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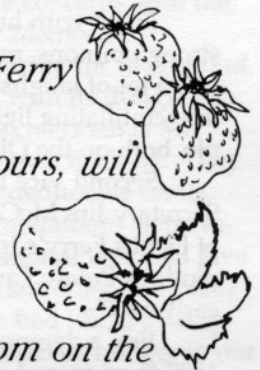
VOLUME XVI, No. 1

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

MAY 2000

Strawberry Festival on June 10

It won't quite be Strawberry Fields Forever, but The Dobbs Ferry Historical Society's first Strawberry Festival will last about three hours, will include music and will raise some much-needed funds.



The Festival will be held on Saturday, June 10 from 2 pm to 5pm on the lawn of the Mead House, the Society's headquarters and the Village's History Center at 12 Elm Street. Admission is only \$10 per person. It is hoped that the net proceeds will recoup some of the costs of the unexpected repairs made to the Mead House in the past year. Rain date is Sunday, June 11.



In addition to music graciously provided by the Padens of Dobbs Ferry, principals of The Wicker's Creek Band, the Festival will feature strawberry short cakes, whipped cream, and fruit punch.



An exhibit illustrating Summer in Dobbs Ferry history will be displayed and videos of the early 20th century will be shown. The Mead House grounds, which have been adopted by the Garden Club of Dobbs Ferry should be in full bloom for the Festival.

Irish Program Provides Spell-binding Evening

The Farringtons, the Coffeys and the Buckleys, the McDermotts, the O'Connors the Dawsons and the McHenry's, the Monahans, the Maguires, the McCarthys -families who contributed to the history of Dobbs Ferry were the subject of a fascinating program about the Irish offered by the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society. Five members of these families told their stories.

The program, *From Ireland to Dobbs Ferry*, was presented at the Mead House on March 10, a week before St. Patrick's Day, and delighted a standing room audience. The program was recorded for the Society's videotape archives.

Humor and Pathos

Filled with humor and pathos, hard facts and strong opinions, memories and hopes, boasts and fears, and a lot of laughs and some sighs, the event reflected the scintillating light and dark history of the Irish people, both on the Old Sod and in the New World.

Second Vice President Fred Staats presided. Secretary Jim McCarthy, as the emcee, placed the stories of Dobbs Ferry's Irish families in the context of the horrendous Potato Famine in Ireland in the late 1840's and early 1850's.

Jim, a demographer by profession, said that in 1800 there were 4 million people living in Ireland. By 1840, the population had doubled to 8 million because of the widespread cultivation of potatoes in those 40 years. Not only were the potatoes nutritious, but an acre of land could produce 6 tons annually.

One Million Irish Died

But in 1845, one-third of the crop was lost through blight. The next year, 1846, was worse: the crop failed throughout the island. 1847 was better but the crop in

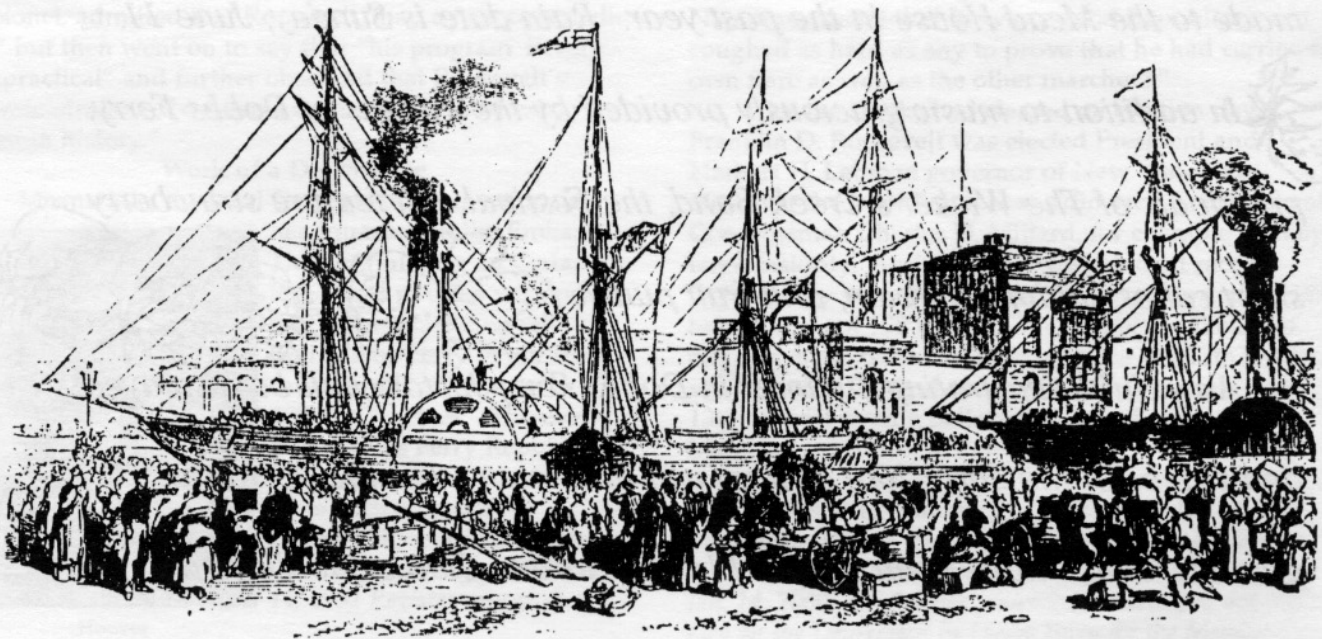
1848 was a disaster. Between 1847 and 1851, 1 million of the Irish people died; by 1860, 2 million had left Ireland, leaving only 5 million. The outflow continued for more than a century, as more of Ireland's sons and daughters left each decade since then, until, by 1970, only 2.8 million remained on the island. In the last 10 years, people have started moving back, as Ireland's economy started to soar.

Where did the emigrants go? According to McCarthy most came to the United States (about 4 million) and most of those (about 3 million) settled in the Boston to New York area (New York, New England, New Jersey and eastern Pennsylvania). McCarthy's four grandparents all came from villages in the Dingle Peninsula within a 15-mile-or-so area. They did not know each other in Ireland, met in Massachusetts and Connecticut and continued their lines in America. Jim, according to his mother, has 85 first cousins in Ireland.

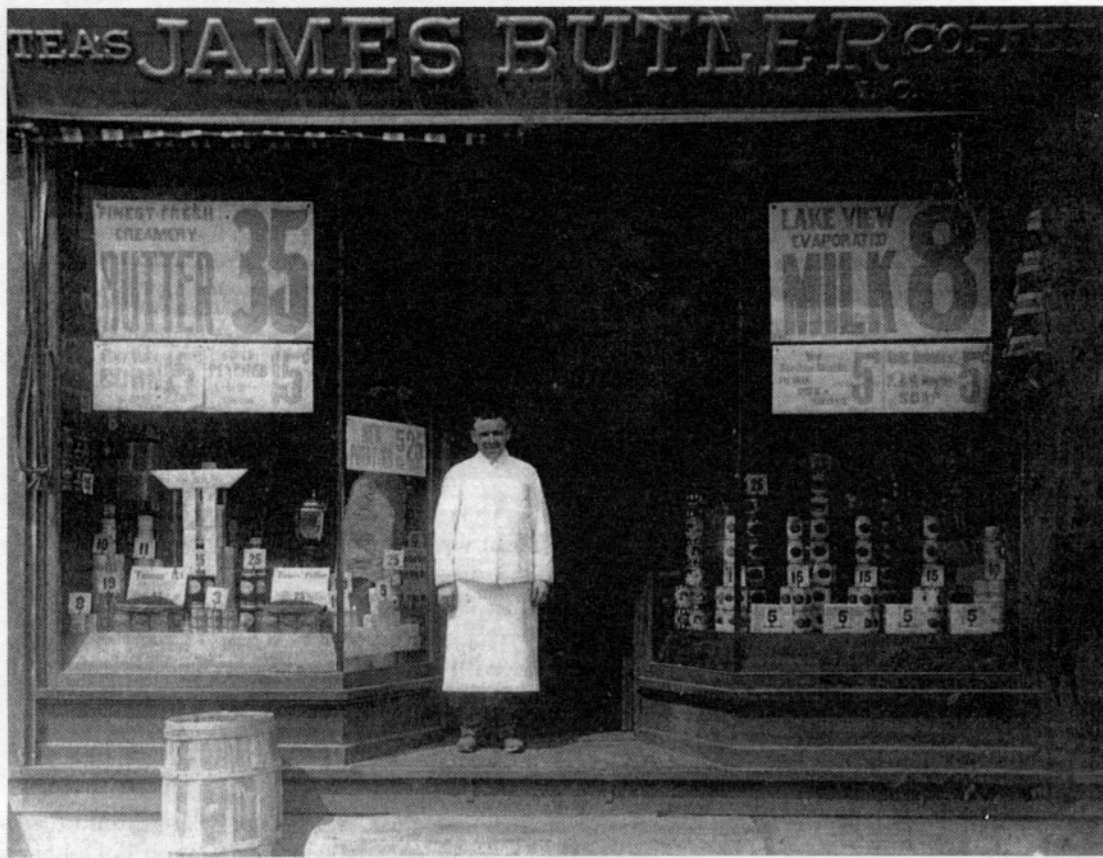
Mayor Brian Monahan presented a slide show called, "An Irish Kid Remembers Growing Up in Dobbs Ferry". One of his grandmothers was a seamstress; the other, Margaret Monahan, was a chaperone at Masters School. His great-grand father was a founding member of the Ogden Engine Company.

Frank Farrington, Village Trustee, told in rapid-fire fashion how the Farringtons, Buckleys, and Coffeys settled eventually in Dobbs Ferry and intermarried.

Frank's great-grandfather, Lawrence Buckley, a "great storyteller," established "Buckley's Saloon" on the Main Street site occupied by the Dick's Cabin/Swiss Cabin/La Foresta restaurants. Ed and Ted Buckley were good friends of Jim Monahan, an uncle of Brian. Two of the Buckley sisters married two of the Coffey



Emigrants leaving Cork for North America on the *Nimrod* and the *Athlon*
(*Illustrated London News*, 10 May 1851)



When the James Butler chain went out of business, John McDermott (left) bought proprietary interest and continued operations at 83 Main St. under the Butler name. Sad to relate, John was over generous with credit in the Depression years, and he lost the store.

brothers. Former Police Chief Jack Coffeys's father bought the house at 17 Devoe Street from the Farringtons.

Intertwining Families

Bill McHenry also told of intertwining families, all of whom reportedly were descended from early Irish kings. Bill married Rosemary McDermott, one of eight children of John McDermott and Rose Dawson in 1950 in Sacred Heart Church. They have lived at 72 Maple Street since 1953. Six of Bill's brothers-in-law and one sister-in-law served in the Armed Forces, five in World War II, one in the Korean War.

John McDermott owned the James Butler Store at 83 Main Street. He was one of 19 children of Patrick McDermott in Ireland. As most others did John left the island to escape poverty and arrived at Ellis Island in 1906. By 1912, eight of his siblings had followed him, settling in the New York area.

Rosemary McD. McHenry's maternal grandfather was Samuel Dawson, of Dobbs Ferry, who married Julia Bergin, a native of County Tipperary in 1914. Samuel's ancestors had settled in Dobbs Ferry in the 1700's, perhaps even in the 1600's through a Dutch line.

Bill's mother was Johanna O'Connor, one of four children of Maurice O'Connor. Maurice, from whom Bill gets his middle name, was born in Annascul, Dingle Peninsula in 1868. Following a common trend, Maurice, one of 11 children, also came to the States to escape Ireland's poverty and settled in Dobbs Ferry.

From Mc EllHinney to McHenry

The McHenry family stemmed from the McEllhinney clan. Bill's great-grandfather, Thomas, settled in "Little Dublin," an area of East Irvington. One of his eight children, James, Bill's grandfather settled in Chauncey, which Bill wryly called "the capital of Dobbs Ferry." Chauncey had 17 houses, McHenry recalls and a hotel which contained 27 rental rooms and an apartment. The hotel was torn down in 1926. The site is now occupied by a Carvel ice cream store. Chauncey, now a part of Ardsley, lay at the western end of what is now the bridge across the Thruway.

A bit wistfully, Bill noted that he and his wife were the last of the McHenrys and McDermotts to live in Dobbs Ferry. The rest of the two families have scattered to other parts of the state and nation, breaking the "clustering pattern" of earlier immigrant populations. Picking up on this notion, McCarthy said that in 1900, about 40% of Dobbs Ferry's population was Irish, while today, he estimated the ratio at 15%. Mayor Monahan's estimate was 20%.

Bill Maguire told of how his grandmother, a native of Cork, worked as a personal maid for Mrs. James Schuyler, who provided his grandmother with a lifetime income after leaving service. His grandfather became a contractor in Dobbs Ferry and built the second church building of Sacred Heart parish at Broadway and Ashford Avenue. The building was dedicated in 1895.

When Are You Coming Home Again?

Some members of the audience also shared their families' experiences. Among them, Terry Luckett said that many Irish families, hers included, had migrated to Canada, and that many French-speaking people in Quebec had names like McCarthy, Sullivan, O'Rourke, and Flynn. Jim McCarthy, not related to the French McCarthys in Quebec, added that the earliest and poorest families driven out of Ireland in 1847 by the Famine went to Canada. One out of six of these emigrants died on the way in what another audience member referred to as "coffin ships". Several in the audience shared a common experience in their visits to Ireland: there is an unusual "sense of continuity" among the people in Ireland – in each locality they have "long memories" of the families who left for the States a century and more ago. A comment often repeated, and surprising to a 3rd or 4th generation American Irish is: "When are you coming home again?"

Waiting for a Bridge

That prompted some sardonic memories: McCarthy said that when a "trip home to Ireland was suggested to one of his grandfathers, the reply was: "There were plenty of reasons why we left that place and I have no desire to go back." McHenry chimed in: My grandfather said: "I'll go back when they build a bridge."

Charlie Baiano, who is Irish-by-marriage to Mary Rose Jordan, asked somewhat querulously, "Am I the only Italian here tonight?" implicitly referring to the fact that the other big population bloc in Dobbs Ferry emigrated from Southern Italy.

In response to a question, McCarthy said people could get help in tracing their Irish ancestors by visiting the Internet website irishtimes.com and that in two years, the project of computerizing all the records of Ellis Island is expected to be completed and make the task of constructing family trees somewhat easier.

– Hank Walter

Recent Irish Immigration and Migration

During the 1880's and 1890's, Irish immigrants continued to come to this county for work. But with the recent dramatic recovery of the Irish economy many are now returning to their homeland.

Edward O'Callaghan was one who emigrated sixteen years ago from County Kerry who has decided to stay. He lives with his wife Noreen, his son Michael, and his daughter Deirdre, at 349 Ashford Avenue – one of the oldest homes in Dobbs Ferry. The house also serves as a base for his business, Kerry Contracting.

Ed also told us of the recent building of the tall-ship *Jeanie Johnston* by the young people of Northern and Southern Ireland, dedicated to peace. The original *Jeanie* was built in 1847, and carried Irish families from Tralee, County Kerry in Ireland to the United States and Canada. Unlike the infamous coffin ships on which thousands died, not a single passenger or crew member was lost to the sea or to illness during her 16 successful voyages.

The rebuilt *Jeanie Johnston* will call at New York, and other coastal cities this summer and will be greeted by President Clinton. Hopefully, as other tall ships have before, she will sail the Hudson, to be cheered on by Dobbs Ferry residents.

A Living Memorial

While *Jeanie Johnston* is a memorial to peace and understanding, there is also a living memorial to the hungry. The Church of the Sacred Heart founded by Irish immigrants, carries on a living memorial with its program, "Food for the Hungry."

Headed by Lloyd and Alice Westlake, food is collected throughout the area and distributed to the hungry through food kitchens and pantries. Many of the other congregations in Dobbs Ferry are also involved in contributing to this effort.

–Bill Blanck

Ireland – 150 Years Ago

For those Irish lucky enough to escape by emigrating, the horrors of the Famine were compounded by the horrors of the Atlantic crossing. Emigrating to America by sailing ship was fraught with dangers . . .

Both before and during the Famine, sailing ships commonly put to sea without adequate water, provisions, medical assistance, or cooking and sanitary facilities. Voyages usually lasted for five to six weeks, but passages of more than twice that length were common, extending the misery of physical privation and outbreaks of disease.

Irish refugees of the Great Famine experienced all the usual horrors of the Atlantic passage — and others

that were exceptional. Many of the Famine emigrants were not only suffering from the debilitating effect of malnutrition before they embarked but also carried with them the germs of typhus, dysentery, and even cholera.

During "Black '47," mortality rates among the Irish were as high as 40 percent in these vessels known as "coffin ships." Including those who died in the waterfront slums of North American cities, or in the quarantine camps, like Grosse Isle near Quebec, as many as 50,000 Irish died en route to North America.

–Kerry Miller & Paul Wagner
Out of Ireland

Proposed Site of Great Hunger Memorial

Sign Announcing Future Memorial in Park

An Gorta Mor—These words are Gaelic for "The Great Hunger" which followed a failure of the potato crop in Ireland. The loss of their staple diet of carbohydrates contributed to the death by starvation of an estimated 1.5 million people between 1840 and 1850. An additional 2 million plus people forsook Ireland and emigrated to the United States in that decade. By 1850 more than 7,000 had chosen to reside in Westchester County. Today, 25% of our county's population is of people with an Irish heritage.

County Legislator Lou Mosiello's constituency (15th district, Yonkers) includes a large number of people with Irish roots. From them he has developed an affinity with their lore of hunger. Mr. Mosiello worked with County Executives Andrew O'Rourke and Andy Spano seeking a way to memorialize "The Great Hunger", and as Lou has said, . . . the issue of hunger is as relevant today in Westchester as it was 150 years ago in Ireland.

On March 9, 1990, County Executive Spano announced that a memorial to the people who perished in the Irish famine of the 1800s, as well as to those who are victims of famine every year, would be created on a site within V. Everitt Macy Park. This site in the park has been set aside in accordance with legislation introduced by Mr. Mosiello. It can be approached from the Saw Mill River Parkway, on South County Trail (old Putnam line roadbed, now

paved). It will be on a rise overlooking the West Woodlands Lake. Westchester Parks Commissioner Salvatore De Santis said at the time of the announcement, "Macy Park with its natural woodlands and inspirational lake is an excellent site for this memorial." (The writer can agree and is pleased to note the great refurbishing of this area. On a recent visit, many birds, including a turkey hen were seen).

During the announcement Mr. Spano also said "Even here in Westchester county more than 4 million meals are served each year to the less fortunate by food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters.

"In addition to the legislative concerns with the site and hunger, the Great hunger Memorial Committee has been actively preparing for their gift of the memorial. Their concerns are with its design, execution and cost. This committee's chairman is Mr. James Houlihan of Houlihan & Parnes Realtors. They (at least 50 people) are raising tax deductible funds.

Mr. Houlihan knows of his forefathers' deprivations and hopes that ". . . This memorial will help give youngsters an appreciation of the suffering that many children undergo when they go to bed hungry every night." He, too, is looking to underscore hunger in our society today.

Completion is expected during 2001.

—Warren M. Gardner

Historian Dennis Maika tells of Slavery in Dobbs Ferry Area

If you were a resident in the Dobbs Ferry area in the mid-seventeenth or early eighteenth century, you would probably have been a tenant farmer, paying rent to Frederick Philipse, the richest man in the New Amsterdam Colony. How could you avoid being his tenant? Mr. Philipse owned 52,000 acres bounded by Spuyten Duyvil, the Hudson, Croton, and Bronx Rivers.

Then again, but far less likely, you might have been a slave, according to Dr. Dennis J. Maika, historian of Philipsburg Manor, who addressed the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society on February 11th. Residents of Dobbs Ferry, he said, might have seen slaves as they passed through the area on the way to North Tarrytown.

People who went up-river by boat to the Old Dutch Church on a Sunday morning would have seen slaves, sitting in the balcony of the church, who were not allowed to participate in any of its rites. Certainly they could not look forward to their children being baptized. But slaves were not confined to the Manor. A tenant farmer (who had the wherewithall) could hire a slave on a temporary basis from the Manor. At least one farmer, a Mr. Oakley did.

In 1685, 146 slaves were shipped to the Manor from the Congo and although 21 did not arrive, those who did were apparently good workers. Congolese

had close relations with Europe and had both navigational and agricultural skills. Some must have been good builders, for the main house at the Manor, the mill and the Old Dutch Church were all built by slaves.

In 1698 when the English took over New Amsterdam, slavery doubled, particularly in the city of New York. On the one hand, treatment of the slaves became more liberal in New York; on the other hand punishment could be merciless. Some slaves become "half free", were given farmland in Greenwich Village but their children remained slaves. In 1712 an official whipper was appointed to punish recalcitrant slaves. Runaways were branded on the forehead with an "R", tied to the end of a cart and dragged around the city. At every corner the runaway was whipped.

There is no record of inhuman punishment at Philipse Manor, although, as Dr. Maika pointed out, 67 pairs of shackles were found in a Philipse warehouse. These, of course, may have been for trading or selling. Dr. Maika gave a vivid, behind the scenes look at our area where a few were singled out and remembered by name: Jack, for instance, who spoke both English and French and was described as a "remarkable fellow." And "'old Susan" who was given specific permission to live at the Upper mills as long as she lived.

—Jean Fritz

Dobbs Ferry Voters in 1932 Presidential Election Faced Depression; Local Campaign Marked by Torchlight Parade and Sore Throats

Sixty-eight years ago residents of Dobbs Ferry were debating whether to vote for the Presidential incumbent Herbert Hoover or the Democratic challenger Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt of New York. On the national scene, it was estimated that there were from eight to ten million unemployed. The April 29, 1932 issue of the weekly newspaper the *Dobbs Ferry Register* reported that under a Federal grant the Red Cross in cooperation with the Unemployment Relief Committee distributed 108 bags of flour to the heads of families. The newspaper also noted that Dobbs Ferry Garden Club supplied fertilizer and seed for unemployed men to grow vegetables in garden plots on land donated by the Board of Education.

Families in Distress

On July 15, 1932 the *Register* revealed "There are now 345 idle in the village and the Relief Bureau on Main Street is able to provide work for individuals only occasionally. Only 40 of the unemployed listed are women. Several alien families who have lived in the village for many years and raised large families are in great distress because neither the village, county or state will employ non-citizens." It was also reported that the Woman's Club spent over \$500 by July 1932 to provide milk for needy families.

By mid September of 1932 The *Register* carried the sad news that the Village Board cut salaries by 10%. Police and civil service employees were exempted.

Hoover Another Lincoln

By early October, against a background of economic distress, the presidential campaign was in full swing in Dobbs Ferry. Republican Village Chairman Colonel Franklin Q. Brown characterized incumbent President Hoover "as great a leader as Abraham Lincoln." The Colonel, admitted that Roosevelt "had a nice personality" but then went on to say that "his program is very impractical" and further observed that Roosevelt's administration of our state has been the most extravagant in history."

Work of a Degenerate

Meanwhile, the local Democrats set up campaign headquarters in the Embassy Theater Building on Cedar Street and pointed with pride that Governor Roosevelt carried Dobbs Ferry in his State campaign for Governor in 1930 by 72 votes. The ever-busy Dobbs Ferry Republicans had a handsome banner complete with a portrait of Herbert Hoover left over from the 1928 campaign. The Oct. 14, 1932 *Register* reported



Hoover



Roosevelt

that the banner, a \$275 gift from Colonel Brown, had been locked up in the vault at Village Hall for safe keeping and was in mint condition when taken out. But before it could be strung over Main Street, vandals had saturated it with acid, rendering it worthless. "It is a terrible disgrace to the community," Colonel Brown said, "Only a degenerate could have done it."

Excitement was running high and all previous voter registration figures were shattered.

The local GOP was not hesitant in whipping up support. "Five hundred Dobbs Republicans made the village blaze with red light last Friday as they marched full force, with bands blaring and torch lights flaring through the streets for their great Hoover-Reynolds rally which was held at the Masonic Temple," The October 14, 1932 *Register* reported.

"The demonstration," The *Register* continued, "was one of the the most enthusiastic ever staged in Dobbs Ferry. Delegations marched from Ardsley, Hastings and Irvington to the hall ---"

But once inside, the rally was delayed by a ten minute outbreak of coughing. Many staunch Republicans were of the opinion, The *Register* reported, "that Charles Napoli, major domo of the fireworks, was secretly in league with the Democrats because the flares he handed out were so pungently acrid that most throats were irritated by the smoke of the torches. But Napoli protested that he was a good Republican and coughed as hard as any to prove that he had carried his own flare as well as the other marchers."

After the smoke had cleared on election day, Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected President and Herbert H. Lehman governor of New York State. However the local Republicans did well -- incumbent Congressman Charles D. Millard, for example won by a large majority. And while the presidential race in Dobbs Ferry was close, Herbert Hoover carried the day by a margin of 158 votes. Only two of the then five election districts went for Roosevelt -- the 12th District voting out of the firehouse on Ashford Avenue and the 13th District casting ballots at a rented office on 81 Main Street.

--Bill Blanck

Editor's Note: The material for this article was taken from the newspaper, The Dobbs Ferry Register in the Archives of the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society. On Friday Jan. 14, 2000, The Society presented a videotaped documentary on the Depression in Dobbs Ferry for the Membership.