proceedings going back to the 1940's, and the current transcription project of the Village of Newburgh, Dutch Reformed Church & Alms-House volumes of records from 1800-1865, are now included in Newburgh's incredible wealth of information accessible to researchers of this next generation, just in time to become part of the City's electronic data warehouse.

Her current preoccupation – together with her 'day job' of Records Management Officer for the City – is the Newburgh Beacon Bay 2009 celebration, the once-in-a-century opportunity to share 300<sup>th</sup> birthdays on both sides of the river, and the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mr. Hudson's voyage.

Mayor Nicholas Valentine commented, "The Woman of History Award" is especially fitting for Betsy, who has made it her mission to preserve and enhance our City's rich historical legacy and architectural and natural resources, even when it meant stepping outside of the duties of her rather limited title of "Records Manager." For example, for the last four years as co-chair of the Newburgh Beacon Bay Quadricentennial committee, along with City Historian Mary McTamaney, she has helped put together a host of events that will make Newburgh a star of the statewide celebration. In 2009, and into the future, Betsy has earned a place in the history of the City of Newburgh."