



# 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.*

FOLLOW US @ Dobbs Ferry Historical Society  
 @ dobbsferryhistoricalsociety

## Irritating but Necessary

You know those steel plates that are wrecking your car's suspension? They're part of a vital upgrading of the village's natural gas infrastructure.

Page 4

## From the Archives

What's the longest-lasting business in the village? It's Willoughby's Food Market, which has been on Main Street for 108 years.

Page 6

## Student Voices

The two winners of the Historical Society's essay contest weighed in on what it was like to be a teenager during the pandemic.

Page 7

Vol. XXIX Issue No. 11 Summer 2021

# The Ferry Shrinks, but Survives, in the Late 1800s

By Jim Lockett

Next time you're in Manhattan at 59th and Fifth, glance over at the statue of Civil War General William Tecumseh Sherman and picture the sculptor, Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848-1907), boarding the ferry at Dobbs Ferry on a hot summer morning in 1875. It was a trip he made repeatedly, bound from his apartment in Manhattan to Snedens Landing (today's Palisades, N.Y.) to teach drawing to the children of wealthy Manhattanites, the Dr. Cornelius Rea Agnew family, who were summering there. Reading the Saint-Gaudens autobiography, we can imagine ourselves stepping into that 18-foot wooden rowboat with him:

*"...I started out at daybreak on those hot summer days; taking the cars [train] to Dobbs Ferry, where I stood on the dock, and, with a string, pulled a wooden arm which branched out of the top of a pole to indicate to the man with a boat on the other bank of the river, a mile or two away, that somebody wanted to cross. Then an approaching speck on the water became the ferryman, who had seen the sign and was coming over to take me back. On landing I climbed a steep hill in the hot sun, and taught the young pupils, who, I am afraid, were not as much interested in what I said as they should have been. They have since become*



Shown rowing passengers across the Hudson in an undated photo, William Coates, husband of Mary Sneden, served two tours as Ferry Captain (1871-1874 and 1886-1903). Coates was among those who strove to keep the ferry viable as its share of commercial cargo declined. It was said he could row from Dobbs Ferry to Snedens Landing in 11 minutes.

*among the most charming of my friends. After an hour or so with them, I descended the hill, crossed the river in the row-boat, took the train, which deposited me at Thirtieth Street on the North River [Hudson River], and walked over to Twenty-Third Street, where I arrived at one o'clock, more dead than alive."*

Saint-Gaudens was not yet famous when he took those ferry rides. He was 26 and teaching to help pay his bills. His first big commission would come the next year — a statue of Admiral David Farragut for Madison Square. But had he more work,

*Continued on page 2*

## The Ferry Shrinks...

*Continued from page 1*

he would not have made those trips to Snedens to teach art to children, and not met seven-year-old Mary Lawrence. Mary would grow up to become a serious student of and assistant to Saint-Gaudens, a successful sculptor in her own right, and an important figure in the history of the ferry. But more about Mary later.

Now let's hand the keyboard over to the ghost of John Dobbs, the man who first brought the Dobbs name to our village waterfront, and who has been our narrator for this multi-century saga of the Dobbs family and their ferry. John continues:

### A Century of Change

**T**he ferryman who transported Saint-Gaudens back and forth across the river in 1875 was my three-greats grandson, Horton Sneden, nephew of Larry Sneden, who had been the ferry captain for over 40 years (1829-1870).

A brief refresher on the genealogy of the ferrymen up to this point is in order here. We'll start with me. Many people conjecture I was the first ferryman, offering the service as a sideline to my farming and fishing from the land I leased circa 1698 at what you now call the village of Dobbs Ferry. Others theorize it was probably my son, William, who started the ferry around 1729. You'll read in many places it was somebody named Jeremiah Dobbs, but the only Jeremiah in the family was of a later generation and he did not run a ferry.

After William came Robert and Mary ("Mollie") Sneden, operating from the west bank, where they first leased and then bought Cheer Hall, the former home of my uncle, William Merritt, former mayor of New York City. Some believe Mollie was my daughter, Mary, and there is good but inconclusive evidence for that. Again, under the censorship rules for messages from ghosts, I can't settle the question, but the rest of my story here will treat that hypothesis as true.

Robert Sneden died young, leaving Mollie and her many sons to run the ferry. But only one son — who I like to think was named after me — picked the right side in



*A scale model of the "Tappan Packet," an early village ferry boat, sailed as part of the Village of Dobbs Ferry's 150th-anniversary celebration in 1973. The replica was designed and captained by Larry Ricci (at the rudder), built by local carpenters, and funded by donations from local residents and the Boy Scouts.*

the Revolution. The other Snedens were banned from sailing boats on the river by their Patriot neighbors.

After my grandson John came his son John Jr., also known as "Boss" Sneden, my great grandson. In 1829, Boss Sneden handed the ferry over to his son Lawrence.

My great-great grandson Larry Sneden did a fine job of piloting the ferry through the boom times of the middle nineteenth century, but he couldn't hold back the historical forces that ultimately drove the ferry into decline. Goods and passengers increasingly traveled by rail and steamship in the later nineteenth century. Local industries that had supported the Snedens economy — stone quarries, ship building — fell prey to distant competitors.

**B**y 1859, north-south rail lines on both sides of the river connected with ferries elsewhere. There also was an east-west line to Lake Erie that at first ended close by at Piermont, but it soon relocated to Jersey City. Demand for ferrying goods between Snedens and Dobbs Ferry dwindled to a trickle. Some passenger traffic remained, but it could not generate enough revenue to justify maintaining big boats and the big pier at Snedens.

In the heyday of the ferry (mid-1700s to mid-1800s), big periaugers — barge-like sailboats about 60 feet long and 16 feet

wide, with two masts — carried freight, passengers, wagons, carriages, and horses across the river. Those were replaced in the second half of the 19th century, with 23-foot cat boats — single-masted open boats with just one sail — and then those gave way in 1872 to 18-foot boats that were as often rowed as sailed. The 500-foot-long wooden pier Larry had built at Snedens fell into disrepair.

**T**he ferry business remained in the family as it diminished in scale. Larry's nephew, John Newton Sneden, succeeded him in 1870, but just one year later John Newton passed the business over to William Coates — 1832-1909 — husband of Larry's daughter, Mary. Around 1874 William Coates turned it over to Horton Sneden. Both John Newton Sneden and Horton were sons of Larry's brother, William, making them my three-greats grandsons. When Horton died 11 years later (1886), William Coates resumed the role of ferryman through the end of the century and three years into the next.

A Snedens Landing resident of that era, Anita Hill, wrote of life at Snedens Landing in the late 19th century and gave the manuscript to the town library. In it, she recalled: "The Chrystena, a one-stacked, snow-white boat, ran daily from Tarrytown to New York stopping at Dobbs Ferry and Yonkers to pick up passengers. Captain William Coates then met the west shore dwellers and brought them home in his sailboat or heavy row boat."

According to Anita Hill, Coates could row the 1.1 miles of water between Dobbs Ferry and Snedens Landing in 11 minutes!

On June 21, 1898, a 14-page paper entitled "The Story of the Ferry" was presented at the annual meeting of the Palisades Library. Ella Sneden Coates (daughter of William and Mary) and a local minister researched the paper, which recounted a brief history of the ferry. I'll quote its ending:

*"Snedens Landing has had an honorable history of two hundred years of industry and of careful handling of boats in all sorts of weather, pleasant and unpleasant, safe and dangerous, without the record of distressing accidents. Let us hope that the Ferry may continue to exist for centuries to come*

*Continued on page 3*

## The Ferry Shrinks...

*Continued from page 2*

*as an interesting feature in the life of the community.”*

I treasure those words. They say to me the ferry was something very important and remarkable for a lot of people and something that helped build and sustain a community. I'm proud that seven generations of my family – from Uncle William Merritt, who led us to settle here at such a propitious spot for a ferry, to William Coates, the ferryman at the end of the century — created and sustained it. And I'm also happy that my five-greats granddaughter Ella felt motivated to undertake that research.

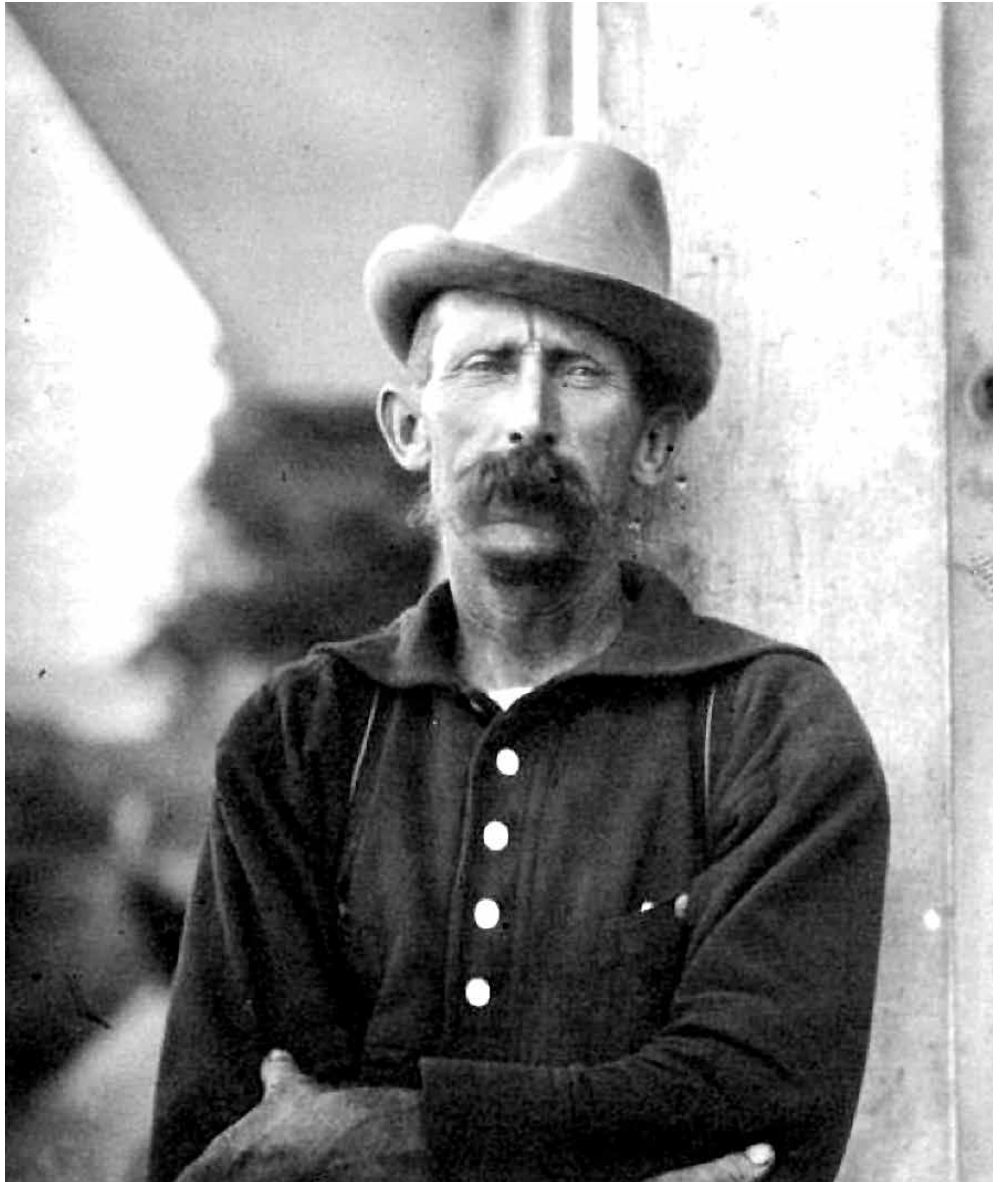
The hope for the ferry to last many more centuries, of course, was not fulfilled. But it did last for about another half century, thanks largely to the efforts of the energetic and talented Mary Lawrence Tonetti, to whose story I now turn.

**A**lthough her maiden name was “Lawrence,” Mary was not from the Lawrence family that had been in Snedens since 1749, occupying “The Big House” and intermarrying with the Snedens. Mary's family was newly arrived to Snedens in 1875. They were a very wealthy and prominent Manhattan family, and they built a grand mansion in Snedens that they named “Cliffside.” One of her ancestors, John Lawrence, was twice mayor of New York City in the 1600s. Since my uncle William was a city councilman in that era and mayor soon after Lawrence's second term, we can safely assume they knew each other well.

In her late teens, Mary became a student of and assistant to sculptor Saint-Gaudens in

### FERRYMAN STAFF

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



*Horton Sneden, who in his first year as ferryman rowed the struggling sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens from Dobbs Ferry across the Hudson to Snedens Landing to teach drawing to a group of inattentive children, save one — Mary Lawrence*

his Manhattan studio. When the planners of the World Columbian Exposition (a.k.a. Chicago World's Fair) wanted a giant statue of Columbus for their event commemorating the 400th anniversary of the explorer's arrival in the New World, they asked Saint-Gaudens to do it. He demurred, recommending Mary instead. She did it, and the statue was well received and prominently displayed. Some critics were unwilling to believe it was the work of an unknown sculptor, let alone a female. But Saint-Gaudens wrote later that she “modeled and executed it and to her goes all the credit of the virility and breadth of treatment which it revealed.”

In 1900, Mary married the sculptor Francois Tonetti. Saint-Gaudens is said to have wept at the news, saying, “And now,

the finest talent in America will never work again.” He was half right: She gave up sculpting in stone and plaster, but turned to sculpting the community of Snedens Landing. She made it into a place bubbling with the creativity of writers, actors, musicians, and other artists of all kinds. Despite the coming of the automobile and bridges and tunnels for crossing the river, Snedens was still highly dependent on the ferry. So, with her help, the ferry survived, transformed into an amenity for an artists' colony. To me, this was an astonishing final chapter for the ferry. I never would have dreamed of it back in 1698, when I first leased my place on the Hudson. But it will be fun delving into it in the final installment of my saga of the Dobbs family and our ferry.

## Yes, Dig They Must

### Irritating steel plates cover a needed upgrade

By Gerard Coffey

Those steel plates that feel like they want to remove the suspension from your car as you drive along certain Village streets actually represent a significant milepost in upgrading the natural gas infrastructure of Dobbs Ferry.

Infrastructure was always expensive, both in terms of dollars and inconvenience. Compare the recent replacement of the Ashford Avenue Bridge with the literal uprooting of life in Dobbs Ferry caused by the digging of the 7½-foot-wide tunnel that ripped down the length of the Village for the local leg of the Old Croton Aqueduct (1837-1842).

Today's less dramatic street excavation and traffic diversion relate to a scheduled high-tech upgrade to the natural gas supply network in much of Dobbs Ferry (*see story below*).



A stack of 12-inch reinforced HDPE gas main pipes awaiting installation and burial to replace old iron pipes in street sections of Con Edison's network on the eastern side of Dobbs Ferry. The mains connect to smaller HDPE pipe inside homes and businesses. State regulations mandate the replacement schedule. Pipe shown is forecast to last more than three times as long as metal pipe.

For an idea of just how far things have come, consider that at the time of its incorporation 148 years ago, Dobbs Ferry had “no street lights, no sidewalks and no sewers,” according to Charles McClelland, Village president. That may put into perspective Dobbs Ferry's recent sewer rent

program, which now charges homeowners a quarterly fee to finance a preventative maintenance fund to invest in upgrading the Village's sanitary lines.

The Village's first attempts to improve things were necessarily modest. These included installing kerosene lamps for street lights and paying Dobbs Ferry's first policeman 20 percent extra to light them each evening. Infrastructure — roads, bridges, power, water, storm drains — cost money, but the lack of even a minimally adequate one weakens the local tax base and adversely impacts home prices.

The first complete natural gas network didn't begin construction until the 1880s in the western part of the Village. And the first water supply network came from a franchise signed with the Pocantico Water Company in 1887, replacing the well pump at Main and Chestnut streets.

Gas service in Dobbs Ferry and Westchester was far behind New York City (Manhattan), which in 1823 issued a franchise to Samuel Leggett's New York Gas Light Company — the predecessor of Con Edison — to install its first gas distribution system to light Broadway from the Battery to Grand Street at a time when the population of Manhattan was 145,000 people. The underground network was heading towards midtown as the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter ignited the Civil War.

*Continued on page 5*

## Out With the Rusted Metal

Just two months before the Covid-19 Pandemic gripped New York State, construction crews began digging up the streets north of Ashford Avenue between Briary Road and Shady Lane and continued right up the hill. The digging soon spread down Ashford Avenue to the park, and into certain residential sections on both sides.

The company, Riggs Distler, was hired by Con Ed to upgrade the individual service connections that branch from the gas mains below the street and into meters in homes and businesses, work it has performed for Con Ed elsewhere in Westchester.

What made the project more than routine was the material used. The new pipes are reinforced high-density polyethylene (HDPE), a plastic that can handle considerably higher pressures than traditional iron and steel pipe. It is expected to last at

least twice (and possibly four times) as long, and is unlikely to require as much maintenance.

New York State's Public Service Commission safety regulations require utilities to completely replace those sections of gas supply networks that are nearing the end of their useful life. And while such upgrade projects are routine irritants to both utilities and customers, the need to dig up and repair HDPE pipes would be greatly — but not entirely — eliminated.

The qualification of the time estimate reflects the difference between the theoretical and the practical. HDPE pipe manufacturers claim such systems will last a century or more. But the jury is out for some engineers who say the only way to know for sure is to see how long it lasts once it's in the ground, and HDPE hasn't yet been around for a century.

## Yes, Dig They Must

*Continued from page 4*

There are several reasons for the painfully slow pace of upgrading natural gas infrastructure in The Bronx, Westchester, and other then-rural counties. Since there were, practically speaking, no gas exploration and transportation systems in the early days, most gas lighting companies had to produce their own from methane that was extracted by the costly burning of certain types of coal or oil.

But creating the means to produce, process, and transmit natural gas into a streetlight system pales in comparison to the costs of installing natural gas service in homes and businesses. These challenges made densely populated areas more profitable due to economies of scale, while suburban and rural areas, not so much. New York City met the investment hurdle rates; Westchester and The Bronx didn't.

There also was the time/money "expense" of getting municipal approval for a franchise. New York City's Board of Aldermen was in the forefront through its Committee on Lamps and Gas, which provided the necessary toll booth leverage to exact tribute. Many other municipalities followed suit.

A few gas mains owned by tiny suppliers were already in place in Dobbs Ferry in the 1870s – on Main, Palisade, Chestnut, and few other streets – and regular service started only in 1881 with a franchise awarded to the Tarrytown & Irvington Union Gas Company, which had been formed in 1859 – the same year as the Dobbs Ferry & Hastings Gas Company.

By this time, however, a wave of ever-increasing consolidation broke out among the tangle of small independent gas suppliers. With the introduction of electric service in midtown Manhattan in 1888, they also saw an opportunity to add electric service to their menu.

But many of these companies lacked the capital to obtain economical gas supplies, pay for large payrolls and equipment for maintenance and replacement, and add a new service most knew little about. Additional operating inefficiency arose from customer choice: some customers in the same



*In between oil lamps and electric light bulbs, homes and businesses depended on natural gas for lighting. A network of pipes fed up and through walls to connect to gas lamps, some quite elegant like the one pictured above. The knob on the lower right turned the gas supply off and on. A match did the rest.*

neighborhood sometimes wanted gas but not electric, while others wanted the opposite.

Before long, the Tarrytown & Irvington and Dobbs Ferry & Hastings companies and several others were swallowed up by Hudson River Gas & Electric, which formed a pipeline service network in southwestern Westchester that ran from Mount Pleasant and White Plains straight through the Rivertowns and into Yonkers, only to have itself taken over by consolidator Anthony Brady's Westchester Lighting Company. In 1884, Westchester Lighting and five other competitors disappeared into the voracious Consolidated Gas Company of New York, the corporate strategy of which was to be the last man standing in the most valuable power markets.

By 1934, Consolidated Gas had taken control of 25 major gas and electric companies in New York City and Westchester, having recognized decades earlier that it eventually would need a large presence in electric supply in order for these acquisitions to pay off. One of these acquisitions, the New York Edison Company, was soon earning more revenue than the gas side of the business. So the organization was restructured in 1936 and the name changed to Consolidated Edison of New York.

The Great Depression severely slowed economic activity until World War II.

After the war, demand for gas and electric power exploded to keep up with home construction and population growth in suburbs like Westchester. With much of the industrial world still digging out from the war, the American economy grew exponentially. Many New York City families began migrating to the suburbs.

But over the past 50 years, advances in technology and major shifts in climate patterns, pollution, and regulation caused the power industry to adapt in unimaginable ways. A 10,000-mile pipeline, Transco, now delivered natural gas from fields in south Texas to New York City. Computers began to manage pipeline networks and electric grid systems more efficiently. And recent decades have seen an expansion of wind, solar, and hydrogeneration of electric power. Today consumers can choose to buy part of their electric power service from sources that don't depend on fossil fuels.

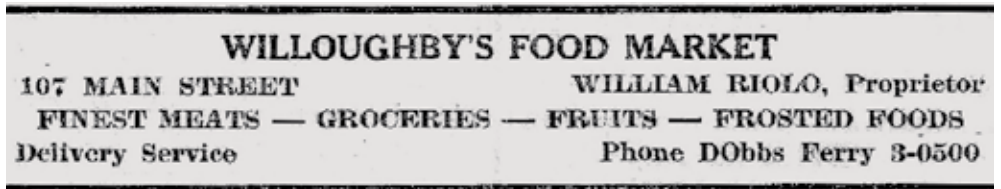
But demand for natural gas in Westchester, its population now approaching one million, continued to outstrip supply to the point where the company declared a moratorium on new gas hookups, effective March 15, 2019, to businesses and residences in all but the northernmost townships in the county until new supplies of natural gas can be secured, something it has hinted is unlikely before 2023.

## Research at the Archives

A recent bit of correspondence that came into the Historical Society prompted an investigation into some of the longest-lasting businesses here in Dobbs Ferry.

What would be your guess? We discovered that one of the earliest was Willoughby's Food Market. Here is some background on its beginnings.

John B. Willoughby, together with his wife, Eliza, and daughter, Maude, came from England on the SS Baltic from Liverpool arrived in July 1906. When they arrive in Dobbs Ferry, they resided at the home of his sister, Margaret Pearce. Margaret was the first librarian of the Dobbs Ferry Reading Room,



*From the Diamond Jubilee Celebration Pamphlet, July 3,4,5 1948*

hired in 1889. The library was in the front parlor of her residence on lower Main Street.

Willoughby was an interesting character. He arrived in America with a wife and daughter. By 1915 his wife has disappeared from American records and his daughter has married. In 1914 he married Polly Carlile. They divorced in 1921. His complaint? His wife was "different from other women... she did not care to go to the movies but wanted to stay home and knit." He then married his bookkeeper, Pauline Schatz, in 1928. She died in 1933.

From his obituary we learn that he started Willoughby's as a meat market in 1913. He is listed as a butcher in the censuses of 1910 and 1915. In August 1928 he sells the business to George and William Riolo of Hastings-on-Hudson. In 1936 William Riolo has a 75-year-old building on Main Street demolished and the current one story structure erected. In 1941, this small grocery had four butchers, six grocers, two bookkeepers and two truck drivers.

This store has been in business for 108 years!

## Ernie Howell Reflects on His Life

*By Maria Harris*

African-American children born in 1926 and raised in Davenport, Iowa, were not expected to earn degrees from Harvard University, travel the world as professional envoys for nongovernmental organizations, and launch second careers as financial advisors at top-drawer Wall Street firms. But Ernest M. Howell did all of these things — while also marrying the love of his life, raising five children, maintaining strong ties with a large network of extended family, and immersing himself in an embracing community in Dobbs Ferry. Now in his nineties, Ernie Howell has compiled an extensive set of writings

in which he reflects upon the many remarkable events that have defined his life while offering guidance and insight for those who follow in his footsteps — his children, grandchildren, colleagues, and generations of dear friends.

Our annual Ernie and Jean Howell Memorial Sunday Community Picnic has been postponed until 2022.

Meanwhile we invite you to enjoy Ernie's reflections in his book, "Finding ErnieJeanHowell: Our Way: Meditations by Ernest M. Howell," by Ernest M. Howell, edited by Nancy Shohet West.

**SAVE THE DATE!** Our Annual Meeting on the Mead House porch on Sunday, September 19, 2021

**LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO HAVE A PARTY?** The Mead House is now available for events. See our website for details.

**UPCOMING PLANS:** We hope to be part of the Rivertowns Pollinator Pathway. We plan to install a small pollinator garden behind the Mead House. Are you interested in helping? Please contact us at [dfhistory@icloud.com](mailto:dfhistory@icloud.com).

**CLARIFICATION:** Winter 2021 Ferryman. Articles: The Road to Dobbs Ferry, Ashford Avenue. The King Street mentioned in the article is in Ardsley and not Dobbs Ferry. Matthew K. Couzens: Preservationist by Design? 12 Chestnut Street was built ca.1858, not in 1855.

**HELP WANTED!** Do you like looking through old photographs? We need help documenting this valuable resource in our archives. Contact us if you are interested. Training on software will be provided. The Society's mission is to document the history of our village. If you have old photos, documents, or items important to our mission, please consider donating them to us. We also can scan your family photos and return them to you!

★ ★

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**2021 ROAD TO FREEDOM WALK**

**Sunday, October 17, 2021**

**1:00 PM**

★ ★

## Essay Contest 2021

We are pleased to present the grand-prize winners of the 2021 Dobbs Ferry Historical Society Contest, the theme of which was “Pandemic Time Capsule.” Ninth and tenth graders at Dobbs Ferry High School were asked to tell us: “What was it like to be a teenager in 2020?” Their responses came as essays, poems, or art.

— Jeanne Cronin Ceccolini & Betsy Hunter,  
Contest Chairs

### By Maeve Larson, 9th grade

It’s crazy to think that it’s been more than a year since our country shut down, and we were all confined to our houses, stuck with our families, for months. I don’t know about others, but we drove each other crazy. Even now, when you leave the house to go on a walk or, in my case, to go skateboarding, you find yourself running back to grab a mask in case you pass anyone. Skateboarding has changed the pandemic for me. A wooden deck with wheels has filled hours of my time and helped me stay (somewhat) sane during this unreal time called a pandemic.

I started skateboarding around late March or early April 2020. My brother had a skateboard that he never used, so I began learning on that. Looking back, I learned how to balance and ride pretty quickly. I told my parents, “I just want to ride, not learn tricks.” That didn’t last very long. My first real ollie, which is where you jump and bring up the board, was late April, according to the video on my phone. Now, when I say “real” ollie, I mean I jumped about two inches off the ground. It felt amazing, regardless. Who knew I would now be doing ollies up and down curbs and over one-foot gaps. My dad runs, and he describes running as “competing against yourself.” I’ve found that to be true within skateboarding. Each trick I’ve learned has felt like my own battle because I am the only one who is competing. If I’m not skateboarding, I commonly watch videos of other people. There are skate progressions on YouTube, and people post how far they have come in a year. These people learn a crazy amount of tricks in one year. Maybe it’s the environment they are in, such as if more people around them skateboard, but the progression still seems insanely fast.

I used to compare myself to these skateboarders that are my age or sometimes younger, but it is a waste of time. To many,



Ariana Biberaj and Maeve Larson

skateboarding seems like it doesn’t mean a lot. I didn’t think it had much significance when I began. It has definitely changed my mind-set, primarily. It has helped me think about learning tricks that are important to me, and not about others. Everybody progresses differently, and that is something I have been learning to accept. I’ve played other sports in the past, but skateboarding is definitely my favorite. When I first started in April 2020, it was mostly a way for me to get outside and not spend my whole day watching TV. The boredom set in about two weeks into lockdown, but skateboarding helped me escape. When I’m skateboarding, I feel calmer. This sounds like a weird comparison, but skateboarding is my meditation.

Covid has been an insane experience to live through, and I genuinely don’t think I would be who I am today without skateboarding. I don’t strive to become a professional skateboarder when I’m older, but I do strive to stick with skateboarding. It is difficult at times, and I have fallen a lot, but in the end, it’s worth it. The joy I feel at the end of the day after skateboarding, it’s impossible to describe. Skateboarding is a way for me to disconnect from the world of technology, violence, and hate, allowing me to just relax, as I roll along.

### By Ariana Biberaj, 10th grade

New phrases never before heard have now become the fundamentals of our society. Medical terminology being thrown around, and restrictions put in place, all to hinder the spread of the virus. A virus responsible for taking the lives of millions while obstructing the lives

of all. Yet, it wasn’t always a bad thing. Before the words “social distancing” and “quarantine” were used regularly, everyone was anxious for school to end. Beginning of the third quarter freshman year seemed like a bust, and summer itself could not feel farther away. Yet, when the news of a virus outbreak began, emotions ran free. Sympathy for those first exposed to the virus, yet a type of excitement. Joy within the regards of the arrival of the virus to a nearby area. The idea of school closing for up to two days seemed wonderful until the point where days turned into weeks, and weeks into months.

March 13, 2020, final day of in-person school, freshman year. Everyone remembers that day as if it were yesterday. The school sent out an email regarding a two-day closure, and there was nothing but relief filling the hallways. What was better than an extended weekend? Nothing, it seemed. But we all should have been careful about what we wished for. The first week of remote learning put in-person learning to shame. Class from bed, in pajamas, with the possibility of turning your camera off. This concept of school seemed amazing, up until it became the opposite. A dread, more than anything else.

Imagine living a day you cannot wait to sleep off to start off fresh tomorrow. Life in quarantine was like a bad day on repeat. That same day being lived again and again, because there was nothing you could do. With the entire world in a global lockdown, everyone

*Continued on page 8*



THE MEAD HOUSE  
12 ELM STREET DOBBS FERRY, NY 10522

POSTAL CUSTOMER

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 2215  
White Plains, NY

CONTACT US BY PHONE : (914)-674-1007 EMAIL : DFHISTORY@ICLOUD.COM ON THE WEB: WWW.DOBBSFERRYHISTORY.ORG

## Essay Contest 2021

*Continued from page 7*

was united yet so far apart. This past year was a time when everyone was experiencing all the hardships associated with Covid-19 yet did not have the possibility of relying on others. As those outside your house, your bubble posed as a threat to your safety. When hugging, or even something as simple as approaching a person seemed unbearable. Instead, we were told to resort to those inside our homes. Living each day like the others.

Days that consisted of waking up to a computer screen and falling asleep to it. Having to do all the work at home, without the guidance of a teacher or cheers from a friend was tiring. Lonely. Every teenager can say that quarantine made them feel detached in ways they could never imagine. This year brought attention to the importance of mental health, and how checking in on others is impactful. Still, words can only help so much in comparison to the horrific tragedies surrounding the world.

Death tolls spiked each day to a point where watching the news was intolerable. The fear involving Covid-19 fully struck when it hit home. Personally losing a loved one to this virus was unlike any other pain. Unable to visit and hug family during a time of heartache as fears of contracting this deadly sickness lived in the mind. Having to deal with this type of grief without those also impacted is an experience I will never forget. A type of sorrow that subsides in you because you also know millions of other families are experiencing the same thing. The same mourning during a time of uncertainty.



## Lilacs

In memory of those citizens who have perished during the pandemic, the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society has planted a series of lilacs along the lower property. These lilacs grace the picket fence on either side of the arched gateway leading to the Village parking lot. Please visit these lovely bushes when they bloom

to enjoy their full beauty. Our dedication ceremony will occur in 2022.

As Lincoln's death was mourned by the nation, exemplified by Walt Whitman's 1865 poem "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," so too have deaths from the pandemic been mourned nationwide.

This pandemic changed everyone. Made us realize the importance of the little things, and how we take our lives for granted. It seems a cliché but you never truly know how amazing something is until you can't have it. Until the hugs were no longer attainable, and classrooms no longer filled, you realized how a virus changed all the things that did not need modification.

## Correction

In the most recent edition of *The Ferryman*, an article about engineer and mapmaker Matthew K. Couzens incorrectly identified the location of an earthen fort that the young Couzens and Col. James Hamilton, son of Alexander Hamilton, tried without success to save from destruction by developers. Best sources indicate the earthen fort most likely was located in proximity to High Street, close to the railroad overpass on land later owned by Dr. J.G. Ambler. The original article incorrectly located the earthen fort where Livingston Avenue intersects with Broadway.