



The Ferryman

Fostering an awareness and appreciation for the history of Dobbs Ferry and all the people, noted and humble, who transmitted the good things of the past to the present and the future.

The Killer Flu of 1918

A look back at the local impact of the devastating epidemic, which killed tens of millions worldwide.

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The 'Great White Hurricane'

Tales from the blizzard of 1888, which paralyzed the East Coast with up to five feet of snow.

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Farewell to Mildred Persinger

When she died recently, at 100, the Historical Society lost one of its longest-term supporters.

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Who Was Gerald Paul Jones?

A trove of recently discovered letters suggests that in the war years he was quite the ladies' man.

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Volume XXIX Issue No. 4 Winter 2019

The Dobbs Family In Rural Manhattan

Part 3 of an imagined autobiography of John Dobbs (c. 1675 - c. 1759)

By Jim Lockett

The neighborhood around Chatham Square on Manhattan Island is where I spent my childhood — far from Barren Island, the place historians have erroneously placed me and my parents. Chatham Square is on the edge of today's Chinatown, northeast of City Hall.

Manhattan above Wall Street was rural in my day. The beautiful Collect Pond, also known as "The Fresh Water," was there, and we weren't far from the East River. There were abundant fish in the pond and the river, and abundant game (and wolves) in the wooded sections of the Manhattan countryside. Interesting travelers passed by on the only road running north, known as The Highway, and paused to admire the view at the little bridge across the stream from the pond. The water was good — much better than from the wells further south; many people came to fill buckets and barrels. In later years, a pump was installed, called "The Tea Water Pump," and the bridge was called "The Kissing Bridge."



A 1798 drawing shows Collect Pond looking south toward New York City, which then barely reached the City Hall area.

The stream ran in a valley through my uncle's farm and continued to the East River. Collect Pond no longer exists. It became polluted and, beginning about 1811, it was drained and filled in. There is a park, Collect Pond Park, on a tiny portion of its former site. The middle of the pond was on today's Centre Street, stretching from Leonard to Canal.

We shared the neighborhood with many people of African descent — former slaves of the Dutch and their descendants. Until 1664, some slaves were freed after many years of work, and they often settled near Collect Pond.

We lived slightly to the southeast of the pond. The African American burial ground is to the southwest, marked by a monument today. There were racial tensions at times. In 1696 a slave was ordered to be whipped with eleven lashes "at every street corner" for assaulting my Uncle William.

Slavery was quite prevalent in New York in the 1600s and 1700s, and whites feared potential insurrections. My future landlord at Dobbs Ferry, Frederick Philipse, made a lot of money in the slave trade, and my uncle William owned slaves when he lived across from today's

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Dobbs Ferry. In 1741, my nephew John Hughson (son of my sister Mary), born in Dobbs Ferry but by then a tavern keeper in Manhattan, was executed for allegedly taking part in a slave insurrection.

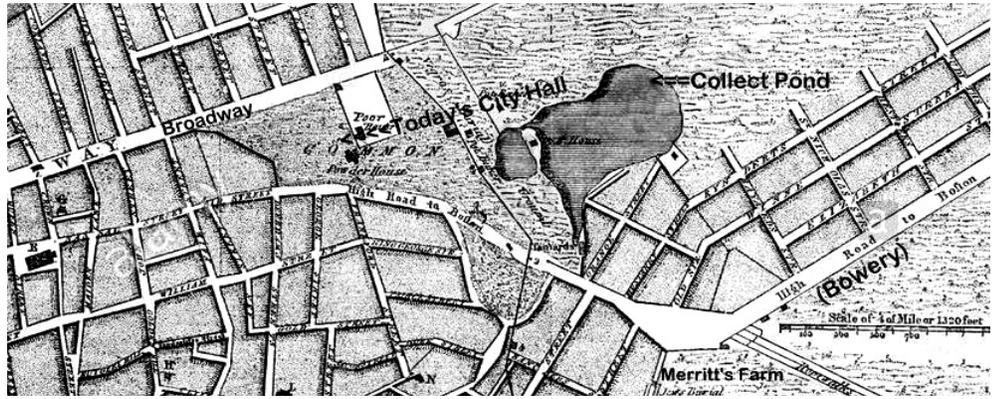
The Dutch traveler Jasper Danckaerts traveled up The Highway on Oct. 6, 1679, entering this in his diary: “We went from the city, following the Broadway, over the valley, or the fresh water. Upon both sides of this way were many habitations of negroes, mulattoes and whites.” He went on, describing Manhattan, “There are many brooks of fresh water running through it, pleasant and proper for man and beast to drink, as well as agreeable to behold, affording cool and pleasant resting places.”

Jews also lived in the neighborhood. My Uncle William and Aunt Margery sold them a little piece of the farm for their cemetery, and it is still there today, on St. James Place near Chatham Square. It is said to be the second oldest extant cemetery on Manhattan.

In addition to selling liquor, my dad cut hay from a salt marsh near my uncle’s farm. This has never been reported before in a Dobbs history, but my dad’s use of the salt marsh is in the historical record, hiding in the back title of the large abutting parcel known as Bowery 6, between my uncle’s farm and the East River. In 1685 one Augustine Herman sold Bowery 6 to Wolfert Webber (a descendant of the original Webber) and Hendrick Cornelissen. The sale excluded “the Lott of Salt Meadow ... now in the tenure of Walter Dobs.”

A coincidence: Jasper Danckaerts, whose journal has been so helpful to this story, would soon plant a religious colony on land in Maryland belonging to the very same Augustine Herman.

Old maps indicate a salt marsh on Bowery 6 extending inland from the East River at about today’s Clinton Street, between the Manhattan and Williamsburg Bridges. It was only a short walk from Uncle William’s farm. I am so glad my dad left this imprint in



A 1767 map showing the Collect Pond area.

the historical record, for it allows me to say definitively, “We lived near there!”

In 1684 my Uncle William Merritt had a great idea: Get into the ferry business! Not a ferry on the Hudson. That came later. His idea was to take over the ferry running from Manhattan to Brooklyn and invest in upgrades, with new facilities on each bank and new boats. He asked the city for a 20-year lease at 20 pounds per year (a lowball offer).

Running a ferry can be a good business. You collect not just the fares for carrying people, cargo, and animals, but also food and drink revenue if you set up a tavern at each landing. My descendants would do this on the Hudson in the following century. So you see, tavern-keeping ran in the family.

Uncle William approached the Common Council with his proposal in February 1684. The Council was interested, but wanted better terms. Rent paid by “the farmer of the ferry” was an important source of revenue for city government. (“Farmer” in my day had the additional meaning of leaseholder. The city owned the rights to the ferry service and “farmed it out” to an operator. The right to collect taxes was also farmed out, and Uncle William generally won the right to collect liquor taxes in the city. So he was called “the farmer of the excise.” In later years he had partners in the excise farming business, men like George Lockhart and John Corbett, who will play important roles in our story.)

I can’t tell you if we ever did run the Brooklyn ferry. The Common Council

Minutes record that the negotiations took place and a final offer was made to Uncle William, but they do not record whether he accepted that offer. You may infer he did, because there is no further mention of the city seeking a ferry operator in the next seven years of minutes. But the ferry leases are lost, and the minutes are silent.

In 1689, a German-American merchant and militia captain named Jacob Leisler seized control of the colony and ruled it from 1689 to 1691. Uncle William opposed what came to be known as Leisler’s Rebellion, with profound repercussions for our family. (The wife of the Brooklyn ferryman was jailed by the rebels. But history does not record her connection, if any, to Uncle William, so I can only dangle that out as an intriguing loose end that might some day lead to an answer as to whether Uncle William ran the Brooklyn ferry. Perhaps there is some as-yet-unnoticed letter or document pertaining to the arrest that would reveal a connection to Uncle William. If she was a relative or employee, I think it would have been mentioned somewhere.)

Soon after the ferry negotiations in 1684, Uncle William won a seat on the Common Council. From then on, a reader of the minutes will find him a most energetic public servant. He seems to be tapped for every conceivable assignment: selecting a place to store gunpowder; obtaining 86 cords of tree trunks for the city’s defenses; “moving the necessary house” (outhouse) at the dock; making arrangements for a ducking stool (a device for punishing scolds); overseer of the poor; reviewing and correcting real estate tax assessments;

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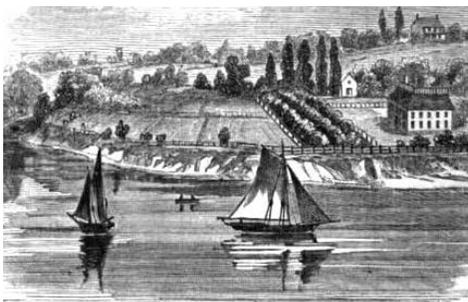
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providing a “treat,” or gift, for the new governor (budget: 20 pounds). And in 1691 you will find in the minutes that he is assigned to conduct bidding for a new ferry operator, and that bidding took place at his house.

Around the same time, my dad was named a city constable. I think Uncle William pulled strings to make that happen. In 1684 council members and constables were not identified geographically, but in 1687 they were for the first time.

My dad was constable for the Bowery (the neighborhood around Collect Pond) and William was Alderman for the same ward. Once my cousin John Merritt was old enough to hold public office, he took over as Alderman for the Bowery and Uncle William then became Alderman for the Dock Ward, site of his downtown house. When my dad died and my mother remarried, her new husband, Nathaniel Pittman, became constable for the Bowery. There was a delay of two years between the marriage and my stepfather getting the constable job, probably because those were the years of Leisler’s Rebellion and Uncle William was thus out of power and unable to do anything for his new brother-in-law. (During those years, Nathaniel sold liquor, tax records show.) I think you can see my uncle was an influential man and he took care of his extended family. (I imagine you want more details on Leisler’s Rebellion, but I am saving that for the next article.)

My dad died in 1689 or shortly before. My uncle Ed Meeks also died around then. I can’t tell you how they died. But death in the prime of life was common. Mosquitoes carrying tropical diseases hitchhiked in the bilge water of ships coming from the tropics and then escaped into the ditches and marshes of Manhattan. Margaret Lane, a 20th-century descendant of mine who wrote much on family history, speculated that Uncle Ed and my dad died at sea. But there is no evidence they were sailors and much evidence they had land-based occupations. Illness, perhaps related to working in and near swamps, is a more likely explanation.



A 1760 view from the East River showing the area where Walter Dobbs had cut salt marsh hay.

When my mom remarried in 1689, so did my Aunt Sarah. You can find their marriages in the records of the Manhattan Dutch Reformed Church, in consecutive entries, as if it were a double wedding. We were Anglicans (Uncle William was a founder and vestryman of Trinity Church), but the Dutch Reformed Church was where everyone tended to record baptisms and marriages, and this continued to be true in later years, when I would travel up to Tarrytown for such life events. The marriage record says my mom and her new husband lived “at the fresh water,” or Collect Pond.

Sarah and her new husband, Henry Crabbe, were said to live “on the land of Frederick Phillips.” That’s about the most nonspecific place description you could imagine, since Frederick Philipse owned land all over the place by then. I too would settle “on the land of Frederick Phillips” in 1698, and my sister Mary as well. We might guess Uncle William’s many connections with Mr. Philipse played a role in settling first Aunt Sarah and later me on his lands, just as we might guess Uncle William’s connections in government and role in founding Trinity Church may have helped my brother William: He would hold minor jobs with city government (street cleaner and night watchman) and then become rector of Trinity Church.

William was also a shoemaker, and his son William would play an important role in the American Revolution as a ship’s pilot and spy for the Patriot side, praised in the correspondence of George Washington.

When it comes to my brother Walter Jr.’s life, maybe it’s a stretch to speculate that Uncle William helped set him on his path,

but maybe not. I’ll give you the facts and you decide: Walter Jr. settled on Barn (later Wards) Island in the East River and married a daughter of the island’s owner. An earlier owner was Thomas DeLavall. DeLavall had multiple connections to Uncle William — he owned a ship that William captained; he was nominated for mayor at the same time that William was nominated for sheriff; and both men were involved in city government, each serving three terms as mayor, DeLavall in the 1660s and 70s and William in the 1690s.

My mom inherited a house in the Bowery from one Obadiah Serjeant, a mariner, in 1691. This fact is recorded in the will abstracts for the period. He left his sister and nephew only 3 shillings each but he left my mom his house. Amazing! The city tax rolls list her as owner of this house throughout the 1690s, first as Mrs. Pittman and later as widow Pittman. Generally, when houses were not owner-occupied, the tenant’s name was also listed on the tax rolls. There is no tenant mentioned in any year for this house, so we may infer she lived there. The fact that Serjeant was a mariner like my Uncle William makes me think he was an old friend of my uncle and leaving his house to William’s sister was in gratitude for some past kindness on the high seas. Just a hunch.

Uncle William, his family, my sister Mary, and I moved upriver in 1698. My mom did not come with us, and neither did my brothers Walter Jr. and William. What those three did in the early 1700s set the trap for future historians leading them into the Barren Island fallacy. The details of that will be revealed in a future article.

Future articles will also delve into the tumultuous events of Leisler’s Rebellion and how that contributed to our moving upriver, and then the history of the ferry service itself — before and during the American Revolution, then during the 19th century as the ferry at Dobbs Ferry enjoyed its most prosperous years, and finally the ferry’s colorful role in the 20th century serving the artists, writers, and actors living at Sneden’s Landing.

All sources for these articles can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/DobbsLockettNotes>.

The Other War of 1918

The devastating flu epidemic's local impact

By Ellen Milhan Klein

Much attention was given last year to the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I. Before we leave 2018 too far behind, it is worth remembering that the year was also the centennial of a war waged here at home — the Spanish influenza epidemic of 1918.

The epidemic killed tens of millions of people worldwide and an estimated 550,000 Americans over the course of 10 months, more than all the wars of the 20th century combined. Its origins are unclear, but a PBS special on the epidemic advanced one theory: On March 9, 1918, troops at Fort Riley, Kansas, burned piles of manure, blanketing the landscape in a black haze. Two days later soldiers began reporting to the infirmary with fever, sore throats, and headaches. Over the next week there were 500 such cases, 48 of which were fatal. During the spring and summer 1.5 million troops, including some from Fort Riley, were sent to Europe, and they took the virus with them on the crowded troop ships. Almost immediately the “Kansas sickness” surfaced among American forces in Europe, then spread to the British, French, and Germans, mutating as it went. By the time the virus returned to America with homecoming soldiers, it had morphed into a ruthless killer, unlike the familiar flu, which brings several days of aches and fever and then disappears. This killer spread from army base to base, causing bloody sputum, blue lungs, and pneumonia. A soldier could be fine in the morning and dead by night.

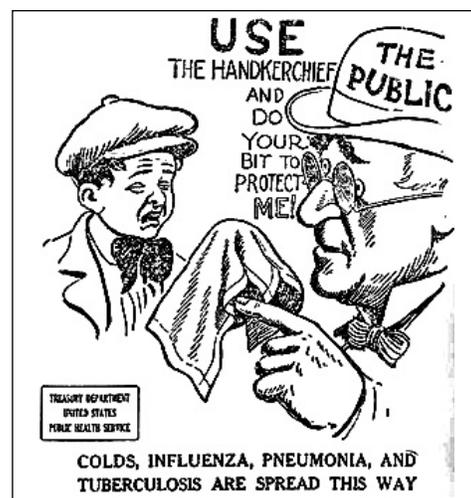
FERRYMAN STAFF

Larry Blizard
Peggie Blizard
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Hubert B. Herring
Ellen Klein
Judith Doolin Spikes

Still, the disease seemed confined to the military. Then on Sept. 11, 1918 — the same day Babe Ruth led the Boston Red Sox to victory in the World Series — three civilians dropped dead on the sidewalks of neighboring Quincy, Massachusetts. From there the virus traveled down the East Coast to New York City, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C. — and eventually to smaller communities like Dobbs Ferry.

Few people who lived through the epidemic are still alive; thus, I relied on general accounts of the period and information in our archives to piece together its impact on the community. Of the many Dobbs Ferry residents who have contributed oral histories to the historical society, only the barber Larry DeRosa, in 1979, recalled the epidemic: “Yes, we all had it, and we lived . . . There was a doctor. His name was Dr. Jenks. He’s the one who took care of everybody. I’ll never forget, he was a wonderful man. Happy-go-lucky, unless he had a little extra drink. But that’s what kept him going, and that’s what he fed everybody — a little bit of whiskey.” Seen through the rose-colored glasses of a seven-year-old child, the crisis apparently left no permanent scars on Mr. DeRosa, possibly because his family survived, and his parents succeeded in maintaining a sense of normalcy. Others in the community were not so lucky.

The brunt of the epidemic hit Dobbs Ferry in October. Early on, Dr. Robert Denniston of the Dobbs Ferry Board of Health issued the following instructions to the community: “If uncomplicated it is seldom fatal, but it is liable to be complicated with pneumonia and that is the cause of nearly all deaths from it . . . To avoid spreading the disease the nose and throat should be washed out several times daily as that is where the disease enters. A solution may be made by dissolving a teaspoonful of salt in a pint of hot water. If one or two cases occur in a family, they should be isolated for at least ten days; at the end of



A 1918 public-service cartoon.

that time the rooms they have occupied, and their persons and clothing should be thoroughly cleaned.” Meanwhile, the Public Health Council passed a rule making it a misdemeanor for anyone to cough or sneeze in public without covering the mouth or nose. Violators faced a fine of \$500, a year in prison, or both.

In Westchester County, the Atlantic division of the Red Cross formed emergency influenza committees to enable each community to care for its own patients. The role of the Red Cross was simply to inform and guide. The committee in Dobbs Ferry, in essence the first responders, consisted of Miss S.J. Russel, Miss H.C. Hubbell, and Miss Ruth Conlon. They chose not to open an emergency hospital but rather to keep patients at home whenever possible. They went door to door checking on what was needed. They knew how much room the hospital had and maintained a list of graduate nurses and women to work under them. Miss Russel opened her home to care for babies, while Miss Hubbell supervised the work of delivering nourishing broths yet also managed to supply, on Tuesdays and Fridays, custards and jellies to a hospital in Ossining. The women also attended sick soldiers among the troops protecting the Aqueduct to safeguard the New York City water supply, and, in their spare time, organized volunteers to make pneumonia jackets for the army camps nearby. (Before the use of antibiotics, flu and pneumonia were treated with bed rest, nutrition,

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and hydration. Pneumonia jackets were designed to warm the chest, often by circulating heated water through rubber tubing.)

Like the rest of America, our village juggled conflicting priorities in the fall of 1918. On one hand, the flu epidemic required residents to hunker down. Schools and churches were closed, meetings were canceled, the sick were quarantined at home. On the other hand, the demands of wartime could not be put on the back burner. Recruiting efforts and factory production were stepped up along with Liberty Loan drives and enormous parades — all occasions when residents would congregate and could be exposed. The columns of the Dobbs Ferry Register are filled with notices of closings and deaths interspersed with calls for more recruits and collections of bandages and knitted goods for the troops.

In the November 1, 1918, issue of the Dobbs Ferry Register, the influenza committee highlighted its work from October 12 to 28. Miss Hubbell and Miss Russel visited many of the Italian homes that had been attacked by the epidemic, where whole families were sick in bed — father, mother, and several children — but often with a nursing baby who was not sick. Without a suitable place to take such babies, Miss Hubbell, chairwoman of the committee, opened her own home. Over the two weeks of the epidemic, nine babies ranging in age from two weeks to twenty months, all but one Italian, were cared for there. Some stayed two days, others ten. As soon as the committee determined the child could go home safely, it did. One member added, “In some cases the parents would have been willing to have us keep them indefinitely, which was not strange, as every child went home cleaner than it came, well fed, in perfect health, and with an outfit of good clothes in addition to those it came in.” One child who had developed pneumonia and meningitis was beyond help.

Mothers in the community donated cribs and baby supplies, and a “tireless group

of women” pitched in to care for the children day and night. The committee engaged a visiting nurse, Mrs. McNerney, to tend the sick in their homes and bring them nourishing food. Thirty-five families were visited, and 15 gallons of broth, oranges, eggs, and jellies were distributed. Except for the nurse, all caregivers were volunteers. Because schools were closed, teachers were available to help. The motor corps provided transportation, and the Camp Fire girls ran errands. The report listed the committee’s expenses, including \$36.00 for the nurse, \$2.02 for milk, and \$8.38 for gas, ice, laundry, etc. It ended with the names of all those who donated sustenance and supplies; Mrs. Henry Villard was a regular donor of puddings.

Another issue of the paper reported that the influenza committee had 100 families on its visiting list and broth was distributed daily. The committee issued a plea for helpers at Miss Russel’s home in Ogden Park, daily from 9 to 1, and the use of automobiles for a few hours each day.

Diseases usually target the very young, the elderly, and the infirm. The influenza epidemic of 1918 afflicted young and old alike. Thomas Francis, 29, died on October 21. Thomas Riley of Newburgh, 14, and George Barrett of Richmond Hill, Long Island, 16, both died on October 28 at the New York Juvenile Asylum (now Children’s Village). Edith Stine Schiffer, 26, died three days earlier, leaving behind her lieutenant husband and two children. James F. Irving Jr. of Ashford Avenue was mourned by his parents and two younger brothers. On October 31, Susan Margaret Biegen, 30, died in the hospital after suffering a relapse.

Based on reports from doctors in Dobbs Ferry, Irvington, Hastings, and Ardsley, the Dobbs Ferry Register on October 25 declared that the epidemic in the Rivertowns had passed. Hastings was hardest hit of all the communities, the situation made more difficult by its having a large foreign population and the deaths of many mothers who left behind multiple children. In Dobbs Ferry, Dr. Denniston, of the Board of Health, oversaw nearly 100

cases over the three weeks, a period during which his own mother-in-law, Mrs. Flora Stiles Wight, died in his Broadway home from pneumonia. Two weeks later the paper recapped what had been a record-breaking month: 103 hospital admissions, 19 deaths, 33 ambulance calls, 671 days of nursing, and larger than normal donations from the community.

Finally, on the eve of the end of the Great War, the epidemic was over.

Sources:

“Influenza 1918.” *American Experience*, WNET-TV, New York, NY. Jan. 2, 2018. DeRosa, Larry. *Oral history interview by Helen Barolini for the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society*, Feb. 28, 1979. *Dobbs Ferry Register* (via fultonhistory.com). Issue dates: Oct. 4, Oct. 11, Oct. 18, Oct. 25, Nov 1, and Nov. 8, 1918. *Irvington Gazette* (via news.hrvh.org). Issue date: Oct. 25, 1918.

A Word From the Presidents

Welcome to our latest issue of The Ferryman! We strive to bring the past of Dobbs Ferry to you today.

As the world moves into a more digital age, so the Society moves as well.

Please friend us on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Dobbs-Ferry-Historical-Society-175127892518003/>

Please follow us on our new Instagram account: <https://www.instagram.com/dobbsferryhistoricalsociety/>

See a few examples from our postcard collection on Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/151971147@N06/>

And please contact us if you can volunteer two hours a week in our archives, mostly for clerical work.

Frank and Madeline

The Big One

Looking Back at the Blizzard of 1888

The three-day blizzard that began on Mar. 11, 1888, was one of the most severe in the nation's history. Sometimes called the Great White Hurricane, it paralyzed the East Coast, dumping as much as five feet of snow in spots. According to the Greenburgh Register, "snow banks ten feet deep were no rarity," one of which "obstructed all travel on Ashford Avenue." The New Croton Aqueduct (passing through Ardsley) was then being built, and the laborers relied on Dobbs Ferry for food. "It was impossible to send it to them on Monday and they were suffering." On Tuesday, they "carried large loads back in bags thrown over the horses' backs."

Some local residents left home Monday morning, not to return till Wednesday. One Adam Stalb "had not spent a night out of his own house in 27 years," the

Register said, but after three days stuck in Yonkers, he walked home.

A local train stalled a half mile below town with nearly 100 passengers, and "the railroad company sent down tea and coffee and sandwiches in abundance." But train delays proved more problematic. In his fascinating book "Hidden History of the Lower Hudson Valley," Carney Rhinevault describes a crash caused by the storm:

"Traffic was stopped on the river because of treacherous waves and high winds," he writes, but "the winds off the river had blown snow from the tracks, and so trains were able to run. Around 6:45 in the morning, the Chicago Express was running out of water for its steam boiler. Fortunately there was a water tower just south of the Dobbs Ferry train station and so the train made an unscheduled stop there.



"The conductor, Byran Calkins, was worried. He knew there was a train somewhere behind him on the same track and he wondered if its engineer would spot him in time to safely stop. Calkins set out a single flare a hundred yards behind his train and hoped. Sure enough, the Northern and Western came barreling down the track, trying to make up for lost time. At that moment, a huge gust of wind blew up a whiteout and the light was obscured. The N&W slammed into the rear of Calkin's train. The crash could be heard as far as the Post Road (Broadway).

"Miraculously, there were only four injuries, including the engineer of the N&W."

Mystery Man

The mention of the "Leather Man" in the letter that begins on the right gives us the opportunity to tell readers, or remind them, about this wonderfully bizarre character. "First noticed around 1856," according to a 2011 New York Times article, "the Leather Man, who fashioned his suit from discarded boots, wandered Westchester County and western Connecticut for decades, sleeping in caves and lean-tos, rarely speaking, accepting food and then walking on. From about 1883 to 1889, he traveled a never-changing 365-mile loop through at least 41 towns; he died in a cave near [Ossining] on March 20, 1889" — just a year after the letter to Lucy was written.

All sorts of stories and identities attach to him — that he was French, Portuguese, a fugitive from justice, a failed businessman, autistic. That his name was Jules Bourglay, the name on his pauper's grave in the Sparta



Cemetery in Ossining. There was little basis for any of that.

In 2011, in an effort to unravel the mystery, his body was exhumed — to no avail. An article in Westchester magazine quotes former Ossining Museum president Norm MacDonald as saying, "We found coffin nails, but there were no remains left, like bones or teeth, that would stand up to DNA testing. We know no more about the Leatherman than we ever did."

As it happens, we have in our archives a first-hand account of the storm. Long before there was email, cell phones, or the internet, people felt the need to communicate on a close and personal level, sharing the challenges, joys, and anomalies of daily life. They wrote letters.

Below is a typed copy of a hand-written letter to Lucy, a great aunt of Clara Mead, who willed her house to the Historical Society, about the trials and tribulations of the blizzard.

The envelope for the letter has gone missing, so we cannot be sure where Aunt Lucy lived, but the letter was in the possession of Clara Mead and hence the archives of the Historical Society.

Hartford, March 17, 1888

Dear Lucy,

It seems a long time since I have heard from you and we feel anxious now to hear how you and Uncle Harvey have

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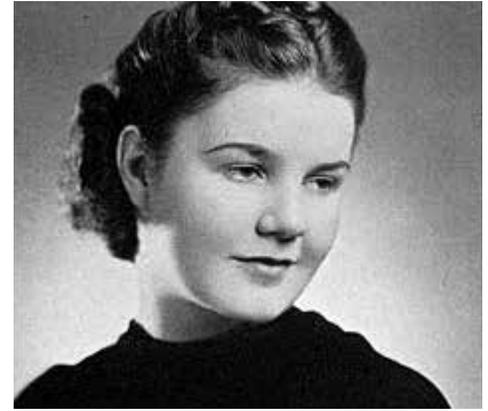
Mildred Emory Persinger

By Mary Donovan

With the death of Mildred Persinger on November 20, 2018, at the age of 100, the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society lost one of its longest-term supporters. Mildred was a Southern woman, born in Roanoke, Virginia, and a graduate of Hollins College. She did graduate work at Bryn Mawr and taught school in Virginia and Alabama. She met her husband, Richard, in Virginia; they married in 1942 and then, in 1944, they moved to Dobbs Ferry, where they raised their three children: Louise Tilgham (b. 1945), Richard Emory (b. 1948), and Philip Burwell (b. 1952). Along with

motherhood and active support of her children's lives in the Dobbs Ferry Public Schools, Mildred managed to carve out a long-time career in public service. "Actually, I never had time to hold down a paid job because I've been kept so busy as a volunteer," she claimed.

At the suggestion of a Hollins faculty member, Mildred began to work as a volunteer on race relations with the National Board of the YWCA shortly after she moved to New York, and that association propelled her into a lifetime of international work with the YWCA. She served on its board for 20 years and was



Mildred at age 20.

chairman of its National Public Affairs Committee from 1962 to 1969. Also in the 1960s, she served on the National Board of the United Nations Association and in 1969 chaired the Conference of

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The Big One...

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got through this week of blizzards. Last Saturday it was mild and pleasant and the birds were singing and it really seemed as if spring was upon us. Sunday was rather chilly but we all attended church but in the evening, it began to snow and Monday morning it was still snowing and drifting.

I called to Tom that he would need his rubber boots to wear down town, little thinking even then that it was only the beginning of the storm. Tom went down on the half past eight car and that was the last we saw of him till Thursday.

The snow continued to come and the wind to blow. We could not see a single house or living soul outside or a light Monday evening. When we went to bed, the wind still shook the house and shook our beds. Toward morning, however, it calmed down some but the snow kept falling all that day and part of the next.

Tuesday, Harry Freeman crawled over here on his hands and feet as best he could. He said his father and Lulu (who had gone to school on Monday) had not come home and they felt a little worried. Soon after he had gone back, a neighbor below us came walking up on snow shoes and called and

asked if we were all well and had plenty to eat and drink. He said he had beefsteak in his pocket and that he was the only man who got home the night before from the city (in this neighborhood). He said he liked to have not reached home and had to be dug out of a drift by his hired man, near his house.

Wednesday, the storm seemed nearly over and all the men left on the street came out and shoveled a path through this street.

Fifty men with teams came from West Hartford to Prospect Avenue, breaking paths and then they kept right on down to the city and established communications there once more. In the meantime, we got word from Tom and sent word to him to stay where he was but Thursday, he made his way home. The cars have not yet started this way and will hardly start under a week, although the snow is melting fast and the railroad company is doing all they can to expedite clearing the tracks.

The trains from New York got through yesterday for the first time since Monday morning. Tom says the snow drifts are much higher down town than here as there was not so much room for the snow to lodge and a good many of the side streets are still impassable, the snow reaching to the second story windows.

We feel as if it had been quite an experience of March weather. Mother had a letter yesterday from Aunt Lhyza written on Sunday in which she said she thought the worst of March had passed and we would soon have spring weather.

She has another letter this morning, written Wednesday in which she thinks differently. She and Laura both have colds, I am sorry to say. Aunt Lhyza takes cold so easily. We are all very well. Mother has been well all winter.

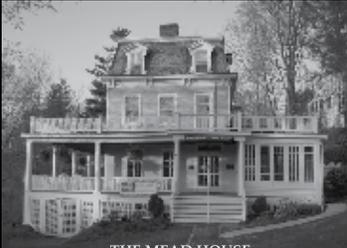
When the blizzards are over and spring really sets in, I hope you will come and see us. Please thank Uncle Harvey very much for me for the photograph of the "Leather Man." It seems a very good likeness. I have written you a long letter on the weather but thought perhaps our experiences might be of interest to you. Write and tell us yours when you can. Mother joins me in much love to yourself and Uncle Harvey.

Your affectionate cousin,

Eunice G. Smith

Did Anna get home before the storm or hadn't she gone. We enjoy Uncle Harvey's letters and hope he will write soon.

E.G.S.



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Who Was This Ladies' Man?

By Peggie Blizzard

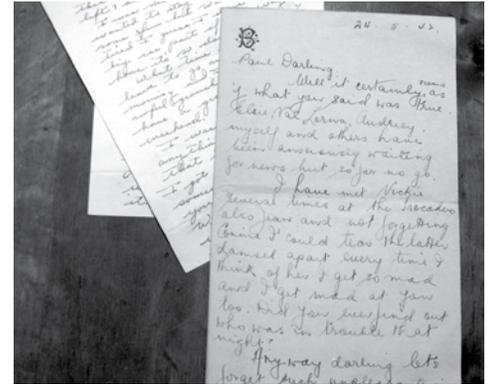
Every so often, we use this publication to reach out and ask for help from the public to fill in some gaps in our records. Does anyone out there know anything about Gerald Paul Jones, who lived with his family at 373 Broadway during the 1940's but who went on to teach at Iowa State University in 1946?

While repairing a leak around the chimney at 373 Broadway, a repairman up in the attic found a box of old letters and gave them to the present owner of the house, who became fascinated with reading them. Apparently, during the years of 1940 to 1944, while stationed aboard the USS Prometheus, Gerald Paul Jones, a.k.a. "Mush" or "Red," corresponded with women all over the world . . . the

proverbial case of "a woman in every port." Each one felt he was coming home to marry them, and eventually he did marry one but we don't know who she was.

In this box found in the attic, there were no letters from Mr. Jones, but in the letters written by service men to a teacher in the local high school, Miss Wood, he did send a few letters and Christmas cards. In one of these, he stated that he was married but did not mention a name, and he also said he was teaching at Iowa State.

Why did he hold on to these letters, which number in the hundreds, throughout a vicious war? They talked about nothing of great consequence . . . just love, loneliness, good times, and the



future. They must have brought a great deal of comfort to a frightened young man who found himself aboard a ship in cold waters, far away from Dobbs Ferry.

If Mr. Jones is still alive, he would be in his late 90's. But if he had children, perhaps someone knows who they are and how we can contact them. The object is to return the letters to the family.

Mildred Emory Persinger...

Continued from page 7

UN Representatives for a Council of 150 Non-Government Organizations (NGOs). In 1975, at the International Women's Conference in Mexico City, she served as the convener of the NGO forum.

In 1995, she helped plan the UN Decade of Women's conference in Beijing. Her particular interest was fighting discrimination in all areas of public life; she fought racial discrimination in housing in New York State and worked to make the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women effective throughout the world. President Kennedy appointed her to the President's Commission on the Status of Women; President Nixon asked her to serve on the President's Commission on the 25th Anniversary of the United Nations; and

in 1977, President Carter asked her to join the U.S. National Commission for the International Women's Year.

In Dobbs Ferry, Mildred was a longtime member of the Historical Society, the League of Women Voters, and the Junior League of Westchester on the Hudson.

She was an active member of South Presbyterian Church. She helped to organize the Dobbs Ferry Committee for Open Space, which sought to preserve the Juhring Estate as an undeveloped woodland. She was working on an article for *The Ferryman* on the Juhring campaign just before she died.

Young Designers Take Over Mead House

The Historical Society and ArchForKids are teaming up to present a fun "hands-on, minds-on" workshop for families. Dobbs Ferry has many notable historic buildings, from the Keeper's House on the Old Croton Aqueduct to Mead House, the home of the Historical Society. Working from photographs, families will make 3D models of the buildings they select.

Along the way, participants will learn about architectural styles and elements — as well as the history of the village.

Recommended for ages 5 and up; children must be accompanied by an adult. Saturday, June 1, from 1 to 2:30 p.m. Children \$5; Adults \$10. For further information, or to register, please contact info@archforkids.com or 914-200-3646.