



the Ferrymen

Highlighting Dobbs Ferry and its history

Vol. XXX Issue No. 21 | Winter 2025

Focus on women... Getting the job done

In 1999 “New Vistas for Women” was the topic of the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society’s annual meeting.

The focus of that meeting was contemporary women in leadership roles in society.

As more and more women were then seeking and obtaining positions on village, educational, and civic boards, Dobbs Ferry was the beneficiary of this uptick.

These women activists have all passed and deserve to be recognized for their contributions to the village and beyond. And for stepping up and getting things done.

Women like **Peg Moynihan**, who in the 1960s saw the need for a trained volunteer ambulance corps and made sure the village got one. Or **Shirley Elbert**, who led the charge for preventing the Juhring Estate from being developed. Children’s author **Jean Fritz**, for her dedication to expanding and leading children’s programs at the Dobbs Ferry Library. **Dr. Sumi Koide** for her service to the village youth.

Mildred Persinger, for her commitment to women’s issues and focusing on the importance of non-government organizations.

Francis “Tahnee” Neal and **Cathy Polgreen**, founding members of the

Dobbs Ferry Historical Society whose contributions to the organization were many. Village Historian **Sr. Agnes Parrell**, for her 1976 book *Profiles of Dobbs Ferry*, which highlighted the story of our community.

Jean Howell and **Patricia Sweeting**, for their service on the school board. **Gisela Knight**, the first woman mayor of Dobbs Ferry. And **Luba Iler**, who served as village justice. To the first woman on the Village Board of Trustees, **Elizabeth VonBernuth**, and subsequent members **Paula Dambroff**, **Joyce James**, and **Jane Morgenstern**, for their commitment to making the village run efficiently. **Elizabeth Martin** for the revitalization of our waterfront park. And **Mavis Cain** for her efforts in restoring the Keeper’s House.

Highlighted below are three women who overcame adverse challenges in their early years and rose above them: Gisela Knight, Luba Iler, and Dr. Sumi Koide. We also recognize Mavis Cain, who recently died.

Gisela Knight (1927-2023) the first, and only, woman to serve as mayor of Dobbs Ferry. Gisela was born in Berlin, Germany and grew up under the Nazi regime. Her adolescence was one of ration cards, air raids and separation from her family. She worked as an interpreter for the British military



Gisela Knight

government in Allied-Occupied West Berlin. She lived during the Berlin Blockade.

She met her husband, David, on a blind date while studying law at the Free University. They married and moved to the United States in 1955 settling in the New York area and later in Dobbs Ferry.

Gisela served as president of the League of Women Voters for three years. At the request of the Democratic party, she ran for village trustee and served there until becoming mayor in 1984. Gisela was elected two more times and served until 1989.

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As mayor, Gisela saw to the provisions of affordable housing for the volunteer fire and ambulance corps. She requested an archaeological survey from the developer of the property that is now the site of the Landing townhouses. The dig yielded 4,000 Native American artifacts, some which are on exhibit in village hall.

Gisela's interest in history was immense and she took courses on the subject well into her 90s. She was a founding member of the Historical Society. During the village's centennial celebration, she organized a historical exhibit at the Women's Club.

As mayor, when it was brought to her attention that the monument in front of the Washington Headquarters on Broadway was inaccurate, she told the *New York Times* that the mistake needed to be corrected. "Dobbs Ferry old-timers cherish this story, but the truth is the truth. I'm a history buff myself, and I do want the monument corrected."

Gisela served as the Greenburgh Comptroller following her mayorship. In 1997 she moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico to be near her grandchildren.

Luba Iler (1922-2002) was born to Russian immigrant parents and was orphaned at a young age. She lived at the Leake & Watts Home in Yonkers. She attended Mt. Saint Vincent College in Riverdale and Bryan College in Rhode Island. She received



Luba Iler

her law degree from St. John's University School of Law, one of only two women graduating with that class. Luba worked in civil and criminal law for NYC firms and later had a private practice in Westchester. Luba moved to Dobbs Ferry in the 1950s. She served as acting justice of Dobbs Ferry and was a member of the village board of trustees. She became the Village Justice in 1981. She also was a member of the Board of Directors of the Sunnyside Council, Girl Scouts. She belonged to the Westchester Magistrate's Association, and was admitted to the Federal Bar, Eastern & Southern District of New York.

Sumi Koide (1929 -2021) was born in Longview, Washington, the youngest in a

farming family in the Puyallup River Valley that had immigrated from Japan in the 1920s. From 1942-45 Sumi and her family were incarcerated at the Minidoka Relocation Center in Jerome, Idaho. The family moved to Philadelphia after their release from the camp.

Sumi graduated from Swarthmore and the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania. She was a staff member of the surgical pathology service at Montefiore Einstein Medical School. Her specialty was pediatric pathology (SIDS). Sumi co-authored peer reviewed publications and belonged to international societies related to her specialty.

In the 1980s she was the leader of the National Japanese American Redress movement for WWII incarceration camps. She was president of the Japanese American Citizens League, New York Chapter. She was on the board of the Westchester Community Foundation and the Westchester Women's Advisory Board.

Sumi was a member of the Board of Trustees of The Children's Village and Dobbs Ferry Community Hospital. She was active in the leadership of the League of Women Voters, Dobbs Ferry Youth Services Council and Dobbs Ferry Employment Service. In 2002 she was inducted into the Westchester County Women's Hall of Fame.

Mavis Cain (1928-2024) was born in Ottawa, Canada to British immigrant parents. She

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Sumi Koide



Mavis Cain

Private estates of the past

With the introduction of the railroad in 1845, Dobbs Ferry would grow from a sparsely populated hamlet of small farms into an area filled with large private estates built by wealthy businessmen.

These estates were initially built as summer homes to escape the heat and pollution of New York City.

These businessmen would commute into the city for work during their summer stay. As time went on more estates were built with many becoming year-round residences.

As it became more costly to run these estates they were sold off and many developed.

Today, very little remains of these estates. Iron gates, stone walls and foundations to these properties are few, perhaps sparking an interest in what was here before...

Osborn Manor

We all drive by the stone wall that fronts the garden apartments of Osborn Manor. Did you ever wonder what was there before? And was there an Osborn?

If you look at old maps, the property was owned by Robie Osborn. Who was he you ask? Well, he was a she! In 1890 William Barbour sold this property to Jennings Scott McComb. There was a house on the property that McComb named 'Rowsley House'. The long driveway came up from Broadway, a slight slope down to views of the Hudson River. This house was sold to a wealthy diamond jeweler of New York City, Ray H. Winsten and his wife in July



Wykaska, known as Draper house.

1914 for \$59,950 at auction. In December of that year, Mrs. Winsten suffered from melancholy and died by suicide, jumping from their apartment in the Ansonia Hotel in NYC. Her husband sold the house soon after that.

Mrs. Calvin M. (Robie F.) Osborn purchased the house and property from Winsten. This was her summer country home. She named her house Calborn Terrace and hosted parties and charity events there. Her brother was Baron W. Gage, a wealthy executive at F. W. Woolworths.

The house and four other buildings were razed in July 1943. The cut stone from the mansion was given to the village of Dobbs Ferry to be used in creating a bulkhead at the waterfront on the Hudson River shore.

The Osborn Manor garden apartment complex was built in 1953. The developer was Tonidor Realty Corporation. The exit from this development was actually the entrance to the estate. Check out the fancy wrought iron gates on Broadway across from Oak Street.

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graduated from McGill University in Montreal and did graduate work in Zurich, Switzerland. From 1950-1988 she worked in advertising. She created ad campaigns featuring a young Brooke Shields, Lily Tomlin, and Betty White.

In 1978, she attended a White House reception honoring those who had been

instrumental in supporting women's rights hosted by first Lady Rosalynn Carter.

Mavis was a founding member of the Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct (FOCA) and served as its president from 2000-24. Mavis was instrumental in raising the funds that led to the restoration of the Keeper's House, and the creation of the Visitors and Education Center at the Old Croton Aqueduct site. She led aqueduct tours and produced a newsletter for the group.

Mavis was a former board member of the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society and contributed to The Ferryman newsletter.

She was inducted into the Westchester County Seniors Hall of Fame.

*Photos, Edwards Dowdle Funeral Home
Facebook: Japanese American Citizens League, New York Chapter
Sources: The Ferryman, Wikipedia, Edwards Dowdle Funeral Home, New York Times*



Fairmead, site of former nursing home

Private Estates...

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Lyman French and Oradell Manor

If you have walked through the corridor at village hall, this man's name can be found on the wall of mayors of Dobbs Ferry. Lyman Clinton French came to Dobbs Ferry in 1872. He eventually established himself as a contractor and builder. He was affiliated with the Diamond Lodge, Free and Accepted Masons, Independent Order of Odd Fellows and Dobbs Ferry Chamber of Commerce. He married Emily Odell, daughter of Moses and Hannah, who owned a farm near Ardsley Country Club. He purchased land just adjacent to that property and built his house on what is now Manor Place.

In 1926, French sold the 11-acre tract to Temple Development and Finance Corporation. He kept one lot, and his son Odell French built his house there. The first five houses were built in the bungalow style and cost \$5,500 each to build. Lyman Place is named for the family farm. Manor Place holds the original house lot (lot 48) and Temple Road is named for the development company.

Mrs. Mary Anna Draper and Wykaska

Henry Draper (1837-1882) was an astronomer and pioneer in astronomical photography. In 1867 he married into the very wealthy Palmer family. His wife Mary Anna was the daughter of Courtlandt Palmer, a merchant and real estate investor. Palmer owned a 50-acre tract of land just east of Broadway to the Saw Mill River, south to the Belden and Juhring lands, north to Langdon Avenue and east to the Saw Mill River.

Mary Anna and Henry summered at the house in Dobbs Ferry, called Wykaska. Winters were spent in the Palmer home at 271 Madison Avenue. Henry's observatory was in Hastings-on-Hudson, the current home of its historical society. Every summer evening they made the two-mile carriage drive to the observatory to photograph the sky. Henry died at 45 of pneumonia. Mary established a memorial in his name at Harvard and donated several of their telescopes there.

The house, along with 20 acres was sold after Mary Anna died in 1914. It passed through a number of owners. The Draper Lane Apartment complex was begun in 1954 by the

builder, Anthony Paterno. The original plans showed 81 apartments within two buildings with elevators. The creek behind the building was to be widened, and the private lane became a public roadway. This private lane led directly to the Draper house. Paterno built the Village Green apartment complex in 1953.

Fairmead

For Sale: Country place on shores of Hudson River containing nearly 13 acres of land. Modern large mansion, stables, greenhouse and sheds. Fruit trees, kitchen garden, flowering shrubs, and lawns. Everything in perfect order 10 minutes walk from NY Central RR station.

This ad comes from *Country Life in America Magazine* in 1902. The big, red sandstone home was built by Brigadier-Colonel James Bowen after buying the property in 1848. A sketch of the house can be found on a map dated 1850. Bowen served as both the first president of the Erie Railroad, and the first president of the Board of Police Commissioners of New York City. During the Civil War, he commanded six regiments, having been appointed Brigadier Colonel of these volunteers in

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Upaway, part of Juhring Estate Nature Preserve today.

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1862. His last public office was New York City Commissioner of Charities in 1865. You can find his grave in the Little White Cemetery on Ashford Avenue.

In 1890 the property was sold to Jose Zayas who owned it until his death in 1912 in Cuba. Zayas was a Cuban planter who also had a home in New York City. Zayas was a member of the Cuban provisional government in the late 1800s fighting for Cuban independence from Spain. He had been designated by the junta in Cuba as the minister to Great Britain. His son, Octavio, became a wealthy banker in New York. The last owner of the home was William McGee and his wife Atilda. McGee divided the property into 184 building lots. The first house was built in 1925.

The Fairmead house was purchased in 1927 by Dr. Henry J. Barrow. He was permitted to run a home for convalescents on the condition that there would be 'no patients with mental or contagious cases accepted'. A fire a year later in February 1928 destroyed the top two stories of the

home. It was rebuilt to resemble the original structure in July 1928. For several decades this was a "quiet, restful, exclusive, refined and accessible" place to recuperate. After Barrow's death in 1971, his estate sold the building to St. Christopher's School. The building no longer stands.

Arnstein Estate

The 26-acre summer estate of prominent New York City businessman, civic leader and philanthropist Leo Arnstein was once located on the eastern portion of Ashford Ave. Today, Hickory Hill, Hunters Run, and private homes sit on the site.

The property which contained a main house, several other buildings and a swimming pool, was bought by the 1307 Ashford Ave. Corporation in 1956 for development.

Arnstein, whose father hailed from Bavaria and his mother from Nevada, was born in San Francisco in 1877 and graduated from Yale.

He became a successful businessman in New York City and spent many years at J. H. Rosbach & Brothers, Inc., manufacturers of leather goods.

Arnstein and his wife Elsie, were involved in progressive programs and were friends of Lillian Wald who founded the Henry Street Settlement and public health nursing.

Arnstein was also involved in many other aspects of civil service. He was opposed to child labor and took a prominent part in movements that opposed it.

He served on the Board of Education, and the Red Cross and the Henry Street Settlement boards. He also served as the president of Mt. Sinai Hospital and as the Welfare Commissioner of New York City.

Arnstein was on leave from his position as Welfare Commissioner for a heart ailment for seven months prior to his death. He died at his home on East Seventy-fifth Street on August 14, 1944.

The Juhring Estate

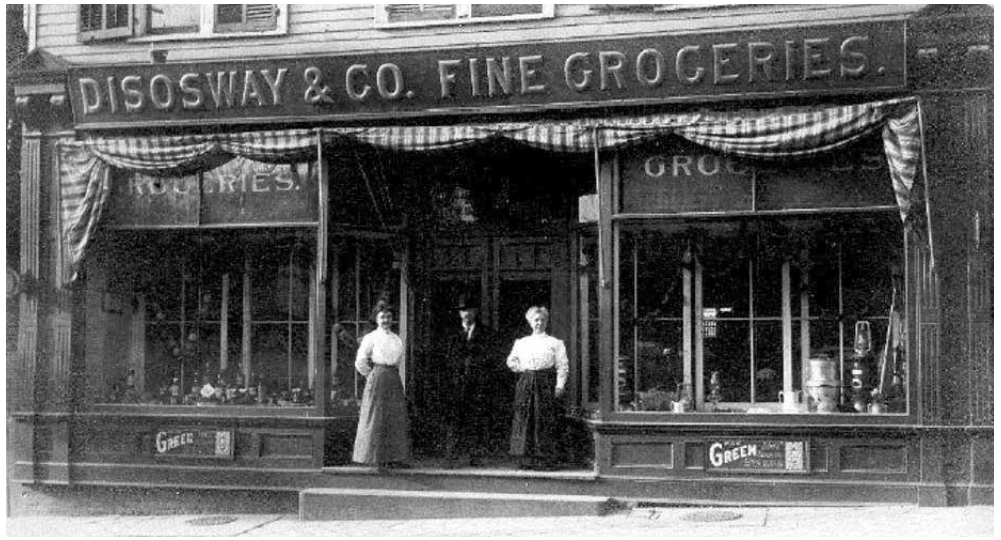
The Juhring Estate was originally part of the Secor Farm in the northwestern portion of the village. Purchased in 1907, and named for John C. Juhring, a wholesale grocer and his son of the same name, a landscape architect, the estate extended to Belden Avenue.

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Finding family takes team effort

By Madeline Byrne and Alan Steinfeld

The photo archive of the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society contains more than 3,000 pictures of the village going back to the 1800s. While many of the pictures are anonymous scenes of buildings, parks, streets, etc., some show a storefront with the name of the business which, many times, is the name of the owner. And in a few such pictures, there are people standing in front of the store. Who are they? Are they the owner, workers, customers? A recent inquiry to the Society from a woman in Ireland shed some light on one such picture (right.)



On Main Street, circa 1915

Jane Hurley wrote, in part,

"...my grand aunt and her husband, AH Disosway, owned a business in Dobbs Ferry in 1915. 'Fine groceries, wine and liquors. (Letterhead details). My uncle James Hurley left Ireland to work in his aunt's store. I would like to know more about the family and would appreciate any help you can give, especially concerning the Disosway family."

We approached the problem on two fronts. One of us (MB) scoured the Society's records and quickly found the photo. Little else could be found other than a map showing the likely location of the Disosway store on Main Street and an advertisement

in the Dobbs Ferry Register for the store. (When we sent the photo to Jane Hurley, she responded that the woman on the right in the photo has a strong resemblance to the women in her grand aunt's line.)

A search for genealogical information on the family was more revealing. A marriage record from New York City dated April 12, 1903, documented the wedding of John H. Disosway to Adeline H. Duncan. John was living in Dobbs Ferry at the time and Adeline in nearby Ardsley. Adeline's mother was listed as Delia Donnellan and subsequent communication with Jane Hurley in Ireland confirmed that Delia was

her great aunt, that is, her grandmother's sister. We were able to document that there were no living members of the family who still carried the Disosway name.

John Disosway died in 1912 while in Seattle, Washington visiting a relative. Adeline Duncan Disosway continued to live in Dobbs Ferry and operate the store through at least 1930. By 1950, she was living in Brooklyn, NY and working in a department store. She died the following year and is buried in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery.

Sources: Dobbs Ferry Historical Society archives, Ancestry.com

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The estate was held by the family until 1958. By the early 1960s the land was owned by investors Edward J. Tobin and Reuben Chase, who planned to subdivide the property into 115 lots.

In response to residents' opposition to this plan, village officials applied for and received federal and state grants to purchase the property as open space.

The village purchased the 76-acre property in 1968 with the stipulation that it remain undeveloped and accessible to the public. In 1996 it was officially dedicated the Juhring Estate Nature Preserve.

A section of the preserve was once part of Civil War surgeon's Dr. George F. Shrady's summer estate, Upaway, that adjoined the Juhring property.

Shrady, was born in 1830 on Rivington St. in New York City, now part of Central Park. Both his grandfathers fought in the American Revolution and his father served in the War of 1812.

Shrady, a prominent New York City doctor, attended to former President Ulysses S. Grant and performed the autopsy of Charles J. Guiteau, the assassin of President James A. Garfield.

He was one of several medical experts appointed to witness the first electrocution.

His observations led him to condemn this procedure.

Shrady's stepdaughter married village benefactor Edwin Gould.

Shrady died in 1907 at his home on Fifth Ave.

Upaway burned in 1931 and was demolished in 1941.

- Madeline Byrne, Teresa Walsh

Photos: Dobbs Ferry Historical Society archives, New York Times

Sources: Dobbs Ferry Historical Society archives; Ancestry.com; Dobbs Ferry: Then and Now; Dobbs Ferry Register, October 18, 1955; The Ferryman; The New York Times, August, 15, 1944, January, 22, 1955; billboeckelman.com/Juhring-estate-nature

Cookbooks - serving up memories

Eating is something we all do to survive. Enjoying what we eat is one of the pleasures of life.

It is always wonderful to try new and exciting recipes, and cookbooks make for an ideal source of inspiration.

There is a plethora of books both hardbound and digital for your recipe perusing, and they are so easy to obtain in this world of online ordering. There are books for every palate from BBQ to zeppoles and everything in between.

But that old, battered cookbook that might have been a mainstay in your mother's or your

grandmother's kitchen is not so easy to come by.

Community, or charity cookbooks as they are often called, are almost nonexistent today. The cookbooks have become popular collectibles among those seeking another way to connect to the past.

These books were often the work of church and civic groups and were usually used as fundraising vehicles.

Almost exclusively these books were the work of women who collected the recipes. It also was a way to allow women to get involved in the community in a time when they had little voice in matters outside of the home.

In 1864, *A Poetical Cookbook*, by Mrs. Maria J. Moss was the first of these community books. Compiled by Moss to raise money for Union soldiers who were injured during the Civil War, the book was so popular that other organizations began to create their own.

Between 1864 and 1922, over 3,000 of these cookbooks were published according to Feeding America, the Historic American Cookbook Project by Michigan State University conducted between 2001 and 2003. In 1866, *The Woman Suffrage Cookbook* was created to raise funds for the local suffragist campaign there. Many of the women who contributed to the book were lawyers, doctors, authors and teachers.

Many of these cookbooks have been digitalized and can be accessed online.

These mostly slim volumes were initially handwritten. With the introduction of the typewriter and later copy machines their contents were often hand typed page by page and then mimeographed or xeroxed. Comb plastic bindings or string were among the most often used method in keeping the books together. They rarely had glossy covers or contained photographs.

The Dobbs Ferry Historical Society has several community books within its archival collection.



Cover of *Eating is Fun*

Remembering Bartel's...

In 2014, the *New York Times* had requested submissions for its Food Section's upcoming ice cream issue. In the July 1, article, "A Cone to Remember" both John Bartel's ice cream and his store were fondly remembered in a submission by Charles Wright of Washington D.C.

John Bartel immigrated from Germany to the United States when he was 16. He later moved to Dobbs Ferry and worked for Mr. Nittenburgh in his candy store. Nittenburgh taught Bartel how to make chocolates and ice cream and how to run the business. When Nittenburgh retired Bartel bought the business.

John married Florence Annichiarico and had four daughters who helped with the business. The store was initially closed on Wednesday because that was when the homemade ice cream and chocolates would be made. The chocolates were in high demand around holidays, especially Easter.

The store had mirrored walls and marble counter with stools that spun and booths and tables. It also had a glass candy counter.

Bartel had a patent for the preparation

of fruit flavors from the United States Patent Office.

In the *Times* article, Wright wrote of having the best ice cream cone at Bartels as a child. He also shared that on special occasions he was allowed to sit at the counter and order a Dusty Road ice cream sundae. He said that he still remembered that sundae a half a century later and all of its ingredients: coffee ice cream, caramel sauce, creamy marshmallows and a malted milk coating. He described the sundae as "having an astonishing mixture of textures, temperatures and taste."

According to Wright, he has tasted many ice creams over the years, "but nothing has quite trumped the memory of that "Dusty Road."

Following Bartel's death, none of daughters stayed on to run the business and the store closed.

There are many who grew up in Dobbs Ferry that have a similar memory of their favorite treat from that wonderful shop on Main Street.



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Cookbooks...

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All were locally published by the Cortland Press.

They all have forwards, and some contain ads and lists of boosters and patrons.

Eating is Fun, put out by the Dobbs Ferry Teacher's Association in 1964, states in its forward that it is a fundraiser to provide for students who might not be able to go to college without extra financial aid.

The majority of the submissions in the book from were from mothers of the students, but teachers and students also contributed.

Anyone who attended the Dobbs Ferry schools would be delighted to find the names of long forgotten classmates and beloved teachers such as Mrs. Rudin, Mrs. Robinson, and the Misses Bowen, Cresci and Kastberg as recipe contributors.

Hi Neighbors, also published in 1964, was the work of the Sacred Heart Church Parish. The book not only contains a forward from the pastor, Monsignor John Nevin, but also a page with the fire alarm signal codes. That inclusion certainly makes one pause and reflect...

Two books from 1978 are interesting and a bit different from the others in the collection. *Cooking for Fun* by the Community Nursery School and South Presbyterian Church, and *Pieces of Ate* put out by the Dobbs Ferry Garden Club. *Cooking for Fun* is a narrow, flip version volume made up of recipes typed onto notecards. The book is held together with a small ring binder, that makes it easy to add additional recipes. All the other books in the collection use plastic comb binding that doesn't allow for any page additions.

EDITOR

Teresa Walsh

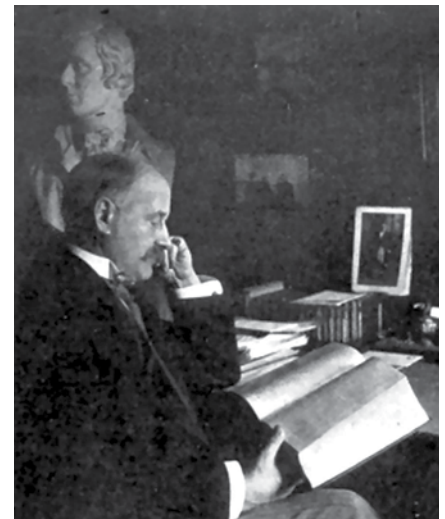
Behind the street signs... McClelland Avenue

Named for Scottish immigrant Charles P. McClelland, the thoroughfare runs from Broadway opposite the Alcott Montessori School to the Ardsley Country Club Golf Course. McClelland was born in Glenluce, Scotland in 1854 and graduated from New York University of Law in 1880, the same year he was admitted to the bar. McClelland practiced law in Dobbs Ferry. He purchased a 17-room home on Clinton Ave in 1894 and named it Glenluce, after his hometown.

He was a member of both the New York State Assembly and the New York State Senate.

He was appointed to the Board of General Appraisers of New York City by President Theodore Roosevelt and served on the United States Customs Court.

McClelland was also involved in the



Dobbs Ferry community, serving terms as both president of the village and school boards, and writing a village history that was published in *The Dobbs Ferry Register*. McClelland died in Dobbs Ferry on June 6, 1944.

Photo credit: electricscotland.com

Pieces of Ate, clearly a pun on the old pieces of eight of pirate lore, has a nautical theme throughout. The theme is perhaps a nod to the Dobbs family who ran the ferry here and to whom the village owes its name.

In the book introduction it is explained that the members of the organization thought that it was a "short step from growing things to cooking things," hence the book.

All these early cookbooks included family recipes handed down through generations. One can be sure that these recipes are the best of the best. Entries in the books from

the Society's collection contain beloved recipes but often don't require hours of cooking. Instead, many of the recipes call for brand name products such as Duncan Hines, Wesson and Mazzola oils, and Jello to make cooking easier.

These cookbooks make for fun reading. They provide a trip back in time via the preparation of food. Where else can one find delightful recipes for Margaret's Stew, ice box and tomato soup cakes, and baked beans croquettes? These recipes might not make your mouth water but they just might make your eyes tear up for days gone by.