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DOBBS FERRY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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May 8th Gala To Feature History of Dobbs Ferry Police

The dramatic story of the Dobbs Ferry Police Department will be told by Detective Joseph Ellman and retired Officer Richard Palfy at the Gala of the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society, to be held Friday, May 8th, at 6:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall of South Presbyterian Church, 343 Broadway, Dobbs Ferry.

This year the price of admission to the Gala is \$18, for which members and friends of the Society will enjoy a buffet dinner offering a choice of roast beef served au jus or with gravy, or roast turkey with all the fixings. Dessert and beverage are included. The society has engaged a caterer whose culinary experience includes association with one of the most prestigious restaurants in Westchester.

Besides enjoying a delicious dinner in company with friends, those attending will hear the engrossing story of the Dobbs Ferry Police Department, one of the oldest in the area. There will also be a chance to buy raffle tickets and win a multitude of prizes generously donated by local merchants.

Officers Ellman and Palfy will tell how it all started. This fascinating story of the Dobbs Ferry Police was obtained through department records, the court book, and blotter samples by the decade.



Officer Boyle

Part of the story is about Patrolman William Boyle, Dobbs Ferry's first uniformed policeman, who was killed in the line of duty in 1898, leaving a wife and thirteen children. Descendants of Officer Boyle are expected to be at the Gala, as well as retired members of the police department.

The history of the Dobbs Ferry Police will include the operations of the present department, its mission, goals, and objectives. There will also be memorabilia and photographs which will be projected on a large screen, as well as videos of the police at work on the streets of Dobbs Ferry during the 1930's and 1940's. A

question and answer period will follow.

The Society is continually looking for material for its archives. Members and friends are encouraged to donate material when they come to the Gala. During the past year members have donated photographs of the blizzard in the winter of 1996-97, as well as dramatic photos of the fire at Rosalind Gardens. Richard Wilson, of Bedford Village, New York, sent a Civil War photograph of Colonel John Howard Kitching, of the Sixth New York Heavy Artillery. Kitching, a resident of Dobbs Ferry, was only twenty-five when he commanded 30 batteries, 2 regiments of infantry, and 300 ammunitions wagons. He was wounded at Cedar Creek, had a leg amputated, and following his return, in the depths of winter, to his home in Dobbs Ferry, he died of complications.

This past February member Brian Kates sent a copy of a clipping from a Confederate newspaper dated 1862 which contained correspondence from James A. Hamilton to Generals Sanford and Scott, and post-marked Nevis, Dobbs Ferry Post Office. Mr. Kates said he hoped we would research this material further and print the results in a future issue of *The Ferryman*. Mr. Kates previously provided the Society with a cancelled check from *New York Daily News* publisher Joe Patterson for the purchase of the Villard Estate. He also included materials from early real estate developers. Extensive research is being conducted by the Society on Henry Villard and his wife Fanny Villard, as well as the development of the Villard Hill property. Research on the Hamilton letters will be done in the future.

At a Society Egg Nog Party, the late Al Wall presented a copy of a telegram to a newspaper correspondent, which sparked research leading to publication of articles about the early days of the woman's suffrage movement and Fanny Villard's involvement.

Some of our best material for future projects often comes from friends and members at our functions.

Our Lady of Pompeii, in the War Years and Afterward

The Cancelled Dinner for Italian War Prisoners

Our Lady of Pompeii, known as "the little church on the corner", was only fifteen years old at the outbreak of war on December 7, 1941.

It was a time when altar boys of only a few years before were called upon to take up arms. Most of the young men attending Pompeii were in the service for the duration. But victory was bought at a cost.

Early in the war Private William Gameraota became the village's first casualty when he died from injuries sustained in an army truck accident in Hawaii, where he was stationed with the Field Artillery.

On Memorial Day of May 1945, only days after the surrender of Germany, Rev. Aurelio Marini celebrated a Solemn High Mass for nine young men who lost their lives. They were Private William Gameraota, Petty Officer 2nd Class Raymond Scapperotta, Private 1st Class Anthony Sanfilippo, Petty Officer 1st Class Anthony Tino, Florent Tramvacco, U.S. Merchant Marine, Private 1st Class William Pisani, Captain Kenneth Frasca, Private 1st Class Louis Mastroianni, and Sergeant Carmine Clasullo.

Only months before, in January 1945, while the war was still raging in Europe and Asia, Mayor Anthony Paino, who took office after the untimely death of Mayor Walker, informed Pastor Marini that the village would be unable to provide police protection for 120 Italian war prisoners for whom plans for a spaghetti dinner had been made by the church's Holy Rosary Society. Paino's action, according to the weekly newspaper *The Dobbs Ferry Register* of January 19, 1945, was commended "by thousands of residents of this and neighboring communities". In the same issue of the *Register*, it was reported that Sgt. Salvatore Pisani, an infantryman, was wounded at St. Lo while on duty clearing road mines.

At the time of the planned dinner for the Italian POW's, January 1945, Italy was no longer allied with Germany, but was a co-belligerent on the side of the Allies. After the Allied victory in North Africa and Sicily, in which thousands of Italian prisoners were taken, and after the bombing of Rome, King Victor Emmanuel, acting on behalf of the Italian Army and Government, had Mussolini arrested, and brought Italy over to the side of the Allies.

But that did not mean the end of the war on the Italian peninsula. The Germans, fighting on alone in Italy, imprisoned an estimated 164,000 Italian soldiers, of whom over 30,000 died in concentration camps.

While participation by the Italian armed forces on the side of the Allies was limited, units fought against

the Germans in northern Italy, Yugoslavia, France, Albania and Greece.

On June 4, 1944, the American Fifth Army made their entry into Rome. American General Mark Clark recalled, "There were enthusiastic crowds in the streets, many of them waving flags as our infantry marched to the capital. Flowers were stuck in the muzzles of the soldiers' rifles and guns on the tanks. Many Romans seemed to be on the verge of hysteria in their enthusiasm for the American troops . . .".

The members of Pompeii's Holy Rosary Society undoubtedly were aware of the change of events in the war and of the welcome our American Armed Forces received in Rome when they planned the dinner for 120 Italian war prisoners held in Camp Shanks across the river.

But the passions of war ran high in Dobbs Ferry and so a dinner that would allow the POW's to take back to Italy the felt sympathy and understanding of Pompeii's congregation never happened.

It should be noted that Italian partisans, during the course of their battle with the Fascists in the hills of Italy, captured Mussolini, who had been rescued by German Paratroopers from his earlier imprisonment. Mussolini, the man who had brought his country to ruin, was executed by those partisans.

This was the only spaghetti dinner that ever aroused controversy. The dinners are the church's largest fund raisers, and the late pastor, Rev. Anthony Cirami, decided that the last weekend in October was the time they should be held. But the annual dinner is not just a parish affair. Planned weeks in advance by volunteer help from the church, it is an event in which the entire community joins. Traditionally scheduled just days before the November election, it is an event that is eagerly attended by candidates of all political parties. Former Congressmen Ottinger and Peysner, and at present, Representative Gilman, all have greeted their constituents over spaghetti and meat balls. The event certainly has not been neglected by candidates for county office, including former County Executives Del Bello and O'Rourke, and the present County Executive, Andrew Spano.

Shortly after the cessation of hostilities in 1945, most of the young men who were parishioners of Our Lady of Pompeii returned to home, family and church. It was a time of readjustment to civilian life after years of combat -- a time of reflection.

It was also a time of the greatest increase of growth for the village. In 1940 the village population was 5,883. In 1950 it had increased to 6,268, and by 1957 the

population had reached 8,372. This was the period of the baby boomers, full employment, and an increased number of baptisms at Our Lady of Pompeii Church.

From the summer of 1950 to the armistice of July 1953 the United States was involved in a "police action" in Korea. While this did not affect the nation or the village to the same degree as the global conflict of World War II, it was brought to an end during the Eisenhower administration. Louis Altieri from Pompeii Church was killed, as were three other men from Dobbs Ferry, James R. McCoy, Harold S. Storms, Jr., and Harold G. Schmidt.

During this period it was reported in the *Dobbs Ferry Register* that a two-day feast of the Society of the Incoronata would take place. Joseph Annicharico, President of the Society, noted, "The annual two-day feast of the Madonna Incoronata Society of Pompeii Church will be held on Saturday and Sunday, April 26 and 27 on Palisade and Chestnut Streets, and will be climaxed with an elaborate fireworks display".

The fireworks that were set off at the waterfront were the first allowed by the village during the previous two years.

Chestnut and part of Palisade Street, as well as a section of Main Street, were gaily lighted and a grandstand was erected on Palisade Street opposite Pompeii Church.

From 1952 to 1955, Rev. Peter J. Toscani, O.S.A., was pastor. He was succeeded by the Rev. Claudio Fabrizi, O.S.A., from 1955 to 1957.

The Rev. Anthony A. Cirami, O.S.A., a graduate of

Harvard, was pastor from 1957 until his death on January 9, 1987. Father Anthony, as he was fondly known by parishioners and non-parishioners alike, guided his congregation through the prosperous post-war years when many parishioners were able to buy homes of their own. But it was also the time of the Vietnam War, and prayerful thanksgiving when the war ended. There was one casualty from the village: Robert J. Reilly.

Fr. Anthony's tenure also included the happy time of the 1973 celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the incorporation of the Village of Dobbs Ferry. Members of the congregation, dressed in colorful period costumes of Calabria, joined in the Centennial parade. Fr. Stephen Bordi, a priest from Pompeii, blessed a downsized version of the "Tappan Packet", one of the early ferry-boats. Apart from his ecclesiastical duties, Fr. Bordi was an accomplished singer, whose renditions of operatic arias at parish functions are still lovingly remembered.

Since 1991 the Rev. Carmelo Glavina has been administrator of Our Lady of Pompeii. A native of the island of Malta, he came to the United States in 1949, bringing with him a charming old world manner.

As the members of Our Lady of Pompeii celebrated the seventy-fifth anniversary on October 7, 1997, they could look back on a mission well accomplished.

-- Bill Blanck

*This is the second article of the history of
Our Lady of Pompeii Church.*



*A picture taken
in years past
records a
procession of
the faithful
from the church.*

Nineteenth Century Health Officer a Potent Influence in Dobbs Ferry

Sewage a Problem -- Main Sewer Extended Another 10 Feet Into the Hudson

-- By Warren Gardner

[In the last two issues, Mr. Gardner wrote of the beginnings of public health services in Dobbs Ferry and the first three years of the existence of the village's Board of Health.]

The Health Officer, whose powers were extraordinary, was authorized in the name of the public health "to enter, at his discretion, any lots, yards, or premises and to issue orders for correction of insanitary conditions."

He could quarantine anyone found to have a contagious disease, quarantine the sick person's premises, order the owner of such premises to clean, purify, ventilate and disinfect them, seize and burn contaminated clothing, restrict the size of funerals, and prevent diseased outsiders from coming into the village. Indeed, the Health Officer's powers were more sweeping than those of a policeman.

In June 1887, for example, the appointed Health Officer ordered the elected Board of Trustees (which had appointed him) to remove a manure pile from Cedar Street "in five days." The following month, a resident whose horse had died, refused to obey the Health Officer's order to remove or bury the decomposing carcass. The Health Officer had it buried and billed the owner for the removal.

~ MEASLES CANCELS CHRISTMAS ~

For all practical purposes, Christmas, 1888, was canceled by the Health Officer because of a measles epidemic. The public school was ordered to scrap a Christmas reception it had planned, the school itself was closed for two weeks and clergymen were ordered not to hold "gatherings" during the Christmas season.

The following selection of Board of Health meeting minutes between 1885 and 1891 illustrates the enormous scope of activities of the Public Health Officer.

October 2, 1885

Bill of Hon. C. P. McClelland, Health Board Counsel, for services rendered from December 31, 1884 to September 30, 1885 for \$37.50 was accepted and ordered paid. He was also on a \$50.00 retainer and attended all meetings. [His privy was also found to be

overflowing in May, 1886 and later abated.]

January 29, 1886

Bill of L. Herbeck as Registrar of Vital Statistics for \$69.00 presented and ordered paid.

August 6, 1886

[Sealed bids were requested through "The Greenburgh Register" for using and caring for the famous excavator. Only one bid, not Mr. Hart this time, by a Mr. Patrick Connolly, who was awarded the contract at a later meeting. Cesspools paid 25 cents per barrel and privy vaults 40 cents. A sum of \$250 was requested from the Village to keep the apparatus safe and in good repair. Mr. Connolly refused contract and it was cancelled.]

~ TYPHOID CASES REPORTED ~

Dr. Judson reported a case of typhoid fever in his own family, Olive Judson, age 5. [Later reports another case, 17 year old in residence of Samuel H. Prince, Main St.] Dr. Contant reported 3 cases in family of Mrs. D. B. Williamson, widow of a former Board of Health member, who had died at age 55 on July 12, 1886.

September 30, 1886

JL, Jr., Main Street. Cellar and manure pit under the outhouse or slaughter house was full of blood, horse urine and other material. Ordered abated.

Dr. Burr keeps a large number of ducks on his premises in a limited space embracing a running brook on the Courtlandt Palmer farm. The water from this brook is used for culinary purposes by several residents of the village. Ordered abated. So done by Dr. Burr.

November 5, 1886

Board of Health asks Village Board of Trustees to provide ventilation at several manholes along the line of the main sewers. This might ease the prevalence of fevers.

February 4, 1887

Mr. Herbeck, as registrar, reported 43 births, 34 deaths, 17 marriages, and 36 burial permits, at 50 cents each. His bill, including disbursement for stationery

(continued on page 5)

Nineteenth Century Health Officer

(continued from page 4)

and postage, was for \$70.00, and ordered paid. [No record of what happened to the 50 cent fees.] He was also the secretary of the board.

~ ALL CHILDREN VACCINATED ~

April 12, 1887

Health Officer reports a case of smallpox just outside village limits and recommends precautionary measures. Health Officer authorized to visit the public schools within the village's incorporated limits and vaccinate all children who may require such vaccination. Also, all persons who may apply, free of charge. He is to designate time and place.

Secretary authorized to purchase in the Board of Health's name such amounts of "cowpox vaccine" required. He did so at a cost of \$15. [Health Officer vaccinated upwards of 250 children and as many adults.]

June 21, 1887

The Dobbs Ferry Board of Health ordered the Dobbs Ferry Board of Trustees to remove the manure pile on the terminal at the end of Cedar Street in 5 days from receipt of notice. This pile was declared a nuisance.

July 22, 1887

Health officer reported that a horse belonging to Mr. JP had died in an outhouse (barn) on Main Street on the night of the 13th. Mr. P refused to remove or bury the carcass and it was still there and decomposing on the 18th. [The Health Officer evidently had it buried and at a subsequent meeting Mr. P was sent a bill for \$13.60.]

February 7, 1888

Mr. Herbeck presented another \$70.00 bill (ordered paid) for his services as Registrar. He also presented another bill for \$3.60 as Secretary.

Dr. Joseph Hasbrouck, the Health Officer, presented his annual bill for \$100 and it was ordered paid.

~ POLICE ENFORCE QUARANTINE ~

March, 1888

Health Officer reported a Michael McGlynn of Main Street had smallpox. Mr. McGlynn was removed to Reception Hospital in New York and a quarantine established at the house in which he lived and at the boat (Slocum) at which he worked. Both places

fumigated and three special policemen hired to enforce quarantine.

The Board paid Mrs. Thomas Francis \$15 for horses and wagon used for taking patient to New York. Policemen received \$4 per day, some at 14 days. One also received \$15 for driving the team to New York.

May 31, 1888

Several occupants of houses on Palisade Street where connection was recently made to main sewer at ground level complained that sand and debris entered sewer. Village Board of Trustees advised to instruct Road Commissioner to raise receptacles.

February 8, 1889 (report on December 1888 event).

Health officer reported that the Village Board of Trustees had "passed through" an epidemic of measles with no deaths and as a precautionary measure had notified the Public School not to have a reception and close school for two weeks. The several clergymen were notified not to hold any Christmas gatherings until after the 6th of February.

The Village Board of Trustees was again requested to require the Street Commissioner to vent the man-holes.

April 2, 1889

Registrar reported 8 recent cases of scarlet fever.

June 26, 1890

Resolved:

The Dobbs Ferry Board of Trustees be requested:

1. to extend the terminal of the main sewer line beyond low water mark.
2. to remove garbage from each house twice a week during July, August, and September.

The Trustees advised that they had adopted both items. Also resolved that the Health Board's Counsel be requested to notify Rev. John Hall and Rt. Rev. Bishop Potts to report marriages performed by them to the Registrar of Vital Statistics.

January 29, 1891

The Registrar's request that the New York State Law be amended to compel physicians or midwives to report births was passed on as before to the local assemblyman.

The Sanitary Code was amended to disallow surface water from entering the main sewer. Residences now so connected are to discontinue this link.

There was also a report that the main sewer had been extended another 10 feet into the river and an elbow had been attached to avoid tidal disturbances.

Ogden Engine Company No. 1 is 100 Years Old!



The photograph above captures the firefighters of Ogden Engine Company No. 1 marching in the parade marking the village's centennial twenty-five years ago in 1973, and their own 75th anniversary. This July 11th a parade of at least 26 fire companies from far and near will march in the streets of Dobbs Ferry in celebration of Ogden Engine Company No. 1's 100th birthday.

In 1898 it was felt that the three existing companies comprising the Dobbs Ferry Fire Department were too great a distance away to protect the community developing along Ashford Avenue. Ogden Hose Company No. 3 was formed on March 30, 1898.

The Company's first home was on Ogden Place East, which was rented for \$120 a year and housed the hand-drawn hose jumper shown above.

On August 11, 1908 members of the Company voted to change the name to Ogden Engine Company No. 1 in anticipation of their new horse-drawn chemical engine which was tested December 8th.

In 1910 the village acquired property and built a one-story structure for the company on Ashford Avenue, the location of the present firehouse. A second story was added later and the building enlarged to

meet the expanding needs of Ogden Engine Company No. 1 over the years.

In February 1916 the Company accepted its first motorized fire truck, the American La France Engine. Since then, five replacement trucks have been ordered for the company -- the latest, a Pearce Pumper, in 1995.

The foregoing information was obtained from "How It All Began, A History of Ogden Engine Company No. 1" by Teresa Walsh.

A 100th Anniversary Reception for the rededication of Ogden Hose Company No. 3's Museum of Firefighting was held Saturday evening, March 28th. Firefighter Pat Ruotolo was honored for forty years of dedicated service to the Company and to the Village. Kevin Costello, Company Chairman, delivered the welcoming address and ex-Chief John H. Cullen, Chairman of the Museum Committee, made the rededication of the Museum and introductory remarks. Fr. Terry Attridge was present as Chaplain, and Chief Edward Hennessey and Mayor Charles Lester were featured speakers, as was Frank Farrington, Company Vice Chairman, who closed the program with comments honoring Pat Ruotolo.