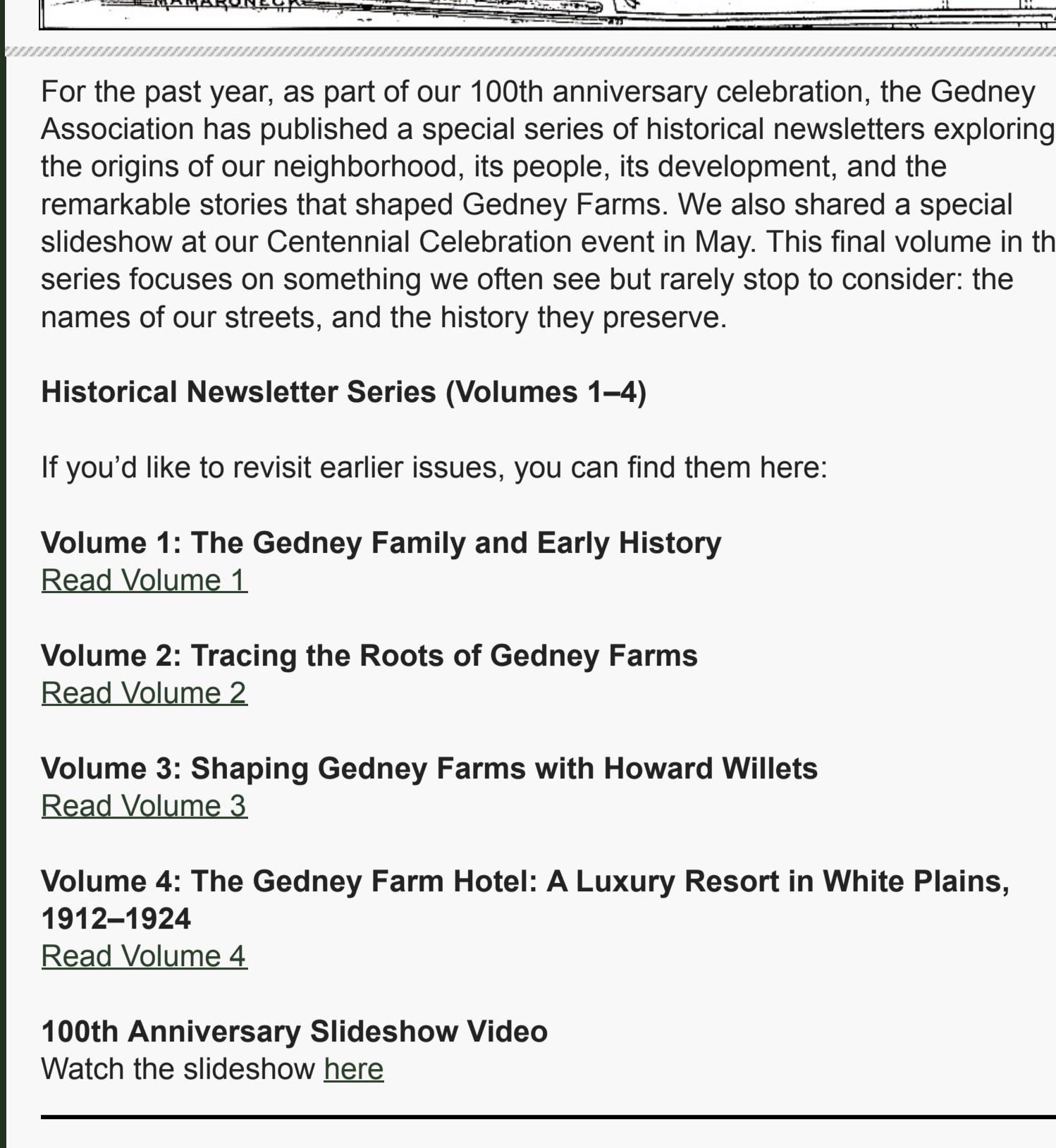




The Gedney Association: Celebrating 100 Years
 Volume 5: *What's in a Name? The Stories Behind the Streets of Gedney Farms*
 December 2025



For the past year, as part of our 100th anniversary celebration, the Gedney Association has published a special series of historical newsletters exploring the origins of our neighborhood, its people, its development, and the remarkable stories that shaped Gedney Farms. We also shared a special slideshow at our Centennial Celebration event in May. This final volume in the series focuses on something we often see but rarely stop to consider: the names of our streets, and the history they preserve.

Historical Newsletter Series (Volumes 1-4)

If you'd like to revisit earlier issues, you can find them here:

Volume 1: The Gedney Family and Early History
[Read Volume 1](#)

Volume 2: Tracing the Roots of Gedney Farms
[Read Volume 2](#)

Volume 3: Shaping Gedney Farms with Howard Willets
[Read Volume 3](#)

Volume 4: The Gedney Farm Hotel: A Luxury Resort in White Plains, 1912-1924
[Read Volume 4](#)

100th Anniversary Slideshow Video

Watch the slideshow [here](#)

Street Origins in Gedney Farms

If you take a walk through Gedney Farms, you'll notice that many of our street names are not random choices, but traces of the neighborhood's history. They reflect the early families who lived here, the development of the land, the years of the Gedney Farm Hotel, and even the champion horses once trained on Howard Willets's Gedney Farm estate. Each name offers a small window into the past of our neighborhood.

The Gedney Name in Our Neighborhood

The Gedney family were among the earliest landholders in this part of White Plains, establishing Gedney Farm here in the mid-1700s. For more than a century, the farm stretched across much of the land that would later become our neighborhood. When the property was sold to Howard Willets in 1898 and eventually developed as Gedney Farms, several local streets were named in recognition of the family's historical connection to the area. These roads preserve the original identity of the land, long before the hotel, the golf course, or the residential neighborhood that followed.

Gedney Way

Although Gedney Way lies just outside the boundaries of Gedney Farms, it plays an important role in the history of the area. Originally part of West Street, the road was renamed Gedney Way around 1872 to honor the Gedney family.

By the early 1900s, the New York, Westchester & Boston Railway (NYW&B) operated a station on Gedney Way, providing direct rail service to New York City. This convenient access made Gedney Farms highly attractive for residential development, helping to shape its identity as a suburban enclave with easy access to the city.

Gedney Park Drive

Laid out in 1913 alongside land originally intended as parkland, this street was first known simply as Park Drive. It was accepted as a public road in 1924. In 1934, when the City renamed the second Gedney Circle to Glendon Circle, the Common Council renamed Park Drive to Gedney Park Drive to maintain the neighborhood's identity and keep the Gedney name prominent in the area.

Gedney Esplanade

Built in 1913, this street was designed with a grassy pedestrian median, reflecting the meaning of "esplanade" as a place for walking. It connects Mamaroneck Avenue to Hathaway Lane. The eastern portion, beyond Macy Avenue and Hotel Drive, was originally known as Wellington Road but was renamed in 1947 to unify the street under one name. The roadway was accepted as a public street in two stages: the original section in 1924, and the former Wellington Road section in 1927.

Ridgeway

Ridgeway is one of the oldest roadways running through Gedney Farms. The name reflects the ridge of high ground the road follows across the landscape, a natural route that long predates the neighborhood.

In 1740, John Gedney (1695-1766), a descendant of the extensive Gedney family, purchased 116 acres from William Marsh for £400, establishing what became known as Gedney Farm. He built a home for his family on Mamaroneck Avenue, across from today's Gedney Esplanade. Under the Gedneys' stewardship, the area became a productive and prominent farmstead, and Ridgeway was carved from that farmland, retaining much of its original configuration today.

By the early 19th century, Bartholomew Gedney (1802-1897) resided on Ridgeway at "Gedney Hall." His estate represented the continuing presence of the Gedney family, whose holdings expanded across much of the surrounding area and remained under family ownership until 1903.

At the turn of the 20th century, Howard Willets purchased roughly 300 acres of former Gedney property for his estate. Ridgeway formed one of its main boundaries, lined with stables, training grounds, and service buildings.

When the Willets estate evolved into the Gedney Farm Hotel and Country Club beginning in 1912, and later into the residential neighborhood developed through the 1920s, Ridgeway remained a defining feature, linking every era of Gedney Farms' history from its agricultural beginnings to the present day.

Burling Avenue

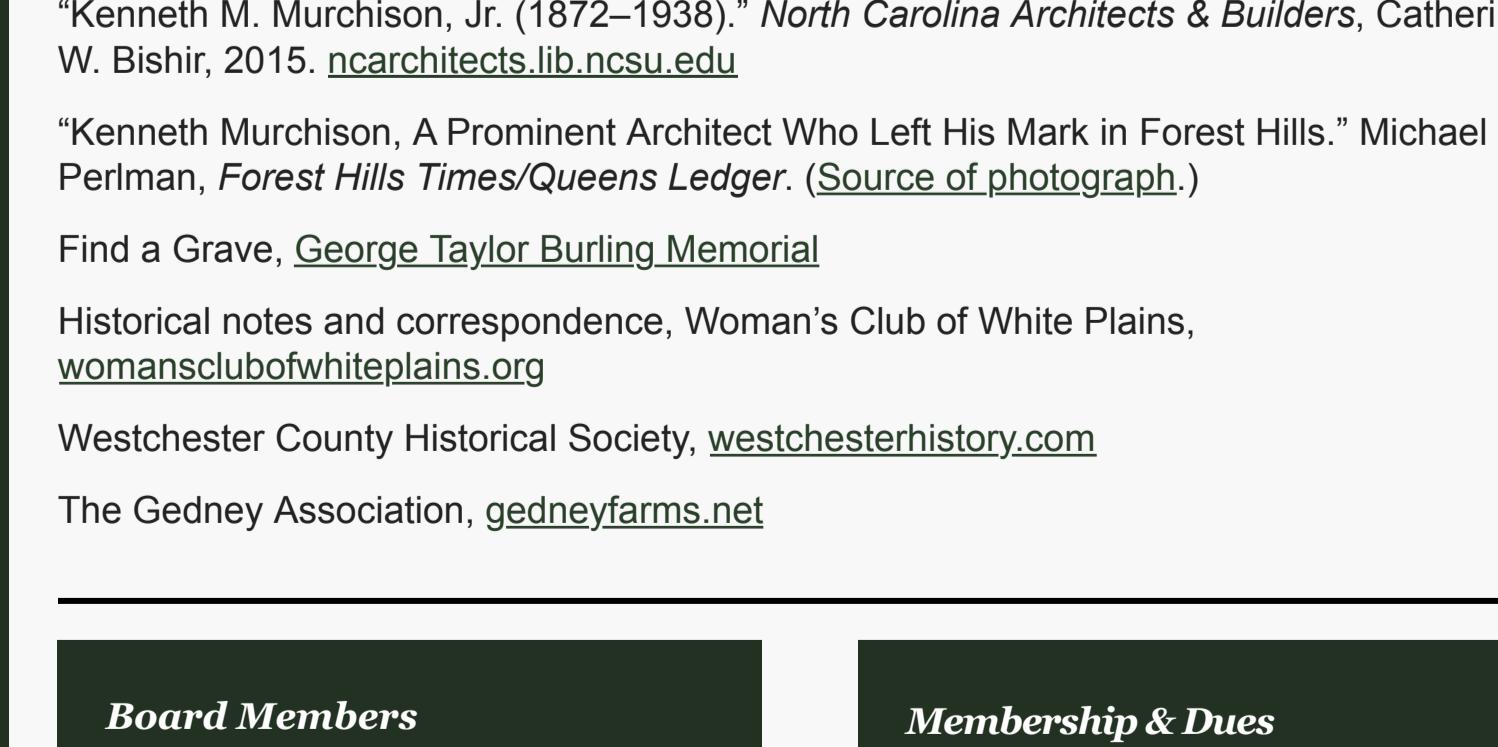
Named for George T. Burling, one of the first residents to purchase property in Gedney Farms in 1913. Burling was a banker who served as Westchester County Treasurer for fifteen years and later became a New York State Senator, playing an active role in civic and financial affairs in the region. His daughter, Caroline, married L. Ward Prince, one of the developers of the neighborhood, linking the Burling family directly to the formation of Gedney Farms. The street was accepted as a public roadway in 1924.



GEO. T. BURLING
25th DIST.

Heatherbloom Road

Named for Heatherbloom, the celebrated high-jumping horse owned by Howard Willets, whose estate once occupied much of Gedney Farms. Heatherbloom became a national sensation in the early 1900s. Trained locally by Richard Donnelly, he won the Middleweight Hunter Championship at Madison Square Garden and set an official high-jump record of 7'10 1/2", with two widely reported unofficial jumps over eight feet, including one at Gedney Farm. Before the neighborhood was developed, the roadway that is now Heatherbloom Road served as the driveway to Willets's original mansion, a four-story, hundred-room estate once described as among the finest private residences in the country.



Heatherbloom: A Modern Pegasus is a painting by C.W. Anderson

Hathaway Lane

Named for racing champion Hathaway, one of Howard Willets's horses used during his years as Master of Foxhounds of the Westchester Hounds, this road follows the route of an early estate access drive leading in from North Street. After Willets's original home near today's Heatherbloom Road burned in 1909, he rebuilt nearby, at what is now 25 Hathaway Lane, making this approach central to the estate. The road was accepted as public in 1927, and its eastern portion was merged into Bryant Avenue in 1934, giving it its present shape.

Hotel Drive

What is now a quiet residential street was once the grand entrance drive to the Gedney Farm Hotel, a luxury resort built in 1913 on the former Willets estate. Designed by architect Kenneth M. Murchison, the hotel incorporated Willets's famous stables into a striking French château-style complex, complete with two silo towers. Guests arrived along this drive by chauffeured automobile or via the New York, Westchester & Boston Railway, which had a station at 25 Hathaway Lane. After Willets's original home burned in 1909, he rebuilt nearby, at what is now 25 Hathaway Lane, making this approach central to the estate. The road was accepted as public in 1927, and its eastern portion was merged into Bryant Avenue in 1934, giving it its present shape.

Murchison Place

Murchison for Kenneth M. Murchison (September 29, 1872 - December 15, 1938), the architect who recognized the Beaux-Arts architectural style and became known for major civic and railroad buildings across the country. His wife, Muriel Murchison, was also one of the founders of Westchester Hills.

Macy Avenue

Named for Mary Macy, the first wife of Howard Willets, whose family descended from the early Nantucket Quaker merchant Macys, known for their role in New England's maritime and whaling trade. Mary died in 1893, many years before Gedney Farms was developed. The street name reflects the Macy family's personal history and early ties to the neighborhood.

Oxford Road

After a fire destroyed Willets's first Gedney Farm mansion, he rebuilt nearby. His new home was completed in 1905 at what was then 10 Oxford Road (today 25 Hathaway Lane).

Robinhood Road and Little John Place

Named for a pair of carriage horses, Robinhood and Little John, that once served guests at the historic Gedney Farm Hotel.

Richbell Road

The name Richbell combines the last name Rich (the maiden name of Ethel Bell, his wife) and the name of the horse, Richbell. The name was chosen for its estate-like character, though this connection remains unconfirmed.

Why These Names Matter

Taken together, these street names tell the story of Gedney Farms, from farmland to country estate, to hotel/resort, and finally to the neighborhood we live in today. They remind us that our landscape has a history, and the character of Gedney Farms is rooted not only in its architecture and open space, but in the names we see every day on the corners.

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Membership & Dues

Annual membership dues of \$45

support the Gedney Association and Gedney Farms's historical and

preservation efforts.

Your membership also helps fund

neighborhood events like the **Fall Family**

[Festival](#).

Click here to learn more and explore payment options.

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