



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.

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Never Too Late

WWII “Flygirl” earns recognition for service to her country.
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Pompeii Celebrates 100 Years

Our Lady of Pompeii parish is celebrating its 100th anniversary of service to the residents of Dobbs Ferry and the surrounding area. The celebration kicked off last October with a special mass officiated by the Rev. Gerardo Colacicco, auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of New York. Other planned events include trips to the Mother Cabrini Shrine, the Holy Land, Rome and Pompeii. The year long celebration will be culminated with a Mass celebrated by Cardinal Timothy Dolan in October.

At the turn of the last century, Dobbs Ferry already had a Catholic church, Sacred Heart. Founded in 1862, Italian immigrants in the village could worship there. However, Italians had a difficult time understanding the sermons which were given in English.

The growing Italian community appealed to Mother Cabrini, who had founded the Sacred Heart Villa in the village (on the site of the present-day nursing home which bears her name) for help in this matter. Later canonized as the Patron Saint of Immigrants, in 1915 Cabrini appealed to Cardinal John Farley of the New York Archdiocese to allow the Italians to worship



An early picture of the church

at the chapel at the Villa, where the homily would be spoken in their native language. Permission was granted, and the Italian community had a place where they could gather and worship that felt a little like home. With the influx of so many Italian immigrants, the little chapel at the villa soon became too small to accommodate all who wanted to attend mass there.

In October 1922, Archbishop Patrick J.

Hayes sent Reverend Conelio Dattolo to Dobbs Ferry to establish a new Catholic congregation for the Italians, and an aggressive campaign to collect funds to erect a new church began.

In December, Dattolo met with local businessmen to appeal for funds. The meeting paid off as he collected \$1,090, which is equivalent to \$18,400 today.

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Pompeii Celebrates...

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In January 1923, the congregation was formally incorporated as the church of Our Lady of the Rosary of Pompeii under New York State law.

The land for the church at Palisade and Chestnut streets was donated by property owners Henry Prentiss and Jerome and Jeanne Bradley. On April 19th, Dattolo paid a nominal fee of \$1 for the deed to the property.

Ground for the church building was officially broken on July 31. Designed by the parishioners, the construction roster for the church was filled with local tradesmen who brought their talents and expertise to the project. Dominick Alteri was the contractor, the Bucci brothers were the excavators and Joseph DeNardo volunteered labor and 10 loads of building stone.

Dattolo fell ill during this period and had to give up his supervision of the project and the parish in June 1924. The Rev. Pasquale Lombardo was named second pastor of the church.

By October that year, the lower level of the church was completed and masses at Our



The Builders. From left to right: D. Altieri, E. Bucci, A. Paino, J. Ryan, S/F Servillo

Lady of Pompeii began, along with Sunday School for the children.

Col. Franklin Q. Brown and his wife Ida, prominent village residents who happened to be Protestants, donated \$1,000 for the purchase of a marble altar that was shipped from Italy. The altar was delivered at the waterfront and carried up to the church.

The main portion of the church was completed in 1925 and in 1926 the basement was converted into a parish hall. The Ryan Roofing Co., parishioners of Sacred Heart Church, installed the roof of the new church as a gift. The project was completed when the 400-pound bell for the church, donated by the Raffa family, arrived in the spring of 1926.

The church was dedicated on May 27 of that year. In addition to the first Mass said in the new church, the first child Baptized was

Giuseppe Petruzzelli. The first couple joined in Holy Matrimony were Savino Ferranto and Maria Castaro, and the first funeral was held for Stanislò DelGrande. In 1927, for the first time the children of the parish received the sacraments of First Holy Communion and Confirmation in the new church.

The church is modeled after the cathedral in Glitiri, Italy. It is relatively small, seating about 150 people, with 16 stained glass windows. It has undergone renovations several times since its construction. In 1958, the lower level was remodeled. In 1964, the main body of the church was renovated and updated.

In 1980, another project saw the installation of air conditioning, a Family Room for services, the removal of the altar rail, and the creation of the Our Lady of Fatima Garden.

The parish continued to grow and was a central point in the lives of its parishioners. Parish societies, which fostered the social and religious aspects of the parishioners were formed, such as The Saint Rita's Society, The Holy Rosary Society, and The Mother Cabrini Society to name a few. Young girls joined the Children of Mary, young boys became members of the Acolyte Service as altar boys and men of the parish joined the Holy Name Society.

One of the endearing organizations in the church is the Altar Guild. Started in 1949, the dedicated members of this organization, to this day, raise funds for the parish, clean and decorate the church, and provide flowers for the Holydays throughout the year.

In 1931, Cardinal Hayes transferred the administration of Our Lady of Pompeii to the Order of Saint Augustine (O.S.A.) friars, beginning a 60-year relationship between the parish and the order.



The original interior

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Pompeii Celebrates...

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The parish's biggest fundraiser, the Spaghetti Dinner, began in 1939. People from throughout the village, and former residents with fond memories, flock to the lower level of the church each year for a wonderful Italian family dinner.

Father Anthony A. Cirami O.S.A., who was pastor from 1957 until his death in on Jan. 9, 1987 (the longest tenure of any pastor at Pompeii) decided that the Spaghetti Dinner should be held on the last weekend of October. Now scheduled just before the November elections, candidates of all political parties attend. In 2020 the dinner was not held due to COVID-19. The much-anticipated event returned in 2021, marking the 80th time people from near and far enjoyed the hospitality of Pompeii.

Over the years the parish and its priests have been actively involved in the community.

In 1948, as Dobbs Ferry celebrated its 75th anniversary, Our Lady of Pompeii had a float in the 4th of July parade. In 1973, during the Centennial celebration of the village's incorporation, Pompeii parishioners, dressed in colorful Italian costumes, joined the village parade. Father Stephen Biordi O.S.A. christened a small replica of the Tappan Packet, an early ferryboat, used in the recreation of the reason Dobbs Ferry got its name. Father Biordi was also known for his operettic arias at parish functions.

One of the main reasons the parish was formed was to have the homilies given in Italian, the native language of the immigrants. Early on in their tenure, the Augustinians began to add English to the homilies for the children of the immigrants who were assimilating to their new country. By the 1960s, this balance had seemed to



(Top) Original altar. (Bottom) Father Anthony, from the left and Deacon Dom Casadone, far right, pose with other clergy.

reverse itself, with more English and less Italian being used along with the traditional Latin. In 1965, Vatican Council II took the unprecedented position to have masses throughout the world said in the language of the locality. At Pompeii, the Mass and homily were now given in English. However, in keeping with the tradition of the parish, one weekly Mass was celebrated in Italian until the Augustinians left. There is now one annual Italian Mass celebrated.

In 1991, due to a shortage of clerics, and their own rules for operation, the Augustinian's relationship with Pompeii came to a close. The Archdiocese once again assumed administration of the parish, and Father Carmelo Glavina became the first non-Augustinian pastor since 1931.

With the availability of priests waning, and falling parishioner numbers, the Archdiocese of New York proposed to close Pompeii in 2015. However, after a concerted effort from the entire community, Cardinal Dolan decided that Our Lady of Pompeii would merge with Sacred Heart and remain open for all parishioners for Mass and Holy Sacraments. This merger has brought Pompeii to its 100th year celebration, with an eye on 100 more.

*Sources: 1997 History of Pompeii Church by Nancy S Cafiero
The Ferryman*

*Special thanks to Fr. Chris Monturo, Pastor, and Theresa Capellupo, Office Administrator, Sacred Heart – Our Lady of Pompeii Parish.
Photos courtesy of SH – OLP*

FERRYMAN CONTRIBUTORS:

Madeline Byrne
Ellen Klein
Dan McNamara
Olana Nabatov
Emily Wood
Editor: Teresa Walsh



President's Page

By Madeline Byrne

Upaway Estate

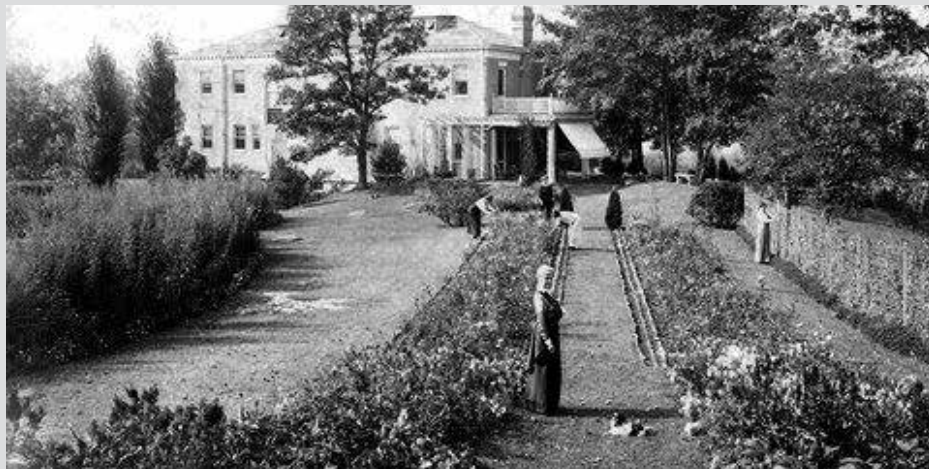
Research on a recent inquiry about the former Upaway estate led us to three prominent Dobbs Ferry families and their connection to a southern island off the Atlantic coast of the United States.

Upaway, located on the property of the Juhring Estate, was owned as a summer residence by Civil War surgeon Dr. George Frederick Shrady Sr. Shrady, who returned to private practice following the war, was the primary physician to President Ulysses S. Grant during the last months of his life. The doctors of both Emperor Frederick III of Germany and President James Garfield, following an assassination attempt on his life, consulted with him. In 1890, Shrady was the first doctor to view an execution by electrocution. He was also the editor of the NY Medical Record for many years.

Beginning in the early 1900s, Shrady and his second wife, Hester, enjoyed their time at Upaway. After Shrady's death in 1907, Hester continued to use the house along with her niece Lydia Cantine French.

Hester had a daughter Sarah by her first marriage that Shrady adopted. In 1892 Sarah married Edwin Gould, the son of Jay Gould. The Goulds purchased Agawam, the home of Union Army General Samuel Thomas, that was located between Broadway and the Hudson River, which is now the site of Mercy College. Thomas, a mining engineer, worked in the industrial sector and later would become the president of various railroad lines.

All three families belonged to the exclusive Jekyll Island Cottage Club located on Jekyll Island, Georgia. In 1885, the island was purchased for \$7,600 by John DuBignon, the nephew of a former plantation owner there. DuBignon marketed the island as a winter retreat for the wealthy that was far from the cold and snow of the north. The soon-to-be built Jekyll Island Club was to



In the gardens at Upaway

— Photo from DFHS Archives

include such amenities as telephone and telegraph lines, docking privileges and trams, with hunting and fishing nearby.

His advertising paid off, attracting millionaires such as John Pierpont Morgan, Pierre Lorillard, Cornelius Vanderbilt, Joseph Pulitzer, and Marshall Field, all who became original members of the club. To retain its exclusivity only 100 members were allowed to join.

The club opened every January from 1888 to 1942, except for several years when there were yellow fever epidemics.

The members built expansive mansions, or "cottages" near the club which served as the hub of the island's social activities.

The Thomas, Shrady, and Gould families all joined the Cottage Club. Thomas was a member from 1901-1905; Shrady from 1904 until to his death in 1907; Hester Shrady from 1908-1916 and Gould from 1899-1940.

The club closed permanently in 1942 during WW2.

McKenna Family Donations

Part of the history of Dobbs Ferry are the families that have lived in the village for generations.

Once such family is the McKenna clan of Rochambeau Avenue. The patriarch, Thomas McKenna, was born in Ireland

in 1846. He would go on to marry Anna Ward. The couple lived in Hastings-on-Hudson where they soon began a family.

In 1896 Thomas built the house located at 36 Rochambeau Ave. and the family moved to Dobbs Ferry. The family home still stands today.

After the death of William McKenna, the current owner's father, the family donated his personal papers to the Society. The family also donated four women's hats, two Catholic catechisms, and a photograph of the house circa 1900.

All such family donations are welcome and will be carefully catalogued and preserved by the Society.

Did you know?

Allen Ludden, husband of Betty White, lived in Dobbs Ferry? Allen and his first wife, Margaret McGloin, lived on Maplewood Avenue from 1953 to 1961.



Allen Ludden hosting the GE College Bowl 1959.

Kris Lent, WWII Flyer

By Teresa Walsh

We are what we carry, not just in terms of physical items but what we retain inside our hearts and minds.

During WWII, Kris Swan Lent, a former Dobbs Ferry resident, joined the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) and it remained an important part of her life. Because there was a shortage of pilots, Kris trained to fly army planes for noncombat assignments, freeing up male pilots for combat missions. Joining in her early 20s, she attended reunions and ceremonies honoring the group well into her 90s.

Born Brunhilde Kristen Swan in Sioux City, Iowa on January 16, 1921, one of six children, she attended the University of Iowa. While there, a friend of hers was enrolled in the Civilian Air Patrol where students were taught to fly. She would go with him and watch his flying lessons. Kris became fascinated with flying and one day the instructor took her up for a free ride. She immediately became hooked.

Kris had just completed a business secretarial course in Sioux City, and hoping to help her country in the war effort, she passed a civil service exam allowing her to work in Washington, D. C. In January 1942, she left by train for the capitol.

Kris stated in a reunion speech, that December 7, 1941 (the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor) changed life dramatically, and that WWII encouraged everyone to join the war effort. "Doors were open to women that had only been shut to them. Careers became a reality in different fields".

In Washington, Kris was shuttled between departments, a common practice, and eventually landed in the office of the Civil Aeronautics Administration, "a lucky break for her" she wrote.

While there she became aware of pilot Jacqueline Cochran's program to train women to fly army aircraft. Cochran's program was designed with the idea that upon completion the female pilots would achieve military status.

Kris saw a door opening for her, and her dream to fly began to become reality. She enrolled at a ground school course at George



Kris Lent, clapping, attends the opening ceremony for the Fly Girls of WWII exhibit in Arlington, VA in 2008.

Washington University at night. She then borrowed \$300 from the government, took a month's leave from her job, and went to York, PA, to take flight instructions. She obtained her pilots license and returned to her job in Washington. She applied to the WASP, passed the physical and interview and waited to be called to Sweetwater, Texas for training. She was accepted into the class of October, 1942. Avenger Field in Sweetwater was the largest all-female air base in American history.

The WASP essentially received the same course of instruction as their male counterparts but did not receive training for combat missions. During the duration of the program, WASP delivered 12,650 aircraft to airbases throughout the nation. They also transported cargo and towed targets for anti-aircraft artillery practice.

The women wore ill-fitting mechanic overalls and leather jackets during training and on graduation they received their Santiago blue dress uniform.

After "winning their wings" the WASP were given a week's leave and then had to report to their assigned home bases. Kris was assigned to Dodge City Airforce Base in Kansas and its B-26 Bomber School.

During one training mission in Kansas, the commanding officer took Kris and four others on a cross country trip to test and observe their skills. She didn't remember where they flew, but on the return trip, they found themselves in a blinding dust storm. The commander had to take over and landed at the nearest airfield where they spent the night. The next morning, they were taken nearby to



Kris in her flight gear.

view a B-29 superfortress bomber. Kris was impressed by the size of the huge aircraft.

In July she returned to Sweetwater for several weeks of advanced instrument training. She was then sent to Orlando, FL for a month's long officers training.

In the summer of 1944, there had been some rumblings that the WASP might be disbanded as there were now more trained male pilots to take over the women's duties.

The women were suddenly told to report to their home bases and while there, pick up their belongings and report to the nearest command center for deactivation.

The female pilots were all shocked at the suddenness of their dismissal. Upon arrival back at Dodge City, Kris missed saying goodbye to all her friends as the WASP were all gone, and the base was being shut down. This was an unhappy ending to Kris' WASP career.

The program was abruptly terminated in December 1944. During the tenure of the program, 1,074 women earned their wings and 38 of them were killed on duty. Their promised military status had to wait,

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Ukraine: A Personal Perspective

By Olena Nabatov

Sergei and Olena Nabatov, caretakers of the Mead House, are educators from Ukraine. Here, Olena gives a firsthand account on how the conflict in her country has affected them and their families.

“My name is Olena Nabatov, and I’m Ukrainian. In November of last year, my sweetheart and I got married. Who could imagine that war in Europe would be the reality in our lifetime?”

On February 24th at 4 a.m., by Kyiv time, Putin bombed Ukraine.

From that moment on, my sense of peace has changed. My mother, daughters, relatives, friends, and students live in Kyiv. I’m far from them now, and I feel frustrated and helpless.

I cry all these days. I can’t eat; I cannot sleep. I don’t leave the house and (I) watch and listen to the news every minute.

I called and wrote to my family and friends to find out: How are they? Where are they now? I cry that I cannot help my family and friends! Shelling and bombing destroyed the houses and lives of innocent

civilians! Thousand are killed, including infants and children, women, and the elderly. People in panic began to flee their motherland to save their children’s lives! Millions are now refugees.

My friend Svetlana told me how Russian troops shelled their village, and one day, they broke into many houses and killed entire families. With her children, a cat, and a dog, Svetlana on foot ran away at night, afraid to be shot in the back. They were lucky to escape, and the next day they fled the country with only a small backpack with their belongings and documents. The fear and horror that they experienced are hard to imagine.

Ukrainian people are fighting for their homes, land, and freedom. Even unarmed residents of Ukraine’s small towns occupied by the Russian military demonstrate Ukrainian flags to their faces and try to stop tanks with their bare hands. Our people will never surrender to the Russian army of terror with the War criminal in power.

The World is helping us, and you can, too. Pray, and if you can, please donate to one of



Olena and Sergei Nabatov during happier times on their wedding day last year in the Mead House parlor.

the humanitarian organizations supporting Ukraine.

My husband and I are newlyweds. I hope to have our honeymoon soon in a rebuilt and even more beautiful Ukraine!

Glory to Ukraine! Glory to the heroes!”

Sergei has started a GoFundMe page to help families in Ukraine.

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-the-kids-suffering-from-the-war-in-kyiv?qid=1a99714ac313eb8d42d15791dc2e46dd>

Photo courtesy of Sergei Nabatov

Kris Lent...

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however. It would not be achieved until 1977 when President Jimmy Carter granted them veteran’s status. Kris was involved in the effort to achieve this goal.

In 1984, the Air Force awarded Kris the World War II Victory Medal, The Honorable Service Lapel Pin, and the American Campaign Medal.

In 2010, President Barack Obama signed a bill awarding the WASP the Congressional Gold Medal for their service in WWII. Accompanied by three of her children, Kris received the medal from Nancy Pelosi.

After deactivation, Kris went on to get her commercial pilot and instructor ratings, hoping to find a job flying for a company or

giving flight instruction. But she, as most of the women pilots, went home to marriage and raising their families.

Kris married Bob Lent on August 24, 1945. Bob had been a bombardier during the war, flying 29 missions over Europe and North Africa.

Kris and Bob moved to Dobbs Ferry in 1962 where they would live for over 34 years and raise their four children, Mary, David, Lisa and Jon in their Maplewood Avenue home. While living in the village, Kris was an active member of the First Reformed Church in Hastings.

In 1996 she and Bob moved to Paoli, PA to be near several of their children and grandchildren.

When Kris was in her late 80’s and early

90’s, there was a resurgence of interest in the WASPs. She began giving talks about her experiences to various groups. She continued to share the story of the WASPs until the effort became too tiring.

After one reunion in 2011, she stated “I was given the royal treatment on my flight back to Pennsylvania. The captain announced my service in WWII to all aboard. I was escorted to the cabin and a photo (was) taken of me in the pilot’s seat! Upgrades to first class. Passengers applauded. It erased the rude dismissal we had when we were deactivated!”

Bob passed in August of 2005. Kris married Bill Gros in 2006. Kris died in 2020 at the age of 99, two months short of her 100th birthday.

Special Thanks to Lisa Erlbaum for providing access to her mother’s papers and photos.

Revolutionary Era Historian Visits Dobbs Ferry

By Ellen Klein

Dr. Iris de Rode, a Dutch historian from the University of Paris, came to Mead House on March 15th, one stop on her whirlwind tour of important sites during the encampment of French and American troops in Westchester in 1781, the seventh year of the Revolutionary War. She was accompanied by her host Constance Kehoe, president of Revolutionary Westchester 250, an organization founded to promote the awareness of the role Westchester County in the Revolutionary War. She was also accompanied by retired Army Lt. Col. Frank Licameli, an expert on military maps. Trustee Linda Borkow displayed some of our maps and presented an overview of what we know of the encampment. Dr. de Rode

then shared some of her doctoral research on the French participation in the American Revolution. Before proceeding to their next stop, the group visited several Dobbs Ferry locations significant during the period of the encampment.

The next day, Dr. de Rode was the principal speaker at a program organized by RW 250 entitled "Washington, Rochambeau and the Grand Reconnaissance," which detailed three days in July 1781 that led to the realization by Washington and Rochambeau that Manhattan, which was controlled by the British, was too well defended to attack successfully. Their alternate plan, to march the armies to Virginia to attack Cornwallis



Dr. Iris de Rode discusses *The French and American Revolutionary War connection*.

at Yorktown, was implemented with the departure of the armies from our area on August 19, 1781. We commemorate this event with our annual Road to Freedom Day.

Photo by Emily Wood

Spotlight on Dobbs Ferry Business

By Madeline Byrne

Do you know what is the oldest, continuous operating business in Dobbs?

If you guessed Johnston's Florist, we believe you are correct!

The history of the florist, now located at 334 Ashford Avenue, began in 1868 with the arrival of Alexander McClelland from Scotland. As a newly-arrived immigrant, McClelland worked as the superintendent at the estate of Francis Cottinet, a wealthy French silk importer, whose home and greenhouses were located in what is now Ardsley-on-Hudson.

In 1874, McClelland purchased eight lots of land from Thomas Purdy, on the northeast corner of Ashford and Lefurgy avenues, where many long-time residents remember the florist. Over the years, McClelland continued to purchase land that would extend east along Virginia Avenue (then called Haines Avenue) and northeast to what is today Haynes Street (then called Thomas Street).

The earliest mention of the florist was in 1885, when McClelland's business was listed in *The Horticultural Directory of the United States. v. 1, Florists and Nurserymen*. The



(Left) Johnston's ad. (Right) The original Johnston family home on Ashford Ave.



directory, which is alphabetically arranged by names and states, was published in Philadelphia by Isaac D. Sailer.

McClelland soon began advertising in the directories of the day.

Besides being a florist and nurseryman, McClelland also served as the Supervisor of the Town of Greenburgh from 1896 to 1901. His brother, and fellow Dobbs Ferry resident, Charles P. McClelland, was a Federal judge and New York state Senator. The McClelland's were considered the Democratic 'bosses' of Greenburgh but Alexander would lose his bid for re-election as County Supervisor to Charles D. Millard, the Republican candidate.

In 1911, after 35 years in the florist business, McClelland retired. He did not sell

the property. Instead, he opted to lease the greenhouses for five years to Jean Audevard, a gardener and native of France. Audevard's resume included working at the Municipal Garden of Paris and as a private gardener to C. F. Havemeyer and the Louis Stern Greenhouses, both in Irvington, and to the Blum family in Scarsdale.

In 1920 McClelland sold the business and property to Robert and Augusta Johnston. The original Johnston family home was moved from the property in 1960 to where it now sits as 30 Highland.

Around 1987 the business moved from 225 Ashford Ave. to its current location, where although no longer owned and operated by the Johnston family, it still retains their name.

Photos DFHS Archives



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Dobbs Ferry Historical Society Website Inspires Local Teacher

By Teresa Walsh

Dan McNamara, a social studies teacher, wanted to get his students involved with local history, and after reading the “Living Through Covid” project on the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society website, he knew that it was just the thing to augment his program.

The “Living Through Covid” project asked that anyone who had a connection to the village write about their experiences during the pandemic. The Society would compile the responses to be used on social media and be archived for future generations.

McNamara teaches at the Kenneth P. Clarke Academy, a middle/high school special act public school district on the grounds of St. Christopher’s on Broadway.

While in the process of creating a living history class for his students, McNamara perused historical websites, and thought the Society’s program would fit nicely into his course.

McNamara’s idea was to have a course for his students that would focus on local history, including the exploration of the Hudson River by the Dutch, the Revolutionary War, and the creation of the

Old Croton Aqueduct. The COVID essay would fit in nicely into this plan as it was to become a part of the local history archives and the students would become part of Dobbs Ferry’s history, just like the subjects they were currently learning.

McNamara teaches in the Success Program at the Academy, which is for students with autism. During summer school he teaches a mixture of students, from the Success and Main (students who have other special education needs) programs. The students from both his Living History and Current Event classes were excited to contribute to history by documenting the struggles they faced during the pandemic. They thought it was so cool that people could be potentially reading their essay 100 or 200 years from now.

McNamara thought the students’ reactions to living through the pandemic were very perceptive. It was clear how challenging it was for them to navigate this new reality and how hard it was for their academic and social lives.

Some students took to virtual learning more easily than others. The students conveyed that they missed their friends. Another challenge which many of the students wrote



Dan McNamara

about was the general monotony of their daily routines and the boredom they faced.

For his in-person summer classes, he devised a village walking tour to amplify the material that the students were currently learning. It took them to the site of a Revolutionary War redoubt at the intersection of Broadway and Livingston Ave., along the Old Croton Aqueduct, and to the Mead House, the Elm Street home of the historical society.

McNamara, who is in his sixth year of teaching, said that he always loved history. He has a history degree from SUNY Albany, with a concentration in American history.

He is a member of the Sons of the American Revolution, male descendants of people who served in the American Revolution or who contributed to establishing the independence of the United States. His ancestor, William Rockwell, left his home in Ridgefield, CT to fight in the Battle of Long Island. After the Battle in 1776, he was part of Washington’s retreat north through Manhattan and across to Fort Lee NJ.

McNamara takes his membership seriously and actively participates in organization programs such as flag retiring ceremonies, parades, meetings, and lectures.

Photos by Dan McNamara



Students: (From the left) Aiden Pilgrer, Daria Bovell-Warden, Nigel Kennedy