



# 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.*

## Garfield Trip Cut Short

In July 1881, President Garfield was about to set off on a trip that was to include a visit to Dobbs Ferry and Irvington to see his friend Cyrus Field, and local excitement was high. Then came an assassin's bullet. **Page 4**

## An Aqueduct Historic District?

Dobbs Ferry now has one historic district, on Belden Avenue. Next up, perhaps: the downtown stretch of the Aqueduct. **Page 6**

## At Your Service

A roundup of Historical Society resources available to all, from family trees to oral histories to census and death records. **Page 7**

## The Origins of 18 Ashford

The medical building at 18 Ashford had an interesting earlier incarnation as a Masonic lodge. Still visible above the doorway: the compass-and-square symbol. **Page 8**

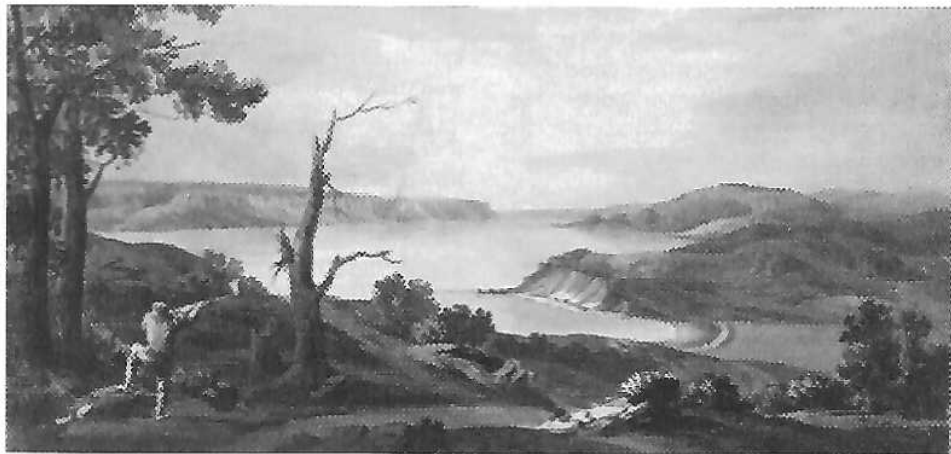
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## The Dobbs Family, Dislocated by Rebellion

By Jim Luckett

**I**n the 1690s, many things were going well for the Dobbs family in Manhattan. John's mother, Mary, had remarried after his dad's death, and she had inherited a house near Uncle William Merritt's farm in the Bowery neighborhood. Mary's new husband, Nathaniel Pittman, landed the job of constable, probably because of William's political influence. William himself rose from alderman to mayor, serving three terms, from 1695 to 1698, during which he and others founded Trinity Church and laid plans for a new City Hall.

In 1698 everything changed. Uncle William sold his farm and downtown house and left office. The Merritts and young John Dobbs and his sister Mary moved up the Hudson. The Merritts settled at the future Snedens Landing on the west bank of the Hudson and the Dobbs siblings at the future Dobbs Ferry opposite them on the east bank. John's mother, Mary, and his brother Walter Jr. also left Manhattan at about this time, settling on Barn Island (today's Wards Island, in the East River off Harlem). Only John's brother William remained in Manhattan.



Upper Manhattan, with the Palisades in the background, as drawn by a British soldier in 1776.

Why did they suddenly leave?

We can't say for sure. But it appears that great events in the wider world drove William Merritt out of Manhattan, and since he was the family's center of gravity, the others followed.

(Some historical context, before we turn this tale over to John Dobbs: The 1600s were a period of great strife between Catholics and Protestants in Europe. French Protestants, called Huguenots, fled from persecution by their Catholic king, becoming martyrs in the eyes of Protestants elsewhere. The Netherlands was Protestant, and tolerant of all religions, but harbored bitter memories of religious

persecution when it was a colony of Catholic Spain. England too had a history of violence between Catholics and Protestants, so its Protestant majority became uneasy when James II, a Catholic, succeeded to the English throne in 1685. This international stew of religious animosities came to a boil in 1688 when the Netherlands' head of state, William III of Orange, invaded England with a large army, putting himself on the throne with help from English Protestants. James II mounted a counter-invasion backed by France. This became a world war, pitting France against England and the Netherlands.)

These grand events helped put the "Dobbs" in Dobbs Ferry, through a chain of events

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never before recounted to a modern audience. Again, we bring back John Dobbs from the afterlife to tell the tale.

## Flight From Manhattan

Part 4 of an Imagined Autobiography of John Dobbs

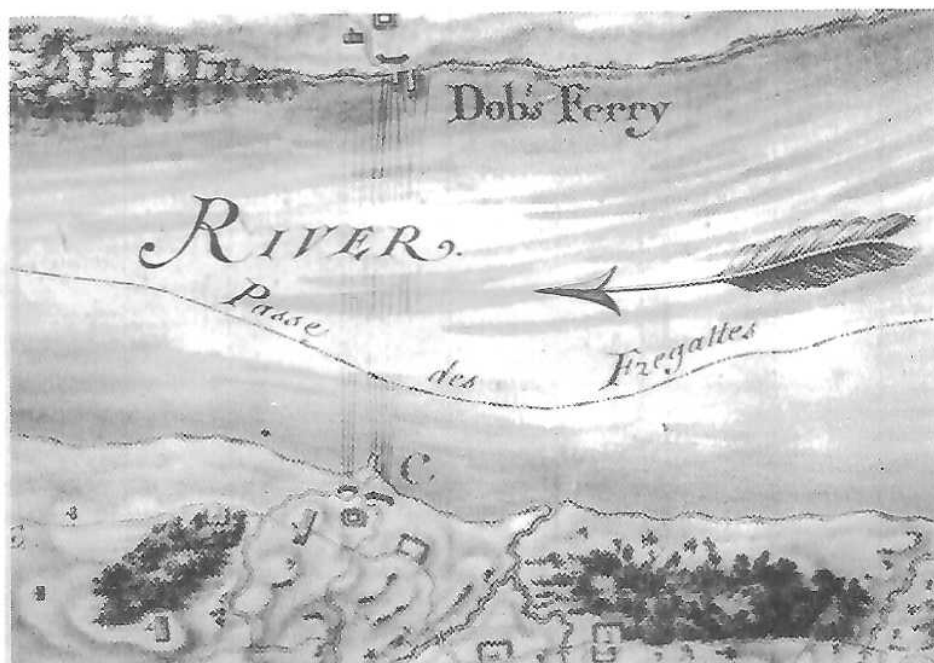
Until 1689, tensions between religions played no role in the daily life of New York City, where I grew up. Then all hell broke loose. We rode out the storm when it first hit, around 1689, but when it hit a second time, in 1698, we moved up the Hudson.

New York was populated by a diverse ethnic mix — Dutch, English, Germans, Swedes, Scots, Irish, French, and others. The Dutch were the most numerous but not a majority. The city was overwhelmingly Protestant, with only a sprinkling of Catholics and Jews. King James II was Catholic, but religious tolerance was the official policy in New York under the English, as it had been under the Dutch.

Nevertheless, religious hatred and fear was a dormant volcano lurking in the hearts of many New Yorkers. They knew what was happening to Protestants in France and had happened to them only a generation or two earlier in Germany and the Netherlands. Also, Catholic France held Canada, and there was constant fear in New York of a French invasion that would bring a Catholic reign of terror.

In 1689, rumors began reaching the colonies of a Dutch invasion of England that had replaced our Catholic King James II with the Protestant William III of Orange. Were these rumors true? If so, would our new king withstand his predecessor's counterattack? No one knew. That France backed James II and declared war on England further heightened anxiety that Catholics might soon be in the ascendancy, taking revenge on English Protestants.

Boston erupted first. The royal governor of New York and New England, Edmund Andros, was jailed by Boston rebels in April 1689, soon after news of William's invasion of England reached Boston. It didn't matter that Andros was a Protestant, a boyhood companion of William III and a veteran of



A detail from a 1781 French map. The map labels Snedens Landing "Dob's Ferry" for reasons later articles will reveal. Today's Dobbs Ferry, where John Dobbs settled, is in the foreground.

the Dutch army. Since Andros had been appointed by James II, many feared he would deliver them into French hands.

It didn't even matter that at the time of his arrest Andros was leading a military campaign against Bostonians' nearby enemies: Maine Indians, allied with the French. Cotton Mather and other Massachusetts leaders hated the recent consolidation of the governance of New England and New York. Andros personified that consolidation, and they hoped the new crisis could help dissolve it.

We in the Dobbs family had a direct stake in that Andros campaign. Our friend Dr. George Lockhart was an officer in the militia and was in Maine with Andros. Lockhart's daughter Jane was married to Uncle William's son John Merritt, and Lockhart and William were business partners, including being Farmer of the Excise together, which meant they collected liquor taxes, having won the rights to this tax revenue by competitive bid. They also owned over 3,000 acres in Orange County (which then included what is now Rockland County), with two miles of Hudson shoreline opposite the future Dobbs Ferry.

When the Boston uprising occurred, the Massachusetts militia men under Lockhart's command mutinied, calling him a Papist, which he certainly was not.

The news from Boston rattled New Yorkers, but the existing governing structure held through May 1689, under the authority of Andros's lieutenant governor. Uncle William and other city officials worked to prepare the city's defenses and calm the populace. According to a letter to the jailed Andros, many people "were fled up to Albany which caused a great tumult and uproar especially among the Inhabitants of Queens and Suffolk Counties.... This day we met all at the Town Hall and a list of the materials for fortifying the City was brought in." Uncle William was among those appointed to obtain them.

On May 15, the lieutenant governor and other officials described the preparations in a letter to officials in England, sending John Corbett, another business partner of my uncle, to deliver it. (Years later, Corbett would buy the land opposite Dobbs Ferry from the Merritts and Lockharts and settle there.)

At the end of May, the rebels seized power, splitting New York society down the middle. Radicals led by a wealthy German-born New Yorker, Jacob Leisler, seized control of the fort at the tip of Manhattan, claiming that the lieutenant governor was "Popishly affected" and about to set fire to the city.

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The mayor and others, including my uncle William, wanted to sit tight and await royal orders. A meeting was held at City Hall, with the minutes showing William and others declaring their defiance of the rebels.

Frederick Philipse, the richest New Yorker and owner of a big swath of Westchester, including the future Dobbs Ferry, was also in the anti-Leisler faction. Nicholas Bayard, another Dutchman, former mayor, and the highest-ranking officer in the militia, was another leader in this faction.

Why were New Yorkers suddenly at each others' throats? Both sides were Protestant. Both were loyal to the new king. Both were led by rich businessmen with no desire to overturn the economic hierarchy. So it was a revolt with no substance. But the Leislerites did not see it that way, fearing (they said) that the other side would sell them out to French Catholics.

A week into the rebellion, the mayor sent my uncle and a few others to invite Leisler to a meeting. Leisler refused to come. The royal lieutenant governor soon fled back to England, delegating authority to Philipse and others.

**L**eisler's background and psyche made him disastrously perfect for inflaming this moment in New York history. He grew up in Germany, the son of a Calvinist minister who had been persecuted by the Catholic Church. His father devoted himself to the cause of the French Huguenots, fleeing Catholic persecution in France. Leisler continued this work, establishing New Rochelle in Westchester as a Huguenot refuge (his statue is there today).

He arrived in New York at age 20, in 1660, as a soldier for the Dutch. He soon left the military, married into an influential family, and became wealthy in international trade. His rigid Calvinist beliefs got him into conflicts even with fellow Protestants.

The crisis of 1689, he said, required him to take power as part of God's plan. Until then, he had spurned higher office, accepting only minor (though lucrative) posts.

In June, Uncle William got hold of a royal order that Catholic officials should be



*Jacob Leisler, whose 1689 rebellion took control of the entire province of New York and attempted conquest of Canada, founded New Rochelle as a Huguenot refuge. His statue stands there today.*

ousted. So the mayor replaced the only Catholic, the customs collector, with a committee made up of Bayard and three others. This enraged Leisler, who wanted to control all appointments and tax revenues.

When Bayard and the others went to the Customs House, they were met by armed Leislerites. Bayard fled to Albany, returning later that year, only to be jailed by Leisler.

On July 2, Mayor Stephanus van Cortlandt tried to convene the Mayor's Court, and my uncle and three others were sent to persuade Leisler to let the government function. Leisler threatened mayhem; the court did not convene.

Leisler had the guns and ammunition to impose his will, so his opponents capitulated in the short run. Meanwhile, they worked to discredit Leisler back in England, knowing that allies in the mother country would be the most potent weapon in the long run.

On August 16, Leisler had Uncle William and his son John dragged to the fort and jailed. John's infant son lay dying, so John was granted a temporary release, but William was held for three weeks. Their offense? Having out-of-town guests who appeared sinister to the paranoid Leisler. (Those guests were harmless scholars visiting from Harvard College. But Leisler imagined it was Andros, sneaking in to plot counterrevolution.)

In October, Leisler decreed that a new mayor and aldermen be chosen. Thus, Uncle

William was out of office and would remain so for two years. Leisler went on to take Albany and even attempted an invasion of Canada, which the French quickly defeated.

In May 1690, my uncle and other city leaders wrote to the new monarchs, William and Mary, asking them to rescue New York from Leisler. The letter began: "Most Dread Sovereigns: We your most oppressed and abused subjects in this remote Part of the World out of a deep sense of your great Goodness and clemency presume with humble boldness..."

Finally, in 1691, a new governor, backed by royal troops, arrived in New York. After some resistance by Leisler (he claimed to doubt the English forces' credentials), and some casualties among the king's forces, Leisler and his son-in-law were charged with treason, convicted, and hanged — executed by an emissary of the very king he claimed to be championing. But the feud between Leisler's followers and opponents would rage for 30 more years.

**U**ncle William and his son became aldermen again. Lockhart became Clerk of the Market and later Surgeon General. My mother, my siblings, and I continued living near Collect Pond, where she owned a house and Uncle William had his farm. My stepfather, Nathaniel Pittman, got my dad's old job as constable, but he died before the end of the decade.

The threat of French invasion still hung over the city. William led troops to Schenectady under the new governor to fight the French and Indians. It was a difficult winter mission.

Meanwhile, in England, the Leislerites got Leisler's conviction overturned by Parliament, and his property restored to his heirs. In 1698, at the end of uncle William's third term as mayor, they achieved their ultimate objective: the appointment of a new governor who was on their side.

William decided New York City was no longer the place to be and moved north to the wilds of Orange County, to the land the Merritt and Lockhart families had bought. They would stay there for years, until after an anti-Leislerite governor was named. The home my uncle built, "Cheer Hall," across from today's Dobbs Ferry train

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# The Day Garfield Didn't Visit

By Richard Borkow

On July 2, 1881, at the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad Station in Washington, President James Garfield was shot in the shoulder and back by a deranged individual armed with a pistol. The president collapsed onto the platform, and horrified colleagues and onlookers desperately tried to assist him.

Garfield, president for less than four months, was about to board a train for a two-week vacation. During those two weeks, he was to deliver an address at his alma mater, Williams College, in western Massachusetts. But before reaching New England, his itinerary would have taken him to Dobbs Ferry and Irvington, where he planned to visit his good friend Cyrus Field, at Field's Irvington estate.

Years later, a Dobbs Ferry resident, John H. Ravekes, recalled that Dobbs Ferry, anticipating the visit, had been in a state of great excitement. "The village," Ravekes wrote, "was decorated and a cannon was placed on top of the hill above the depot" to give a salute when the president arrived.

Garfield was to arrive on the Hudson by boat, and carriages were to meet his party at the dock. We read in "Life of a River Village" that a route along Livingston

Avenue and Broadway had been mapped out to show off Dobbs Ferry — first south to the Hastings line, then north to Irvington.

The celebratory mood turned to deep gloom when news of the shooting arrived. A proclamation was prepared by some 100 citizens, meeting at South Presbyterian Church: "The telegraphic announcement of the murderous assault was received by our citizens while actively engaged in decorating the streets and ornamenting their dwellings... therefore in mass meeting be it resolved, that the dastardly crime is an infamous assault... that the bullet and the assassin have no place in our civilization."

The gunman, Charles Guiteau, was known to the president. In 1881, persons seeking government jobs had almost unrestricted access to the president at White House receptions. Taking advantage of this easy access, Guiteau had been haranguing Garfield, demanding that he be posted as American consul in Paris or Vienna.



A drawing of Garfield on his deathbed.

Guiteau claimed that he was entitled to a high diplomatic post because of the campaigning he had done on Garfield's behalf, insisting he had been responsible for Garfield's victory. (Twice during the campaign Guiteau had gathered small crowds on New York City street corners to give pro-Garfield speeches — so far as is known, his sole contribution to the campaign.) Finally, the White House staff had had enough, and told Guiteau to stay away.

Outraged, Guiteau decided to assassinate Garfield and shopped for a pistol. He wanted a handsome pistol, and he selected one with an ornate design, for — he reasoned — the weapon would surely go on display in a museum at some future point, and it must have a good appearance.

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## The Dobbs Family...

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station, was at the first break in the Palisades, the natural stone wall that made that stretch of the riverbank inaccessible by road from Weehawken to that point. My son William would one day run a tavern in Dobbs Ferry, and my daughter Mary ("Mollie") Sneden

would run a tavern at the former Cheer Hall. (The evidence that Mary Sneden was John's daughter is strong but not definitive. More on this in the next installment.)

Nicholas Bayard's son would soon start a ferry from Manhattan to Weehawken, and my family would do the same between my leasehold and Cheer Hall.

Did we have a ferry in mind when we moved north? No document exists to answer that. But we did take possession of both banks of the river at a logical spot for a ferry, protected from competition for quite some distance to the south because of the Palisades. And Uncle William, a mariner and entrepreneur with plenty of capital, had a history of interest in the ferry business, dating back to his 1684 proposal to run the Brooklyn Ferry.

Bayard, though, did not leave Manhattan, and was soon put on trial for treason by the Leislerites and sentenced to death — a sentence that after a series of delays was never carried out. Still, my uncle was wise to leave town.

This was doubly true, for after he left, he was accused of absconding with city funds. The charge was never adjudicated, so his guilt or innocence remains a mystery. Clearly, many in high places continued to hold him in great esteem, as the next installment will show.

*All sources for these articles can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/DobbsLuckettNotes>. ... A correction: In the first article in this series, a caption mistakenly stated that Henry Dobbs was sitting among members of the Dobbs family. The photo, taken at Snedens Landing, showed people of various families.*

### FERRYMAN STAFF

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

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Guiteau's gunfire on July 2 did not lead to lethal injuries. The bullets damaged none of the president's vital organs. One grazed his shoulder. The other caused significant spinal damage, then lodged itself deep in his back. (The autopsy would show that, remarkably, the spinal cord had been spared.) The main risk was microbial infection. If it could be minimized or prevented, Garfield would survive.

The way to prevent infection was the application of strict antiseptic technique, and, in 1881, unlike in the Civil War era, just 15 to 20 years before, doctors knew about antiseptics. Since the mid-1860s, the technique had a famed proponent, the Scottish surgeon Joseph Lister, who convinced many younger doctors that application of antiseptics would prevent infection and save lives.

The problem for the wounded president was that many old-school doctors, including prestigious surgeons at the pinnacle of the medical hierarchy, didn't believe in antiseptics. And they were the surgeons who were given responsibility for the president's care.

For the old guard, Lister's techniques were totally contrary to their experience. Lister insisted, for example, that surgeons be painstakingly vigilant about handwashing and the cleaning of instruments. But this, they said, was unacceptably radical. Why be so fastidious? How could tiny microbes cause so much trouble?

A few years earlier, at a medical conference in Philadelphia, Lister had spoken, among other topics, about gunshot injuries. Do not probe a bullet wound with unwashed hands and unclean instruments, he urged. Do not go rooting about for the bullet. He appealed for strict antiseptics.

Lister's appeals met with a mixed response. Younger physicians, especially the scientifically inclined, agreed with him. But others expressed skepticism, even hostility.

Dr. Frank Hamilton, a leader in New York's medical hierarchy, and a respected Civil War surgeon, was in the hostile camp. At the conference in Philadelphia,

he challenged Lister openly and spoke disparagingly of his theories.

To the great misfortune of President Garfield, the same Frank Hamilton became a key member of the surgical team called in to manage the care of the wounded president. Hamilton had been summoned by the team's leader, Dr. D. Willard Bliss, who, like Hamilton, had gained renown as a Civil War surgeon. Bliss was similarly dismissive of Lister's theories.

For Bliss and Hamilton, the number one goal was to find and remove the bullet. Consistent with their traditional approach to gunshot injuries, they probed deeply into the wound with unwashed fingers and unclean instruments, and urged others on the team to do the same, thus converting a relatively clean bullet track into a channel of festering infection. Multiple abscesses developed, eventually spreading throughout the body, and Garfield's condition steadily worsened.

Each day, across the country, the president's status was front-page news. Doctors who believed in antiseptics began to criticize the surgical team, and made their criticism public. They accused Bliss and Hamilton of mismanagement and blamed them for Garfield's deterioration.

Because of the front-page reporting, many newspaper readers learned about antiseptics for the first time. The general public also became aware that a controversy was raging among physicians over the role of antiseptics in the president's care. Which of the contending medical camps was right? Ordinarily, there would be no way for a layman to decide. But it was clear that the president was sinking. And it was also clear that the doctors treating Garfield were opponents of antiseptics.

Garfield finally succumbed on September 19, 1881, 80 days after he was shot. By the time of his death he had developed septicemia ("blood poisoning") and was wasted and emaciated: His weight had dropped from 210 pounds to 130.

As we chronicle this very sad event in our history, the saddest aspect is the abysmal care provided to President Garfield. But history recounts a positive development too: Widespread reporting of the

controversy discredited the opponents of antiseptics. The criticism directed at Dr. Bliss and his team made the lay public and the medical community much more aware of the role of antiseptics in surgical treatment. The controversy gave momentum to the cause of antiseptics, and by the late 1880's, Joseph Lister's principles had become mainstream in the United States.

*Sources:*

*Blanck, William J., editor, Life of a River Village (Morgan Press, Inc., Dobbs Ferry, 1974) p 46.*

*Rutkow, Ira, James A. Garfield (Times Books, Henry Holt and Company, New York, 2006) pp 71-139.*

*Rutkow, Ira- Seeking the Cure (Scribner, New York, 2010) pp 64-80.*

## A Word From the Presidents

Members and Friends:

The Historical Society has been busy this spring with our Essay Contest, Arch for Kids program, and Spring Thing Picnic.

Join us at the Mead House on September 22, at 2 p.m., for our Society Annual Meeting, which will include a special program. Our village historian, Dr. Richard Borkow, will show a video interview with Bill Lyons, a World War II fighter pilot.

In the interview, Bill relates his enlistment in the Army Air Force at age 18 and his 63 combat missions over France and Germany in 1944 and 1945. Bill describes in detail his combat experience on November 26, 1944, when he participated in what is thought to have been the largest aerial battle of World War II.

In addition, we will summarize our Society year and introduce new programs for the next year. Our archives will be open for viewing.

Please join us.

*Frank and Madeline*

## Time for an Aqueduct Historic District?

By Sonya Terjanian

**O**n January 8, 2019, the Dobbs Ferry Board of Trustees officially designated our village's first historic district: a group of twelve homes on Belden Avenue between Broadway and Walker Drive. The designation, intended as a pilot project to test our new preservation ordinance, was the culmination of four years of work by the Dobbs Ferry Historic District Task Force.

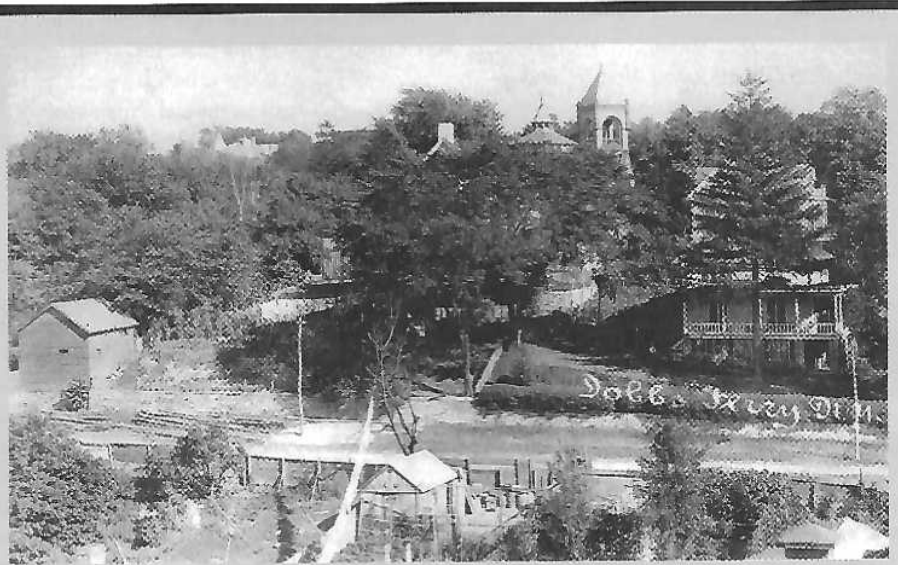
Now that we've tested the new legislation and made needed adjustments, we're ready to apply the law to a much larger portion of the Village: our downtown.

Downtown Dobbs Ferry has a special feature that sets it apart from other Westchester municipalities: the Old Croton Aqueduct runs parallel to the entire length of our Main Street, giving walkers and bikers multiple points of access to our commercial district. The size and spacing of the historic buildings lining the path allow dramatic views of the Hudson, creating a unique experience for residents and encouraging visitors to linger and explore.

For these reasons, the Historic District Task Force is working to create a district centered around the downtown stretch of the Aqueduct, bordered roughly by Broadway and Main Street, Cedar Street, and Hatch Terrace.

It's an idea whose time has come: many other groups, such as the Route 9 Active Transportation Conceptual Design Committee, the Downtown Improvement Task Force, the Rivertowns Chamber of Commerce, the Dobbs Ferry Tree Consortium, and the Dobbs Ferry Beautification Committee, are bringing renewed energy to revitalizing and beautifying our downtown. We believe that historic preservation is an essential part of these combined efforts to create a more vibrant, walkable, economically stable commercial district.

The application process for any historic landmark or district in Dobbs Ferry is intentionally rigorous. By requiring extensive information about each property within the district, we can make sure the



### The Way It Looked a Century Ago

**M**ore than likely, this photograph of the Aqueduct was taken from an upper room of what was then the Meyer Hotel, at the corner of Main and Chestnut, now 78 Main. It would have been a warm Monday afternoon in summer. Monday because that was typically wash day and several households have laundry still hanging out to dry, and afternoon because the shutters to the French doors are closed to keep out the summer sun. Summer because the leaves are heavy on the trees and you can see pole beans fully grown in the yard to the left. The laundry has been brought in at the house on the right (12 Chestnut) because you can see the empty line stretching from the fence dividing the property to one of the posts on the veranda. There also

appears to be a set of steps off the porch, but they are no longer there.

Notice the poles, either electric or telephone, which were at that time erected on the east side of the Aqueduct path but are now on the west side. There was also a barn, or shed, belonging to the parsonage, the back side of which is resting on the stone fence. That building is no longer standing.

In the background is what was then the Summerfield Church and is now the Chabad of the Rivertowns. The front of the building caught fire but was rebuilt in 1894. The Gagliardis' house, not in this picture, was built in 1927. So this photo was taken between those dates.

Village has helpful documentation for making future decisions about renovations and demolitions.

Currently, the Task Force is researching the date each building was constructed, who the original owners were, and what changes have occurred over time. We are also documenting architectural styles, and gathering as many photos — historical and contemporary — that we can find for each property. This is obviously a huge undertaking, and the work is being done entirely by volunteers. If you have historical or architectural information about buildings in our downtown, please share it with me at [sonya@sonyaterjanian.com](mailto:sonya@sonyaterjanian.com). And

if you would like to assist us in this important effort, please let me know. We need all the help we can get!

**Why are historic districts important?** Research has shown that local historic districts are beneficial to communities in a number of ways:

**Property Values** – Studies have shown that houses in historic districts appreciated in value more than similar properties in non-designated areas. That increase, however, tends to occur more slowly and steadily than it does in areas experiencing gentrification

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## Dobbs Ferry Historical Society Resources

By Alan Steinfeld

Staff at the Historical Society regularly receive inquiries from people interested in learning more about their family's history. The Society is in the process of updating its website to more completely indicate both its own holdings of genealogical material and to point researchers to pertinent material readily available to them. What follows is a summary of the current state of the Society's holdings, other resources that may be of value, and plans for additions to our holdings.

**Family Trees** - The Society has family trees for many families who have been a part of the history of the Village. We are working to provide a listing of these trees for the website. At present, there is no plan to make the trees themselves available on the website. Until the listing is available online, feel free to call the Society to inquire.

**Little White Church Presbyterian Cemetery (also known as the Presbyterian Cemetery or Methodist Cemetery)** - For decades, the Little White Church Presbyterian Cemetery served the needs of the Village and surrounding communities. Having suffered from years of neglect, the cemetery was restored in 2013. Many of the headstones were found to be broken and were no longer associated with any discernible burial site. As part of the restoration project, a Society volunteer

created a virtual cemetery using the Find A Grave website. The names of those buried in the cemetery, gleaned from a variety of sources, were identified, and individual memorial pages for each person were created on the website. Where possible, a photo of the gravestone was added and related individuals were linked. The virtual cemetery can be accessed at <https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/863857/presbyterian-cemetery>.

**Oral Histories** - Over the decades, oral histories of 59 Village residents have been done as part of the ongoing Italian Project. A list of the individuals recorded and the dates of the recordings can be found on the website under "Ongoing Projects" by clicking on "The Italian Project." It is not expected that the actual recordings will be placed online. Additional information can be obtained by calling the Society.

**Church Records** - Thanks to the cooperation of the leaders of several Village churches, the Society has scanned copies of baptism, marriage, and burial records. Records in the collection include those from the Zion, South Presbyterian, and Aldersgate United Methodist Churches. The images have been indexed so they can be searched by name or date.

**Baptism** - Records run from the 1850s to the early 1900s and are available for all three churches.

**Walkability** - Clear statistical links exist between the presence of older, human-scaled buildings, and higher "Walk Score" ratings — a metric used to rank a community's walkability.

**Tax Benefits** - Owners restoring income-producing buildings certified historic by the National Park Service may be eligible to receive federal and state tax credits totaling 20 to 40 percent of rehabilitation costs.

**Downtown Revitalization** - Research has shown that neighborhoods containing a mix of older, smaller buildings of different ages support greater levels of positive economic and social activity than areas dominated by newer, larger buildings.

*The Society has family trees for many families who have been a part of the history of the Village.*

**Marriage** - Records run from the late 1850s to the late 1890s and available from all three churches.

**Burial** - These records are just available from Zion. They cover the period from the early 1860s to the late 1890s.

There are no plans to make these records available on the website.

**Village Death Records** - When a person dies in the Village, a record is maintained at Village Hall. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, deaths were recorded in a register. This register is currently being indexed by Village employees. When the index is available, it will be placed on the Society's website.

**Federal and State Censuses** - While the Federal census can be searched through several commercially available sources, it is not possible to search across several different censuses by geographic location.

### Time for an Aqueduct...

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and development — so it benefits property owners without forcing people out through rapid rent and tax increases.

**Affordability** - Developers need to provide a high return on their investment to their funding sources (banks, private investors, hedge funds etc.), so new unsubsidized market-rate housing is scaled at the high end of a given community's range. The lower investment costs incurred by people renovating historic properties helps to sustain lower rents and welcome middle- and low-income newcomers.

**Heritage Tourism** - Those who visit historic sites and areas where a great deal of preservation activity has occurred generally spend 30 percent more than other tourists, and stay nearly twice as long.

**Sustainability** - The carbon emissions associated with building products and construction represent a significant portion of global greenhouse gas emissions — even when those materials are used to construct energy-efficient buildings. Renovation and reuse of older buildings sequesters carbon in place, whereas demolition and new construction emit more carbon than we can recover in time to meet our climate-change mitigation goals.



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## A Recent Inquiry: Spotlight on 18 Ashford

By Madeline Byrne

Maybe you know 18 Ashford Avenue because your doctor or dentist is there, but it had a much more romantic beginning.

It begins in 1864 when the Free and Accepted Masons of the State of New York petitioned to build a new lodge in Dobbs Ferry. The next closest lodge was in Tarrytown. The rumor was that the wives of the Masons didn't like their husbands using the excuse that the meetings were so far away that they had to stay out all night.

The new lodge was called "Diamond," named for one of the market sloops that sailed farm goods from our region to New York City and brought back supplies. The sloop was owned by William Pateman, who also owned the lumber yard down by the river. The first Master of the Lodge was Abram O. Wilsea; Charles Gisner and Charles C. Storms were the wardens.

The first home of the Lodge was on the second floor of the building that predates the current 75 Main Street. Rent at that time was flexible and the building was owned by one of the Brothers, Charles G. Storms. Meetings were held mostly on Friday evenings.

Funds were raised by the members by providing entertainment, dances, music, and fairs.

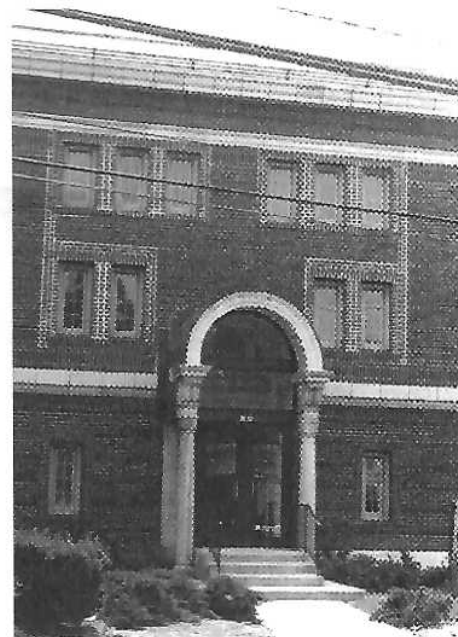
In 1895, when the building at 75 Main was demolished, the Lodge moved to Oddfellows Hall in what is now 96 Main Street. The meetings were held here until 1924, when the building at 18 Ashford was built.

Sketches of the new building can be found in a New York Times article in December 1923. The building was designed by Adolph

H. Knappe, a member of the Lodge. The cost for land, buildings, and furnishings was estimated at \$75,000. Lord & Burnham of Irvington supplied the heating system. The builder was the Classon & Parkhurst Engineering Company.

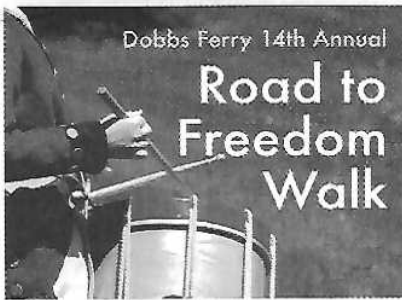
Doric pillars and Indiana limestone were used in the front entrance, with the emblem of the compass and square cut into the stone. The front entrance would have led into the banquet hall, which had a "moving picture machine." The original design of the building had the brickwork in a diamond shape. If you exit the building on the Ashford Avenue side, look back at the original entrance and you will see the Freemasons' emblem and the words "Masonic Temple."

By 1984 the Lodge had rejoined with Diamond Thistle Lodge in Tarrytown and 18 Ashford Avenue became the medical building it is today.



Sources:

*History of the Diamond Thistle Lodge No. 555 (www.diamondthistle.org)*  
*Hasting Echo, February 23, 1924*  
*The New York Times, December 30, 1923*



Dobbs Ferry 14th Annual  
**Road to Freedom Walk**

## Sunday, August 18


1:00 PM - Gould Park

- ★ Walk with fife & drum and uniformed reenactors along the 1781 route of the Continental Army

2:00 PM - Mead House, 12 Elm Street

- ★ Meet Gen. Anthony Wayne and the elite American Corps of Light Infantry and discover how on July 15-16, 1779 they stormed the British fortress at Stony Point. This year marks the 240th anniversary of their dramatic and heroic campaign
- ★ Kids will play colonial games and learn to drill in formation to musical commands
- ★ Sample 18th century recipes featuring herbs from our colonial kitchen garden
- ★ Listen to period music
- ★ View displays of early money, military artifacts and tools
- ★ Demos of 18th century hairstyling, attire and makeup

Event is free  
Refreshments will be served  
All ages are welcome



We are grateful for the generosity of the principal sponsor of Road to Freedom 2019

Road to Freedom 2019 is a shared initiative of the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society and the Village of Dobbs Ferry  
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