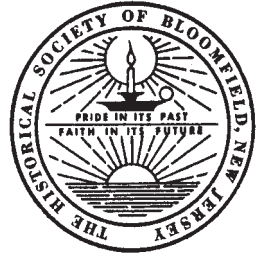




The New Town Crier



Official Newsletter of the Historical Society of Bloomfield

BLOOMFIELD, NEW JERSEY 07003

MAY 2011

SAVE THE DATE

NEXT MEETING

TUESDAY, MAY 24, 2011

The meeting will be held at

BLOOMFIELD CIVIC CENTER

84 Broad Street, Bloomfield, NJ

8:00 PM

THE ROEBLING LEGACY

Presented by

CLIFFORD W. ZINK

This program will present highlights from Mr. Zink's new book, *The Roebling Legacy*, focusing on the Roeblings' New York Bridges: Brooklyn Bridge, Williamsburg Bridge, Manhattan Bridge, Bear Mountain Bridge and the George Washington Bridge. The author will be signing copies of the book, which will be available for purchase. Information on the book and a Look Inside preview is available at: www.roeblinglegacy.com.

The Roebling story spans more than 200 years from John A. Roebling's birth in Germany in 1806, and it encompasses four generations of Roeblings manufacturing innovative products in Trenton that helped shape modern life and build landmark bridges, including the Golden Gate Bridge. Along the way, the Roeblings employed tens of thousands of workers in New Jersey, created America's first sports car and built the model company town of Roebling, NJ, which now has a new Roebling Museum.

Mr. Zink is a preservation consultant and historian specializing in architectural, industrial and landscape history. His first book, *Spanning the Industrial Age: The John A. Roebling's Sons Company, Trenton N.J. 1848-1974*, summarized the history of the Roebling wire rope business. His

BHS CENTENNIAL SENTIMENTS

On April 16, nearly 400 Bloomfield High School alumni, former and current faculty members and township officials swarmed the grand ballroom at The Villa in Mountain Lakes for the school's 100-year anniversary celebration. The four-hour gala, dubbed the "reunion of all reunions" by host Bloomfield Educational Foundation (BEF), welcomed generations of Bengals from the class of 1936 to the class of 2013.

"It was just a little old town," said Helene Geyer Schautz, 92, of growing up in Bloomfield in the 1930s. "I was on the gym team (back then) and when we had our exhibitions, all the boys came—and I married one of them."

Harold Itkin (class of '67) received a plaque for establishing a football scholarship awarded to the most dedicated Bengal. Tom Dowd, arguably the district's first and only former superintendent born in Bloomfield, received the coveted BEF Founders Award, presented by Chairman Emeritus Joseph Kliminski.

"Every day I spent in Bloomfield, whether as a resident or as an educator, it was a day of joy," said Dowd, a former Berkeley Elementary teacher and principal at Carteret Elementary.

A group of alumni met with BHS Principal Chris Jennings on the day for a tour of the high school, which underwent a multi-million dollar transformation to become a state-of-the-art facility. A

particularly jarring site for some visitors was the now-flattened Foley Field, where BHS had traditionally held its graduation for decades. The historic concrete bleachers were demolished in late February, leaving behind a startling hole near the John F. Kennedy Drive North spot.

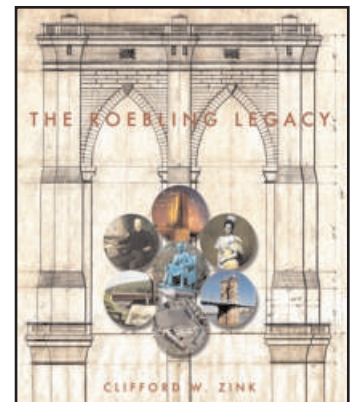
Mike Napolitano, VP of the Foley Field Restoration Committee, said at the gala that they were going to try to incorporate elements of the old bleachers into any new design that gets passed. The committee hopes to build a three-tiered grandstand on the field—complete with "Foley Field" written in iconic red lettering—with the \$900,000 Green Acres state grant the township could receive.

—Lia Eustachewich, *Bloomfield Patch*
(photo by Warren Westura)



Miriam Adams Scurman (left, Class of '37) and Helene Geyer Schautz (right, Class of '36) were the oldest BHS graduates to attend the event. Geyer Schautz still lives in town on Essex Ave. Three generations of the Scurman family were there—all of them BHS graduates—including BEF Chairman Michael Scurman.

second book, *The Hackensack Water Works*, described the quest to develop a safe water supply at the turn of the 20th Century in a rapidly growing suburb, and the book won awards from Bergen County and the State of New Jersey. His third book, *The Monmouth County Park System: The First Fifty Years*, related the race to preserve open space during the postwar boom. Mr. Zink is currently working on a book on the Somerset County Park System.



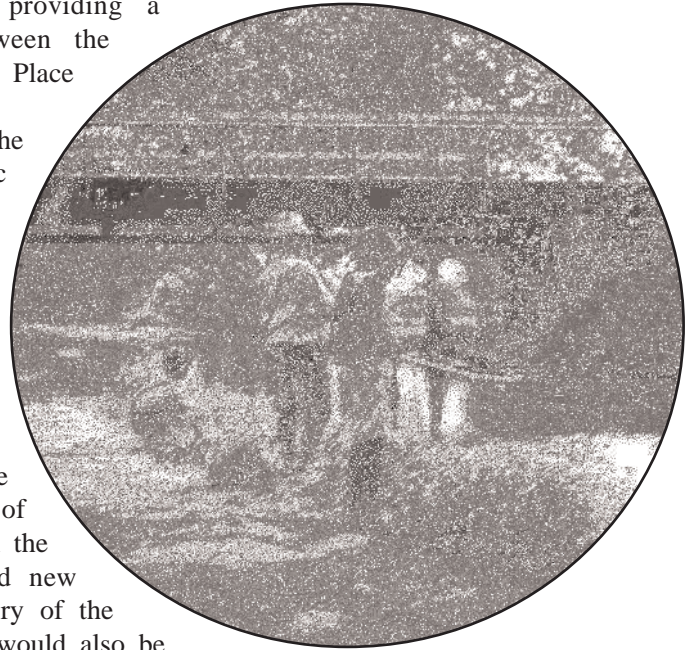
BERKELEY AVENUE BRIDGE



horizontal alignment. It was proposed that the new bridge be lower, providing a smoother transition between the Cedar Street and Jerome Place intersections.

Proposed impacts to the Morris Canal Historic District include the removal and replacement of the existing riveted steel plate throughout the girder superstructure, substructure and piers. Impacts would be mitigated through historic documentation of the bridge, inclusion of architectural treatments on the replacement structure and new signs explaining the history of the Morris Canal. Provisions would also be made for the monitoring and documentation of archeological finds discovered during construction, which is slated to begin in Oct. 2012 and end in Sept. 2013.

These two photographs of the Berkeley Avenue Bridge are from the Rev. Wilson S. Phraner Collection of *Magic Lantern Slides* graciously donated to the Historical Society by Rev. Phraner's grandson, David Phraner. Visit the HSOB website at <http://hsob.org/phraner> to view more of the photos from Rev. Phraner's Collection. A further collection of bridge photos can be found at <http://hsob.org/bridge/>



The Berkeley Avenue Bridge, built in 1922 in the final years of the Morris Canal's operation, is one of two known existing road bridges built to span the Canal. It is a contributing structure to the Morris Canal Historic District listed on both the National and New Jersey Registers of Historic Places. (*On the Level, No 102, May 2009, The Canal Society of NJ.*)

On March 16, a Public Information meeting was held at Fairview School concerning "Proposed Improvements for the Berkeley Avenue Bridge over the Second River & the Morris Canal." The \$2.8 million project involves the replacement of the existing bridge with a more modern two-span bridge on a slightly improved

CAN YOU IDENTIFY?

In our March 2011 issue, we asked readers to identify these existing Bloomfield houses from approximately 100 years ago. Could you do it? Here are the answers:



N134 is 31 Almira Street (near the Nevada Diner off of Broad Street).



N53 is 230 Franklin Street (Corner of Franklin and Berkeley Place).

IS YOUR HOUSE HAUNTED?

We're guessing the answer is *Yes!* For our October issue, the HSOB wants to know what Bloomfield homes can lay claim to peculiar, eerie or spectral goings on. If things go bump in the night, if your cat refuses to enter the nursery, if your dining room has cold spots even in the dog days of August, we want to share your story. Send manuscripts or story ideas with your contact information to: info@bloomfieldhistorical.org or mail to HSOB Museum, c/o Bloomfield Public Library, 90 Broad St., Bloomfield, NJ 07003. Please mark submissions *Attention Editor*.



The former residents of this Berkeley Avenue home, built circa 1909, claim groceries used to fly out of cabinets and across the kitchen of their own accord. Half the household claimed poltergeist activity; the other half attributed the uncanny projectiles to over-stocked shelves.

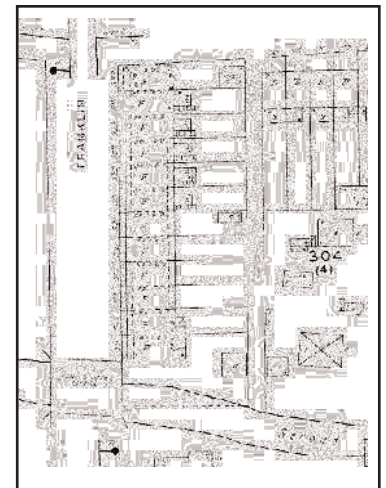
LOST BLOOMFIELD



From the Russell Collection: These buildings were replaced by the Garden State Parkway, but they were in poor condition at the time. From Russell's real estate card when #s 315, 317, 319 and 321 were for sale: "Each have 12 rooms, sewer connection, toilet in basement, water and sink on first floor; also second floor. Price \$16,000 for the four houses. Also six houses on the same block at \$4,000 each." (#s 323, 325, 327, 329, 331 and 333)



The location in 2010, near Dunkin' Donuts (formerly the notorious, much-missed Short Stop Diner).



The original buildings as shown on a 1938 Sanborn map.



General Joseph Bloomfield

THE NEW TOWN CRIER

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF BLOOMFIELD

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Ava Caridad & Frederick Branch,

I have for many years enjoyed receiving The New Town Crier and have had particular interest in any mention of the Oakes and their related families. I have always felt that the facts were carefully researched and that care was taken before publication. However, the [March 2011] newsletter and the article about Eliphalet Hall has left me with many questions.

1. Could you explain further the "imposing mansion" that was built by Thomas Oakes II at the SW corner of Williamson Ave. and Belleville Ave? I am familiar with a house that was in that area that was a duplicate (in reverse) of 240 Belleville Ave. Is that the house you mean? I thought that it had been torn down when the [Garden State] Parkway was built.

2. You mention the Caleb Baldwin as being related to the Oakes family. That may be. However, the two relations that I know of are Abigail H. Baldwin, daughter of Simeon and Elizabeth Ward Baldwin, who was the wife of David Oakes I. Also, Georgia Augusta Oakes married William Augustus Baldwin in 1898. She was a granddaughter of David Oakes I.

3. You write of a William Baldwin who died in the Civil War and is buried in the Stiles plot. I believe you mean William S. Pierson who has an "impressive monument" in the Pierson plot adjacent to the Stiles plot. His monument says "A member of the First Minnesota Regiment, was wounded at the Battle of Bull Run, July 21, and died at Richmond, VA, Aug 18, 1861. Aged 20 years." He was the son of Horace Pierson and Rhoda Ann Smith. Rhoda died and Horace married Mary

Oakes, sister of David Oakes I, when William was 3 years old in 1844. Thus, he was a step-nephew of David Oakes I. Further research has shown that William died as a prisoner. Is the response to the letter of inquiry something that is at the Historical Society?

Thanks so much for all your years of wonderful work and dedication.

Pamela Oakes Felton

(Great-great granddaughter of David Oakes I)

As retiring editor of the HSOB Newsletter, is disconcerting to find that a gigantic error has happened in my final article: the Eliphalet Hall essay in the March 2011 issue of this newsletter. Mrs. Pamela Oakes Felton has rightfully objected to the goof and has written to The Society about this error in her family history (reproduced above). The Union soldier was indeed a relative of David Oakes, but he was not William Baldwin. Mr. Pierson had a son by his first wife. When she died, he remarried Mary Oakes, a sister of David Oakes. The reply to his letter of inquiry was given to the Historical Society by a former employee of the Oakes family who was present when the new owner of the Oakes Mill trashed all of the old files. Among the documents he rescued from the dumpster was a reply from a Union Officer in Alexandria, VA advising Mr. Oakes that Pierson's body could not be found and returned to Bloomfield for burial. The document was given to the Society by the employee's widow and is preserved somewhere in its files. Further details will be published in the October issue.

—*Frederick Branch*

NOMINEES FOR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR 2011 ELECTION

<u>Position</u>	<u>Candidate</u>
<i>President</i>	Jean Kuras
<i>Vice President, Program</i>	Joseph Barry, Jr.
<i>Treasurer/Membership</i>	Emma-Lou Czarnecki
<i>Recording Secretary</i>	Jane Bond
<i>Corresponding Secretary</i>	Mary Shoffner
<i>Curator</i>	Dorothy Johnson
<i>Trustees</i>	Ava Caridad Richard Rockwell Mary Shoffner Richard West

FROM THE PRESIDENT

CONSTITUTION CHANGE

Last year, the Board made a decision to combine the September and November general meetings into a meeting held in October. This decision came about after a discussion of promoting meeting attendance and how the calendar, including vacation times and holidays, affected attendance. October would become the Annual Meeting Month. This meant calling for a change in the constitution.

ARTICLE VI MEETINGS & ELECTIONS SECTION 1

From: Two or more meetings shall be held during the year as determined by the Executive Board, the annual meeting being in September.

To: Two or more meetings shall be held during the year as determined by the Executive Board, the annual meeting being in October.

The membership will be asked to vote upon this Constitutional change at the October meeting.