



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.

In November 1765, a tenant farmer irate at his landlord, Frederick Philipse, brought an armed rebellion to the Dobbs Ferry woods. **Page 4**

In 1822, a distant cousin of Clara Mead, one Theodisia Smith, started a diary, chronicling daily tasks like sewing and cooking. **Page 5**

A longtime Village pharmacist reminisces about all the pharmacies that have come and gone over the years. **Page 6**

Walking around the Village is pleasant, but with a new online Historical Society guided tour, you can learn a bit of history, too. **Page 8**

Volume XXIX Issue No. 7 Winter 2020

The Ferry Takes Root on the West Bank

By Jim Lockett

In the previous installment, some of the Dobbs family and the related Merritt family left Manhattan and settled on opposite sides of the Hudson around 1698. The ferry began, soon passing into the hands of Robert Sneden and his wife, Mary (“Molly”), assumed to be John Dobbs’s daughter.

Now we’ll cover some of the same years, but with greater focus on the western bank, where the ferry was headquartered for most of its long history. On the eastern side, we’ll meet Jasper Stymets, the ferryman at Dobbs Ferry, according to President John Adams. And we’ll end this installment as the Revolutionary War begins, with the ferry taking John and Sam Adams westbound, to the Continental Congress, and Martha Washington eastbound, joining her husband at the siege of Boston.

Part 5 of an imagined autobiography of John Dobbs, who first leased the east-bank ferry landing around 1698:

Cheer Hall and Lord Cornbury

When they hanged Jacob Leisler in 1691, we hoped we were done with his rabble. But, you’ll recall, the Leislerites pulled strings in London, regaining power in 1698. My uncle



The “Big House” today. Located at 201 Route 9W, Palisades, N.Y., it was built by Henry and Mary Ludlow. A land survey they commissioned in 1745 offers the earliest reference to the Sneden family running the ferry.

William, an anti-Leislerite, was of course immediately out as New York mayor and soon left for Orange County. The rest of us, except my brother William, also left Manhattan — me and my sister Mary to the future Dobbs Ferry, my brother Walter and my mother, Mary, to the future Wards Island, and my sister Margery to the Bronx.

Poor Nicholas Bayard, another former New York mayor and ally of my uncle, wound up on death row, charged with treason.

Then the political pendulum swung back: In 1702, the queen appointed an anti-Leislerite governor, Lord Cornbury. To us, Cornbury was a hero; he saved Bayard from the gallows. But most historians falsely ridicule him as a transvestite and vilify him as a thief. I’m glad recent scholarship (“The Lord Cornbury Scandal,” by Patricia Bonomi, University of North Carolina Press, 1998) has debunked those smears.

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

In 1702, Cornbury stayed three weeks at Cheer Hall, my uncle's riverside house, separated from my own by just over a mile of water. Cheer Hall would eventually belong to the Snedens, and would be the headquarters of their ferry, but for those three weeks it was the provincial seat of government. Cornbury convened his council there, safe from the yellow fever that was ravaging New York City. For my uncle, it was an opportunity to forge political ties.

Cornbury appointed Uncle William and his son John as the first Orange County judges. They also were on the county board of supervisors. They were big frogs in Orange County, but it was a small pond: There were only 233 whites and 36 slaves (eight belonging to Uncle William) in the whole county. (Indians weren't counted.)

Cheer Hall sat on 3,410 acres, including two miles of riverfront. Uncle William's close friend Dr. George Lockhart originally bought the land in 1685, but my uncle was soon in on the deal. There is a 1687 deed from Lockhart to Merritt, but that must have been a mortgage deed, not a sale. When the property was sold years later, Lockhart's widow was listed as a seller along with the Merritts, suggesting they were joint owners almost the whole time. Lockhart himself died just as we were moving, in 1698. Uncle William settled the estate and was its largest creditor.

The Merritts and Lockharts were very close, allied by marriage (Merritt's son and Lockhart's daughter), politics, and business. The two men had been fellow businessmen and office holders in New York City and fellow officers in the New York militia. In 1689 they were fellow victims of rebellion: Around the time Leisler jailed Uncle William, Lockhart was leading Massachusetts troops against Indians in Maine. Lockhart's soldiers,



Lord Cornbury, appointed governor in 1702, who among other things saved Nicholas Bayard from the gallows, was once labeled a transvestite and a thief, but recent scholarship rebuts that.

driven by the same anti-Catholic paranoia that fueled Leisler, called him a "Papist" (he wasn't) and mutinied.

With Cornbury in the governor's chair, the Merritts could resume land investing. Getting Indians to sign deeds was easy, but getting legal recognition of such deeds from whites required a patent from the government. A good relationship with the governor was a prerequisite. My cousin John Merritt and partners bought a vast tract in Orange County, the "Chesekook Patent" (deed, 1702; patent, 1707). At the same time, he also invested in two more big tracts, the Wawayanda and Minisink Patents.

The Merritts Leave Cheer Hall

In 1705, the Merritts and Lockhart's widow sold the whole Cheer Hall property to John Corbett, captain of the ship Beaver, land investor, and, as my uncle and his son had been, a New York City alderman. The Corbets and Merritts were well-acquainted:

- Uncle William had been "farmer of the excise" (a for-profit post licensed by the government to collect liquor taxes) many times, sometimes in partnership with Abraham Corbett (probably John's father) and sometimes with Lockhart.
- Corbett had played a minor role in the drama leading up to Leisler's Rebellion. He carried an urgent letter from the soon-to-be-overthrown Royal

governor and Governors Council to the authorities in England.

- Corbett and John Merritt were co-investors, with others, in the Minisink Patent.

It was good that Uncle William sold to a friend. If we Dobbs/Snedens folk were going to fulfill our destiny as stewards of the ferry, we needed the Cheer Hall property to be in friendly hands.

Corbett called the place "Rockland." Others called it "Corbetts Point." Soon two alternative names for it — "Snedens Landing" and "Dobbs Ferry" — came into use, with "Snedens Landing" winning out in the 1800s and continuing into the 1900s. Nowadays you call the hamlet "Palisades" and the county "Rockland," Rockland County having been carved out of Orange County.

I've read that Uncle William "went back to sea" after leaving Cheer Hall. That's wrong. Sure, he served as a ship's pilot once, but that's not "going to sea." A pilot serves briefly, near land, to advise the captain on navigating local waters. The government appointed Uncle William pilot of the warship *Lowestaffe* on April 24, 1706. But a month later, someone else filled that role.

Why would my uncle, a wealthy old man and former mayor, serve as a ship's pilot? Consider: Cornbury and the captain of the *Lowestaffe* were enemies. Cornbury was so mad at the captain he wanted to blast the *Lowestaffe* to smithereens with cannon fire. He wrote that in a letter. Cornbury settled one struggle with the captain by sending soldiers to the docks. So my guess is that Cornbury wanted a pilot on that ship with my uncle's interpersonal skills and gravitas to talk some sense into that rogue captain.

We know that in January 1707, Uncle William was not off sailing, because he settled the estate of one Nicholas Croxton in that month (my sister Margery Dobbs was a witness). That was his last recorded action. In 1708, Uncle William died. He was about 67.

The Snedens Get Cheer Hall

Corbett died in 1714, leaving the property to his daughter Mary. In 1725 she married Henry Ludlow, a wealthy Manhattanite. The couple built and occupied a grand residence

Continued on page 3

FERRYMAN STAFF

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

Continued from page 2

higher on the western valley wall called “The Big House.” This structure still stands, though much altered.

In 1745, the Ludlows commissioned a survey. The resulting plan shows a building down by the river, probably Cheer Hall, that is labeled “Snedings House the ffery [sic].” That is the earliest documentary reference to the Snedens running the ferry. When they first occupied Cheer Hall, I couldn’t say. Maybe in 1731, not long after their marriage.

In 1749, the Ludlows sold the Big House, with 540 acres, to John Lawrence, formerly of Westchester. And in 1752, the Snedens recorded a deed for their riverside abode and 120 acres. Whether they were renters in 1745, or owners under an unrecorded deed, I couldn’t say. Robert Sneden died in 1753, at about age 44, leaving Molly with seven sons and two daughters. They continued the ferry.

In the 1760s, Molly’s son John and daughter Mary married Lawrences from the Big House. Perhaps we have these marriages — or at least John’s — to thank for keeping the ferry in my family. The Lawrences would become ardent Patriots in the Revolution. John too chose the Patriot side, perhaps influenced by his in-laws. His six brothers and his mother were Tories. The ferry wasn’t confiscated as Tory property after the war only because John the Patriot became its sole owner.

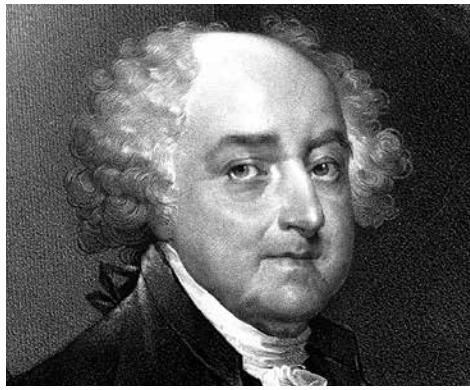
Taverns on Both Sides of the River

Travelers need refreshments. So in 1756, Mary Sneden obtained a liquor license for the western ferry landing. By 1760, my son William was also operating a tavern, probably at the corner of today’s Walnut Street and Broadway in Dobbs Ferry.

And where was I in 1760? Almost certainly six feet under, though my death is unrecorded. (Fortunately for you, dear reader, I am able to observe and write from the afterlife.)

John and Sam Adams Ride the Ferry

A young man named Jasper Stymets (sometimes written “Stymus”) became the tenant on my former leasehold around 1769. We never owned the land, so there is no deed to pinpoint the date. Stymets was listed as a freeman (voter) in New York



paid at Hutchins of Stamford	0: 6: 11
paid at Kings of Hoop Neck	0: 16: 0
paid at Bulls of White Plains	0: 3: 8
paid at Jasper the Ferryman	
at Dobbs Ferry for Dinner & Ferryage	0: 4: 0
paid at Mrs Watsons at Hackensack	0: 8: 10
paid at Piersons of Newark	0: 2: 10
paid at Elizabeth Town for Shewing	0: 0: 10
Hoops	
paid at Grahams Elizabeth Town	0: 18: 4
paid for Wine and Hoops to Newark after our stay with the H. Miller	0: 5: 8

In September 1775, John Adams and his cousin Sam took the ferry en route to the Continental Congress, as evidenced on the fourth line of John’s expense account.

City in 1767, and he married there in 1768, so perhaps it was right after his marriage.

It has been written that Stymets was not a ferryman — another error by historians. Let’s read from the expense account kept by John Adams on his trip with his cousin Sam to the Continental Congress in September of 1775: “Paid at Jasper _____ the Ferryman at Dobbs Ferry, for dinner and ferryage 0:4:0.” (The blank is in the original; “0:4:0” would be pounds, shillings, and pence.)

Here’s how I imagine that day: After Jasper’s wife served dinner in their little farmhouse by the river, Jasper collected the four shillings and raised a flag to signal the Snedens. Because the Adamses were on horseback or in a carriage, he signaled for the big periauger, not the little boat used for passengers without beasts. Soon that big flat-bottomed sailboat sailed across to pick them up. Stymets could have had his own ferryboat, but it makes more sense to think he cooperated with the Snedens.

Martha Washington Rides the Ferry

About two months after the Adamses took their westbound ride, Martha Washington, with her carriage and large entourage, was carried eastward across the river by the Snedens. She was going to Cambridge to be with her husband, who had Boston under siege. There is no written record of her crossing, but there is a letter from George to Joseph Reed in Philadelphia that asks Reed to advise her where to cross. It rules out crossing at New York City: “... as she and her Conductor (who I expect will be Mr Custis her Son) are perfect strangers to the Road, the Stages and the proper place to Cross Hudson’s River (by all means avoiding New York) I shall be much obliged in your particular Instruction’s & advice to her.”

Ruling out New York City would make Dobbs Ferry the obvious place for her to cross. The Palisades blocked crossing any closer to the city. And there was no reason to go farther north.

Continued on page 4



A Washington family coach at Mt. Vernon, perhaps similar to the one that carried Martha Washington on a Hudson River ferry crossing in late 1775.

The Levelers Are Coming! The Levelers Are Coming!

By Larry Blizzard

Some 10 years before the American Revolution, an army of angry armed men gathered in the woods around Dobbs Ferry. What was their purpose?

It was a November day in 1765, and William Prendergast was furious. An Irishman from Kilkenny and a tenant farmer on Philipsburg Manor, Prendergast had come down to Yonkers, where his landlord, Frederick Philipse, was conducting manorial court. (In this court, tenants who had not paid their rents were being evicted and/or imprisoned.) It was here that he learned a fact that galled him: Philipse himself paid the king a yearly rent of just four pounds for his entire estate of 20,000 acres — exactly 12 shillings less than Prendergast paid Philipse!

In addition to this “quitrent,” Prendergast, like all the tenants, had to give a portion of his crops to his landlord. Also, he could not will his land to his wife and children without the consent of Philipse and, if permission was given, would have to pay a transfer tax equal to one-third the value of the property.

Prendergast felt that this was intolerable. Once back home in Dutchess County, he seemed to have no trouble raising an army of several hundred disgruntled farmers. Armed with a motley assortment

of weapons, mainly swords, pistols, and knives, the army was surprisingly well-organized: several companies of men were created, led by captains and lieutenants. A group of 12 men were selected to supervise activities, and all decisions required a majority vote.

Calling themselves “Levelers,” the members vowed to pay no rents and to reinstate evicted tenants. In the following months, the Levelers ranged through Dutchess County, threatening landlords, burning barns, punishing timidity, and stirring up general rebellion against the landlords. By the spring of 1766, the uprising had spread into Westchester County. Financially hard-pressed farmers looked upon the rebels as saviors. In April, between 800 and 1,000 Levelers marched to the woods around Dobbs Ferry, where they camped. Their goal was to free three rebels from Cortlandt Manor who were imprisoned in New York City.

From Dobbs Ferry, they marched to Kingsbridge, in what would become the Bronx, where a committee of six was chosen to go into the city and demand the release of the rebels. However, upon arrival in the city, they encountered an indifferent public, plus a body of grenadiers ready to



A tenant farmhouse, ca. 1750.

dispel any resistance. Thus Governor Henry Moore was able to persuade them not to attack, and the Levelers returned to their home grounds.

Hostilities against the landlords continued. Jailed farmers were released; tenants who tried to remain loyal to their landlords were threatened with destruction of their houses and fields. Open battles resulted in casualties on both sides. Fearful, the governor determined to crush the rebellion and ordered the grenadiers into action.

After several clashes, about 50 farmers were arrested; Prendergast, however, escaped. William was married to a Quaker woman, Mehitable Wing, who, believing in the innate goodness and mercy of humans, persuaded her husband to surrender himself and state his case honestly. However, his trial, held in Poughkeepsie, turned out otherwise. While

Continued on page 5

The Ferry...

Continued from page 3

Why did George rule out New York City? Not fear of Tories — the city was firmly in Patriot hands. John Adams wrote to his wife in April 1775: “The People of the City, have siezed [sic] the City Arms and Ammunition... The Tories there, durst not shew their Heads.”

I think George feared that New Yorkers would delay her with lavish parties and long speeches. This is what happened in Philadelphia. In a letter to Reed on Christmas Day, after her arrival in Boston, George delivered this gentle complaint wrapped in a thank you: “I must again express my gratitude for the attention shewn Mrs Washington at Philadelphia — It cannot but be pleasing,

altho’ it did in some measure, impede the progress of her journey on the Road.”

The Ferry in the Revolution

Our story, having reached the opening stages of the war, must be suspended here. Next, we will see the vitally strategic ferry landings and surrounding areas in the thick of the war. Stymets joins Washington’s army. Molly Sneden and her Tory sons flee to New York and Canada. Washington sees “Dobbs Ferry” — meaning today’s Palisades, N.Y. — as so strategic that he fortifies it with a blockhouse. Later, with independence near, he chooses it as the only spot allowed for meetings with the enemy over prisoner exchanges and similar matters. And he meets there for final talks with the British commander to settle details of the British military withdrawal.

All sources for these articles can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/DobbsLockettNotes>. The author thanks the Palisades, N.Y., historian Alice Gerard for her helpful answers to his emails related to research for these articles and acknowledges the contribution of her books and articles on the subject and those of her late mother, the historian Alice Munro Haagensen.

Correction

In the Fall 2019 issue of *The Ferryman*, James Dowdle was incorrectly listed as the owner of the Edwards Dowdle Funeral Home in Dobbs Ferry. Joseph N. Casario is the current proprietor, having acquired the business from James Dowdle in 2016.

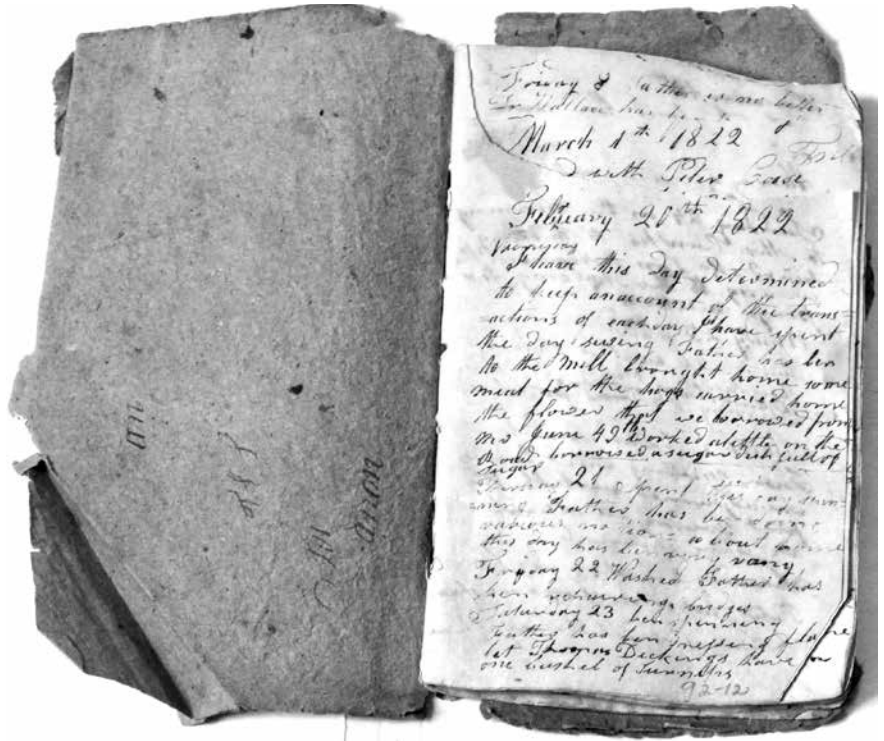
An Early 19th-Century Time Capsule

By Peggie Blizard

Life must have been based more around work than fun in rural America in 1822 when Theodosia Smith decided, for some reason, to keep account of her days in a small, hand-made diary, which by some miracle has survived intact for nearly 200 years and has found its way into the archives of the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society at the Mead House.

Theodosia Smith, a second cousin four times removed of Clara and Theo Mead, lived near Salem and Cross River, N.Y., in 1822 with her father, Matthew, two brothers, Peter and Solomon (Solomon died two months after the diary stopped), and two sisters, Rachel and Hannah. Their mother was dead by this time, but confusingly, on February 21 she writes, "Mama came to visit." Perhaps this was a grandmother. No mention is ever made in the diary of the two sisters.

The diary begins, "February 20th 1822 I have this day determined to keep account



The first page of the diary of Theodosia Smith, a distant cousin of Clara Mead.

of the transactions of each day. I have spent the day sewing. Father has been to the mill. Brought home some meal for the hogs. Carried home the flower [sic] we borrowed from Mr. June. Worked a little on the road.

Borrowed a sugar dish full of sugar."

Reading on, it becomes clear that possibly one of the reasons she is writing daily in

Continued on page 6

The Levelers...

Continued from page 4

the other rebels were punished with fines, pillories, or imprisonment, Prendergast was sentenced to be hanged — despite an eloquent plea from his formidable wife.

Mehitable, undeterred, leaped on a horse and, after stopping by her sister's house to borrow her best dress, galloped from Poughkeepsie down the King's Road through Dobbs Ferry, all the way to Fort George in Manhattan, where she beseeched the governor.

Moved by the woman's earnestness, he wrote out a reprieve for Prendergast, "until the King's pleasure should be known." He also allowed her to draw up a petition for a royal pardon.

She then galloped all the way back to Poughkeepsie with the documents: in less than three days, she had ridden 160 miles. She had endured four days without sufficient sleep or decent food, traveling over roads fraught with danger from wild animals,

thieving highwaymen, fallen trees, and rocks, in virtually pitch-dark conditions. "Mehitable's Ride" has entered the annals of American history as an epic example of personal courage and self-sacrifice. At last, after six months in jail, Prendergast received the King's pardon. (In London, it was felt that leniency might have a more positive effect than severe punishment.)

Returning to Philipsburg Manor, William and his wife were joyously welcomed by the other tenants. For the rest of their lives, they lived quietly; they paid their rent, shared

their crops, and raised 13 children.

Oddly enough, when the Revolutionary War broke out, William remained loyal to the king. One of his sons even served in the British army. Perhaps he felt gratitude at the king's mercy. William's loyalist leanings seem to have been tolerated by his patriot neighbors.

Sometime after the war, William, along with several Quaker families, moved to Chautauqua, in western New York state, possibly seeking a more tranquil environment. Regardless of his search for peace, the uprising he fostered will always be known as the Prendergast Rebellion.



A book illustration showing Mehitable pleading for her husband at the trial in Poughkeepsie.

Resources:

Bonomi, Patricia. "A Factious People: Politics and Society in Colonial New York" (2d printing: Cornell University Press, 2014).

Denike, Alice, and Rebecca Rankin and others. "A History of Dobbs Ferry." Series published in the Dobbs Ferry Register.

"From the Lick to the Rapids," by Ken Prendergast. Blog archive.

A Remembrance of Pharmacies Past

By Joe Bova

Every once in a while I run into someone who asks about some of the businesses that used to be in our downtown. I recall Kenny the Barber, Vic's Coffee Shop, the Greenburgh Savings Bank, Caldara Movers, Scribner and North's Stationery Stores, Bartels Ice Cream, Oxford Market, Dick's Cabin, Jimmy's Restaurant, and one that is very close to me, the first Dobbs Ferry Pharmacy. The original one was at 73 Main Street, run by Columbus (Doc) Arone and his son, Richard (Dick).

This is where I began my career in pharmacy. I grew up at 43 Main, and this corner (where the Celtic Corner stands now) was as far as I could go before having to cross the street. The cash register here was the old type that had keys for each employee. Through the years, some of them that I remember were Joe Gemma (husband of Rose), Frank and Richard Palfy, and Don and Vito Tarricone. I believe the last employee after me was Mike Spina.

Sadly, Cary's Pharmacy has been added to this list, and in 50 years or so people will look back and ask about the business that once occupied 105 Main. When Cary's shut its doors in August, it was the oldest operating pharmacy in Westchester County. The business first opened in 1869 as the French Apothecary, then became the



The pharmacy not long before it closed, complete with creative artwork on the windows.

German Apothecary (the druggist was Kurt von Weidel). It changed to Cary's Pharmacy when it was purchased by William J. Cary in the early 1900s.

After World War II, Bess and Bernard Pobiner kept the business going and kept the name Cary's. In the same entrepreneurial spirit as the Arones, the Pobiners hired local talent. Many of these were from the Keiling family, a number of whom still reside in Dobbs Ferry. In fact, Albert Keiling worked side by side with Bernie for many years in the prescription department. There was a custom that workers would leave messages on the basement walls at 105 Main. They are still there today.

Over the years, relationships are built up with patients who typically go to the same pharmacy for all their needs. Cary's

Continued on page 7



A young Joe Bova with Bernie and Bess Pobiner.

Time Capsule...

Continued from page 5

the diary is to keep a record of the work she did for a Mr. Peter N'Cossee, who agreed to pay her \$7 a month to do spinning for him. It seems that almost daily, he brought her several pounds of flax.

Three days into the diary, "Father" comes down with the flu, which goes on and on and on. He is treated at home by two different doctors, one of whom bled him as treatment. Theodosia cared for him while she continued to do the spinning and various other household duties, such as sewing and washing. It

appears that one reason she agreed to do the spinning might have been to earn money to finance her brothers' education.

After keeping the diary for about a month, her last entry was, "Sunday 24 I stayed home." So what happened to her? As there were still a large number of pages left, she might have caught the flu herself. We know from other records that she not only survived but went on to marry Gideon Reynolds at age 42, and she gave birth to a daughter, Emeline Hoe Reynolds, within the year.

At some point later, someone turned the book over and began using the other side,

writing down the names of states, and cities in those states. A good guess is that it was a child doing schoolwork, and this little homemade book was just available paper.

One interesting nugget: Throughout the diary, she uses the dollar sign when writing down sums of money, but on March 8 she states, "Peter bought a pound of liver for 2 shillings." It seems that because of ongoing shortages of coins in some regions, shillings (originally worth about 25 cents) were in use well into the nineteenth century.

Theodosia died at age 54, some 12 years after getting married and giving birth.

A Remembrance...

Continued from page 6

was no different. I started working for the Pobiners while I was in pharmacy school in the mid-70s and purchased the business in 1981. I owned Cary's (keeping the name; why change what is working?) until June 2008.

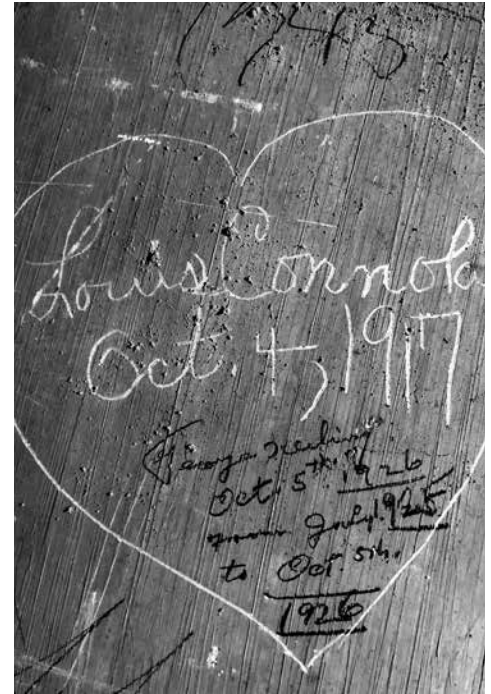
You see family members born and grow right before your eyes, and then they are off to college. You laugh with these same people and share good times, and you grieve with them when they lose a loved one. I have fond memories of those years. This was not unique to Cary's. At one time there were four independent pharmacies in the Village. In addition to Doc Arone's and Cary's, there was Broadway Arms (operated for many years by Nathan (Butch) Kessler on the corner of Cedar and Broadway (now a frozen yogurt store).

When the Arones closed their doors, in the early 70s, the name became available and Cedar Hill Pharmacy on Cedar Street became Dobbs Ferry Pharmacy; it is still there, next to what used to be the Dan Zimkin Army and Navy Store, owned by Bruce Glickman.

Just imagine: four independent pharmacies in one town. This was typical years ago. The owners all got along, as there was enough business for everyone. In fact, for many years it was customary that only one of the four would be open on Sunday and rotate. If patients from one of the other three needed something, they would be accommodated. This way everyone had a few Sundays off!

Many milestones were passed during the years at Cary's. In 1977, the 600,000th prescription was filled. Times have changed, and I guess some people call this progress. Based on the impersonal nature of some of today's "big box" pharmacies, I feel disappointed that a profession that once had patient care at the very center of what was provided has been divided into mail-order and mandatory-prescription plans, depriving people of freedom of choice. I suppose all health care is going in this direction.

In June 2008, when Eric Granick took the keys from me and begin his tenure at 105 Main, I am sure he had big plans for his future. I am sure he expected his business to grow to the point where one day he would turn the keys over to his successor and the tradition would continue.



Messages left by workers on the basement walls are there to this day.

"Progress" had different things in mind. The health-plan industry made it impossible for Eric to continue operations.

One day someone will walk down Main Street and ask, "Wasn't there a pharmacy there once?"

A Word From the Presidents

Happy New Year!

Welcome to the Winter 2020 issue of our newsletter, The Ferryman. We hope you had a chance in early January to drop by Mead House for our annual eggnog party — for a taste of our famous eggnog made from one of Clara Mead's recipes!

We have a lot of excellent programs planned for the upcoming year. In May, we have invited Linda Russell, a historical musician, to lead us in a program of "Songs of the Historic Hudson River." Also, this spring we will be sponsoring our annual historical essay /scholarship contest for high school seniors.

The Historical Society continues its core mission of preserving the archives of the Village of Dobbs Ferry as an accessible

resource for all.

This past year, we helped some fine folks research their family genealogies (Mead, Dobbs, Odell, and Wilsea). We were happy to provide old photographs of long-lost places, once considered fixtures in our town, like the drugstores at Chestnut and Main, Dick's Cabin, Springhurst Estate, and a town founding father — Franklin Q. Brown.

So much is learned when we are asked to research the history of a house for a new home buyer in Dobbs Ferry. It is our pleasure to dig into the archives and bring to life the stories and images of those who once lived in our village. We have recently received inquiries on Meyer H. Meyer (Ashford Avenue estate, ca. 1860s), the Hildebrandt Estate, and the Proudfoot Estate (both north of Brookside Lane).

It is our goal to continue to present the programs and lectures that relate to the history of the village (like the Road to Freedom March and the Little White Church lectures) as well as to support new initiatives like the establishment of formal historical districts in town. Your feedback has told us that you enjoy the programs that also relate to the history of the county, state, and country as a whole. We will endeavor to bring you the highest-quality programming possible.

We love this work, but it's not possible to do all this without your assistance. Please become a member of the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society and help us all make history together.

*Madeline Byrne and Frank Farrington
Co-Presidents*



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New Dobbs Ferry Walking Tour

By Madeline Byrne

A walk through Dobbs Ferry is always enjoyable. Interesting shops, views of the Hudson, and a mix of architectural styles make for a pleasant stroll through town. The Historical Society has now added to the pleasure of such a walk by launching a self-guided tour through the village.

In connection with the internet startup walkabout.fm, the village now has a way for you to find and learn about our history. Walkabout was started by Neal Taparia and Darshan Somashekar, two successful web-site entrepreneurs. They were recently featured in a piece in the September 22, 2019, issue of The Scarsdale Inquirer.

The goal of Walkabout is to help locals and tourists learn more about smaller communities. The web site curates tours through towns and villages using information from Wikipedia. Each stop on the tour is pinned on a map and associated with a photo of the site and a written description. There is also a button to click on to hear the description read.

Using Wikipedia as their information



The new Walkabout app offers a self-guided tour of Dobbs Ferry. Just click on the map to locate sites like the Albany Post Road marker and Our Lady of Pompeii church.

source allowed Taparia and Somashekar to create pages for thousands of locations. However, given the scope of the project, it was impossible to check on the accuracy of the Wikipedia listings. When we checked the site for the tour of Dobbs Ferry, we found that of the six places identified, two were not even in the village, and some important landmarks were not mentioned.

An email to Walkabout brought a prompt response from Somashekar. We asked if we could add to the listings they already had and remove the ones that aren't in Dobbs Ferry. He was glad to hear from us and helped with the changes. There are now 23 listings for the village, ranging from the Albany Post Road Marker to the Zion Episcopal Church.

So visit walkabout.fm and enter Dobbs Ferry in the search box. Take the tour and

let us know what you think. Are there places you would like to see added? Is there information you want to add to a description? And next time you are going to visit a relative in a distant location, visit walkabout.fm to see what treasures might lie around the corner.

Dobbs Ferry's First Police Officer

On January 5, 1874, the Dobbs Ferry Board of Trustees appointed Lawrence W. Boyle to be the first police constable for a salary of about \$30 a month, which also compensated him for being a lamplighter. He was allotted 50 cents a month for kerosene to light the only two lanterns on Main Street. His work experience before this appointment was as a worker on the river schooner Kate van Tassel.

As for a uniform, it would be another 10 years before the Village felt it could justify spending the \$30. The first uniform was blue flannel with a narrow white cord for a stripe on the pantaloons and a row of brass buttons on the coat and one brass button on each sleeve. Also required was a suitable straw hat. (Village minutes, June 1885.)

However, Mr. Boyle's story has a sad ending.

In 1898, at the age of 41, he made the mistake of picking up a wire on Chestnut Street between Main and Palisade Streets, "thinking it would be a mistake to leave around, most probably. He did not know it was live."

He had been born in Ireland in 1857 and left behind a wife, Margaret Kerwin, and 13 children, who lived in a house on Palisade Street.