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

APRIL 2002

Historical Society's Gala on April 26 Will Feature One Hundred Years of History

Tina Marziale, Tony Castello, and Charlie Baiano Honored

Selections from the last 100 years of Dobbs Ferry's fascinating history will be presented at the Spring Gala of the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society. Two centenarians will be honored at the affair: Tina Marziale, who became 100 this past January 10, and Anthony Castello, who passed the century mark earlier this year. The third guest of honor is Charlie Baiano, a life-long resident of Dobbs Ferry, who is only 81 years old. Charlie became a Prisoner of War when he parachuted from a burning plane over Germany on August 17, 1943. Confined to Stalag 17 for the duration of the War, he survived on the sparse diet provided by the Germans only with food packages from home, delivered by the Red Cross.

After the War Charlie was employed as a gardener on the Rockefeller estate. He has been a member of the Historical Society since it was founded.

The Gala, an annual fund-raising event of the Society, will be held at the Dobbs Ferry Woman's Club, 54 Clinton Avenue, on Friday April 26, beginning at 7 pm with a buffet dinner.

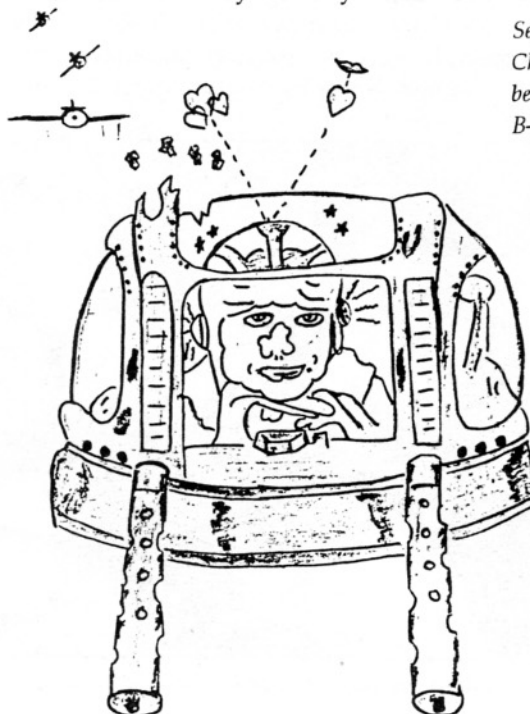
The Gala will also feature a raffle for gift certificates and many fine items donated by Dobbs Ferry area merchants. Admission is \$25 a person, or \$45 for two persons. Whatever net income is realized will help the Society carry out its primary mission to preserve Dobbs Ferry's history and maintain the Mead House as the Village's History Center. The history program that will follow the dinner will feature a review of some important local events and some national events that affected Dobbs Ferry during the previous 100 years. Bill Blanck, president of the Society, said that Mrs. Marziale might be prevailed upon to share some of her memories of bygone Village life with Gala attendees. Mr. Castello was born in New York City, moved to Irvington in 1908, when he was 6 years old, and moved to Dobbs Ferry in 1970. He was a milk deliveryman for 35 years in both villages, starting in the days when milk came in returnable glass bottles. Attendees who are old enough will remember the clink of glass bottles against each other in the early morning hours as milk was delivered to their doorsteps, and how (before the days of homogenized milk) the cream would rise to the top and, in winter, push the cap up as the cream froze into a column.

Tina Marziale was born in Ariano Irpino, in the Campania region of Italy, which includes Naples. Named Maria Concetta Covotto – the Tina comes from the diminutive Concettina – she first went on stage at the age of six, singing at a benefit concert for earthquake victims. At 18, she enrolled at the Conservatory of Music in Naples and then moved to Dobbs Ferry to a house on Main Street where she still lives 77 years later.

Tina worked at Master's School, married Salvatore Marziale in 1932, became a volunteer at Our Lady of Pompeii activities and at Dobbs Ferry Hospital, and worked at Anaconda Wire Company during World War II, and later in dress factories in Dobbs Ferry and Yonkers. She was a founder of the Italian-American Civic Association and, for 62 years, took part in every one of Our Lady of Pompeii's annual Spaghetti Dinners since they began in 1939. She has two children, Salvatore and Mary Jane, three granddaughters, and five great-grandchildren.

Mrs. Marziale, Mr. Costello and Sgt. Baiano have experienced more history that anyone else in Dobbs Ferry.

*Self portrait by Sgt.
Charlie Baiano,
belly gunner on a
B-17 during WWII.*



The Great Spaghetti Dinner that Never was in 1944

*Or, how a group of nice ladies from Our Lady of Pompeii
Almost gave food and comfort to the former enemy during wartime.*

Controversy is not new to Dobbs Ferry. But no recent controversy has touched national issues quite as deeply as *The Great Spaghetti Dinner That Never was in 1944*.

The main characters were, a group of Italian prisoners of war, some very nice ladies from Our Lady of Pompeii, The Mayor, Mayor Paino (it's amazing how many names from back then are still familiar in our village today) The Board of Trustees, Fiorello Laguardia and President Roosevelt.

The time was 1943, and the second World War raged on but was coming to its inevitable conclusion. American troops had fought their way up the Italian peninsula and Italy had surrendered. Italian prisoners of war had been shipped to the United States and Italy's status had changed from warring nation to a co-belligerent. Many of these prisoners of war ended up at Camp Shanks in Rockland County, just across the river from Dobbs Ferry, where they were employed in various capacities locally to make up for our nation's wartime manpower shortage.

Now it must be noted that the Italian prisoners of war had a slightly different attitude toward ideology than their recent allies, the Germans. Whereas the Germans on the whole retained a fierce belief in Fascist discipline and even retained their official military structure in the American Prison Camps, the Italians were cut from different cloth. They seemed to take to the American way of life quite readily. In fact, after a while, they were allowed to come and go quite freely and trade in their POW uniforms for a simple work shirt with a badge on it that said quite succinctly, ITALY. Who could argue with that?

Certainly not the nice ladies from Our Lady of Pompeii in Dobbs Ferry. As far as they were concerned this was a group of nice Italian boys who were working hard and in some ways actually abetting the American war effort. Anyone could see that it would be a great idea to throw them a party, have some spaghetti and maybe they could meet some nice girls from around town and settle

down. Who could argue with that? Apparently, the Mayor, the Board of Trustees, the police Chief and the American Legion — that's who.

When Mayor Paino got wind of what was going on via the local Priest that Saturday morning, he tried to contact other members of the Board of Trustees. Remember, this was before e-mail, and he said he could only get in touch with one. He did however manage to get in touch with the head of the American Legion and the Chief of Police, all of whom strenuously objected to the nice Ladies from Our Lady of Pompeii giving comfort and succor to the former enemy. After all, these nice Italian boys were not so nice after all. Until very recently, they had in fact been trading bullets and blood with American soldiers. The war was far from over and some of the boys fighting and dying overseas were from our very village. How could we allow a Spaghetti Dinner to go on in honor of the enemy when our own boys were still risking their lives in the mud of Europe and the sands of the Pacific? Mayor Paino, who had two sons in the military, simply told the ladies that he couldn't he couldn't provide Police protection. The Dinner was cancelled.

You have to understand that the lax attitude toward the prisoners came from the fact that no one was going anywhere. An escaped prisoner's best bet was to get to Mexico, and Mexico was a long haul from Westchester and Rockland County. Especially if you had none too great a facility with the English language and more specifically, the wise cracking American idiom of the time. The other question was one of motivation. Here the prisoners of war were treated better than they were as soldiers at home. The abundance and quality of the food was incredible to them and the Germans actually thought it was some kind of propaganda trick. For the Italians, it just made them happy. Was anyone really in a hurry to escape so they could get back to Europe and get shot at all over again? Not very likely.



Italian prisoners of war had relaxed treatment at Camp Shanks. Local relatives visited on weekends.

Anyway, regardless of how relaxed attitudes toward the Italian Prisoners of War were, The Great Spaghetti Dinner of 1944 was, alas, not to be. The Mayor was able to muster the forces of repression and the nice ladies of Our Lady of Pompeii were thwarted in their efforts to feed the nice boys from Italy, who stayed home at Camp Shanks that afternoon or found something else to do.

So you see like any good tale, *The Great Spaghetti Dinner That Never Was in 1944* has two sides. In a way, both were right. The mayor, the Board of Trustees, the police chief and the American Legion were right to represent the wartime values of patriotism and loyalty to our armed forces. But the ladies from Our Lady of Pompeii were right too. They represented the American virtues of forgiveness, generosity and above all, good food.

Now you may ask, Where does Fiorello LaGuardia and Franklin Delano Roosevelt fit into our story? Fiorello LaGuardia (the little flower and fighter pilot of WWI) was a hero to Italian-Americans and to everyone else. After all, it was his ebullient personality which helped pull New York City through the depression. Likewise the patrician FDR, another hero of the depression who, undaunted by his disability, was also also a hero of World War II. He signed the bill into law that changed the status of the Italian Prisoners of War and enabled them to trade their POW shirts for the proud badge of ITALY. Which probably had a lot to do with the nice ladies of Our Lady of Pompeii's rather benevolent attitude toward Prisoners of War. ITALY, who could argue with that?

Has *The Great Spaghetti Dinner That Never Was in 1944* brought about any long-term changes on our local culture? Probably not. But it's interesting to note, that while many families, representing many nationalities come and go from our village, the bedrock community still remains Italian. The names from 1944, the Baianos and the Pisanis and others are still here today. And although Dobbs now has Chinese and Japanese restaurants, the local disposition still seems to be for Italian food. Pizza from Dobbs Ferry still tastes better than pizza from anywhere else. However one thing that has not changed is, that if you really want a spaghetti dinner, can you can still get one from the very nice Ladies of Our Lady of Pompeii Church.

—Brian Wright

Food Was Scarce For American Prisoners of War in WW II

A spaghetti dinner, lovingly prepared by the women of Pompeii was something that could only be dreamed about by Seaman Warren Foley, Sgt. Charlie Baiano, Lt. Frank Delmerico, Sgt. Charles Angelo and Lt. Vincent Lisanti. All were Prisoners of War. Both the Germans and the Japanese kept prisoners on a near-starvation diet. Red Cross packages from home, when received, made a tremendous difference.

Toward the end of the European war Hitler threatened to execute prisoners if the allies continued the bombardment of German cities. This threat was not carried out. As reported in the Sept. 1995 issue of *The Ferryman*: "The first POW was Seaman Warren John Foley, who was held by the Japanese when Bataan fell in April 1942 until the time of his liberation in September 1945.

Seaman Foley's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Max Foley, had few messages from their son, and it wasn't until the war ended that they learned of the severity of his imprisonment. His captors put him to work in the Philippines as a stevedore and in Japan as a laborer in a lead mine.

After his liberation, President Truman wrote to Seaman Foley. 'It gives me special pleasure to welcome you back to your native shores - you have fought valiantly and suffered greatly. As your Commander in Chief, I take great pride in your past achievements and express the thanks of a grateful nation for your services in combat and your steadfastness while a prisoner of war. May God grant you happiness and a successful future.'

Staff Sergeant Charlie Baiano, a B-17 belly gunner, became a prisoner of war after his second bomber mission over Germany. When German fighters set his plane on fire, he was ordered to bail out. Wounded in the leg, he was greeted on the ground by German civilians with pitchforks, rifles and a pack of dogs. After a stay in a German hospital and 7 days of constant interrogation, he was sent to Stalag 17, where food was poor and scarce. Red Cross packages helped him survive.

As the war neared an end and as the Russians approached the camp, the 4,000 internees were started on a forced 18-day march by their captors. The rations provided by the Germans consisted of one loaf of bread for every 18 men. But before finally being liberated by Patton's third army, Baiano reported that 'we bartered with the Austrians and passersby as we hiked and managed to swap cigarettes and soap for additional food, and this really kept us alive.'

Lieutenant Frank Delmerico an Air Force Liberator bomber pilot, became a prisoner of war on November 25, 1944. In May 1945 his parents, Mr. and Mrs Frank Delmerico, were notified that their son had been liberated from Stalag-Luft Number 1. Future Village residents Sgt. Charles Angelo and Lt Vincent Lisanti were also shot down and taken prisoners."

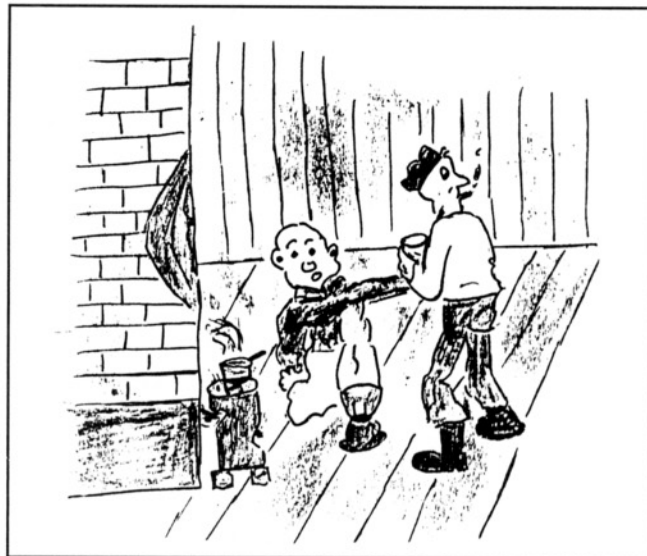


Signpost shows that Italian POWs at Shanks had many comforts.

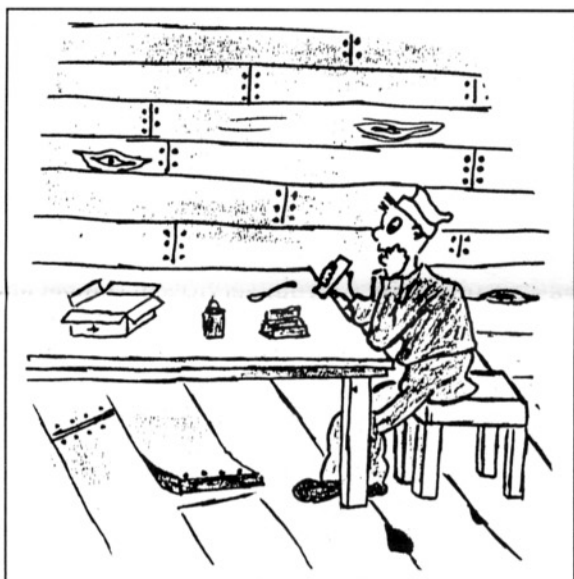
These drawings were made by Sgt. Charlie Baiano who was Held by the Germans in Stalag 17 during WWII



Not so delicious potato soup.



Cooking food obtained by trading cigarettes with German Guards



Food packages from home helped sustain existence.



German mugshot of Charlie Baiano

Hitler Wanted to Kill All P.W's

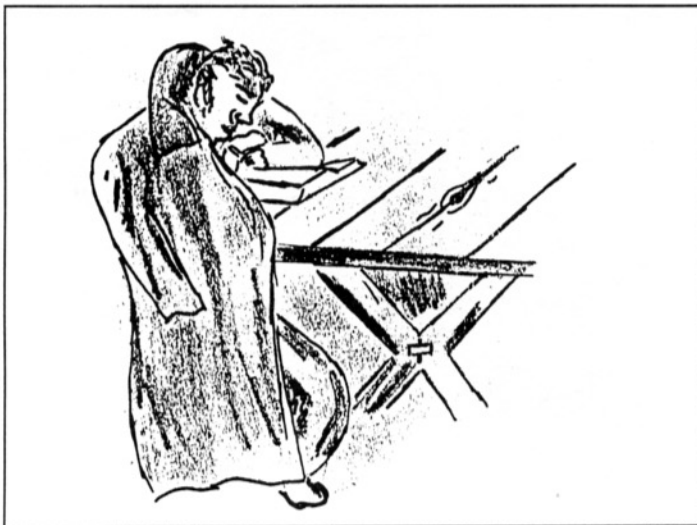
The Swiss Radio confirmed yesterday reports that in the last days of the war Adolf Hitler ordered all Allied prisoners of war shot.

Heard by BBC in London, the radio quoted Dr. Burckhardt, president of the International Red Cross. He said that the Wehrmacht had refused to carry out the order and that in March he had met representatives of Heinrich Himmler and obtained permission for the Red Cross to enter PW camps and prevent any last-minute executions.

Last March, at the time of Dr. Burckhardt's visit to Germany, reports that Allied prisoners in Germany would be killed were widespread, but Himmler was blamed at that time. The reports never were officially recognized because of Allied concern over what might happen if Burckhardt's mission were a failure.

Dr. Burckhardt also said that Hitler always had wanted to renounce the international conventions relating to prisoners of war, and that toward the last days of his life, his temper steadily grew

German Generals didn't let the killing happen.



Reading and hoping to get out alive

Founded in 1833 Zion Episcopal Church has Historic Roots

From its very beginning, Zion Episcopal Church has been closely linked to events and personalities that transcend the physical boundaries of the Village of Dobbs Ferry. It is a church that was purposely set in the heart of the community it serves. Little did our founders anticipate in 1833, how built-up the downtown streets of Dobbs Ferry would become, making Zion and its grounds a haven of trees of trees and grass in the midst of a busy village.

As a part of the Episcopal Church in the United States, Zion has its roots in the earliest history of our nation's independence from England. Originally known as the Church of England, after the American Revolution, the Episcopal Church had an important witness in the founding of our country, as the religion of choice among such men as George Washington, James Madison and Alexander Hamilton.

The expansion of the Episcopal Church nationally was reflected in the call for an Episcopal Church locally in the early 1830's, and again prominent men in the area were instrumental in Zion's birth. Van Brugh Livingston, a disenchanted Presbyterian, gave the gift of land on which the church was to be built. A core group of church leaders organized the congregation. They included Oscar Irving, Washington Irving's nephew, and James Hamilton, son of Alexander Hamilton. Later Washington Irving himself would play an important role in the life of the parish, serving on the vestry, or steering committee of the church. On October 31, 1833 Zion Episcopal Church officially incorporated as the second house of worship in Dobbs Ferry, and in the spring of 1834, the present building was dedicated, making it the oldest standing house of worship in the village.

Zion is an unusual name for an Episcopal Church, and was probably chosen because the site of the Church on a bluff overlooking the village and the Hudson River. It is clearly a reference to Mount Zion in the Bible but it also reflects the 19th century's interest in the early Jewish texts and the contemporary archeological investigation of the Middle East. This is evidenced in the Star of David that graces the stone tower of the church.

Zion's architecture reflects the revival of interest in the Gothic style in the 19th century. The church is a gem of this romantic trend in architecture, with pointed arches above the windows, and one of the earliest examples of stained glass in Westchester above the altar. It is an interesting footnote that Washington Irving, who was to admire the romantic style of Europe, and bring that aesthetic to America, would have such a prominent role in Zion's early history.

The nineteenth century also saw a tremendous growth in the Episcopal Church, and Zion was the center of this expansion. Zion was directly responsible for founding Episcopal Churches in Hastings, Irvingtons, and Tarrytown. It is historically the mother church of this part of the Hudson Valley.

Zion also expanded its building and property in the 19th century, buying one of the oldest homes in the village from a riverboat captain, to be the rectory of the church. The Church itself has been expanded in three stages, first as a small Gothic revival building of 10 pews, then expanded in 1853, and finally in 1870 the building took its present shape.

Throughout its history Zion has been led by able men and women who saw their church as a spiritual and physical center of the community. Today Zion continues in that tradition with its commitment to maintaining the historical beauty of its buildings and the grace of its property. The Nineteenth Century was a time of expansion and strength for Zion, and it is in that tradition that Zion enters this century, built on strong and rich foundations, with its face to the future.

—The Rev. Richard R. McKeon, Jr.

The second article on the history of Zion Episcopal Church will be printed in the next issue of The Ferryman.



**YOUR RAFFLE DONATION WILL HELP THE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY MAINTAIN ITS HOME AT THE MEAD HOUSE
AND PROVIDE EXPANDED PROGRAMS
FOR THE MEMBERSHIP**

Return completed tickets to the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society.
Mail to 12 Elm Street, Dobbs Ferry, New York to be received by April 24th,
or bring them to the registration table at the Gala on April 26th,
at the Dobbs Ferry Woman's Club, 54 Clinton Avenue, Dobbs Ferry

*Prizes will include Gourmet Meals at Local Restaurants
the Society's Popular Afghan 🌀 Certificates from Merchants
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<p>\$1 each, 6 tickets for \$5, FREE LUCKY BONUS -13 FOR \$10</p> <p>FREE LUCKY 13th TICKET with \$10 donation for page of 12.</p> <p>FREE EARLY BIRD 14th TICKET with \$10 for 12 through April 24.</p>	<p align="center">EARLY BIRD BONUS! with \$10 for 12 by April 26</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>City _____ State _____</p> <p>Zip _____ Phone _____</p>	<p align="center">FREE BONUS! with \$10 donation for page of 12.</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>City _____ State _____</p> <p>Zip _____ Phone _____</p>
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