Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct Newsletter No. 22, Winter 2005/06

Old Croton AqueFest Launches Keeper's House Campaign

The first of October was a day of firsts for Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct. It was our first event along the length of the trail, the first time we offered Friends-emblazoned T-shirts, hats, and water bottles, and our first opportunity to ask trail users to donate to the Keeper's House restoration campaign. On a bright autumn day, it all succeeded wonderfully.

Billed as a trail-long celebration of the Old Croton Aqueduct and Keeper's House Restoration Fund, the public was invited to "come out and play" on the trail. At "celebration stations"—tables set up in Yonkers, Hastings, Dobbs Ferry, Irvington, Tarrytown, and Ossining—there were live music from jazz to folk to

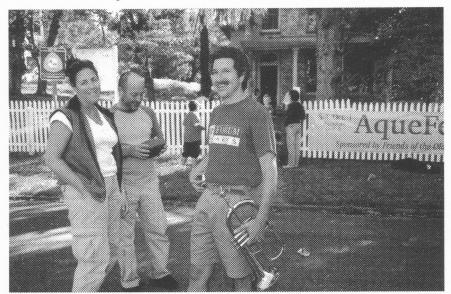
flute and saxophone, story-telling, sing-alongs and coloring for kids, breathing demonstrations and massages, and, of course, guided visits into the Aqueduct tunnel in Ossining. (One of the delightful revelations of the day, thanks to musician Blake Rowe who played an electric guitar right inside the tunnel, was that the tunnel has great acoustics.)

The day was

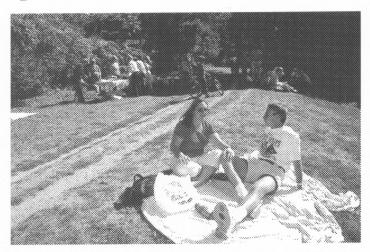
made momentous by the arrival of a check from Verizon for \$12,000, arranged by John Butler of the company's Consumer Affairs Department for the project that was the focus of AqueFest: the Friends' vision of bringing back to life the Keeper's House (also known as the Overseer's House) as a visitor and education center for the public. Verizon's contribution is to be used for technical education equipment for the visitor center. We are thrilled that Verizon, a good neighbor of the Aqueduct, is giving us this much-needed support.

For the 100-plus years that the Aqueduct carried precious Croton River water to New York City and Westchester County, the graceful 1850s brick house

next to the trail in Dobbs Ferry served as home and work center for a succession of supervisors of this section of the Aqueduct. While the Aqueduct was in service there were five or six such houses along route; today, the house in Dobbs Ferry is the only one survive. The Friends, in partnership with the New York State Office of Parks. Recreation



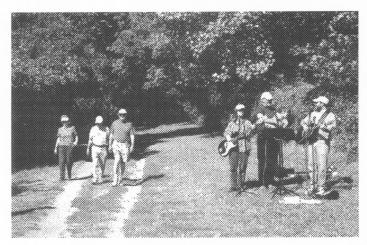
Musician Mark Morganelli with Aqueduct walkers in front of the Keeper's House on AqueFest Day. (Photo by Susan Rutman Gaertner)



Enjoying AqueFest Day on the trail; Hastings "celebration station" in background. (Photos courtesy of Susan Rutman Gaertner/Rivertowns Enterprise)

and Historic Preservation, were awarded federal funds for 80 percent of the estimated construction cost of the visitor center project. Our task has been to raise \$300,000 to cover the remaining 20 percent plus the cost of exhibits and fitting out the visitor center. Two-thirds of this sum has already been raised; we are asking our members and the public to help us raise the remainder.

Douglas Emilio, who with Carl Grimm heads the project for the Friends, led perhaps 100 visitors through the house on AqueFest Day. A typical comment was "I've passed this building dozens of times but never knew what it was." Though in derelict condition, the interior retains attractive period features like ornate plaster moldings. Our hope is that in years to come it will be a familiar and welcoming place to the Aqueduct's innumerable fans and to newcomers as well.

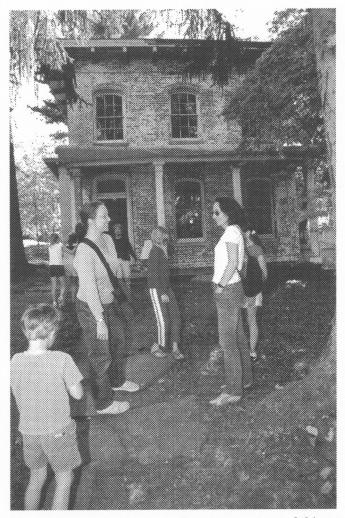


Acoustic RiverRun offers music on the trail.

We were heartened by the public's impassioned and generous response, and are immensely grateful for the \$6,000 raised through new memberships, merchandise and map sales, and contributions. People

loved the T-shirts, loved having live music on the trail, loved the idea of a visitor center, and continue to love the Aqueduct. One woman said "I run six miles a day. This trail means everything to me. I would do anything for it."

This first AqueFest entailed months of work and daunting logistical and organizational challenges. Those leading the effort were board member Eileen Charles; Molly Penn, our fund-raising consultant; and Friends president Mavis Cain. They planned the event; recruited volunteers, musicians, and sponsors; sited and supplied the tables along the trail; designed and



Socializing at the Keeper's House: a portent of things to come?

delivered the T-shirts and hats; and coordinated a thousand and one details. In the early days of the Aqueduct, its workers communicated by riding horseback from one point to another, bearing urgent messages. For AqueFest, the organizers updated the technique, cell-phoning back and forth between "celebration stations." Congratulations and a big thank you to Eileen, Molly, and Mavis and to all who participated (see p. 3).



An AqueFest Thank You

Countless hours of planning and labor, dozens of helping hands, generous contributions of goods and talents, and community-minded sponsorships went into making AqueFest a success. The Friends are deeply grateful to all.

Organizers: EILEEN CHARLES, MOLLY PENN, AND MAVIS CAIN

In Yonkers: (at Yonkers' Riverfest). Captains: Joseph Kozlowski and Tom Tarnowsky.

In Hastings: Captains: Eileen and Fred Charles. Helpers: Sarah Brockus, Mary Lambert, Helena Crowley, Deb DePietro, Todd Vunderink.

- Adam Hart, children's songs
- Acoustic RiverRun
- Neck and shoulder massage by Riverspa

In Dobbs Ferry: Captains: Mavis Cain, Bill Cassella, Ildiko Viczian. House Tours: Douglas Emilio. Helpers: Adrienne Bortree, Nina Orville, Amy Bennet, Deniz Turzan, Sara Kelsey.

- Classical flute and guitar duet by High Arts Conservatory instructors
- Drawing workshop with Ildiko Viczian
- Stretching and breathing for trail users by Rivertowns Center for Yoga & Health
- Eddie Monteiro Brazilian Jazz (sponsored by Ginsburg Development Companies)
- Mark Morganelli and the Jazz Forum All Stars (sponsored by Ginsburg Development Companies)
- Ed Bettinelli of The Art of Drumming and the Fillmores

In Irvington: Captains: Molly Penn, Karen Schatzel, Ruth Gastel. Helpers: Audrey Sackner-Bernstein, Linda Krueger, Zara Ahmed, Alexandra Graylin, Susan Weyburn. From the Irvington High School Key Club: Erin Madden, Marisa Zipay, Nikita Sabharwal, Natalie Luzzi, Mairin Din, Anna Blum, Heena Purswani, and Rie Inaba.

- Sports Injury advice by Dr. Lawrence Ruck
- Maureen Lackner, flute, and Chistopher Ceccilini, saxophone
- Traditional folk music with Dan Elias, clarinet, and Ed Pitaro, guitar

In Tarrytown: Captains: John and Catalina Flack. Helpers: Taylor Pape, David Starky, Nancy Sciotto.

- Chris Reising Jazz
- Herman and Charley Ville's Interactive Children's Show
- Neck and shoulder massage by RiverSpa

In Ossining: Captain: Jean Horkans. Helpers: Peter Iskenderian, Michael Sciotto and son Michael, Niall and Cynthia Cain and son Evan.

- Aqueduct tunnel tours guided by Jean Horkans and Bob Kornfeld, Jr.
- Blake Rowe on electric keyboard.
- Folk singer Paul Mandry on guitar

Graphics by Ildiko Viczian; Andy Simons of Emphasis!; Dennis DiVincenzo.

It's Official: It's Now the Keeper's House

The 1850s brick house at Walnut St. in Dobbs Ferry, long known as the Overseer's House, has now officially been renamed the Keeper's House. The renaming proposal was an initiative of Robert Kornfeld, Jr., vice-president of the Friends and Croton System historian, supported by the managers of Old Croton Aqueduct State Historic Park and the board of the Friends. The proposal was reviewed and accepted by the Historic Preservation Bureau of the state's Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation in July.

The Italianate, two-story residence breathes Aqueduct history: it served for more than a century as residence, office, and operations center for the superintendent or "keeper" of the Fourth Division of the Aqueduct. It is the only house remaining of six that were built along the line of the Aqueduct. Its first occupant,

until 1872, was James Bremner. His successors lived there until the early 1950s, when the house was closed. The Friends are in the midst of a fundraising campaign for a major restoration of the Keeper's House as a visitor and education center.

While Bob Kornfeld has advocated for
this name change
informally for some
years, the visitor center
project provided renewed impetus for the
renaming. Besides
citing original Croton

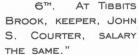
Aqueduct reports to support the name "Keeper's House," Kornfeld argues that "overseer" is particularly inappropriate because of the word's association with American slavery; indeed, most overseers' houses on the National Register of Historic Places are on plantations or other sites that would have used slave labor.

Kornfeld's report (see www.aqueduct.org) for link to full report) proposing the name change quotes from an 1843 report by the state-appointed Water Commissioners, who were to maintain the Westchester County part of the Aqueduct, as follows:

"IN ACCORDANCE WITH THESE VIEWS, THERE HAS BEEN ERECTED ALONG THE LINE OF THE AQUEDUCT, STATION HOUSES,

AND PERSONS EMPLOYED, WHOSE DUTY IT IS, NOT ONLY TO ATTEND THE WASTE-WEIRS AND FLOOD GATES, BUT TO VISIT THAT PORTION OF THE AQUEDUCT CONFIDED TO THEIR CARE, REPEATEDLY, AND TO AMEND ANY DAMAGE TO THE EMBANKMENTS, AND IN THE EVENT OF SERIOUS INJURY, TO GIVE IMMEDIATE NOTICE TO THE COMMISSIONERS, IN ORDER THAT IT MAY BE PROMPTLY REPAIRED. THE LOCATION OF THESE STATION HOUSES, WITH THE NAMES OF THE PERSONS EMPLOYED AS KEEPERS, ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- I ST. AT THE CROTON DAM, KEEPER, DANIEL ADAMSON, SALARY \$600, PER ANNUM.
- 2D. AT SING SING WASTE WEIR, KEEPER, GEORGE WATSON, SALARY \$1.25 PER DAY.
- 3D. AT MILL RIVER, KEEPER, JAMES BERWICK, SALARY THE SAME AS LAST.
- 4TH. AT DOBB'S FERRY, KEEPER JAMES BREMNER, SALARY THE SAME.
- 5th. AT YONKERS, KEEPER, ABRAM SCUDDER, SALARY THE SAME.



Actually none of the original keepers' houses built in the 1840s remains. They were of wood, "of the most cheap and frail description..." and turned out to be too expensive to maintain. In 1857 they were demolished and replaced with masonry structures, including the house in Dobbs Ferry.



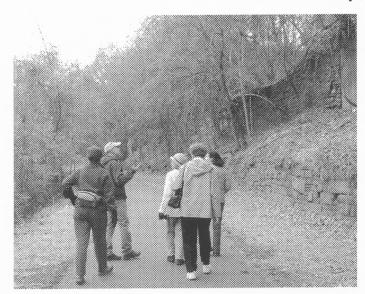
The Keeper's House, Dobbs Ferry, drawn by Ildiko Viczian, 2005.

czian, 2005. "Overseer" was never used by the

agencies that admin istered the Aqueduct. When a New York City agency, the Croton Aqueduct Department, took charge of the Aqueduct in 1848-49, Kornfeld reports "they initially used the term Superintendent rather than Keeper for [most] of their facilities . . . Later they occasionally referred to those assigned to the reservoirs as Keepers, but generally used the term Superintendent for all such personnel. The word Keeper was still the term in common usage."

Newsletter readers should expect gradually to see more references to the Keeper's House and fewer to the Overseer's House. The house's second life as a visitor center is one we all eagerly anticipate.

Yonkers Trail Improvements Underway



A section of Aqueduct trail in Yonkers, after improvements. (Photo by C. Fahn)

Good news! Long-awaited improvements on the east-west section of the Aqueduct in Yonkers have begun, thanks to funds secured in 2002 by State Senator Nicholas Spano and former Assemblymember Mike Spano, with additional funding provided by the state Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

This fall, reports Aqueduct Manager Peter Iskenderian, a crew has been thinning trees, removing thick tangles of vines, planting new trees and grass, and laying a surface of stone dust on the path between Palisades Ave. and Walnut St. The steep dropoff that had impeded trail users and made it almost impossible for maintenance equipment to operate has been nearly leveled, and the Yonkers Department of Public Works has hauled away truckloads of trash. One happy result is that Aqueduct stone walls along the trail, still in good condition after 163 years, have been revealed.

Initial repairs on the Aqueduct's historic, 40-foot-high Nepperan Bridge will start in April; the Saw Mill River flows through a culvert at its base. State Parks will install interpretive plaques and new signs, including directional signs in the Lamartine-Ashburton Ave. section, where at present the trail appears to end. Improvements to the section between Walnut and Prescott streets and further, much-needed bridge masonry repairs must await future funding.

Have a look for yourself: take a walk on the trail between Palisades and Walnut to enjoy its newfound appeal. There is a good view of the bridge from the city park on its north side, on Nepperhan Ave.

New Croton Dam Turns 100

Helen Barolini

It was a festive crowd at the Croton Free Library on October 23, 2005, celebrating the centennial of the New Croton Dam. The event had been planned for Croton Dam Plaza but weather was unsettled and the dam's spillway torrent so thunderous with the accumulation of a heavy rainy season that the festivities were moved, most successfully, to the library.

The program began with remarks by elected officials who were enthusiastic on the great benefits of the dam and the achievement of the 1,500 workers from several nations who constructed it. A brief history of the dam, begun in 1892 and completed in January 1906, captured the monumental effort of the enterprise.

The program followed with remarks by longtime Croton resident Donald Parrish, who recounted historical tidbits from period newspapers. As a former Croton resident, I felt honored to read two poems from *Croton Elegies* by my late husband antonio Barolini. David Goldman sang a Neopolitan song of immigrant struggle and Marion Kearsley Madison, granddaughter of an African-American worker on the dam, told of his



Celebrating the New Croton Dam's centennial. (Photocourtesy of Gary Cahill/The Gazette.)

experiences and the family's long establishment in the village of Croton. Centenarian Edward Rondthaler sang in full voice his composition for the occasion, "Our Old Dam's New Ballad." (continued on page 6)

Exploring Treasures of the Jervis Archive

John Bloomfield Jervis (1795-1885) is well known as the Chief Engineer of the original ("Old") Croton Aqueduct, the perfectionist, frugal, hard-driving man who achieved the monumental task of getting the Aqueduct built. Jervis was from Rome, New York, and bequeathed his home there to the city as a public library together with his personal library, a very large archive of papers, drawings, and other material covering his long engineering career and wide-ranging activities and interests. For details of the Jervis archive, visit the website www.jervislibrary.org, click on About the Library, then click on John Bloomfield Jervis, Civil Engineering Pioneer.

In connection with a book he is planning, Tom Tarnowsky, a professional photoresearcher, spent two days at the Jervis Public Library in July, possibly the first member of the Friends to visit the collection. Following is part of his first note after the visit.



Jervis Public Library, Rome, NY. (Photo by Tom Tarnowsky)

"JUST GOT BACK FROM ROME, NY. FOUND THAT I HAVE A LONG RESEARCH EFFORT IN FRONT OF ME CONCERNING JERVIS' PAPERS. THE TWO LIBRARIANS WHO HELPED, LORI CHIEN AND KEITH KINNA, COULD NOT HAVE BEEN NICER. AT ONE POINT I WAS HOLDING IN MY HANDS AN ORIGINAL DRAFT OF A SUMMARY LETTER JERVIS WROTE TO THE WATER COMMISSIONERS IN 1848 JUST AS THE CROTON PROJECT WAS NEARING COMPLETION. JERVIS DIPLOMATICALLY LET THE COMMISSIONERS KNOW THE SYSTEM WOULD NEED CONSTANT ATTENTION AND MAINTENANCE, EVEN GOING SO FAR AS TO RECOMMEND AN UNPLANNED-FOR RAILING FOR THE PARAPET ATOP THE HIGH BRIDGE, AT A COST OF 9 TO 10 THOUSAND DOLLARS, TO PREVENT TOURISTS FROM FALLING OFF THE BRIDGE, WHOSE PARAPET WALLS WERE ONLY TWO FEET HIGH. THERE IS THE SUGGESTION THAT THE TOURISTS FLOCKING TO THE BRIDGE WERE NOT ANTICIPATED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PROJECT.

"I ALSO GOT TO EXAMINE ORIGINAL COPIES OF THE THEO. SCHRAMKE AND F.B. TOWER BOOKS [NOTE: SCHRAMKE AND TOWER WERE ASSISTANT ENGINEERS ON THE CROTON PROJECT.] I COPIED A FEW PAGES OF DESCRIPTIONS OF THE AQUEDUCT AND I DISCOVERED THAT ONE OF THE LITHOGRAPH PLATES IN TOWER'S BOOK [ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE CROTON AQUEDUCT, 1843] IS MOST LIKELY AN EARLY VIEW OF THE "ARCHVILLE" BRIDGE BETWEEN OSSINING AND TARRYTOWN. I SPENT THE ENTIRE FIRST DAY LOOKING AT MORE THAN 360 SLIDES OF VARIOUS IMAGES COPIED FROM ORIGINAL ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS, ALL OF WHICH ARE AT THE JERVIS LIBRARY. THE LIBRARIANS PULLED ONE FOLDER FOR ME OF THE ORIGINAL DRAWINGS OF PIER NO. 10 OF THE "HARLEM BRIDGE," SHOWING EACH OF 36 COURSES OF MASONRY IN THE PIER AS WELL AS THE EXACT PATTERNS IN WHICH THEY WERE LAID, AND THEIR DIMENSIONS DOWN TO THE THIRD DECIMAL PLACE. I ALSO HAVE A COPY OF THE DESIGN OF THE COFFERDAMS BUILT FOR THE HIGH BRIDGE FOOTINGS IN THE RIVER BOTTOM, A COPY OF A VERY GOOD WATERCOLOR ARCHITECTURAL DRAWING FROM TWO ELEVATIONS OF THE 42ND ST. RESERVOIR BY JAMES RENWICK, JR., . . . AN EARLY GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF HOW A HIGH BRIDGE WILL BE BUILT ACROSS THE "HARLAEM," SPECIFYING A 120 FOOT ARCH, AND DESCRIPTIONS OF SIX PROPOSED ARCHED BRIDGES ACROSS 96TH ST. TO IOIST ST. IN "GLENDINNING" VALLEY [MANHATTAN]. ALSO A DETAILED STATEMENT OF WORK AND EXPENSES ON SECTION 33 BY CONTRACTOR GEORGE LAW, INCLUDING MILL RIVER AT POCANTICO. . . .

"I KEPT IN MIND THE EDUCATIONAL POSSIBILITIES FOR THE KEEPER'S HOUSE. THERE IS A GOOD DRAWN PLAN FOR A WASTE WEIR IRON GATE, WITH MATHEMATICAL COMPUTATIONS IN THE MARGINS, GOOD FOR CURRENT ALGEBRA STUDENTS. . . . ANOTHER VISIT IS NECESSARY AT SOME POINT."

New Croton Dam Turns 100 (continued):

The Croton Chorale and Orchestra provided the musical culmination of the day with excerpts from the *Croton Cantata*, composed in 2002, and a rendition of the Victorian gem *Croton Ode*, first performed at the great Aqueduct gala held in 1842 in New York City. Refreshments included a cake replicating the last stone laid in the dam and Croton cocktails: water with a slice of lemon. The event, organized by Carl Oechsner, president of the Friends of History, together with the Town of Cortlandt and the Croton Free Library, was a lively tribute to a magnificent structure, enjoyed by all who participated!

Ed. Note: For the story of the dam, bountifully illustrated, see *The Croton Dams and Aqueduct* by Christopher R. Tompkins, Images of America Series, 2000, Arcadia Publ., ISBN 0-7385-0455-6.



Calendar Notes

Sun., Dec. 18, 2005. Aqueduct walk from Odell Ave., Yonkers, to Van Cortlandt Park, the Bronx, including a

visit to Untermyer Park's Greek garden. Meet group arriving by train at 9:56 am at Greystone Station (Metro-North's Hudson Line), Yonkers. Walk ends about 5 pm at No. 1 subway line. About 7-1/2 mi. Bring lunch. Leader: Michael Graff (917-902-7979).

Jan. 10 & 17, 2006. "Water Over the Dam: Croton, That Is": Two talks by Carl Oechsner, local historian and president, Friends of History, 7:30 pm at the Croton Free Library, 171 Cleveland Drive, Croton-on-Hudson, tel. 271-6612. Free; registration not required. Tues., Jan. 10. Part One (1842-1900): "New City, Old Troubles." Tues., Jan. 17. Part Two (1900-1907): "Tallest in the World."



OpenHouse New York, 2005. Aqueduct fans aren't afraid of water! A hardy group of ten, led by Tom Tarnowsky with help from Jean Horkans, walked the entire Manhattan route of the Aqueduct in an all-day downpour on Oct. 8 as part of OpenHouse New York. On Oct. 9, Bob Kornfeld, Jr., accompanied by Doug Emilio and Charlotte Fahn, led another group along the Bronx route to the High Bridge, then on the Washington Bridge to Manhattan. Both walks ended at High Bridge Tower. The Friends' participation was organized by Doug Emilio. The photo shows the base of the Aqueduct embankment wall just north of Fordham Road; Bob Kornfeld is at far left. (Photo by Gautam Sheth)

TO OUR MEMBERS: PLEASE RENEW EARLY WHEN
THE NOTICE ARRIVES. WE DEPEND ON YOUR
CONTRIBUTIONS! THANK YOU.

For inquiries about Old Croton Aqueduct State
Historic Park or to report trail conditions,
call Park Manager Peter Iskenderian at
914-693-5259.



An Easy Gift. The Friends' color map-guides of the Aqueduct in Westchester (Old Croton Aqueduct State Historic Park) and New York City fit into a holiday stocking or regular business envelope. The following carry one or both maps:



Cornelia Cotton Gallery, 111 Grand Ave., Croton
Art Barn, 211 North Highland Ave., Ossining
Ossining Heritage Area Visitor Center, Joseph G. Caputo
Community Center

Hudson Office Supply, 10 Main St., Tarrytown River Gallery, 39 Main St., Irvington Cary's Pharmacy, 105 Main St., Dobbs Ferry Corey Glass Picture Framing, 3 Main St., Hastings-on-Hudson

Good Yarns, 8 Main St., Hastings-on-Hudson The Office Ink, 572 Warburton Ave., Hastings-on-Hudson Hudson River Museum Shop, 511 Warburton Ave., Yonkers

New York City

Bronx County Historical Society, 3309 Bainbridge Ave., 718-881-8900

Van Cortlandt House Museum, Van Cortlandt Park, Bronx, 718-543-3344*

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 103rd St., 212-534-1672*

Urban Center Books, 457 Madison Ave. betw. 50th and 51st St., 212-935-3595

Posman Books, Grand Central Terminal, 212-983-1111

*Call ahead to check on map availability.

By mail: The maps are \$5. each (members, \$4.). Add 75 cents S/H for the first map, 50 cents each additional map. *Please specify which map(s) you want.* Send a check for to the Friends at 15 Walnut St., Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522. Questions? Visit www.aqueduct.org or call 914-693-4117.

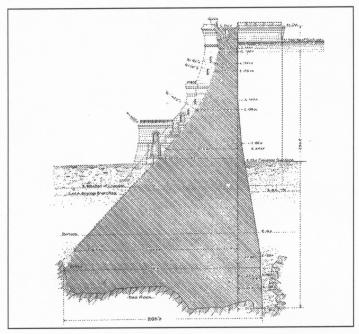
MEMBERSHIP COUPON

Your tax-deductible contribution	helps	to	protect	and
preserve the trail.				

- Renewal
- New Member
- ☐ Friend \$20
- ☐ Students & retirees \$10
- ☐ Good Friend \$50
- ☐ Best Friend \$100

Please make check payable to Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct. Send it with this coupon to the Friends at Keeper's House, 15 Walnut St., Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522-2109.

Name		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
Address		
City/State/Zip	Tel	



Cross-section of New Croton Dam, showing its great mass belowground. Its total height, above- and belowground, is 301 ft. The dam was completed 100 years ago. (Courtesy of C. Oechsner)

Newsletter: Charlotte Fahn, *Editor*. News items, reminiscences, and comments welcome: 914-478-3961 or czfahn@yahoo.com or by mail c/o the Friends.

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Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct Keeper's House 15 Walnut Street Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522 Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct is a private, non-profit, volunteer organization formed to protect and preserve the Old Croton Aqueduct. The Friends work to raise public awareness of the Aqueduct and trail, and to secure the resources that will enable this historic greenway to remain unspoiled in perpetuity. Address: Keeper's House, 15 Walnut St. Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522-2109; telephone 914-693-4117, www.aqueduct.org

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