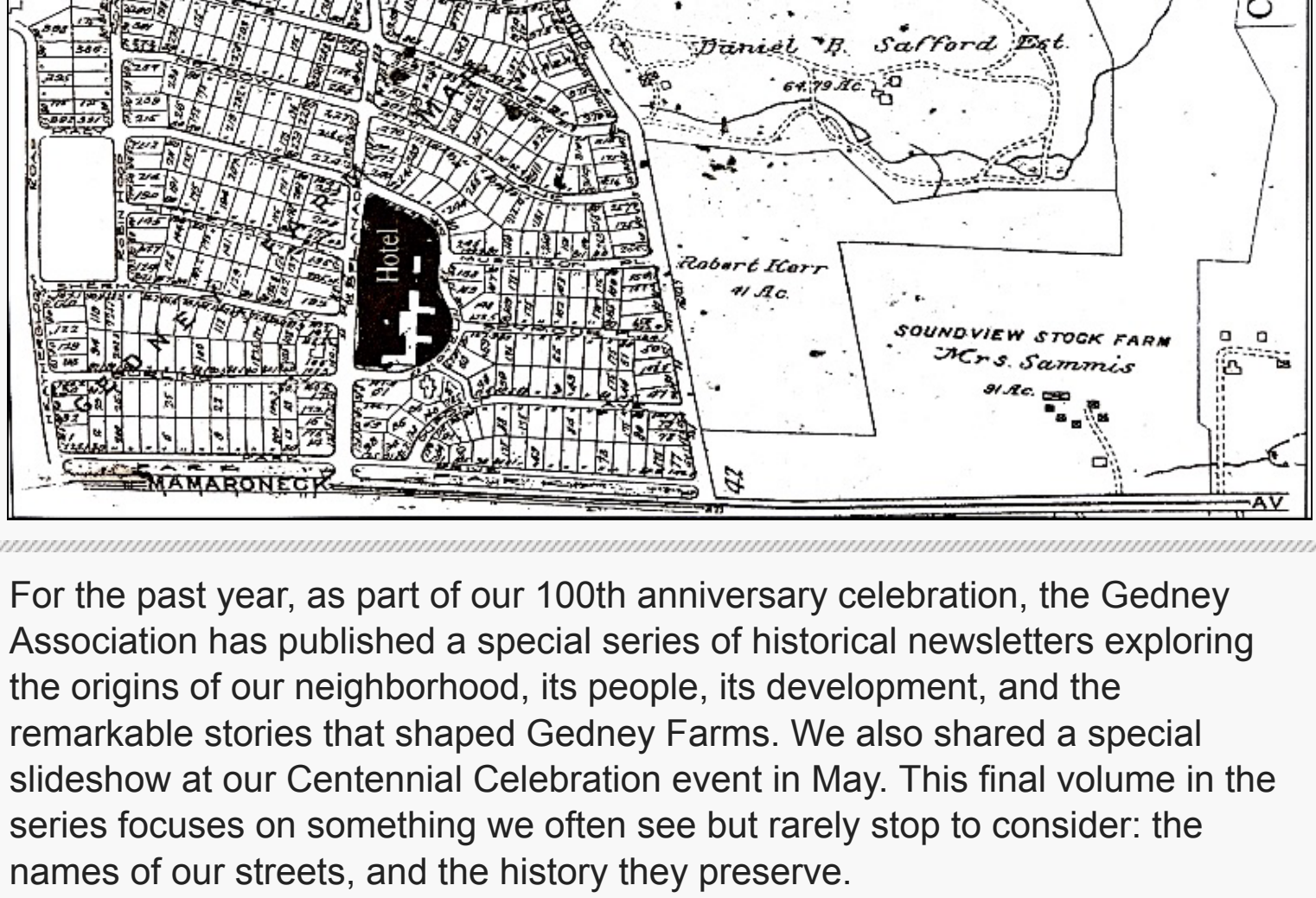




The Gedney Association: Celebrating 100 Years  
Volume 5: *What's in a Name? The Stories Behind the Streets of Gedney Farms*  
December 2025



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  
25<sup>th</sup> 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 7'10½", 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

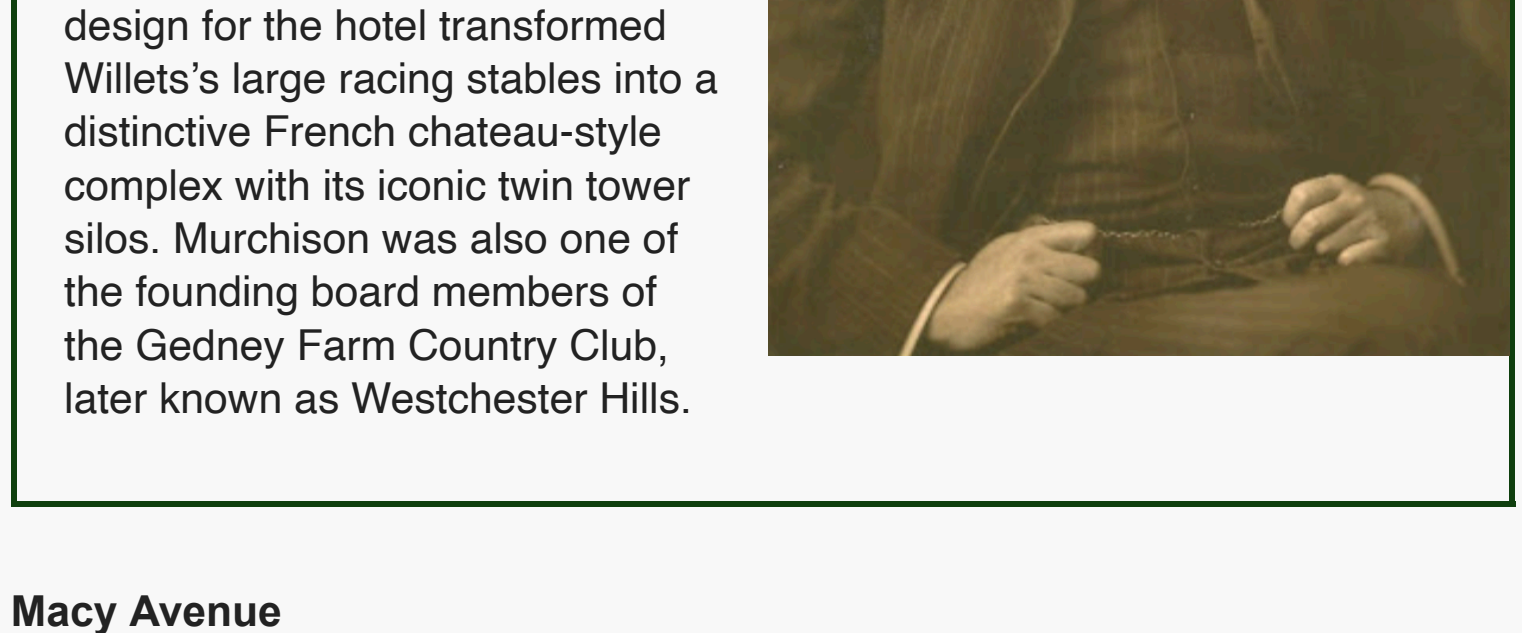
**Hathaway Lane**

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 chateau-style complex, complete with its two silo towers. Guests arrived along this drive by chauffeured automobile or via the New York, Westchester & Boston Railway, which had a station at Gedney Way offering direct service from New York City. Though the hotel was destroyed by fire in 1924, Hotel Drive still follows the same approach that once welcomed its guests.




**Murchison Place**

Named for Kenneth M. Murchison (September 29, 1872 – December 15, 1938), the architect who designed the Gedney Farm Hotel. Murchison was a nationally recognized Beaux-Arts architect known for major civic and railroad buildings across the country. His design for the hotel transformed Willets's large racing stables into a distinctive French chateau-style complex with its iconic twin tower silos. Murchison was also one of the founding board members of the Gedney Farm Country Club, later known as Westchester Hills.



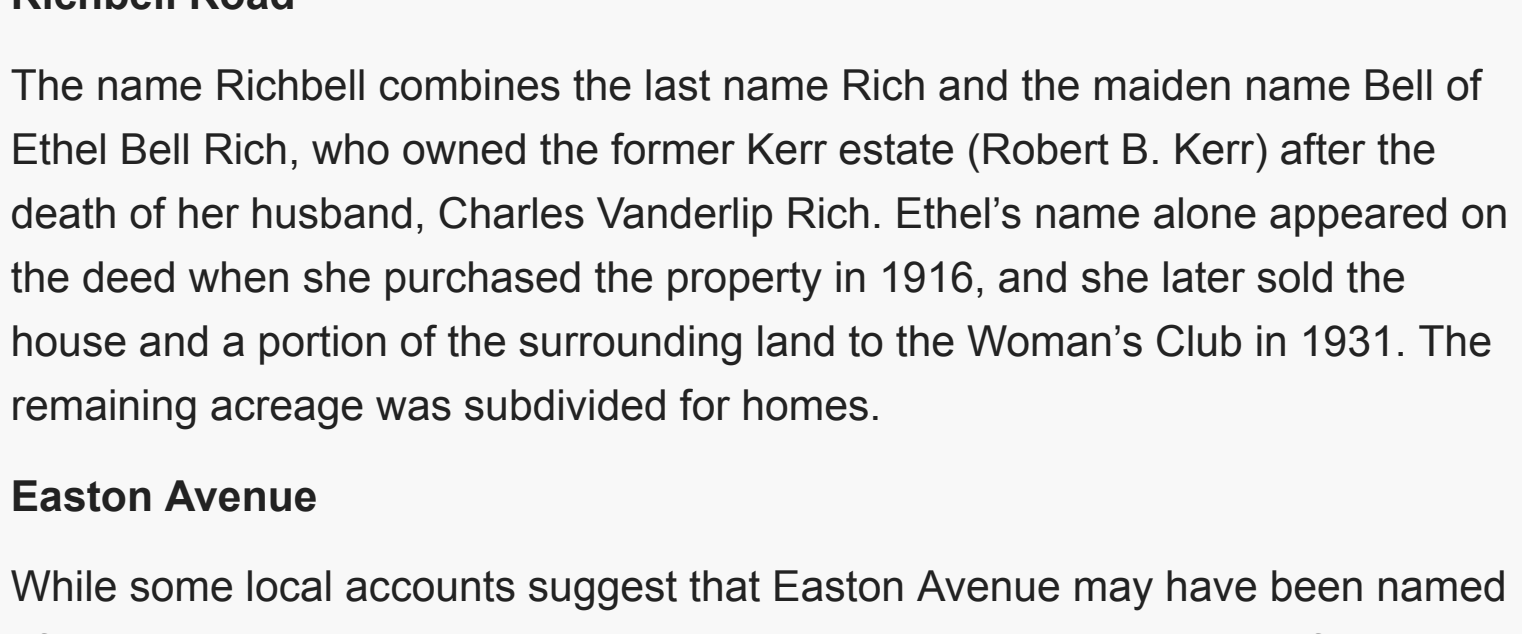
**Macy Avenue**

Named for Mary Macy Willets, 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 Willets family's personal history and early ties that predate the neighborhood.



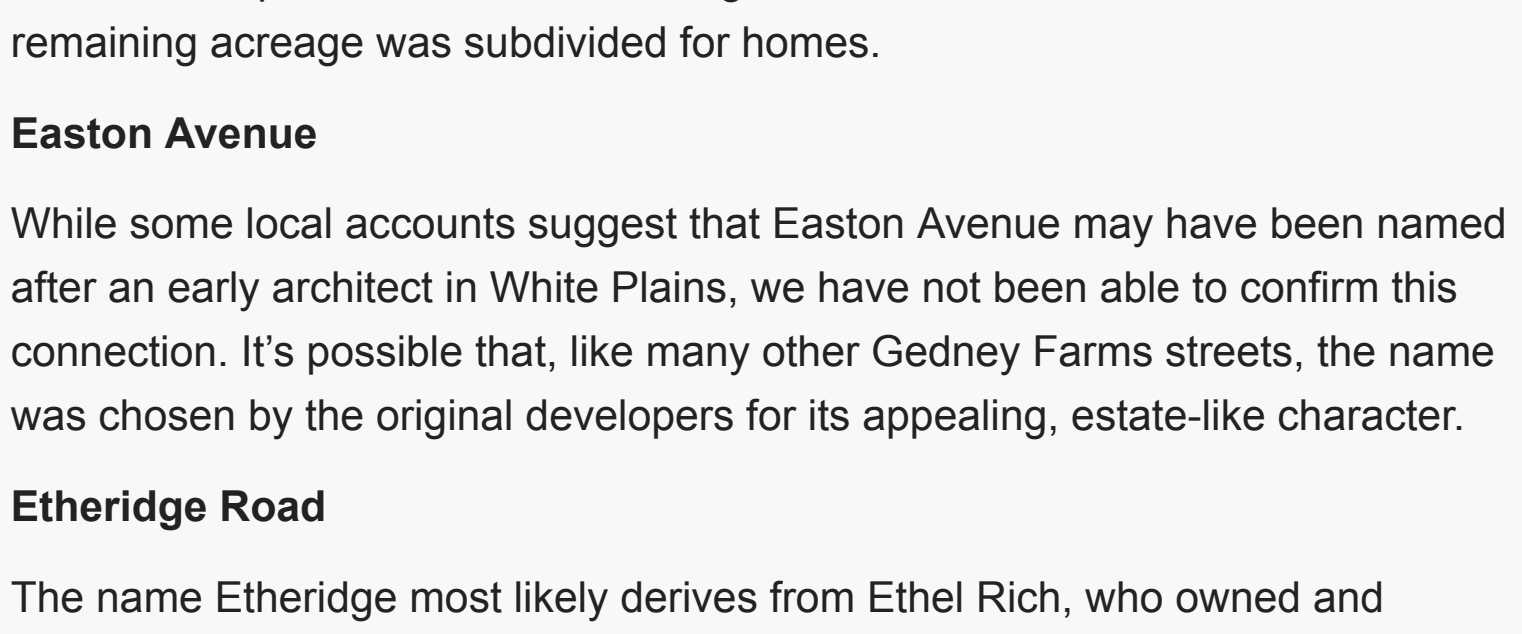
**Oxford Road**

After a fire destroyed Willets's first Gedney Farm mansion, he rebuilt nearby. His new home was completed in 1909 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.



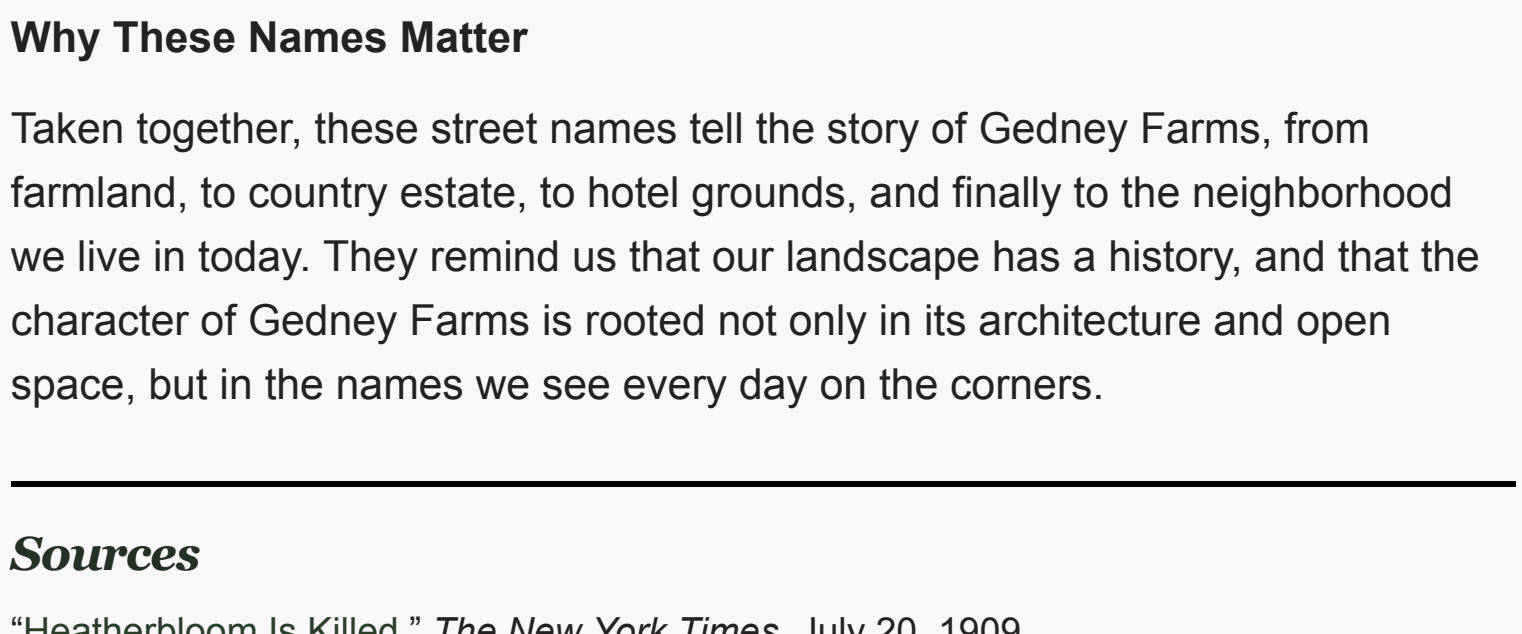
**Richbell Road**

The name Richbell combines the last name Rich and the maiden name Bell of Ethel Bell Rich, who owned the former Kerr estate (Robert B. Kerr) after the death of her husband, Charles Vanderlip Rich. Ethel's name alone appeared on the deed when she purchased the property in 1916, and she later sold the house and a portion of the surrounding land to the Woman's Club in 1931. The remaining acreage was subdivided for homes.



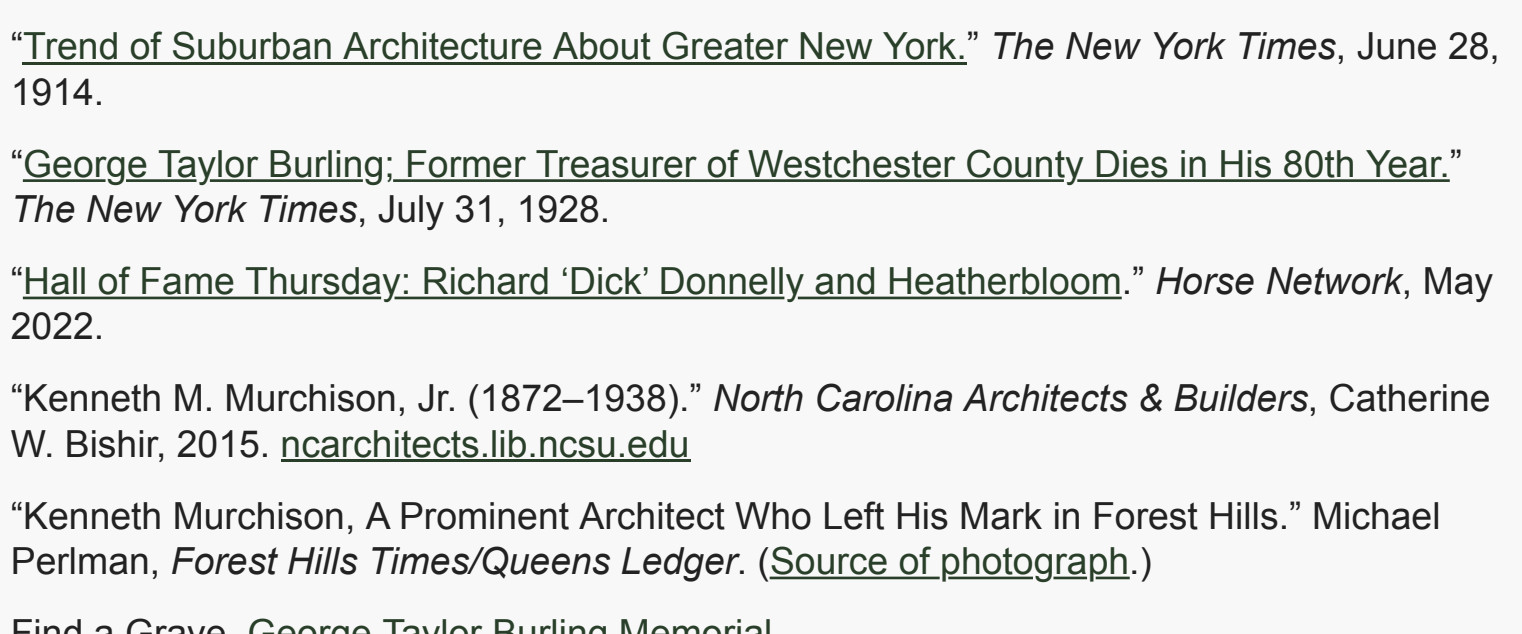
**Easton Avenue**

While some local accounts suggest that Easton Avenue may have been named after an early architect in White Plains, we have not been able to confirm this connection. It's possible that, like many other Gedney Farms streets, the name was chosen by the original developers for its appealing, estate-like character.



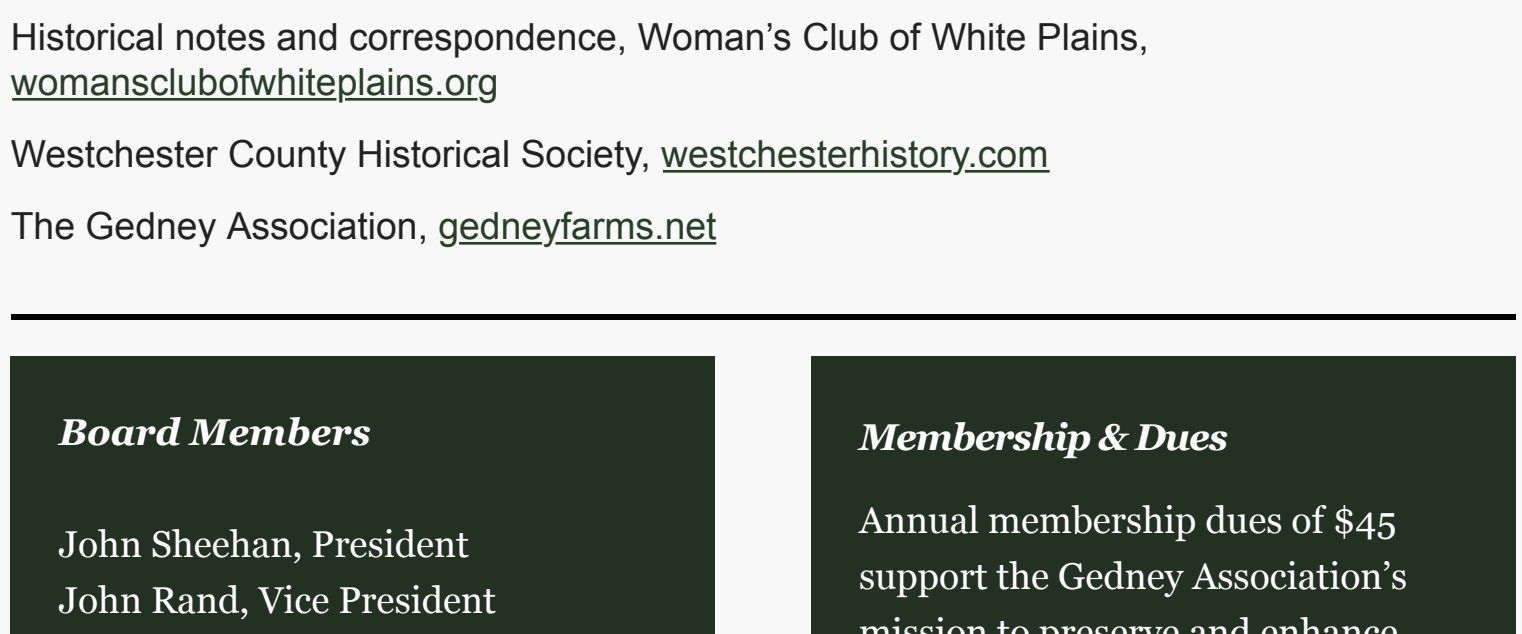
**Etheridge Road**

The name Etheridge most likely derives from Ethel Rich, who owned and subdivided this portion of land during the 1920s. At the time, developers often created street names by blending the owner's name with natural features; "Ethel" + "ridge" fits that convention and the period when Ethel Bell Rich began selling parts of her estate. *Some accounts propose that the name derived from "Ethel Easton," wife of an early White Plains architect, 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 grounds, and finally to the neighborhood we live in today. They remind us that our landscape has a history, and that 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's mission to preserve and enhance Gedney Farms' historical and residential character.  
  
Your membership also helps fund neighborhood events like the **100th Anniversary** and **Fall Family Festival**.  
  
**Click here** to learn more and explore payment options.

