



The New Town Crier

Official Newsletter of the Historical Society of Bloomfield



BLOOMFIELD, NEW JERSEY 07003

MARCH 2011

SAVE THE DATE

NEXT MEETING

TUESDAY, MARCH 22, 2011

The meeting will be held at

BLOOMFIELD CIVIC CENTER

84 Broad Street, Bloomfield, NJ

8:00 PM

THE PASSAIC RIVER: 81 MILES OF HISTORY

Presented by

PHIL JAEGER

This program follows the Passaic River through seven counties from its source in Mendham to its end at Newark Bay with an emphasis on historic activities and structures along the river in past centuries. The focus is on topics such as: early mills, Glacial Lake Passaic, the first successful test of a submarine, extant Native American art and constructions, the country's first industrial city and the heroic exploits of the "great descender" Sam Patch.

Phil Jaeger, renowned local historian, will take us on a journey from the past to the present. Through pictures and words, experience New Jersey like it used to be. Drawing on a personal collection of more than 5,000 postcards, historical maps and documents, as well as his own photographs, Mr. Jaeger has created historical programs that are as enjoyable as they are informative. His programs have drawn rave reviews from organizations all over New Jersey.

A former high school mathematics teacher, Mr. Jaeger is a trustee of the Passaic County and Cedar Grove Historical Societies. He is also a member and a former director of the Canal Society of New Jersey.

CALLING ALL BENGALS: BHS CENTENNIAL WANTS YOU!

The Bloomfield Educational Foundation (BEF) will be celebrating Bloomfield High School's Centennial Anniversary on Saturday April 16, 2011 at the Villa on Route 46 in Mountain Lakes, NJ. Please join the large gathering of Bengals who will be enjoying the Centennial Celebration at the lavish cocktail hour and dinner that will feature open bar, Viennese hour and entertainment. Arrangements have been made for those who wish to stay overnight. As we go to press, over 300 attendees have registered. Reservations are quickly filling up so please visit the website to sign up at: www.bloomfieldeducationalfoundation.org.

BLOOMFIELD
Educational ★ Foundation

MEET THE AUTHORS

You are cordially invited to meet *Bloomfield* and *Bloomfield Revisited* authors Frederick Branch and Jean Kuras, as well as *Bloomfield* author and *Weird New Jersey* editor Mark Scurman in the Bloomfield Library Theatre (90 Broad St.) on Sunday, March 27 at 2p.m. The authors will share stories about the writing experience with the audience and participate in a question & answer session. Following the talk, audience members are invited to visit the Museum of the Historical Society of Bloomfield, located on the 2nd floor of the Children's Library.



The Morris Canal aqueduct over the Passaic River in Little Falls, NJ was constructed of brownstone from a quarry a short distance downstream. Completed in 1829, the aqueduct was blasted to pieces in 1925. Its destruction was considered by Alvin Harlow, a canal historian, to be "an act of violence."

FROM THE RUSSELL COLLECTION

Visit our web site at <http://hsob.org/russell> to see more historic photos from the Russell Collection.

Can you identify these Bloomfield houses from approximately 100 years ago?

Both of these houses are within two blocks of the site of the Morris Canal, one in South Bloomfield and one in Central Bloomfield. Email answers to info@bloomfieldhistorical.org



N134

Lost Bloomfield



N53



67 Franklin Street was replaced by the apartment building on the right.

More houses from the Russell Collection

These houses are still in Bloomfield



67 Franklin Street, February, 2011.

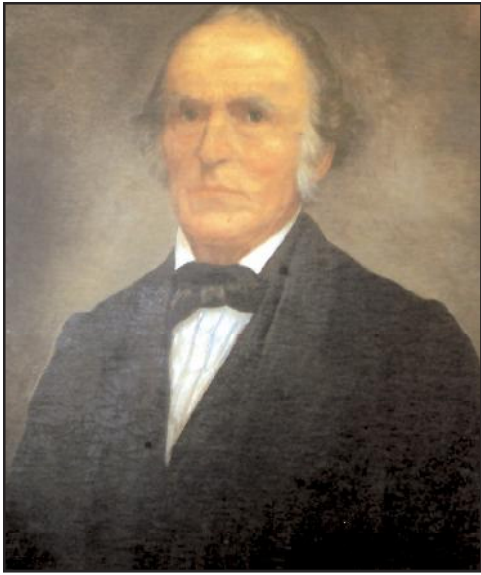


155 Willard Avenue



110 Newark Avenue (corner of Newark Ave. and Berkeley Ave.)

SQUIRE ELIPHALET HALL (1796-1856)



Portrait of Eliphalet Hall (Nov. 1796-Aug. 1856). The painting was donated in May of 1993 by Mr. William Condit of Jamesburg, NJ and is now housed in the HSOB Museum.

Judge Eliphalet Hall was an important citizen of mid-nineteenth century Bloomfield who seems to have “fallen into the cracks” of history. He lived in a house on Oakland Avenue, which is now the property of former member of the HSOB, Mr. Alan Slaughter. Judge Hall served as Overseer of the Poor and presided as President of the Township Committee, a group of civic-minded leading citizens that preceded our present form of town government. Town Committee Meetings were usually held in his home; public meetings of the Committee were held at the 1840 Parish House of the Church on the Green. In fact, these meetings were held there so often that, at one time, the Town claimed ownership of the building.

Judge Hall also handled real estate transactions and it was he who transferred property at the corner of Williamson Avenue and Belleville Avenue to David Oakes I in the 1850s. In 1875, David Oakes' son, Thomas II, built an imposing mansion on the southwest corner that survived recently as the Murray Funeral Home (now the site of the Renex Dialysis Clinic of Bloomfield—*editor's note*).

After Judge Hall's death, the house on Oakland Ave. changed hands and finally became the family home of Silas Stiles, who was related to David Oakes through his marriage to Sarah Oakes Stiles. When Mr. Slaughter removed a fireplace mantel during some remodeling, documents were discovered that related to the Oakes family. They were somewhat of a puzzle to local historians, unaware of the connection. A trip to Bloomfield Cemetery disclosed that the Oakes and Stiles families were related through marriage and that their burial plots in the “Cove Section” of the Cemetery are adjacent.

Also related to the Oakes family are the Caleb Baldwins, whose home stood until the 1950s (?) on the current site of the Nevada Diner on 293 Broad Street. A casualty of the Battle of Cedar Creek in Virginia near the close of the U.S. Civil War was William Baldwin, whose impressive monument stands in the Stiles family plot. A reply to a letter of inquiry from David Oakes to Private (?) Baldwin's commanding officer at Alexandria, Virginia, concerning the family's desire to return the mortal remains of his nephew to New Jersey

regretfully disclosed that they could not be found.

A daughter of Judge Hall, Catherine Louisa Hall, married David Wilmot Smith in 1846; their children were Walter, Horace, Charles, Spencer, Jennie, Julia (who married George M. Condit) and Laura.

David Wilmot Smith had received an education in the schools of Bloomfield. He began his business career in the employment of David Oakes, a prominent Bloomfield manufacturer of the times. In 1859, Smith took charge of a woolen mill in Basking Ridge, New Jersey, where he continued in business for five years, most of that time devoting himself to the manufacture of kerseys (coarse cloth) for use in the army. At the close of the Civil War, Smith established a painting decorating business which he conducted until his death.

Judge Hall was also connected to the Dodd family, possibly more than once. Further research has to be done, but Sarah Hall, daughter of Eliphalet Hall and Electa (Ward) Hall, is listed in the Dodd Genealogy of 1940 as married to Albert Dodd. —*Frederick Branch*



The Hall House on Oakland Avenue.



General Joseph Bloomfield

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OF BLOOMFIELD

90 Broad Street
Bloomfield, New Jersey 07003
Tel: 973-743-8844

E-mail: info@bloomfieldhistorical.org
www.bloomfieldhistorical.org

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Richard Rockwell, *Assistant Editor*

PHOTO DIGITIZING BY

Richard Rockwell

LAYOUT BY

Roseann Ratz

~ THE WELCOME MAT ~

A cordial welcome is extended to the following new members of The Historical Society of Bloomfield. We hope you will take note of our many activities and participate in as many as you choose.

Nicholas D'Angelo, *Brookline, MA*

Mark Davies, *Bloomfield*

Christopher DiGuilio, *Bloomfield*

Celeste A. Gagliard, *Bloomfield*

Richard & Mary Galassini, *Gibbsboro, NJ*

Tony Karpinski, *No. Attleboro, MA*

Dr. Victoria S. T. Larson, *Bloomfield*

Jill Maguire, *Bloomfield*

Russ & Ava Regal, *Bloomfield*

Clare Duggan Rizzolo, *Florham Park, NJ*

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

It was with great regret that the Board accepted Fred Branch's resignation as Newsletter editor, and with an overflowing sense of appreciation, gratitude and admiration for a job well done.

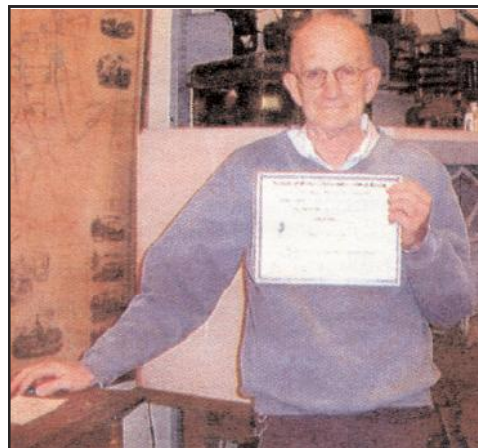
Several years ago, former President Ina Campbell asked Fred if he would consider resuming publication of the Society's Newsletter. Because Fred takes time whenever he is asked, always giving of himself, the Newsletter was brought back. And wow, was it brought back! Fred championed the Newsletter. He was its captain, engine and crew. His energy, skill, flair and zest produced a Newsletter that was chosen best by the League of Historical Societies in 2006. The Newsletter flourished and brought an avalanche of cheers and appreciation.

We celebrated with delight that Fred's gifts were put to such good use for the Society's benefit. He left the Newsletter a better place because he was there. We have long accepted his best, and now we wish him all the best.

Welcome Ava!

How pleased we are to welcome Ava Caridad as editor of the Newsletter! Her talents, skills and enthusiasm, animated by a love of history, promise an interesting future for the Newsletter.

Jean Kuras



Fred Branch

A QUIET VISTA

Looking down a country road at the turn-of-the-century? Close, but no cigar. The above was taken in 2000, not 1900, and the "road" is the abandoned right-of-way of the Newark and Watchung Railway, later known as the Orange Branch of the Erie. Through the 1950s, the 8:05 from The Oranges stopped here to discharge passengers at the station just behind this point of view. From the platform, commuters ascended a stairway to Arlington Avenue and Watsessing Center, their final destinations usually either the General Electric Company (employing 2,000 people) or the Lamp Division of the Westinghouse Corporation (employing 6,000 people), or other smaller places of business in the area. The last few cars of the long train blocked nearby Lawrence Street, and any employees hurrying to GE could count on being late once the gates went down.

The gates are now down for good, the tracks are gone, and the scene is pretty much what it must have been in 1856, before the "iron horse" disturbed the peace and quiet of this bucolic area with its raucous whistle.

Frederick Branch



A Quiet Vista