



The FERRYMAN

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DOBBS FERRY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
12 Elm Street, Dobbs Ferry, New York 10522

DECEMBER 1997

OUR LADY OF POMPEII CELEBRATES 75 YEARS

On Friday evening,, October 3, 1997, Father Carmelo Glavina, pastor of Our Lady of Pompeii Roman Catholic Church, and his flock began the parish's 75th anniversary celebrations with a wine and cheese party in the parish hall. The talk among the older church members included fond memories of bygone pastors, dances in the hall, spaghetti dinners, friends living and dead. A few were old enough to remember how their parents or uncles and aunts petitioned the Archdiocese for some years to establish an Italian church in Dobbs Ferry.

It was late summer, 1922. When groups of Italian-speaking men of Dobbs Ferry got together on bocci courts or at card games, the talk was about the demonstrations and pitched battles between communists and fascists that had racked Italy all year long. They also argued about the settlement of the bitter five-month strike of coal miners in the United States over wages and union dues checkoff system.

Victor Emmanuel III was King of Italy. Pius IX had been Pope for only half a year and strongly opposed communists everywhere, and fascists in Italy. Luigi Facta was Prime Minister; Benito Mussolini and his fascists were consolidating power and, in two months, Mussolini would make his successful "March on Rome." Warren Gamaliel Harding was President of the United States, Calvin Coolidge, Vice-President. Nathan Miller, of Syracuse, the New York Governor, would be ousted in November by Alfred Smith, of New York City. John Hylan was Mayor of that city; Lyman French was "President" (that is, Mayor) of Dobbs Ferry; and the Rev. John Talbot Smith was pastor of Sacred Heart Church at Broadway and Ashford Avenue.

While the historic events of these turbulent times swirled about them, the Italian men and women wondered, somewhat complainingly, when, if ever, the powers in the Archdiocese would grant them their own Italian Parish. They did not object to attending Mass at Sacred Heart. But Father Smith delivered

his homilies in English, which many did not understand fully. They wanted their own church where the sermons would be in Italian.

Archbishop Patrick J. Hayes had felt the pressure from Dobbs Ferry from time to time ever since he took over the Archdiocese in 1919 from the late John Cardinal Farley. In the years before that, the Italians had appealed to Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini for help. Mother Cabrini, who had established Sacred Heart Villa, a Catholic girls' boarding school, in Dobbs Ferry, just south of Broadway and Livingston Street, responded by appealing to Cardinal Farley in 1915. She asked for permission to have an Italian chaplain offer Masses and administer the sacraments in Sacred Heart Villa's chapel.



A dream realized -- a church of their own.

Mother Cabrini, born in 1850 in a small village near Pavia, Italy, founded the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart in 1877, worked in Italy for 12 years, and then devoted her order's energies to helping Italian immigrants in the United States. She and her nuns arrived here in 1889. She became a citizen in 1909 and later, the first canonized saint in the United States.

By the time she focused on the immigrants' religious need in Dobbs Ferry, she had established sixty-seven houses in seven other

countries besides the United States and her religious order numbered more than 1,500 nuns all dedicated to education, nursing and the care of orphans, as well as fulfilling specific needs of Italian immigrants. She was canonized by Pope Pius XII in 1946. Her Dobbs Ferry girls' school is now the St. Cabrini Nursing Home.

In 1917, two years after she let them attend Mass in the school's chapel, the sad news of Mother Cabrini's death of malaria at the age of 67 in Chicago reached Dobbs Ferry. By then the local Italian population was exploding far beyond anyone's expectations and the tiny chapel all too soon could not accommodate all who wanted to attend Sunday Mass there.

-- continued on page 2

Pompeii Celebrates 75 Years

— continued from page 1

Finally, in October, 1922, Archbishop Hayes sent Rev. Canelio Dattolo to Dobbs Ferry to establish a new Italian Catholic church. He had been chaplain at the New York City Tombs (the city jail) for two years. Before that, he had been first assistant pastor at Our Lady of Loretta in the city and had studied in Italy at the Roman Theological Seminary. He received a bachelor of arts degree from Columbia University in 1917. Just before his call to Dobbs Ferry, he had been offered a professorship in Italian and Spanish by Washington University in St. Louis, but then chose to follow his mission to establish a church in this Village.

The front page of the November 24, 1922 issue of the *Dobbs Ferry Register* said of Father Dattolo: "[He] has already taken charge and immediate steps will be taken with a view to collecting funds to erect a suitable edifice." The paper called him a "fluent orator" and, indicating his interest in local history, quoted from a fund appeal the priest circulated in the Italian community.

Calling the Village an "historical town" visited by George Washington, Father Dattolo said in his circular: "We who glory in the part played by Dobbs Ferry in the Revolution and whose civic pride prompts us to look to the future citizens of this grand Republic, will surely be urged by the double motive of patriotism and humanity to do our 'bit' toward the erection of the Church of Our Lady of Pompeii around which we later on may raise a home for destitute children. The children of today are the men of tomorrow. Therefore do we now direct and care for them as they are to handle the problems with which we wrestle.

"Founders, \$100; co-operators, \$50; benefactors, \$25; in memory, \$10. Free offerings in any amount will be acceptable."

Congregation Incorporated

In December, Father Dattolo convened a group of Italian businessmen, made a personal appeal and collected \$1,090 (a large sum in those days), as well as pledges of pro bono work. In January, 1923, the congregation was formally incorporated as "The Church of Our Lady of the Rosary of Pompeii" under the state's laws. Land for the church at Palisades and Chestnut Streets was donated by property owners Henry Prentiss and Jerome and Jeanne Bradley. On April 19, Father Dattolo paid a nominal \$1 for a deed to the property.

The building fund, which had been growing slowly, received a tremendous boost when Col. Franklin Q. Brown donated \$1,000. Ground was broken on July 31, 1923. Dominick Altieri was the contractor, the Bucci brothers were the excavators and Joseph De Nardo volunteered labor and ten loads of building stone. Col. Brown was honored in December, 1923, for his generosity at a dinner dance attended by 100 parishioners at the Dixie Inn (now Rudy's Beau Rivage).

As reported by the *Register*, the dinner committee was chaired by Father Dattolo and included: Marzio Orlandi, vice-chairman; Anthony Paino, treasurer; James Peters, Dominick Altieri, Pascal Connola, Moses De Luca, Natale Spino, Charles Gagliardi, Joseph San Filippo and Silvio Merendini.

Unfortunately, Father Dattolo fell ill after work had started. His health continued to deteriorate until he had to give up supervision of his flock and of the building project in June, 1924.

The basement part of the new church was completed in October.

The October 24, 1924 issue of the *Register* carried the announcement that Patrick Cardinal Hayes had named Rev. Pasquale T. Lombardo as Pompeii's second pastor. The article came two days before the basement was opened for Masses and other church services.

The main part of the church was completed by the end of 1925. The following year, the basement was converted into a parish hall. The church was formally dedicated in May, 1927. Father Lombardo left in August to make way for the congregation's third pastor, Rev. Nicholas A. Rimoli. The church was taken over in 1931 by the Augustinian order, which contributed eleven pastors to Pompeii until 1991, when the order returned the flock to the Archdiocese's jurisdiction. The present pastor, Father Glavina, is a diocesan priest.

— Hank Walter

More of the church's history will be published in the next issue of The Ferryman.



At the Fiftieth Anniversary, the Church, except for lighting, was much the same.

A Holiday Double Celebration --

First, the Annual Clara Mead Egg Nog Party December 14th 2:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Members of the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society may begin the celebration of the 1997 winter holiday season by coming to the sixth annual Clara Mead Egg Nog Party.

The Egg Nog Party, now a traditional holiday season event, will be held at the Mead House, 12 Elm Street, from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. on December 14th. While the Egg Nog Party is for Historical Society members only, non-members who wish to attend may do so by joining the Society at the party. Members who have not yet paid their 1997-1998 dues may do so at the door.

Miss Mead's generosity prompted her to bequeath her home to the Society, of which she was a member. She died in Septem-

ber, 1991. Her home is now the Society's headquarters and Dobbs Ferry's history center. The Society continued the eggnog parties as a way of saying "thank you" in her memory.

Custodian of her "secret recipe" was Dr. Mae Pepper, her next-door neighbor and long-time friend. Mae Pepper's untimely death this past March was deeply felt in the Society. She had been the Society's Secretary and the Chair of its Membership Committee. Not only did Mae prepare the delicious concoction, she also served it with her characteristic cheerful good humor.

Copies of the recipe have been distributed to members at past annual parties.

Followed by --

"Washington Irving: World Traveler" at Zion Episcopal Church at 5:00 p.m.

The second is Zion Episcopal Church's annual Washington Irving Holiday Celebration, at 5:00 p.m. at the Church, 55 Cedar Street, an event which is co-sponsored by the Church and the Society, and is open to all. The theme this year is "Washington Irving: World Traveler."

The Church, founded by Washington Irving in 1833, and the oldest house of worship in Dobbs Ferry, will be decorated in the nineteenth century style.

Local actors will read selections from Irving's writings and traditional holiday carols will be sung by candlelight. A reception will follow in the parish hall. Children are welcome and admission is free.

According to Rev. Richard R. McKeon, Washington Irving, in the course of his life, traveled extensively

throughout Europe and served as the American Ambassador to Spain. He used his experiences to add romance and drama to his writings, and this in turn influenced his attempt to give European traditions a "New World" flavor.

Washington Irving Sunday at Zion is becoming a cherished tradition in the Village and celebrates not only Irving's presence here during the nineteenth century, but also the spirit of cooperation between the Church, the community, and the Historical Society.

Volunteers are needed to bring baked goods for the reception. Such donations can be brought to the church earlier on the 14th, or at the Reception itself.

For more information, please call Fr. McKeon at 693-9320, or Bill Blanck at 693-4964.

Dobbs Ferry Historical Society's Goals for 1997-98 Year

At the special reorganization meeting of the Society's Board of Trustees on October 8, the Board discussed objectives and activity proposals for the coming membership year. These included:

Developing an index of all the Society's holdings to make archival information more easily accessible; working more closely with the Village government on historical topics of joint interest; and possibly producing more than four issues of the newsletter each year.

Also, computerizing the Society's financial and membership records; buying a state-of-the-art computer system, including a laser printer; and supporting more programs like the recent presentation by architect Steve Tilly on the Oceana Building at the annual membership meeting in September.

Also exploring opportunities for raising additional funds to replenish the Society's capital reserves (which took a beating this past year, because of emergency repairs to the Mead House), as well as to pay for projects like indexing the Society's microfilmed

records of the *Dobbs Ferry Register*, developing more history programs of interest to the members and investing in the future in technological advances in the preservation of historical documents (like digitizing photos, slides, etc. on to compact disks for storage). Actions will be taken on some of these proposals at future meetings of the Board.

At its reorganization meeting, the Board also elected its officers for the 1997-1998 membership year: Bill Blanck, President; Warren Gardner, First Vice-President; Fred Staats, Second Vice-President; Mavis Cain, Treasurer; and Jim McCarthy, Recording Secretary

At the annual membership meeting on September 26, the Society's members elected ten Trustees; six, for three-year terms: Bill Blanck, Muriel Brown, Charlotte and Hugh Frankenthaler, Anne Graham and Hank Walter; three, for two-year terms to fill vacancies: Gabriele Grunebaum, Dr. Cecil Jack and Dr. Jim McCarthy; and one, for a one-year term to fill a vacancy: Jock Thornton, Esq.

PUBLIC HEALTH IN DOBBS FERRY --Village Purchases Odorless Cesspool Cleaner

-- by Warren Gardner

[In the last issue, Mr. Gardner wrote of the beginnings of public health services in Dobbs Ferry. Those services were absorbed by the Westchester County Department of Health on January 1, 1930.]

The concentration of humanity, housing, commerce and industry began to be critical in Dobbs Ferry in the 1870s, specifically along Main Street. Insanitary conditions and a prevailing ignorance of their effects on the environment increased sickness in the village. In 1882, the elected Board of Trustees approved a 13-page Sanitary Code with broad powers to be enforced by the Health Officer. Printing the Code cost \$15.

The concept of "proper waste management" is taken for granted today. Not so 115 years ago in Dobbs Ferry. The village took its first step toward "waste management" -- although it was not called that in those days -- on June 30, 1883 when the village's Board of Health ordered householders "to henceforth keep all ashes separate and apart from garbage and, where feasible, in separate receptacles."

Government telling private citizens how to handle their own waste matter on their own properties was a relatively new idea in America. But intervention on behalf of the public health was generally accepted in Dobbs Ferry. For some insanitary conditions had gotten so gross in public areas, that it is hard for us to understand how people could have tolerated them for so many years.

Imagine a Main Street whose eastern side had many outlets that spewed on to the street both liquid and partially solid materials from leaking cesspools up the hill. Imagine the same situation on Palisade Street paralleling Main Street down the hill.

Decisive action was required. And on May 2, 1883 the Village Board of Trustees informed the Health Board that \$1,000 extraordinary appropriation for sanitary purposes was approved by voters -- 30 for, 17 against (voters in those times were males who paid property taxes, or husbands of women who paid property taxes. Parts of these rules lasted well into the twentieth century).

The need for a cesspool cleaner, as well as someone to operate it, was obvious. In the spring of 1883, after extensive correspondence with health officers in other municipalities, a "pump and potting machine" costing \$650 was purchased from the Odorless Excavating Company.

By the summer of 1883 Mr. James Hart was contracted to store, care for, and use the new machine which, he reported, was working well. There was plenty to do.

According to the condensed minutes of the Board of Health:
August 25, 1883:

Mrs. J-T. on Main Street. Stagnant water running from premises. Ordered to provide a cesspool.

Mrs. M. - Chesnut Street. Slop water running from premises. Ordered to provide cesspool.

Mr. H. T.- Main Street. House draining running over sidewalk and gutter. Ordered to provide cesspool

Mrs. P. L. Stagnant water on premises. Uncovered improper drains. Ordered to provide cesspool.

Mr. J. L. Stable in rear of market on Main Street. Stagnant water in pit.

The Village Board of Trustees asked to have street Commissioner close all slop sinks or cesspool outlets on village streets.
September 7, 1883

Health Officer reported that those complained against have all, except Mr. L., indicated a willingness to comply. Mr. L. said his problem was caused by a broken sewer between Main and Palisades Streets. Health Officer to confer with Street Commissioner.

Complaint made against tenants in J. M.'s house on Main Street for keeping goats and allowing place to become filthy.
October 5, 1883

Health Officer reported: Sewer fixed. He had also asked the B's gardener not to empty the cesspool without covering contents immediately.

Mr. Hart reported that apparatus was safe but had not been called upon to use it in last three weeks.

April 25, 1884

The secretary (Mr. J. B. Ackerman) reported that the water used for drinking at the public school building was unfit for use. It was resolved that he should report the matter to the President of the Board of Education and that the matter be attended to forthwith.

The residents of the Village of Dobbs Ferry were particularly requested to give especial heed to the ordinances in regard to throwing impure matter upon the streets and in the gutters, and were also requested to abstain from throwing the contents of the cesspools on their lawns and gardens, especially without covering. It (odor) causes discomfort to adjoining premises' occupants and is prejudicial to the health of the neighborhood.

Future articles in The Ferryman will include rulings and recommendations on garbage, safe water, quarantine, vaccinations, burials, public records and a horse that died in an outhouse.



Brand new inside plumbing in 1883 frequently made problems outside.

~ IN MEMORIAM ~

JOHN RICCIARDI BEQUEATHS SOCIETY \$10,000 IN HIS SISTER'S MEMORY

"I give and bequeath the sum of \$10,000 to the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society, Dobbs Ferry, New York, in memory of my sister, Filomena Ricciardi, for its general use and purposes."

That was one of the provisions of the last will and testament of John Ricciardi, life-long resident of the Village who died on September 23, 1996 at the age of 89.

The Board of Trustees has expressed its gratitude for the generous bequest.

Mr. Ricciardi, a member of the Society, was the fourth child of a large family most of whose members were born, raised and lived in Dobbs Ferry for almost the entire 20th century. They were active in a variety of community and business affairs and were deeply interested in the history of the Village.

Mr. Ricciardi was born in Dobbs Ferry on January 26, 1907, to Francesco and Carmela Ricciardi. His parents had emigrated to Dobbs Ferry in the late 1890s from the little village of Calitri, Italy, about 75 miles easterly of Naples.

Francesco had high educational ambitions for his children, an unusual trait for an Italian immigrant in the early years of the 20th Century, when most children in immigrant families from different countries of Europe had little or no formal education beyond eighth grade.

Francesco and Carmela had seven children -- four sons and three daughters: Vitale, the eldest, Filomena, James, John, Madeline, Frank and Teresa. Frank, the sixth child, is the sole survivor of the seven and still lives in Dobbs Ferry. John is also survived by a niece, Rene Maxwell, of Little Silver, N.J.; a great-niece and a great-nephew.

John and his brothers and his sister Filomena, graduated from Dobbs Ferry High School. Reportedly, the Ricciardi children were the only students in the school who were of Italian descent for the period between 1915 and 1925. John was a member of the Class of 1925.

His sister Filomena had graduated in 1918 with an "A" average and went on to attend Barnard College, a rare accomplishment in those days for women who did not come from wealthy families. She was, in fact, the first woman of Italian extraction in Dobbs Ferry to attend college. Margaret Mead was one of her classmates at Barnard.

Also fulfilling the father's educational ambitions for his children, James went beyond high school and received an engineering degree from New York University while Frank earned a Bachelor of Science from Randolph-Macon College, Ashland, Va.

John, caught in the Great Depression, worked at whatever temporary work was available during the hardship thirties. In 1939, John opened up the Ricciardi Shoe Store on Main Street, across the street from the post office. Three years later, in 1942, shortly after the United States entered World War II, John closed the shoe store and joined the civilian war effort, commuting to the Bendix Corporation plant in Teterboro, N.J. He stayed there after the war and retired after 30 years in 1972, at the age of 65.

Soon after John started at Bendix in 1942, according to his brother Frank, John also became a business partner with Ernest

Scribner, his sister Teresa's husband, and the two men opened up a "confectionery store" on Main Street, "Scribner and Ricciardi," near where Doubleday's Restaurant is now located. For a quarter of a century, Ernest and Teresa ran the store, with John occasionally spelling them on his days off from Bendix, until about 1970. Even today, some long-time residents still refer to the candy store as "Scribner's".

After his retirement, John was active in a number of Dobbs Ferry groups, including the Aldersgate United Methodist Church, the Embassy Club, the Diamond Thistle Masonic Lodge and the Historical Society.

John's bequest to the Society in memory of his sister Filomena is a clear expression of the Ricciardi family's continuing interest in Dobbs Ferry history and their commitment to preserving it for future generations.

Indeed, Filomena was one of the founders of the Society, one of about a dozen people who laid the groundwork for its creation after the Village Centennial celebrations in 1973. She was a member of the Board of Trustees from its incorporation in 1978 till her resignation in 1992. She also served several years as the Society's Treasurer and was named "Trustee Emerita" by the Board when she declined to run for re-election to the Society's Board in 1992 for health reasons.

When she died in 1994 at the age of 92, *The Ferryman* described her as "a bundle of restrained energy, approaching all her responsibilities and tasks with serious effort and accomplishing all her goals with efficient effort. An amiable, stable woman, she steered the Society through many difficulties with a few calming words and sensible proposals. Her bottom line was 'what is best for the Society.'"

John's bequest to the Society in his sister's memory is a fitting tribute to a gracious woman whose contributions of time, effort and personal interest, not only to the Society, but also to the community at large, will always be remembered.

CORRECTIONS: There were some errors in the September, 1997 issue of *The Ferryman*, occurring in the articles about the Oceana Building. Without repeating the errors, the corrected texts read:

"The land parcel, the Oceana Building and its predecessor structures had a checkered history until 1965 . . ." (p. 1, col. 1).

"Dobbs Ferry's Oceana Building . . . has been the home of the Oceana Group of publishing companies *since* 1965 . . ." (p. 2, col. 2). [Note: At *The Ferryman's* request, David Cohen, CEO of the Oceana Group, explains that his father, Philip, founded Oceana in the closing days of World War II, located his operation in New York City until 1960, moved it to a building on Cedar Street opposite the old movie house and finally settled in 1965 in the structure at 75 Main Street, now known as the "Oceana Building."]

"In June, 1833, a surveyor . . ." (p. 2, col. 1).

"On July 13, 1833, . . ." (p. 2, col. 2).

"The structure . . . was *five* stories high." (p. 3, col. 1).

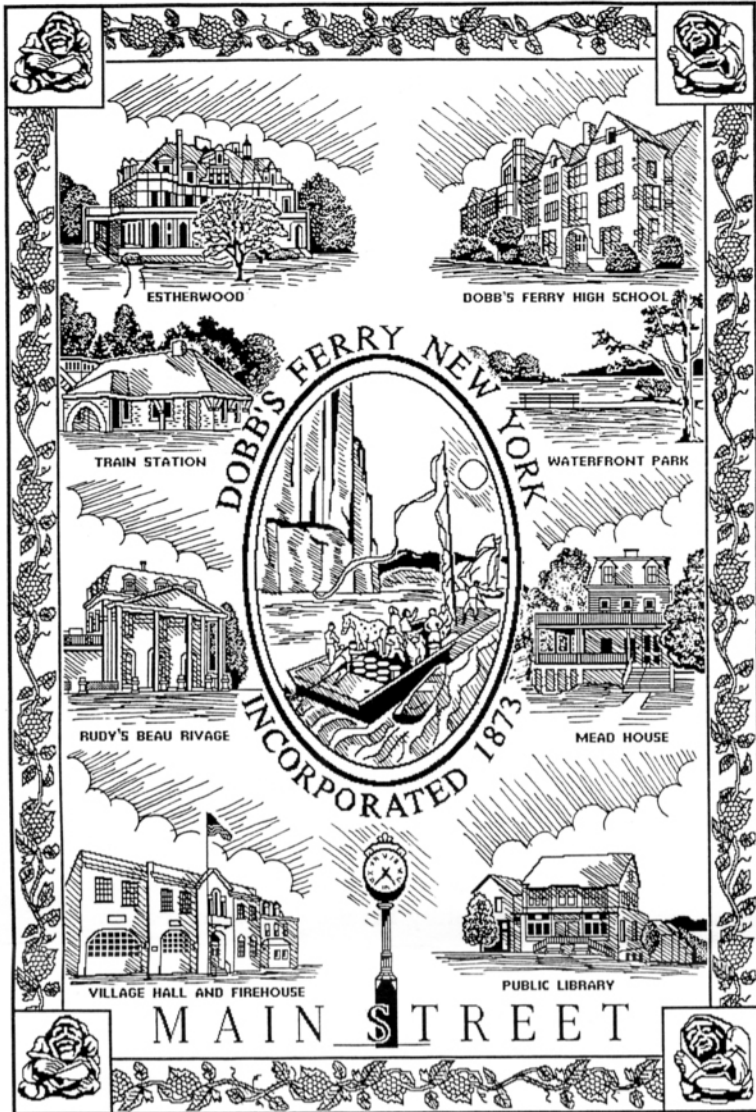
SOCIETY AFGHANS GREAT HOLIDAY GIFT

Once again, the Society has reordered more of its popular "history" throws for the upcoming holiday season.

While the throws, which feature Dobbs Ferry landmarks, are given away throughout the year as birthday or anniversary presents (and especially as graduation gifts to local high school seniors), they make ideal Chanukah, Christmas and New Year presents. At only 45 bucks a throw, each one becomes a priceless memento of our beloved Village.

Evoking pleasant sentiments and fond memories of living here, each afghan depicts the high school, the railroad station, waterfront park, the Mead House, Village Hall and the firehouse, the public library, Washington Theatre, national landmark Estherwood, and the Main Street sidewalk clock. These scenes surround Jon Neilsen's well-known woodcut of William Dobbs poling his ferryboat across the Hudson River toward the Palisades.

You can order the throws by using the form below.



Dobbs Ferry Historical Society
12 Elm Street
Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522

I would like to order _____ throw(s) @ \$45 each. Enclosed is my check for \$_____.

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Check color: Williamsburgh Blue Cranberry Red

IF YOU ARE NOT A MEMBER, PLEASE JOIN US NOW

Dobbs Ferry Historical Society

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Phone (day) _____ (eve.) _____

Please make check payable to, and mail to:
DOBB'S FERRY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
12 Elm Street
Dobbs Ferry, New York 10522
Telephone (914) 674-1007 (24-hour answering)

Membership contribution..... \$ _____

Mead House Roof/Boiler contribution..... \$ _____

Newspaper Microfilming Project contribution... \$ _____

TOTAL enclosed (TAX DEDUCTIBLE)... \$ _____

My employer's matching contributions form is enclosed.

MEMBERSHIP 1997-98 New Renew

Patron..... \$100.00

Friend..... \$ 50.00

Contributing..... \$ 25.00

Family..... \$ 15.00

Individual Adult..... \$ 10.00

Student/Senior (over 60)..... \$ 3.00

Junior (Students under 16)* ... No fee

*Persons under 16 years of age must show parent's or legal guardian's consent for membership. Thus, if you have checked Junior membership above, please provide signature below.

Date _____ Please check one: Parent _____ Guardian _____

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian