

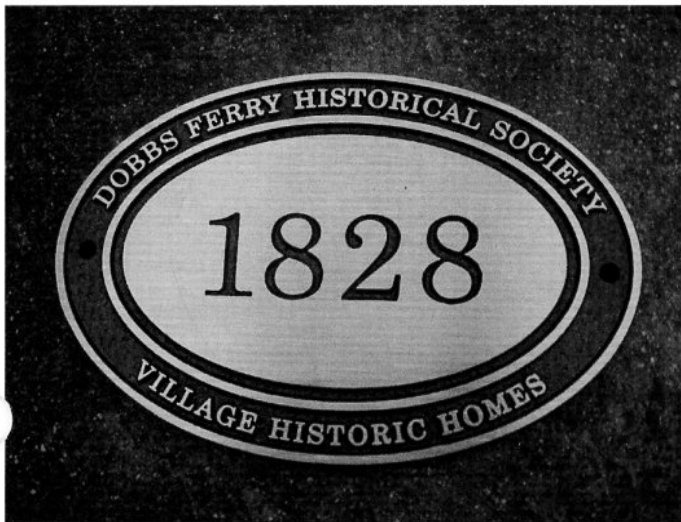
# THE FERRYMAN

DOBBS FERRY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## WE PROUDLY INTRODUCE:

### THE DOBBS FERRY HISTORICAL SOCIETY HISTORIC PLAQUE PROGRAM



In 1682, Frederick Philipse obtained a patent for the area that encompasses present day Dobbs Ferry, land that was eventually incorporated in Philipsburgh Manor [in 1693]. Gradually a settlement grew around what became the eastern terminus of the ferry operated by successive members of the Dobbs family. Thus, for over three centuries, Dobbs Ferry has played a vital role in the growth of the Hudson Valley region and in our nation's history. Historic buildings here are a lasting reminder of this rich history and of the people who lived here.

To call attention to the historic character of our village and to give formal recognition to its earliest buildings such as houses, barns, and stores, the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society is inaugurating its Historic Plaque Program.

The 9" by 6" oval medallion plaque (as seen in the photo) will provide visible recognition for our historic buildings. It also will serve as an excellent educational tool for increasing recognition of Dobbs Ferry architectural history and for promoting historic preservation of our village.

To qualify for a plaque, the structure must be documented according to Historical Society procedures, be at least fifty years old and be located within city limits.

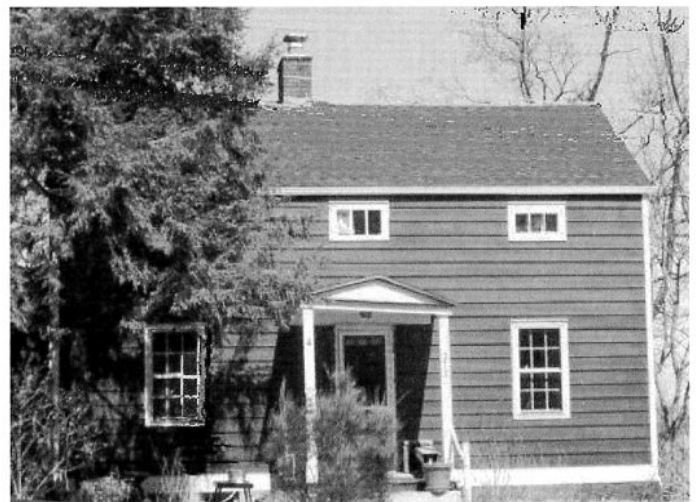
Owners will be asked for documentation such as deeds, building permits, surveys, etc indicating year of construction. The Society will do its best to correctly identify and authenticate the date. Due to the nature of these historical records, in some cases it is not always possible to determine the exact date. If the year cannot be determined, a "c" for circa will be added to the plaque.

The fee to participate is \$300 which covers the cost of the plaque, authentication of the records and a one year family membership to the Historical Society. Applications are available upon request. Just call (914)-674-1007 and leave a message or email us at :

[DFHistory@Verizon.net](mailto:DFHistory@Verizon.net)

The town's residential architecture spans several eras and our neighborhoods offer a unique look at historic homes being adapted to today's families and lifestyles. Many of the homes have been cared for and lovingly restored. This program is a wonderful way to highlight an important aspect of what makes the village so special, and help document the historical roots of Dobbs Ferry.

**WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO BECOME  
PART OF DOBBS FERRY'S  
LIVING HISTORY MUSEUM!**



*Read about "The Little Red House"  
built in 1828 our first plaque recipient inside!*

# THE HISTORY OF RESOLUTE HOOK & LADDER

BY NEIL SWEETING

One hundred and twenty-five years of dedicated volunteer service! For that long, Resolute Hook and Ladder has provided fire protection to Dobbs Ferry residents. To honor this milestone, the fire department will host a firemen's parade through the village on Saturday May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2008 at 5:30 pm. Involving numerous neighboring fire departments and marching bands, the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary parade will be the highlight of a year of celebrations.

As Dobbs Ferry expanded in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the need for formalized fire protection was obvious. On May 17, 1883, the Village Board of Trustees led by President (Mayor) Downey held a special meeting in Huber Hall to address the issue. A petition was presented by John Ackerman, Charles Starr, William Garvey, Charles Huber, James Embree, Charles McClelland, Arthur Gudeon, Hugh Tieran, William Travis, James Ackerman, Edward Pringle, Frank Hotchkiss, Ellsworth Driscoll, Fred Eberspacher, John Eberspacher, John Mc Nicholas, Robert Gudeon, James Gillespie, Thomas

Browne, James Walsh, James Elder, Charles Schmidt, John Kane, Michael Farrell and Joseph Lossee to be organized into a fire company to be known as the Resolute Hook and Ladder Company No. 1. The petition was promptly granted. President Downey then called for an election. Joseph Embree was elected foreman and L.W. Boyle was elected assistant foreman. President Downey then turned the meeting over to the membership who elected John R. Ackerman Chairman, Joseph Gillispie Secretary and John Eberspacher Treasurer. A committee was formed to work with the Village Board to purchase a fire truck and to develop company by-laws.

The next week, on May 24, 1883, the first organizational meeting was held. Members decided to hold meetings of the membership on the second Monday of the each month. This meeting schedule has remained in effect for 125 years. In addition, the company meets every Monday night for company drills.

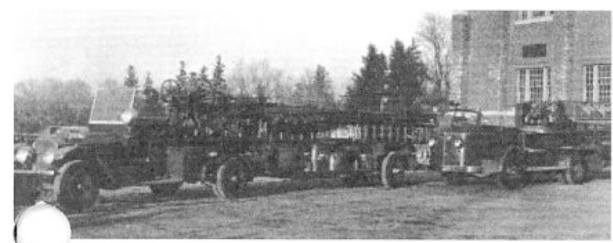
The first piece of apparatus purchased for the company was a hand drawn, hook and ladder wagon and was housed in the company's first firehouse on Cedar Street (where the Allstate Insurance Office stands today). The company responded to two fire calls that first year. Today the fire department responds to roughly 350 calls yearly.

In February 1891 the company wrote the Mayor that they were dissatisfied with their present quarters and needed a more suitable building. Space was made available in the Village Hall at 63 Main Street (where the Sushi Niji Restaurant stands today). Resolute occupied the ground floor, sharing the space with the Livingston Hose Company which was formed in August 1888.

By the time Resolute relocated to 63 Main Street, horses were being used to pull the apparatus. Kept in the John Best Livery Stable located at 32 Main Street, the horses were alerted to a fire by banging a metal hoop with a hammer in front of the firehouse. John Best would release the horses and they would charge up the street to the firehouse. A reward of five dollars was given to the first man who got to the station and had the team of horses hooked up and ready.

In February 1898, the company asked the Village to appropriate \$2,500 for a new, more modern piece of apparatus. But Village residents voted down the proposal during an April referendum. Not until 1909 did the company receive their first piece of motorized apparatus—a gas-powered Mack tractor—to replace the horses. The tractor was hooked to the company's original trailer. While happy with this addition, the company never forgot that their original request for new apparatus was voted down by the Village residents.





In June 1917, the company took ownership of a modernized tractor-drawn tiller apparatus with a 100 foot aerial. This began an 85 year tradition of using a tractor drawn tiller fire apparatus. The apparatus served the company during many large fires in the Village including the great Main Street fire of August 1918 that started in Mr. Pelligrini's barber shop and spread into several stores causing an estimated \$50,000-\$60,000 dollars worth of damage. Just before being retired from service in 1948, the original tiller apparatus responded to an explosion and fire at the Rockland Dental company on Main Street that damaged several buildings.

In 1927 Resolute moved for the final time into their present firehouse in the Village Hall at 112 Main Street on land donated by Franklin Q. Brown. Upon completion of the firehouse, the company objected to the design of the apparatus floor because it lacked a solid wall to separate Resolute from Livingston Hose which shared the firehouse. This displeasure showed the fierce competition and rivalry the villages three fire companies had amongst themselves during the early days.

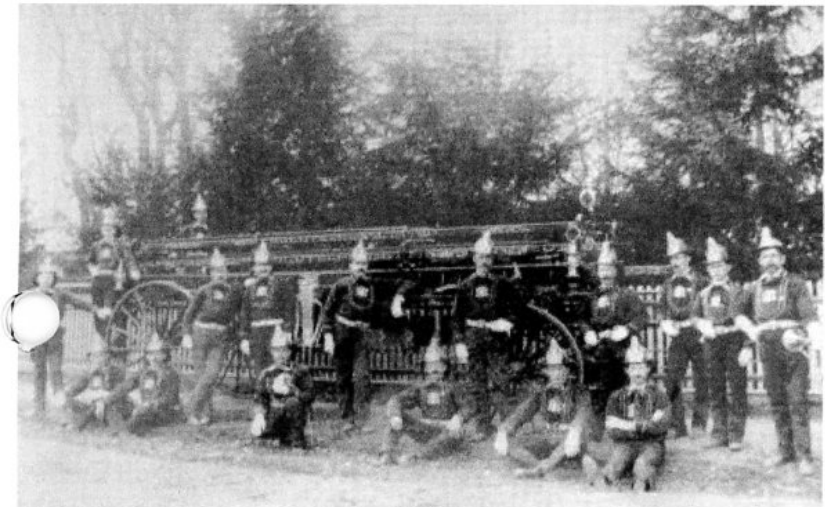
In 1948 after 31 years of service, the first tiller apparatus was replaced with a new tractor-drawn American LaFrance tiller with a 100 foot aerial ladder. The apparatus cost the Village \$35,000. The trailer portion of this apparatus would serve Resolute for 44 years. The tractor was replaced in 1971 with a new enclosed cab and the open cabinetry on the trailer was replaced with new closed cabinets. This overhaul cost the Village \$50,000.



The tiller-drawn aerial went through one final overhaul in 1983 in time for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the company and the Westchester County Volunteer Firemen's Convention hosted by the department that September. The overhaul included a new paint and white paint scheme and a 100 foot aerial ladder.

In 1990 Resolute began the search for a new apparatus that resulted in the purchase a Mack Tower Ladder with a 95 boom and bucket, thus ending Resolute's 85 year tradition of tractor-drawn tiller fire apparatus requiring two drivers. Beginning service in February 1992, Tower Ladder 23 has responded to some of the biggest fires in the Village's history as well as to numerous neighboring communities on mutual aid. At the December 1997 Rosalind Gardens fire, members of Resolute used the Tower Ladder to rescue a woman trapped by fire on the fifth floor fire escape.

Over the last 125 years Resolute has served the Village outside its traditional firefighting role. In 1886, due to the lack of a formal police department, the company formed a Vigilance Committee to patrol the Village at night. During World War II, the company assisted Air Raid Wardens and responded to alerts. Members have assisted in building playgrounds and have supported numerous civic organizations. They have helped houses of worship change lights high on their steeples and have educated school classes on the importance of fire safety. Along with fire fighting, company members have played an integral role in the makeup of the political and social fabric of the Village. Their history is rich and they will forever remain resolute in their desire to help the residents of the Village at a moment's notice twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.



**125TH ANNIVERSARY  
FIREMAN'S PARADE  
THROUGH THE VILLAGE  
SATURDAY MAY 17<sup>TH</sup>, 2008  
AT 5:30 PM  
REFRESHMENTS AFTER  
AT WATERFRONT PARK**

**COME SHOW YOUR  
APPRECIATION AND  
SUPPORT OUR FIREMEN!**

# *A Soldier's Tale... Private Flohr's Diary*



*Private Flohr was a German soldier serving with General Rochambeau's forces in America. In this installment, he describes the troops' march from Newport to the Dobbs Ferry area that he labels as Philipsburgh, the name of the colonial manor that stretched along the Hudson River from the Croton River south to Yonkers. His forces arrived at the encampment on July 9<sup>th</sup> and passed muster before General George Washington on July 12, 1781.*

**W**e liked the food that Americans ate, except for the bread, because it is made from cornmeal and baked in such a strange way, although it is pleasant enough to eat. Coffee, tea, and chocolate are used by everyone. One never sees a white man working. All work is done by Negroes. Also, one does not see much difference between rich and poor white people. All the inhabitants seem to be rich. I have been wondering greatly from what their wealth comes, since they do not work at all.

The greater part of the land is uninhabited and has no owner. As soon as one leaves a town, it is all woods. If here and there one sees an estate, which they call a "plantation" the owner who lives there is called a "gentleman" comparable to European nobility, yet much richer. Each of these gentlemen owns at least 50 Negroes, and some as many as 200. These are bought and sold at market like cattle. Heavy trading goes on all over the country. The Negro men who are traded own nothing but what they wear.

**Y**ou do not see any difference in what women wear, be it Sunday or a week day. They are always dressed like noble ladies. If they have to travel only a half hour's walk, they are on horseback or in a carriage. The women ride horses as competently as men. Also their beauty is preferable to all the beauties in other lands. They are not all haughty and talk with everyone, rich or poor.

Before we started our march, there was an execution, which took place on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May. The man executed was a sergeant or a corporal of artillery who had stabbed his captain because of a whore. For that, his hand was cut off and he was hanged according to Royal Ordinance.

**O**n the 10<sup>th</sup> of June we were put aboard small ships and at 9 o'clock we sailed 30 English miles from Newport to Providence. The town of Providence lies on a navigable river which empties into the ocean at the town. There is a nice college [*today's Brown University*] up on a hill above the town. The town is embellished with a fine, large church steeple in addition to other small ones. We left ship and set up camp on the left side of the tow. We left a small detachment of sick men in Providence under the command of Major Duprez because the college had a hospital.

In some areas through which we marched, you saw very few men around, but many women. If you saw a man among them, he would most likely be an old one, or a cripple, because in those areas all men up to 60 years old had been forced to join the military. [*Ed. note: clearly an exaggeration. Earlier, he says nothing about the draft status of the gentlemen on their plantations.*]

However, there was no lack of women. Because of the man shortage, the women came quite often into our camps along the way. They came to "buy" some of our soldiers. This was curtly refused and they had to go home empty-handed.

**O**n the morning of 28<sup>th</sup> of June, we began our march from Providence, hiking 13 miles to Barron's Tavern, an inn along the road. We made camp nearby. Again, we had many visitors, among them many young American women who stopped at the camp on horseback looking like English ladies. That afternoon, our Excellencies, the Generals, arranged a ball on the open hillside in front of the inn and invited the young American women to attend. This went on until nightfall. You could see how they enjoyed dancing and singing with both the soldiers and their officers. When we went to our tents to sleep, the girls went home with regrets.

*[Ed note: from here, we could not decipher from Flohr's spelling what some of the place names really were—Neuegawn, Gaibar, or Ezabar, Heutgau, Sacsueh. Furthermore, his rendition of the mileages and the days on the march through Rhode Island and Connecticut do not add up. Earlier in his foreword, he says that he wrote notes most days, but then reconstructed them into a narrative a few years later.]*

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of June, we marched off again for 13 miles to Breakneck, a small town nestled on some mountains in a beautiful area. The amusement there was even greater than that of the previous day—dancing and singing with the charming and lovely American girls. All this fun went on in the open air.

**O**n the 30<sup>th</sup> of June, we marched another 13 miles to Neuegawn a small town. Along the way, we came to nice glade called Gaibar two miles long. We set up camp very near Neuegawn and had a rest day, which gave us an especially nice time in which to amuse ourselves with the pretty girls.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July, we marched 16 miles to Ridbury. Along the way, we passed a place called Danbury. We made camp at Ridbury, on a nice gentleman's estate, where we had again many visitors. On the 4<sup>th</sup>, another 10 miles to Bedford, near the North River and New York. On the 5<sup>th</sup> we marched to North Castle, a small town near the mountains, where we had a rest. On the 9<sup>th</sup> we marched off for 19 miles to Phillipsburg, where we had another rest.

**O**n the 12<sup>th</sup>, we passed muster before General Washington of the American Army. His dress uniform was a dark blue with a yellow leather collar and lapels, golden epaulettes and a large hat. There we rested until the evening of the 21<sup>st</sup>.

*Next installment: Flohr's version of Major Andre's capture*

BY GABRIELE H GRUNEBaum WITH HANK WALTER

## DOBBS FERRY ENCAMPMENT, JULY 4 TO AUGUST 19, 1781

*Dobbs Ferry and neighboring localities, such as Ardsley, Hartsdale and Edgemont/Greenville, were part of the 1781 summer encampment of the allied American and French armies. Here the winning strategy for the Revolutionary War was adopted. General Washington established his headquarters in Joseph Appleby's farmhouse (near the present-day WFAS radio station, in Hartsdale, just south of Secor Road). General Orders issued from this site were labeled "Head Quarters, Dobbs Ferry."*  
*Items of note during this period included:*

Elite military units were deployed in Dobbs Ferry during the 45-day encampment including Col. Alexander Scammell's First Infantry, described by a respected primary source as **"a select corps, consisting of the most active and soldierly young men and officers intended to march in advance of the main army, constantly prepared for active and hazardous service,"** and Col. Elisha Sheldon's Dragoons, the first cavalry of the United States.

A large redoubt, overlooking the Hudson River, was constructed at Dobbs Ferry by Continental Army troops. American soldiers at the redoubt took casualties defending the encampment and at least one soldier in the Dobbs Ferry redoubt was killed by enemy fire.

Dobbs Ferry received cannon fire from British ships on the Hudson River on at least three occasions. Fire was returned by the troops in the redoubt, causing considerable damage on one occasion to the HMS Savage, a British ship-of-war. That damage allowed an American prisoner on board to escape by jumping overboard and swimming to safety in Dobbs Ferry.

General Washington placed the name, "Dobbs Ferry" or "Dobbs's Ferry" or "near Dobbs Ferry" at the top of approximately 100 letters which he sent during that busy time, indicating that these were his preferred names for the location of the encampment.

The march to Virginia began when the Continental Army left Dobbs Ferry as a unified body on Sunday, August 19, 1781. The troops stationed in the Heatherdell Road area (present-day Ardsley) joined the troops stationed in Dobbs Ferry on August 19. Alexander Scammell's Light Infantry was ordered to march at the head of the marching forces. The American army marched west on present-day Ashford Avenue (known then as Dobbs Ferry Road), and then turned right at the Gateway intersection and proceeded north on present-day Broadway.

James Thatcher, a Doctor in the Continental army described the beginning of the march in his *Journal*. **"we commenced our line of march yesterday, a party of pioneers being sent forward to clear the road towards King's bridge [to the South], and we expected immediately to follow in that direction; but an army is a machine, whose motions are directed by its chief. When the troops were paraded for the march, they were ordered to face to the right about, and making a retrograde movement up the side of the North [Hudson] river, we have reached King's ferry, and are preparing to cross the Hudson at this ferry."**

The French army, under the command of General Rochambeau, took a different route; it departed from the Edgemont/Greenville area and marched north on interior roads, roughly parallel to the Americans; both the Americans and the French crossed the Hudson River at King's Ferry (Verplanck) and then proceeded south from Stony Point to Philadelphia, then to the Chesapeake Bay and Virginia where they met and defeated the British forces at the Battle of Yorktown.



*Courtesy: Sheldon's Dragoons website*

BY DR. RICHARD BORKOW

**THE LITTLE RED HOUSE - A REVERIE**

Here's the scene: I'm sitting in my car at the intersection by the Stop 'n Shop waiting for the light to change. The road is clogged with traffic and I am several car lengths south of the light, heading north. Bored at the seemingly interminable wait, my eyes wander to the left, where I spy a little red house.

*Suddenly, a page in history turns.* It's no longer 2008; it's sometime in the 1840's. I'm sitting on a horse on a macadam road called the Albany Post Road. I'm heading toward the blacksmith shop, which is next to the little red house. My horse needs a couple of new shoes. Maybe while that's being taken care of, I'll cross the road and stop in at the Anthony Inn (Tony Storm's place). I'll check my mail (the inn is also our post office) and catch up on local gossip. I might even go downstairs to the inn's ornate cellar bar. Perhaps Alexander Hamilton's son, James, will be there, or even Washington Irving.

As I approach the blacksmith shop, the front door to the little red house opens, and the smithy comes out. He has just finished his lunch. He sees me and waves a greeting.

At that instant, the page turns back again. The man is not a smithy; he is standing at the intersection, pointing at the traffic light, which has turned green. In place of the blacksmith shop, the Broadway Arms apartment building looms up. Behind me, cars are honking. Sluggishly, I move on. Where the Anthony Inn stood, the Dobbs Diner and Mobile station silently observe my passing. I move on down Ashford.

My encounter with the "little red house" at 373 Broadway in Dobbs Ferry has been echoed in the recollections of those individuals with whom I have discussed the house. They too find it "a step back in time."

When I was asked to write an article on the house, I resolved to first gather all the factual information regarding the structure that I could find. This proved to be a frustrating task. Certainly there were records, which showed that the house passed through a succession of owners since its construction in 1828. Also, the interior has gone through some changes, and more recently, new wood clapboard siding has replaced the original, badly-deteriorated exterior walls. The shutters are now missing. Yet, few personal anecdotes or reminiscences have surfaced.

This much I have learned: The house was built in 1828 *perhaps* by a man named John Hyatt. The house *may* have been a farmhouse which was part of a larger farm whose main house was at 152 Broadway. The house then *may* have become the residence of a blacksmith whose shop was part of a stagecoach stop which *may* have been where the South Presbyterian Church is located. Or it *could have been* connected with the Anthony Inn, itself a prominent stagecoach stop. In the later 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was owned by N. L. Golden, who maintained a carriage shop in the building beside it, which is no longer there. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Taxter's Blacksmith Shop occupied the corner of Cedar Street and Broadway. The little red house at 373 Broadway is now definitely a private residence.

If you can provide any further definitive information or anecdotes regarding the "little red house," please contact me through the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society.

BY LARRY BLIZARD

***"The Little Red House" at 373 Broadway built in 1828 is the first recipient of our historic plaque program.***

Hey Betsy... great afghan!  
Now how about making a  
flag for our country?

*Betsy Ross*  
*"The early years"*



I would like to order \_\_\_ afghan(s) @ \$45 each.  
Enclosed is my check for \$ \_\_\_ please send it to:

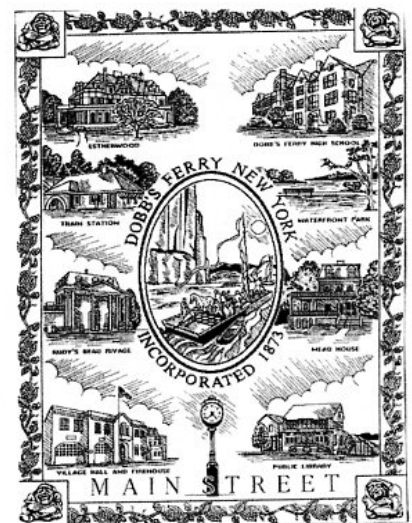
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Address \_\_\_\_\_

phone \_\_\_\_\_

Williamsburg blue   
Cranberry red

DF Historical Society  
12 Elm St  
DF, NY 10522 or  
phone (914)-674-1007



**The Gala is coming up  
on June 7th  
Make your reservation  
now!**

AS OUR PRIMARY FUNDRAISER OF THE YEAR,  
YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS RAFFLE ENABES  
THE SOCIETY TO MAINTAIN ITS HOME AT THE  
MEAD HOUSE AND PROVIDE EXPANDED  
PROGRAMS FOR THE COMMUNITY  
PLEASE SUPPORT US.

**Prizes include gift certificates to our local  
restaurants, our popular afghan, and other  
great gifts donated by our local Merchants**

Mail your completed tickets with  
payment to us by June 1st at :

**The DF Historical Society  
12 Elm Street  
Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522**



Or bring them to the registration  
table at the gala on June 7th at:

**The DF Women's Club  
54 Clinton Avenue  
Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522**

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☆ ☆ "LUCKY 13" ☆ ☆

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**\$1 each  
6 for \$5**

**13 for  
\$10**

# You Are Cordially Invited to our Annual Spring Gala

7:00 p.m. on Saturday night, June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008  
Dobbs Ferry Woman's Club ♦ 54 Clinton Avenue ♦ Dobbs Ferry, NY



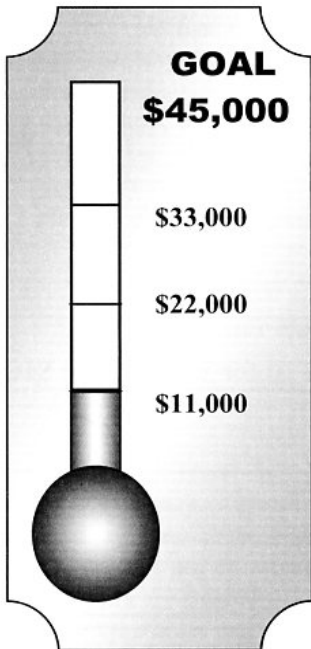
We are most delighted to present a lecture by our special guest  
**DAVID S. DUNBAR**  
New York City Historian  
and co author of  
"EMPIRE CITY - New York Through the Centuries"

Delicious food and beverages, a party atmosphere, and the ever-popular raffle will mark this evening. If you have never attended the Gala before, do join us this year. It will be a very special evening with plenty of time to chat with old friends and find new acquaintances who share your interest in the history of Dobbs Ferry.

Send your reservation for tickets (\$30 for each ticket) and your raffle tickets ( see inside) to:  
Dobbs Ferry Historical Society  
12 Elm Street  
Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522.

Our space is limited so do send your reservations in early.  
For further information, call 914-674-1007.

## MEAD HOUSE PRESERVATION FUND : UPDATE



We are pleased to report that due to your generosity: we have been able to start some repairs that were urgently needed. With the donations we have received we have been able to accomplish much, but need your continued support to help us finish this work:

- Repaired our leaking roof
- Fixed and painted our entry stairs
- Carpentry in preparation for painting

**WE'VE STILL SO FAR TO GO...  
WON'T YOU PLEASE HELP US?**

## WE NEED YOU TO BECOME A MEMBER!

**If you enjoy receiving  
this newsletter, please  
join the society. We rely  
on membership dues to  
stay in existence.  
Thank you for your  
continued support!**



The Mead House  
12 Elm Street  
Dobbs Ferry, New York 10522  
Phone: 914-674-1007  
Email : [dfhistory@verizon.net](mailto:dfhistory@verizon.net)

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**DOBBS FERRY  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**

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DobbsFerryHistoricalSociety/Home.html](http://web.mac.com/msdonovan/iWeb/DobbsFerryHistoricalSociety/Home.html)

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