



# The FERRYMAN

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VOLUME X, No. 3

DOBBS FERRY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
153 Main Street, Dobbs Ferry, New York 10522

JUNE 1991

## THE ENVIRONS OF ASHFORD AVENUE -- THEN AND NOW



These are the men of Ogden Engine Co. #1, circa 1908, with a charming young lady, photographed on Lefurgy Avenue. Seated in a place of honor is Adelaide Beckett. The firemen (listed in alphabetical order) are: John Bagley, John Brannick, Joseph Costello, Eugene Devlin, William Hallahan, John Holgerson, George Kamke, Horace Leadbetter, Thomas

Lee, Napoleon Mattson, James Monahan, Martin Monahan, Henry Newhaus, Joseph Newman, Niram Odell, Joseph Oths, Sr., Otto Pfeil, Thomas Sheridan, Andrew Siess, Charles Siess, William Stinson, and Henry Weiderhold. The above photo was donated to the Historical Society by Georgia M. Kaschel.



Ashford Avenue today, from a viewpoint just north of the bridge between Dobbs Ferry and Ardsley, in a photo made this year shortly before the spring greening. Capt. Andrew Serrell (USN, Retired) a former Dobbs

Ferry resident, was the pilot and Bill Blanck operated the still and video cameras. The flyover recorded, in numerous photos, 1991 Dobbs Ferry.

## New York State Denies Resubmitted \$350,000 Request for Restoration of the Overseer's House

The Commissioner of the State Parks Department for the second time in an eleven month period denied a resubmitted request for funding to restore the Aqueduct Overseer's House. The current request submitted by the State Parks Department Taconic Region was for \$350,000 while the previous request was for \$524,000.

For over two years, in the denied proposals, the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society was named as the operator of the Overseer's House, which it hoped would serve as a new home for the Society. Presently the Society is housed on the ground floor of the library in a room that also serves as a library storeroom.

The denial of the current submission is especially significant as all money from the Environmental Quality Bond Act of 1986 has been spent on other State Projects. It was under this Act, passed by the New York State Legislature, that application was made for Restoration of the Overseer's House.

The Dobbs Ferry Historical Society now must decide what the next step will be in seeking new, adequate quarters.

--Bill Blanck

## Little White Church Cemetery Walking Tour Scheduled for June 30th

The Historical Society will be conducting a walking tour at the Little White Church Cemetery on Ashford Avenue Sunday afternoon June 30th at 2:00 o'clock.

The history of the cemetery and the present preservation of the site will be the focus of the tour. Call the Historical Society for further information.

-- Caroline Kravath

## Aqueduct Photograph and Slide Exhibit Will Open this August in Dobbs Ferry Library

The Dobbs Ferry Historical Society is mounting a color photograph and slide exhibit, *Focus on the Old Croton Aqueduct*, this summer in the Dobbs Ferry Library's Pearline Plotkin Memorial Community Gallery.

With 1990-91 support from the Heritage Task Force for the Hudson River Valley, Inc., the exhibit will hike us through the narrow Old Croton Aqueduct Trailway (a State Park), from the edge of the dam in Croton, all the way south to Untermyer Park in Yonkers.

Captured along the way are encounters with the aqueduct double arch in Ossining, Station Road Viaduct in Irvington, and ventilators in Hastings and Ossining. Glimpses of just-off-the-trailway architecture, including the Octagon House, Alexander Hamilton's Nevis, the Aqueduct Overseer's House and Zion Episcopal Church, are caught by photographer Evelyn Fitzgerald, with addi-

tional photography by Cathy Polgreen and Tema Harnik.

Close-up photos of the natural growth along the aqueduct's Dobbs Ferry portion, are reminders of the seasonal Natural History Walking Tours conducted by the Historical Society in 1990.

The exhibit is enhanced by a continuous slide show exploration of the greater area through which the Old Croton Trailway runs -- from aerial to trail-level views.

*No Aqueduct tour will be complete this summer without stopping in at the new Ossining Urban Cultural Park Visitor Center (95 Broadway, Ossining) on your way north from Dobbs Ferry. Opening June 8, 1991, the Center will house a permanent exhibit about Sing Sing and the Old Croton Aqueduct.*

Both the Dobbs Ferry Photo Exhibit and the Ossining Urban Cultural Park Visitor Center are open free to the public.

--Tema Harnik

## Storms Family Members Identified

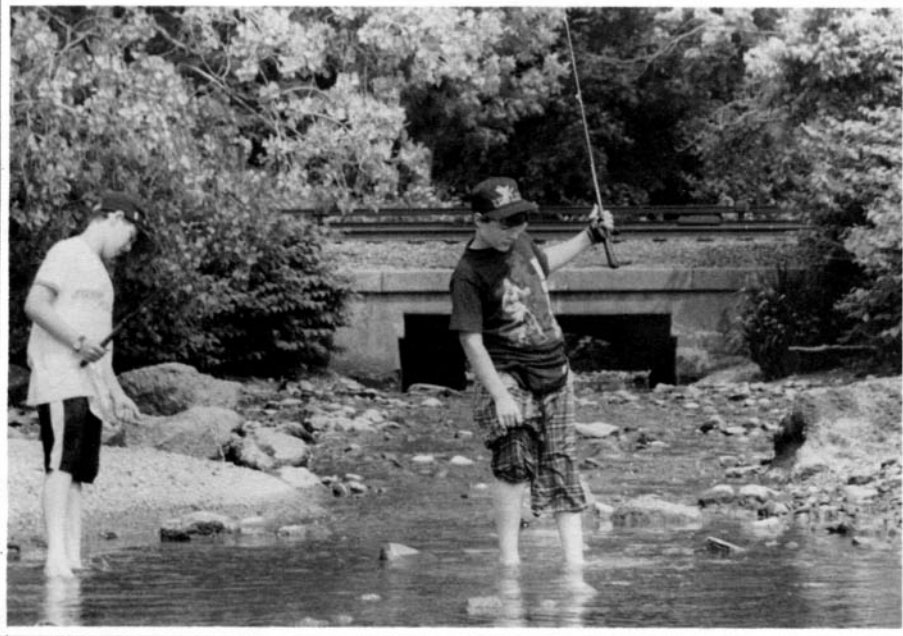


Remember this front-page photo in the last issue of *The Ferryman*? Winfield Losee of Broadway identifies his mother with her left hand on the bicycle seat (second from right) and her family. That's her father, Charles G. Storms (left) and his children (left to right): Howard, the youngest, Ella, Edwin, Edith, and Lillian (Lily, who later married David Ravekes). Two older children are not pictured. Mr. Losee's generation has another survivor: little Howard's son, Gilbert Storms, of Florida.

-- Virginia Barton

## FOWCAS ADOPTS WICKERS CREEK

### *Initiative Sponsored by League of Women Voters*



*At the junction of Wickers Creek and the Hudson, Michael Heiman (left) and Emmanuel Marks (center) try their luck casting for stripers.*

Formal adoption papers were given to Thomas Morrison, corresponding secretary of The Friends of Wickers Creek Archeological Site, (FOWCAS) by Thomas J. Jorling, Commissioner of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, in recognition of the group's commitment to the protection of Wickers Creek. The initiative was sponsored locally by the League of Women Voters as part of Water Week, May 5-11, 1991.

#### **Fish Breeding Area**

Mr. Morrison has been working with various members of the Department of Environmental Conservation to change the classification of Wickers Creek. "This would essentially mean upgrading the status of the waterway, thereby taking into account its importance as a breeding area for fish and the significance of its drainage into the Hudson River," he stated.

On May 15, 1991, Morrison and FOWCAS member Carol Russell arranged a meeting between Dobbs Ferry Mayor Donald Marra, Village Manager Margaret Slavin, and Laura Tessier and Dale Borchette of the Soil and Water District of Westchester County. The group visited the Wickers Creek drainage area and discussed what it would entail to document the wetlands. Tom Morrison explained that "Throughout the United States the status of wetlands as a critical environmental zone is being recognized and most communities are taking measures to preserve and protect these lands from further destruction."

In addition to the mission of increasing community awareness of the environmental aspects of

this resource, FOWCAS intends to continue its efforts to highlight the historic significance of the waterway, both in the past as well as in present memory.

#### **Attracted Native Americans**

The position of the land at the confluence of Wickers Creek (a source of fresh running water) and the Hudson River is believed to have been one of the key factors that attracted Native American groups to set up camps and shellfish processing sites on its banks for over seven centuries. This area has long been recognized as a major archaeological site.

Mr. Morrison's organization has undertaken steps to place the site on the National Register. This Fall the Review Board of the Department of Parks and Recreation will meet to decide whether or not to approve the request that Wickers Creek be listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places. "Listing the site would give recognition to the significance and meaning of Wickers Creek in American pre-history and would also underscore its importance as a feature in local history," Mr. Morrison explained.

Members of the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society have shown interest in collecting accounts by local residents of their memories of Wickers Creek. The area has been a favorite recreational site since the beginning of the century, as attested by photographs in the Archives of the Historical Society. A joint project between FOWCAS members and members of the Historical Society that would highlight the environmental and historic significance of Wickers Creek is being planned for early autumn.

*-- Kathleen Modrowski*

# Kind Horses and Low Budgets in 1891

## FOR SALE

A young, sound and kind horse, good under the saddle, and a fine roadster. Can be seen and particulars given by applying to:

Thomas Creighton  
Bliss Brothers Market  
Dobbs Ferry

## A PAPER HORSESHOE

The latest horseshoe is of paper. It is elastic and durable. It is the invention of a German.

A number of thin sheets of parchment paper saturated with oil and turpentine are glued together and the mass subjected to a strong hydraulic pressure. The holes for the nails are then bored, after which the shoes are trimmed and ready for the market.

It is said that the shoe wears in such a way that the surface is always rough, thus adapting it particularly to smooth pavements.

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**Advice: In order to show your grandeur,  
don't reduce your fellow being.**

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The annual statement of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Dobbs Ferry recommends the following expenditures:

For removing garbage	\$500.00
For Rents	\$500.00
For Sprinkling Streets	\$500.00
For Legal Purposes	\$250.00
For Clerk's Salary	\$250.00
For Printing	\$100.00

--Researched by Judy Holzer from  
a local 1891 newspaper

## SOME RECENT ADDITIONS TO THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S RESOURCE COLLECTIONS

(available on loan to members)

Educational Facilities Laboratories, Inc.

**LEARNING ABOUT THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT.**  
EFL, 1974.

A catalogue of resources for teachers and students.

Longstreth, Richard.

**THE BUILDING OF MAIN STREET.**

A Guide to American Commercial Architecture. 1987.

Maddex, Diane (gen. ed.)

**LANDMARK YELLOW PAGES.**

National Trust for Historic Preservation. 1990.

Where to find all the names, addresses, facts and figures you need.

\*Preservation League of NYS.

**PRESERVATION DIRECTORY.**

A Guide to Programs, Organizations & Agencies in New York State. 1988.

Strangstad, Lynnette.

**A GRAVEYARD PRESERVATION PRIMER, 1990.**

The guide prompting conservation of the Little White Church Cemetery.

\*New York Historical Resources Center.

**GUIDE TO HISTORICAL RESOURCES IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY, NEW YORK REPOSITORIES.**

Olin Library, Cornell University. 1991. (*The Dobbs Ferry Historical Society's holdings appear on pages 27-31.*)

Kammen, Carol.

**ON DOING LOCAL HISTORY.**

Reflections on what Local Historians Do, Why, and What It Means, 1988.

Thompson, Enid T.

**LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTIONS.**

A Manual for Librarians. AASLH, 1978.

### On Oral History ...

Gabaccia, Donna A.

**FROM SICILY TO ELIZABETH STREET.**

Housing and Social Change Among Italian Immigrants, 1880-1930. State University of New York series in American Social History. Albany, 1984.

Portelli, Alessandro.

**THE DEATH OF LUIGI TRASTULLI AND OTHER STORIES.**  
Form and Meaning in Oral History. SUNY Press. 1991.

### Hudson River Valley and Environmental Studies ...

NY/NJ Trail Conference and Rockland County Department of Planning.

**THE LONG PATH IN ROCKLAND COUNTY.** December, 1989.

Historic Hudson Valley.

**GREENWAYS IN THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY.**

A New Strategy for Preserving an American Treasure. Sleepy Hollow Press, 1988.

Hudson River Valley Greenway Council.

**DRAFT STUDY FOR A HUDSON RIVER VALLEY GREENWAY.**  
Albany. April, 1990.

Scenic Hudson and the National Park Service.

**BUILDING GREENWAYS IN THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY.**  
A Guide for Action. December, 1989.

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). **DRAFT HUDSON RIVER ESTUARY MANAGEMENT PLAN.**

Hudson River Estuary Management Program and Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement. September, 1990. (No. 1-1990).

NYSDEC.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY. DRAFT HUDSON RIVER ESTUARY MANAGEMENT PLAN.**

Hudson River Estuary Management Program and Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement. September, 1990. (No. 2-1990).

NYSDEC.

**A RESEARCH PROGRAM FOR THE HUDSON RIVER ESTUARY.**  
Prepared pursuant to the Hudson River Estuary Management Act of 1987. September, 1990. (No. 3-1990).

Heritage Task Force for the Hudson River Valley, Inc.

**THE LOWER HUDSON BASIN TRIBUTARY STUDY.**

Recommendations on Protection and Best Management of Tributaries to the Tidal Hudson River. December, 1990.

\*reference use only

## 1924 - 1948 VILLAGE MEMORIES -- The Winemaker, History in the Dump, and The Gatehouse Ghost

*Ed. Note: The following letter from former resident Mayzette Edholm Stover provides an intriguing glimpse of the village she knew over half a century ago. We thank her for sharing her delightful memories with us.*

A friend of mine discovered The Dobbs Ferry Historical Society. She sent me the information about the Outbuildings project. Fascinating! I recognize most of them. My membership is enclosed.

I lived in Dobbs Ferry from 1924 until 1948. My father was an artist and a writer. He studied in Europe at the turn of the century. The family settled in Dobbs Ferry when I was five years old. My mother and father hunted for an inexpensive apartment that an artist could afford. The apartment had to have a view of the Hudson River. We moved to the top floor of 7 Main Street. The Pellegrino family owned the house. The druggist, Ralph Immediato, wife and children lived on the second floor. Main Street at that time was a Little Italy. I was the only blond child on the street.

### Uncle Tony

The patches of land around the converted houses and apartments were planted with tomato and pepper plants, oregano, etc. There were grape vines shading patios or climbing over porch pillars. Their luscious black grapes were pressed to make wine. Prohibition did not put an end to this. My father's booklegger, Uncle Tony, lived nearby. He slipped us bottles of wine in mysterious packages.

In the Spring the ladies would walk to the aqueduct, where they could harvest dandelions for salad and for a tart dandelion wine.

In the fall great trays of tomato paste were prepared outside. They were covered with cheesecloth for protection against bees, flies and butterflies. Main Street was perfumed with delicious odors: Italian bread, tomato and oregano, and a pungent sausage smell.

Later we moved to a building belonging to Masters School, a rambling old Victorian house overlooking the river, thanks to Miss Sally Masters, who let us live there for reduced rent during the Depression. Our next move was to 333 Broadway during the war.

My father was a friend of J. T. Cronin, the architect mentioned in your guide, and he also knew Edwin Gould.

Our house was a meeting place for artists, writers, poets, and town characters: i.e. Dr. John Timen, the director of the Little Theatre; J. Gordon Guthrie, stained glass artist. Lewis Hine, the photographer of Ellis Island, was a good friend, joining us from his home in Hastings.

My memories of D. F. are of "Uncle Tony", my father's bootlegger, the iceman giving us chipped ice,

kids during the depression checking for coal that might fall from the delivery truck, the garbage man who was a history buff, and spent his spare time in the library. He also built a cabin on the edge of the dump (now a park) overlooking the Hudson. He had his pick of discarded furniture. He built an extra room for a piano.

The Charthouse restaurant has taken the place of the old coal dock. I have interesting paintings of the coal dock, and the old willow tree as it was. I'm so glad you have preserved it.

### Gatehouse Ghost

I remember the old Ingersoll house, and the gatehouse. Kids would spit on the sidewalk and turn around three times to ward off his ghost. I didn't understand this as I had been told he was a free thinker. There was another ghost in a gatepost in front of a deserted mansion (long gone) near the Hudson at the end of Maple Street, I think. I do not remember the name of the ghost but he had been an occupant of the house and his ashes were supposed to be in an urn in the gatepost. I wrote about this for a children's story, but I have not sold it. I now need to revise it.

There are many fascinating memories about this town, and as you know a great deal of history that stretches back to the very beginnings of our colonies, and Indian lore that disappears beyond our knowledge.

Cordially,

/s/ Mayzette Edholm Stover

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### Welcome to the Newest Members

The Historical Society welcomes the following new members who have joined since the March 1991 newsletter:

From Dobbs Ferry: **Rita Baviello Belarge, Ronnie Berish, Sylvia Brownshield, Robert W. Cassidy, Lucille P. Danaher, Robert Distefano, Lois and Leon Flesdrager, Amie Gross and Harold Horowitz, Jeremy Gutman and Debra Kupper-Smith, Nancy Zevola Higgins and Dorothy E. Hull.**

Also, **Chris K. Ishii, Buck and Jean Jee, Bernard and Rita Katzanek, Conrad and Mary Lesnewski, Terry Luckett, Dr. Letty G. Lutzker, Esther McGuire, Miriam and David Mauzerall, Michael and Irene Moynihan, and Violet A. Pearce.**

Also, **Betty Petronis, Dr. and Mrs. Paul Rogow, Linda Rudd, Elaine and Terry Schneider, Steven and Linda Segall, Michael and Patricia Sheridan, Patti Tobacco, Isabel Tripodi, Kurt J. Vollweiler, Nancy White and Robert Hirschfeld, and Lindsey and Bill Willis.**

**The President's Office of Mercy College** has a new professional membership.

From around Westchester: **Joseph Ellman** of Bedford Hills, a Dobbs Ferry police officer; **Nancy Strong Caruso** of Hastings, owner of The Paper Shoppe, **Doug Wilson** of Irvington, and **Elizabeth Edwards** of Mount Vernon.

The Society is delighted to hear from a small en-clave of three transplanted Dobbs Ferryites living in California: **Alison Lent** and **Philip Sutton**, both of Redondo Beach, new memberships sent in by **Mindy Kubicek** of Long Beach, California.

And from Berlin, Maryland, we welcome as a member **Andrew Serrell**, a native of Dobbs Ferry and a major contributor to the recent video tape "Dobbs Ferry 1933".

**Correction:** The name of **Mrs. Margaret C. Jordan** was omitted by mistake from the Membership List in the March 1991 newsletter. Mrs. Jordan is a current 1990-91 member.



# CELEBRATE THE 4th OF JULY



WITH THE DOBBS FERRY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**Raffle Prizes:**

Drawing at Bandstand at 5 pm. Winner need not be present.

- ★ \$25.00 Gift Certificate - Swiss Cabin Restaurant - Main Street.
- ★ \$25.00 Gift Certificate - Jimmie's Restaurant - Main Street.
- ★ \$30.00 Gift Certificate - House of Charm - Main Street - Your choice of hair care, clothing, or gifts.
- ★ \$25.00 Gift Certificate - Schapira Coffee Co. - NY, NY - Your choice of coffee or teas.
- ★ \$25.00 Gift Certificate - Tom's Laundry & Dry Cleaner - Main Street.
- ★ A Round of Golf with Brian Monahan.
- ★ Month of Freshly Baked Bread by Judy Holzer.
- ★ Your choice of two 8 x 12 color aerial photographs of Dobbs Ferry, made by Bill Blanck. Photos may include your house.
- ★ 30-minute ride in a 1929 Erskine (antique Studebaker car).

\$1 each, 6 tickets for \$5,  
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Return tickets & donation to DOBBS FERRY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
in door slot of Dobbs Ferry Public Library, 153 Main St., through July 3rd,  
OR to Historical Society's table at PICNIC-IN -THE-PARK, July 4th.

Phone (914) 693-7766 (24-hour answering)

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## World War II Dobbs Ferry Subject of Ferryman Special Edition

Marking the fiftieth anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society will publish a special edition of the Ferryman featuring the activities and contributions made by local residents during World War II.

Microfilm of local newspapers is being researched and ex-servicemen who were in the armed forces are being interviewed and taped.

In a recent taping, Lee Vance, a retired Lieutenant Commander in the Navy, recounted his experiences beginning at Pearl Harbor and ending with the Japanese surrender in Tokyo Bay aboard the Missouri.

In the video tape interview, Lee Vance tells of his

rescue and subsequent assignments, first to a destroyer, and by the end of the war, to the battleship Missouri. It was on the deck of the Missouri that General MacArthur, with the high command, accepted the surrender of the Japanese, ending World War II. Lieutenant Lee Vance was aboard.

Other interviews planned by the Historical Society will include experiences of Dobbs Ferry servicemen both in the Pacific and in Europe.

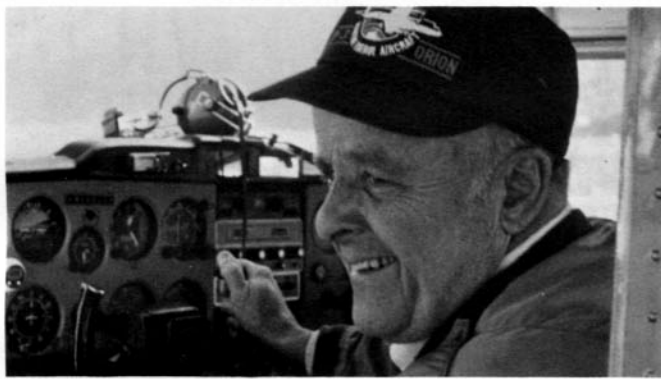
Fred Staats, Bill Maguire, Barbara Pearce, Candace Shuluk, Bill Shuluk and Kathleen Modrowski are the Historical Society's interviewers.

--Bill Blanck

## Flying Over Dobbs Ferry to Record 1991 Village for Archives and for the Ashford Avenue Project; Prints Will Soon Be Available

During the videotaping of an interview a year ago, Captain Andy Serrell volunteered to make a flyover of Dobbs Ferry for still photo and video documentation.

In the same interview, Captain Serrell, who grew up in the village, related his memories of Dobbs Ferry in the Depression, the 1933 NRA Parade, and his participation in World War II, Korea and Vietnam as a Navy flyer.



*Captain Andy Serrell*

His offer to help document the village on film and tape was made for this year. And so, a few weeks ago, before the village blossomed into spring, I received a call from Captain Serrell from his home in Maryland, telling me to expect him for the flyover.

Timing was important. The weather had to be good -- springtime could not be too far advanced as the greening would obscure areas to be photographed.

The day set for the flight arrived and the weather was magnificent. In happy anticipation I drove to the Westchester County Airport to meet Captain Serrell. My job was to operate the still and video cameras.

Flying in a small plane is a memorable experience. In a commercial flight, often high above the

clouds, you see little of the ground below except in takeoff and landing. But in a small plane at low altitude practically every building and road is recognizable as the countryside slowly unfolds beneath you.

At about 1200 feet, we flew over the Hudson, viewing the Palisades in rugged miniature. In seconds we were over the Dobbs Ferry waterfront, and then the Village. Captain Serrell knew exactly where all the streets and landmarks were as we circled back and forth.

The side window of the Cessna was open so I could lean out to do the photography (strapped in a seat belt of course). The chill wind bit into my fingers -- gloves would hamper the operation of the cameras. And a video lenscap, attached to the camera with a cord, flapped in the breeze and frequently hit my now-numbed hands. But we did get our pictures.

Both the video and still photography will become part of the archives of the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society. Prints, in color, will soon be available for purchase. Your home may be shown in one of the several photographs.

--Bill Blanck

ISSUE EDITOR  
Bill Blanck

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Barbara Pearce  
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Bill Blanck

# Dobbs Ferry Historical Society

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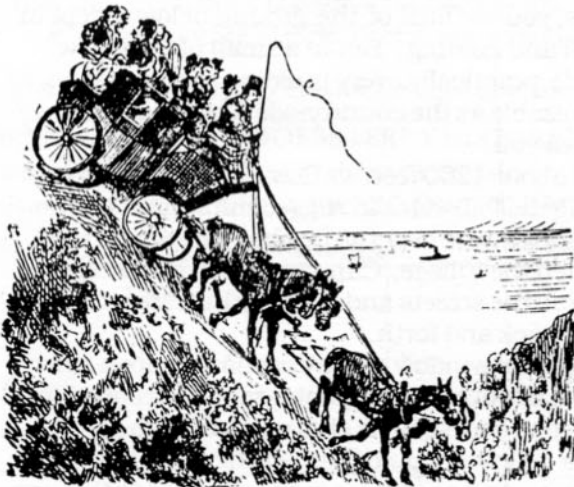
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**G**OING TO THE JULY 4th PICNIC AT THE WATERFRONT IS THE THING TO DO.

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