



The FERRYMAN

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U.S. Postage
PAID
Dobbs Ferry, NY
Permit No. 15

Resident
Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522

VOLUME XIV, No. 3

DOBBS FERRY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
12 Elm Street, Dobbs Ferry, New York 10522 (914-674-1007)

DECEMBER 1998



Clara Mead Egg Nog Party and Zion's Irving Celebration Set for Sunday, December 13



Mark your calendars and plan to spend all afternoon and early evening of Sunday, December 13 at two of the best, traditional holiday events in the Village.

The first is the seventh annual Clara Mead Eggnog Party. This will be held from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Mead House, 12 Elm Street. The party is sponsored by the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society for its members.

The second follows immediately afterwards: the annual Washington Irving Holiday Celebration (with wassail bowls and goodies of all kinds), beginning at 5:00 p.m. at Zion Episcopal Church, 55 Cedar Street (on the hill just east of the corner of Cedar and Main Streets). This celebration is co-sponsored by the Church and the Society, and is open to all.

Clara Mead, a Society member who bequeathed her house to the Society as a home for its collections, hosted an eggnog party during the Christmas season for 36 years for her circle of friends. After she died in 1991, the Historical Society resumed her personal tradition during the holiday season of 1992 as a com-

memoration of her generosity to it. Miss Mead's "secret recipe" for eggnog was reportedly her own version of one printed in *The New York Times* in December, 1954, when she began her annual parties.

The party is a members-only event. But non-members who wish to attend may join the Society at the party. Members who have not yet paid their 1997-1998 dues may do so at the door.

This year Zion Church's Washington Irving Holiday Celebration will focus not only on the holiday writings of Irving, but on his writings about Spain, which were published in 1832, the year Zion Church was founded. The program will also feature Spanish holiday traditions and an original sketch written especially for the program.

Following the 5:00 p.m. candlelight program in the decorated church, there will be a reception in the parish hall. For more information, please call Zion's parish office at 693-9320. The program is free of charge and all are welcome.

"Friends of the Historical Society" Being Formed

A new group, "The Friends of the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society," is being formed by member Ed Berry. The group's purpose is not only to help the Society maintain the success of its present activities, but also to help expand its reach into the community and to involve more people in its efforts.

Mr. Berry said, "We invite you, members and non-members alike, to join a select group of individuals dedicated to helping the Society's Board of Trustees in the work of collecting and preserving the historical data of our wonderful village."

"The work, now done almost exclusively by the 18-member Board," Mr. Berry continued, "involves such chores as improving the Mead House and its grounds, organizing and cataloguing its collections, helping to run historical programs and events, participating in

fund-raising activities, indexing pertinent data in our microfilmed records of the *Dobbs Ferry Register* and the *Enterprise*, researching (if necessary) and answering phone message inquiries, performing other office and administrative work, researching and writing (if that is your bent) historical articles for *The Ferryman*, making photographs and videotapes -- and even such mundane tasks as painting the front yard fence and entering information into our computer."

Whatever talents of brain and/or brawn you have, the Society can use them to make it a better custodian of Dobbs Ferry's history. If you're interested, call the Society at 674-1007 and leave a message, with your name and number, for Ed Berry. Or contact him at his e-mail address: berry@amnh.org. He'll get back to you. That's a promise.



A Visit to the Direct Descendant of Frederick Philipse III

-- A Personal Essay by Mavis Cain

From Westchester, N.Y., to west of Chester, in Wales: that was the enforced trip Frederick Philipse, third lord of Philipse Manor Hall, made in 1783, fearing for his life as he fled the revolutionaries.

I made the same trip from Westchester to west of Chester in the autumn of 1997, also fearing for my life as I drove a small grey rental car through the web of heavy traffic on the M25 and the M40. My goal: to interview the great, great, great, great grandson of Frederick Philipse III, a man whose name is Basil Heaton. Major Heaton's mother was the last of the family to have the name of Philipse. His family home is now, and has been for generations, an impressive and historic house called "Rhual", the "Rh" being more of a whispered sh-sh-sh than anything else.

As I drove to Wales through my father's home county of Wiltshire, where I had so often searched for my own roots in England, it seemed a strange paradox for a British family to be finding its roots in America. Roots in reverse. Indeed it is fairly recently that Major Heaton has been piecing together stories of his family's past in Westchester. I wondered if it was just a coincidence that this important Westchester family settled just west of Chester, a town with an impressive cathedral that holds the remains of Frederick Philipse III. Perhaps the irony of the location was some comfort to this man who was so desolate when he left his beloved Westchester.

I was given a warm welcome at Rhual and invited to stay the night, which I was happy to do. The house was built in 1634, so it pre-dates Philipse Manor Hall here in Yonkers. Rhual is both impressive and comfortable. It is a working farm with glorious grounds and a rose garden that rivals that at Hampton Court in the quality of the roses.

As the Major and I talked about his family history, I kept thinking about the family's huge tract of land running for many miles along the Hudson from Yonkers north toward Peekskill. I had learned that both Frederick Philipse's wife Elizabeth and his sister Mary were excellent horsewomen. I imagined these two attractive women galloping over my own small plot of land in Dobbs Ferry. If they were alive today, we'd probably see them cross country skiing on the Aqueduct Trail, both of them athletic and energetic.

My kind of women. Frederick, on the other hand, was decidedly plump -- so much so that he and his wife could not ride comfortably together in their carriage. However, he was much admired and loved by his tenants, who remained loyal to him right up to his expulsion from America.

This third Lord of the Manor took a great interest in the education and activities of his children . . . all nine of them! A tenth, a daughter, died in infancy. The five attractive daughters were belles of Westchester and later of New York City. I enjoyed reading a letter from Maria to Sarah van Brugh Livingston, congratulating her on her marriage to John Jay, later the first Chief Justice of the United States. Maria writes " . . . it was no small mortification to me in not having it in my power to accept by cousin Kitty Livingston of being one of the bridesmaids. I know that I flattered myself with the pleasing expectation of being one of their number. Had it not been for my papa, who thought the weather too warm for me to be in town, I should have realized all those pleasures of which I had formed such an attractive idea." Now, how is that for a charmingly written letter!

Since the Livingstons and Jays became revolutionaries and turned against the Loyalist Philipse, one wonders how quickly the warm friendship between the young women was doomed to cool, or even if the warm weather was the real reason Papa forbade Maria to be a bridesmaid. Incidentally, the van Brugh Livingston family later owned a southern section of Dobbs Ferry. The Livingston farm, formerly part of the Philipse holdings, stretched from what is now the Oceana Building and eastward up the hill to Broadway.

The most famous romance in the Philipse family was that between Mary Philipse and George Washington. However, the peregrinatio Washington was evidently not attentive enough, and Mary began seeing Roger Morris. This handsome Captain from a distinguished Welsh family had, like Washington, served as aide-de-camp on General Braddock's staff. A descendant of Mary's family reported that Washington, on hearing of the courtship, "set out for New York, arriving there one winter's evening. Late as the hour was, he sought and obtained an interview with Miss Polly, as Mary was known, but she was already the promised

wife of Morris." The marriage took place in 1758. Captain Morris was an ardent Loyalist and shortly after the Battle of Lexington he left America for England.

I found myself wondering at what point it became a serious problem to be a Loyalist. The word itself certainly has a favorable ring to it. Frederick Philipse III was loyal to and supportive of his wife, his children, his tenants -- and his King. He loved his country, his county of Westchester, and our majestic Hudson River as much as any of us in Dobbs Ferry do today. He was a country gentleman only mildly interested in politics. But because he was rich and powerful, he was chosen to be a member of the New York General Assembly. He revealed his love of the land and of peace and order in his domain when, on the eve of the passage of the Tea Act in 1773, Philipse interrupted the Assembly proceedings to introduce a bill "to prevent the killing and destroying of partridges and quail on the manor of Phillipsborough."

At this point I made a conversational detour from Westchester to Ontario, Canada, where I grew up. I asked the Major if he knew what U.E.L. stood for. He did not -- nor did Jennifer, his wife. I told them about the United Empire Loyalists who fled to Canada during the Revolutionary War, and whose descendants to this day celebrate their loyalty. To have U.E.L. on one's card is almost as impressive as O.B.E. (the Order of the British Empire). Imagine a U.E.L. chapter in Wales.

In 1776, as the rumblings of revolution grew louder, Frederick Philipse talked to his tenants, urging them "to preserve the peace and support the legal government," He was, of course, accused of trying to influence the thinking of this large group of men. On June 27 he received a subpoena ordering him to present himself before the Committee on Conspiracies of the New York Provincial Congress. In his reply, Philipse wrote of the "near and intimate ties I have with this country, which can be secured and rendered happy to me only by the real and permanent prosperity of America".

As his reputation and personal fortune began to disintegrate, did he sometimes wonder why he had backed the wrong horse or was his loyalty to his King so heartfelt and sincere that he never wavered? I found no correspondence or other sources that would answer that question.

When I said goodbye to Major Heaton and his

wife, I encouraged them to come to see us in Dobbs Ferry, and they indicated their keen interest in doing just that.

Thanks to Contributing Merchants

Each year, part of the success of the Society's Spring Gala depends on the sale of raffle tickets for prizes. The prizes are donated by merchants of Dobbs Ferry and other river villages, non-profit groups and members and other individuals.

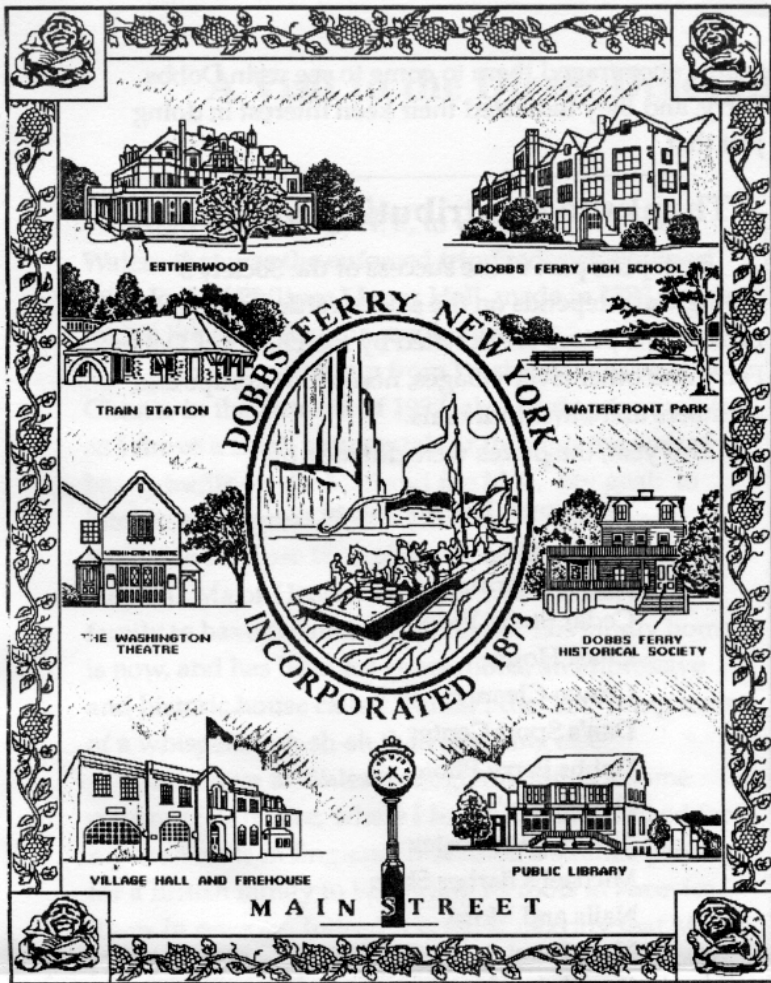
This year, the prizes were donated by:

The Brown Bag Bookstore
Caffe Latte
Cary's Pharmacy
Cedar Street Video
Chart House
Crown Cleaners
Dan's Sport Center
Dobbs Ferry Photo
Doubleday's
The Elegant Poster
Michael's Barber Shop
Nails and More
N. Y. Bagel Authority
Ozzello's Cafe/Grill
Pizza Treat
Reader's Hardware
Rochambeau Wines & Liquor
Sam's Restaurant
Star Photo & Video
Sunny Nails

The Society publicly acknowledges the generosity of these friends and expresses its thanks for their support.



From the December 5, 1902 Dobbs Ferry Register



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 ferry-boat 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:

DOBBS 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 1998-99 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