

LARGE ESTATES ARE FEATURES IN HISTORY

History Group Of The Village Continues; New Series Started

OUR VILLAGE OF DOBBS FERRY

The Local History Group of the Dobbs Ferry Public Library continues its history of the village. Twelve chapters have been printed in the Dobbs Ferry Register and many more chapters are to come. The attempt is to present them in chronological order. Many persons have cooperated to bring these facts together to make them a story. If any resident knows additional facts we shall appreciate receiving them so they may be added to the history. Corrections too will be most welcome.

Chapter 13 The Large Private Estates

The Hudson River Railroad Company was formed in 1846 to operate a railroad along the east bank of the Hudson from New York City to Greenbush, opposite Albany. The New York and Harlem Railroad Company had been chartered in 1831 and laid its tracks down what is now Fourth and Park Avenues in the City and managed to extend them to White Plains in Westchester by 1844 and on to Albany by 1852. The Hudson River Railroad could not meet the competition of the river steamboats in carrying freight but it was a much faster route than the Harlem Railroad since its tracks were at water level and it was soon taking passenger business away from the Harlem Railroad. Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt gained control first of the Harlem Railroad and then the Hudson River Railroad and combined them in 1864. The various stock juggling maneuvers of such financial vizards as Daniel Drew, Leonard Jerome, Jay Gould, Jim Fisk and Cornelius Vanderbilt in this decade of the 1850's constitute one of the great dramas of United States history. Vanderbilt who had enlisted J. Pierpont Morgan as his financial agent, succeeded in November, 1869, in acquiring the New York Central Railroad as well as the others, and made them the New York and Hudson River Railroad; the first Grand Central Depot at 42d Street was opened on October 9, 1871.

As a result of these transportation facilities the villages and towns along the Hudson River began to grow because the business men could establish homes

in the country and commute every day to the City. One of the first business men from the City who bought property in Dobbs Ferry was James Wilde Jr., a prosperous clothier. His acreage began at the northern edge of the village on the west side of Highland Turnpike (now Broadway) and extended to the center of the village and included the north branch of Wicker's Creek. He named his estate, "Mid-Grove" and he built an attractive stone mansion with porches overlooking the broad expanse of the Hudson. The brook had a lovely water-fall right near the stone entrance gate to his estate. He had a dock on the river for his yacht and boats. He had his furniture brought from New York City in one of the sloops on the river which carried freight at a cheaper rate than the railroad did at that time.

Mr. James Wilde Jr. became an active member of the South Presbyterian Church beginning in 1858 and a decade later served as chairman of the committee of church trustees which selected the site for the new church building erected in 1868-69. At the same time Mr. Wilde purchased the lot at the corner of Broadway and Church Streets adjoining the church property and there he had built a stone house with brick trimming intended for "his own declining years." His house was completed in 1877 but before Mr. Wilde had sold his large estate, "Mid-Grove" which he wished to do, he rented the new house to Miss Eliza Masters for her school which was established in September, 1877. James Wilde Jr. died in 1879 before having a chance to live in the house intended for his declining years. However, after 1883 the Wilde family lived there for many decades and when the house was sold the South Presbyterian Church acquired it for a parish house in 1916. Mr. Wilde was elected the first president of the Greenburgh Savings Bank in 1869. He also served at one time on the School Board of the village and was always a civic-minded resident.

About 1882 "Mid-Grove" was purchased by General Samuel Thomas whose family enjoyed the estate and in 1895 the General assisted in the establishment of the Ardley Country Club which adjoined his estate and which became one of the best known golf courses in the east. About 1900 this lovely estate became the property of Edwin Gould (son of Jay Gould) and it remained in that family for several decades. Mrs. Anna W. Peters was the owner of this estate for some years thereafter; she became a prominent member of the Zion Episcopal Church. She sold the property to a real estate development corporation and the residence has been razed to the ground. In 1956 the land is not being utilized and to the villagers the estate is still known as the

Gould Estate. On Ashford Road (or Avenue), on the south side a block above the Little White Church was a large estate on the hillside where Fred J. Stone had built his "Castle." A pretty stone gate-house at the entrance led to a long, curving driveway up to the Castle near the brow of the hill with a sweeping view of the Hudson. A portion of the estate was sold to John D. McKenzie who called it "McKenzie Place." Mr. McKenzie, a Scotchman, joined the South Presbyterian Church in 1867 as did his wife, Catharine, and the story is told that they attended church each Sunday, bringing their twelve children, all dressed in kilts. About this time the Presbyterian Church installed a few colored glass windows in their church building which had been procured from the old Roman Catholic Church on Dock Hill. This action so incensed the protestant soul of Mr. McKenzie that he withdrew from the Church and took his family to Staten Island.

Colonel Robert Green Ingersoll purchased the F. J. Stone castle and property in the late 1880's. He was known in his day as the "Great Agnostic" but equally as famous as an orator and for his nominating speech for James G. Blaine at the National Republican Convention of 1876. His eloquence and his personal charm made him a very effective speaker and an excellent pleading lawyer. His home was here in Dobbs Ferry until his death in 1899. His daughter, Eva, had married Walston Brown and the estate became known as "Walston" and remained in the family for many years. The next owner was Mrs. Irma Levy and she often rented one or more of the houses on the estate. For a few Summers Mr. Grover Whalen and his family made this his home. Grover Whalen, often referred to as "Mr. New York" because he acted as chairman of the Mayor's Reception Committee in New York City for 35 years, welcoming the City's famous visitors. Mrs. Elmire During became the owner of the estate when it was zoned for apartment usage in 1945. She arranged for the construction of some 200 brick apartments known as "Beacon Hill Manor" and on the opposite side of the driveway the "Beacon Hill Cooperative Apartments," embracing 160 homes, was erected. The Levy mansion or the former "Castle" became the Beacon Hill Country Club, with a swimming pool as the center of recreation. There still remains a 25-acre wooded plot on Ogden Avenue

which Mrs. During wishes to use for an apartment site but the Village authorities have refused to approve. For two years the matter has been before state courts for decision; approval for building of Marguery Apartments was granted in 1957.

Close to the Hudson, south of "Mid-Grove" lay the estate of Courtlandt Palmer whose daughter, Mary Anna, became Mrs. Henry Draper and this estate is generally known as the Draper Estate. Dr. Henry Draper, born in Virginia in 1837, became a famous scientist. He had his home in Hastings and built an observatory on his estate and specialized in celestial photography; his marvelous photographs of solar spectrum, of comets, nebula of Orion and spectrum of Jupiter marked him as an original discoverer in physical science and gave him a reputation as a great American scientist. He was elected to the National Academy of Sciences in 1877 and given an honorary degree of L.L.D. by New York University in 1882. He married Miss Palmer in 1867 and after her father died in 1874 Dr. Henry Draper took charge of this estate in Dobbs Ferry and lived there until his own death in 1882. Mrs. Henry Draper continued her residence on the same estate until her death several decades later. Not until the 1950's was the property acquired and zoned for apartments. The first development of many apartments is known as "Dobbs Manor" and a second series of apartment buildings nearer to Wicker's Creek has been named "Draper Lane," continuing the name made famous by an American scientist.

Villard Hill is the highest point in Dobbs Ferry and with the most extensive view of the river and it was first owned by Samuel and Thomas Cochran. Thomas Cochran born in Scotland in 1807 was the youngest and sixteenth child and eleventh son of Robert and Elizabeth Cochran. While young he went to France and engaged in lace manufacturing trade, then he came to New York in 1828 and formed a partnership with his brothers in the lace and dry goods business and prospered. With his brother, Samuel he purchased a tract of 100 acres of land in Dobbs Ferry at the top of the hill on Clinton Avenue. Two identical houses were built, one for each brother. Every feature of the houses was identical, even to the door knobs. One may wonder whether their Scotch thrift dictated such a decision. The property was laid out as

a private park by the landscape architect, Frederick I. Olmstead. Thomas' house, a large one with bay windows and a porch overlooking the Hudson was named "Dunedin" but amongst the family of nieces and nephews it was always called "The Hill." He first used it only as a Summer home but he retired from active business about 1870, spending his later years quietly at his Summer home. He never married but retained his admiration for the fair sex and was always the courtly gentleman. His favorite recreation was croquet; his pastor, Dr. Niven of the Presbyterian Church often played with him. He took a deep interest in Mrs. Masters and her daughters and aided them in their school when they started it at "Kirk Knoll" which they named the Wilde House in which they lived. Thomas Cochran died at his home in New York City on November 28, 1889. Samuel Cochran named his house "Thorwood" but he only lived there a few years when in 1879 he sold it and eighty acres of land to Mr. Henry Villard for a Summer home. This was during the hey-day of Mr. Villard's success, as a financier and railroad magnate. Henry Villard, a native of Bavaria, emigrated to the United States in 1853, began as a news reporter in the middle west and acquired fame for his vivid reporting of the Civil War and went to to greater fame as a financier, investing for foreign capitalists in American railroads. In 1882 he built for his family a large private residence on Madison Avenue, directly behind St. Patrick's Cathedral. The house formed a part of an imposing block which presented the appearance of a palace though it really consisted of six residences. Mr. Villard and family moved into this princely edifice after he had lost his fortune on December 17, 1883. The fearful strain of the opening of the Northern Pacific Railroad of which he was president, with its attendant national celebration all across the country at which time on September 3, 1883 Mr. Villard was one of three officials who had known as her famous and suc-

cessful husband. She was much admired and respected. Her talents as a musician, and the annual piano concerts given in her home (usually as benefits for the Dobbs Ferry Hospital) were events enjoyed by the community for many years. Mrs. Villard lived a useful life until 1928.

Oswald Garrison Villard and his family lived in Dobbs Ferry until October 1929. He became one of the foremost American journalists and an editor-owner of the New York Evening Post, and later as editor of The Nation he influenced the political thought and public opinion during many critical years. In 1930 Villard Hill, all the acreage, was sold to Joseph Medill Patterson, owner of the New York Daily News, who had both "Thorwood" and "Dunedin" torn down, and developed the property for many houses. The name of Villard Hill is retained and in 1956 there are about forty large, modern homes built on the former estate. Again they are the residences of successful business and professional men and women who commute to the City every working day, such names as Norcross, Odquist, Bailey, Brown, Loiseau, Whittaker, Wallace, Foster, Conner, McDowell, Haft, Whitworth, Hastings, and others.

Robert M. Olyphant was a successful merchant in New York City whose family had been engaged in the China trade through the Yankee clipper days. Mr. Olyphant about 1864 purchased a large piece of property on the next hill to the south of Villard Hill which overlooks the Hudson, and built there a pink brick mansion near the brow of the hill with a long, circuitous driveway from Highland Turnpike. He had stone entrance gate and a small brick gate-house at turn of road on Palisade Avenue. Lower on the hill was a barn and a barnyard with a pond for the farm animals. The estate had many acres and adjoined the Minturn estate on the northern edge of the village of Hastings-on-Hudson. By 1881 this estate was the property of William A. Cole for some years and the next owner

was a brother of Governor Flower who named it "Southlawn" but the house is still often referred to as the Flower Mansion. Norman Haggood, the editor and writer, also lived in this house at one time. Mr. Leonl, an Italian restaurateur, rebuilt the house when he acquired ownership, removing one story, panelling the lower floor in oak and replacing windows with leaded French glass with scenes therein, some dated 1651. The house is now owned and occupied by the widow of Arthur Macy, a banker formerly of Scarborough. The estate was divided into real estate developments as early as 1908 and sold off into small lots situated on narrow, winding roads on the hillside. The building of attractive homes has continued for several decades. Many developers have taken sections of the property which is known as "Riverview Manor." It is one of the most attractive residential sections of Dobbs Ferry. Hundreds of homes now enjoy the river views selected originally by Robert M. Olyphant as the site of his estate in 1864.

Jacob Storm purchased 279 acres of land at the corner of King's Road (Broadway) and Ashford Road in 1785 from the Commissioners of Philipse Manor. Richard Dusenbery had the farm on the south and Abraham Storm owned the next farm north and Warner Wilsea on the west. Jacob deeded his property to his son, Thomas in 1792 who had a son, Anthony. Anthony, it was who, built a house at this corner in 1820 which was used as a station stop for the stage coaches that operated between New York City and Albany. "Anthony's Inn" as it was called, was the most popular place in the village. It also served as post-office as Anthony Storm was appointed postmaster by President Jackson in 1828. The old Storm's house was a landmark for more than a century and remained in that family until 1933 when the land was sold for business and the house was razed. The site is now occupied by the new houses.

Robert M. Olyphant was a successful merchant in New York City whose family had been engaged in the China trade through the Yankee clipper days. Mr. Olyphant about 1864 purchased a large piece of property on the next hill to the south of Villard Hill which overlooks the Hudson, and built there a pink brick mansion near the brow of the hill with a long, circuitous driveway from Highland Turnpike. He had stone entrance gate and a small brick gate-house at turn of road on Palisade Avenue. Lower on the hill was a barn and a barnyard with a pond for the farm animals. The estate had many acres and adjoined the Minturn estate on the northern edge of the village of Hastings-on-Hudson. By 1881 this estate was the property of William A. Cole for some years and the next owner

was a brother of Governor Flower who named it "Southlawn" but the house is still often referred to as the Flower Mansion. Norman Haggood, the editor and writer, also lived in this house at one time. Mr. Leonl, an Italian restaurateur, rebuilt the house when he acquired ownership, removing one story, panelling the lower floor in oak and replacing windows with leaded French glass with scenes therein, some dated 1651. The house is now owned and occupied by the widow of Arthur Macy, a banker formerly of Scarborough. The estate was divided into real estate developments as early as 1908 and sold off into small lots situated on narrow, winding roads on the hillside. The building of attractive homes has continued for several decades. Many developers have taken sections of the property which is known as "Riverview Manor." It is one of the most attractive residential sections of Dobbs Ferry. Hundreds of homes now enjoy the river views selected originally by Robert M. Olyphant as the site of his estate in 1864.

Jacob Storm purchased 279 acres of land at the corner of King's Road (Broadway) and Ashford Road in 1785 from the Commissioners of Philipse Manor. Richard Dusenbery had the farm on the south and Abraham Storm owned the next farm north and Warner Wilsea on the west. Jacob deeded his property to his son, Thomas in 1792 who had a son, Anthony. Anthony, it was who, built a house at this corner in 1820 which was used as a station stop for the stage coaches that operated between New York City and Albany. "Anthony's Inn" as it was called, was the most popular place in the village. It also served as post-office as Anthony Storm was appointed postmaster by President Jackson in 1828. The old Storm's house was a landmark for more than a century and remained in that family until 1933 when the land was sold for business and the house was razed. The site is now occupied by the new houses.

HISTORY (cont. on Page 3)

OFFICIAL — State of New York Inspection Station

- WHEEL ALIGNMENT
- BRAKE SERVICE
- WHEEL BALANCING
- COMPLETE FRONT END WORK

SAFETY BRAKE SERVICE

IRvington 9-1339

14 North Astor St. Irvington, N. Y.
(Opp. Railroad Station)

Tel. DOBBS FERRY 3-4757

CARROLL
Taxi

24-HOUR SERVICE

LIMOUSINES FOR ALL OCCASIONS

90 Main Street Dobbs Ferry, N. Y.

DICK'S CABIN

SUNDAY STEAK SPECIAL
COMPLETE STEAK DINNER

\$3.50

SERVED FROM 1 until 12 P. M.

MAIN STREET DOBBS FERRY

Telephone DOBBS FERRY 3-9729

Monuments erected in all Cemeteries
Single Grave Headstone erected in Cemetery
COMPLETE COST — \$85.00 and up

Family Plot Monuments erected in Cemetery
COMPLETE COST — \$185.00 and up
(Prices slightly higher in Gate of Heaven Cemetery)

HUESS MONUMENTAL ART WORKS

JACKSON AVENUE HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON
Tel. HASTINGS 5-0713 Opposite Mt. Hope Cemetery
Free Booklet upon request.

Upholstering - Draperies

Slip Covers
repairing and refinishing since 1931

WILMER T. BARNES

32 CEDAR STREET DOBBS FERRY, N. Y.
DOBBS FERRY 3-9851

Furniture Cleaning



Keith S. McHugh presents Vail Medal to Mr. Boese as young John Baumann adds his own special award.

Dramatic rescue of drowning boy wins telephone man top honor

The highest honor that can be given a telephone employee, the Vail Medal, has just been awarded by the New York Telephone Company to cable splicer John Boese of New City, Rockland County for his rescue of 7-year-old John Baumann from drowning.

Boese's rescue of young Baumann took place May 25 at New City Park Lake, Rockland County. The boy had fallen into deep water and disappeared. Boese plunged into the lake to join the search. Time after time he dove into the cold, muddy water, refusing to give up, until finally he located the youngster lying unconscious on the bottom and brought him to shore.

Besides the medal, Boese has received another tribute of which he is extremely proud — a letter from the boy's parents. It says, in part: "Every time we tuck our boy into bed, we say to ourselves, 'Thanks again to Mr. Boese.'"

In presenting the Vail Medal, Keith S. McHugh, President of the New York Telephone Company, explained that it is given only for acts of outstanding initiative or courage — either on or off the job, or when telephone training is an important factor. Telephone man Boese's story is an unusual one. But what he has done typifies the "spirit of service" of telephone people everywhere.

NEW YORK TELEPHONE COMPANY

They're ready — is your house?

Cold, stormy weather and its home heating problems will soon be here. Have carefree, economical Gas Heat installed NOW and be "all set" when the first wintry blast arrives. Ask for a FREE heating survey.

Con Edison

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4, 1957

HISTORY (continued from page 1)

The Storm's house and frame, quite seventeen rooms running the full house on the river. It faced south of an old arbor cover and a wall stood close.

Anthony Storm, 1848, leaving the wife, Charity Le... his son, Isaac Storms as the year... to live... death; he raised one of whom is... of David Raveke... scendant of ano... of Dobbs Ferry. A... final Storm prop... piece by piece... was bought in... Field, a brother... David Dudley... his acreage into... faced on Broad... now Belden Ave... tive entrance gate... It included land... to Washington A... to Ashford Ave... portion of the... of Golf Course... dren's Playgroun... Laura Belden a... estate, "Belden... Field was a prom... New York, pract... to 1880, and spec... of procedure and... ment jurist and... internationally. Y... willed to his wi... she began selling... erty in lots, and... Broadway were... Curt von Wedel, ... Main Street boug... on Broadway an... (later Belden Ave... a house there in... to Mr. Thomas Lo... lly lived there u... Losee, his father... before him were... chants of the vill... On the river sid... opposite Belden P... eral attractive h...

P. O. Bo

I've been getting few letters lately. folks who have ing my column might nice. Be ing a column in one-way street hear from you now and then.

One of the asked an intere tion. A lady wr does Con Edison I can't buy my from anybody e

Since other p have the same mind, I thought be a good idea answer in my c

Con Edison ad tell you about n appliances and the most out of Edison also wa know about its ing program to the dependable you need - now future.

So Con dis pays to cover from your si and theirs.

Incidentally, anything you'd me, don't hesita Address your Uncle Wetbee 189, Mount Ver

Wetbee

See Uncle Wetbee and T. Mod. thru Fil. WCA-TV, C

Con Ed