



The New Town Crier

Official Newsletter of the Historical Society of Bloomfield



BLOOMFIELD, NEW JERSEY 07003

May 2018

SAVE THE DATE

NEXT MEETING
Tuesday, May 22, 2018
7:30 PM

BLOOMFIELD CIVIC CENTER
84 Broad Street
Bloomfield, NJ

The International Arms & Fuze Company
Presented by
Dean Cole

Many of us can still remember the Charms candy factory at the corner of Bloomfield Ave. & Grove Street, but what is mostly forgotten today is that from mid-1915 to the end of 1918, the factory was home to one of the largest arms manufacturers in the U.S.—The International Arms & Fuze Company.

At its peak, it employed 10,000 workers, including over 4,000 women working night and day to produce millions of artillery shells and fuses for the allied war effort against Germany in World War One. The plant had its own railroad siding and water supply, as well as medical facilities, a laboratory and a cafeteria. The workers had their own band,



baseball team, bowling league and women's basketball team.

Initially, its presence in town aroused fears of explosions, fiery catastrophe and plummeting property values. In reality it brought tax revenue, employment, town improvements and the expansion of public transportation.

Join us on May 22 to learn more...

Mabel Sociable Club restoration

At its Feb. 26, 2018 meeting, the Bloomfield Township Council presented a proclamation to Bloomfield College and to Fallon & Pacheco Architects for their restoration of the Mabel Sociable Club building at 198 Liberty Street.

The Mabel Sociable Club was formed in 1866 and in 1870 completed construction of the Liberty Street property. In 1925, the building was expanded and became the George Morris School, part of the Bloomfield public schools system. It was purchased in 1978 by Bloomfield College to serve as its Student Center. In 2016, it was renovated and dedicated to the use of the College's Creative Arts & Technology Division.



“The Mabel Sociable Club is a piece of living history, and one of the oldest operational buildings in Bloomfield. As such, the Bloomfield Township Council and I agreed that any renovations had to complement the style of the period in which it was built,” said Mayor Michael Venezia. “The Mabel property is just the latest in a series of restorations in town made to preserve our architectural history.”

“The historic preservation of this iconic building will add to the

beauty and history of Bloomfield. The preservation of this property exemplifies attention to details and integrates the campus into our community” said Councilman Rich Rockwell, a board member on the Bloomfield Historic Preservation Commission and the VP of the Historical Society of Bloomfield.

“Bloomfield is one of the oldest Townships in Essex County, and its historic buildings are not only a great source of pride for everyone in town, but they also offer a view into a past that should be preserved, for educational and aesthetic purposes.”



• 3rd Annual Ice Cream Social on Sat., June 9, 11:00am–2:00pm!

The HSOB 3rd annual Ice Cream Social—FREE ice cream for all who visit the HSOB Museum (90 Broad St., 3rd fl. Children's Library).

• Vintage Baseball Game at Wrights Field on Saturday, Sept. 15!

The HSOB welcomes the Hoboken Nine—a vintage baseball club—at Wright's Field (180 Weaver Ave. Located at bottom of Baldwin Place). Free! HSOB.org

Whatever happened to 17 Brookside Place?

And for that matter, what happened to Brookside Place?

By Richard Rockwell



Above, I discovered this Nathan Russell photo labeled “17 Brookside Place.” I didn’t recognize that street name so I searched the 1906 map (below) and found Brookside Place.



Here is Brookside Place on the 1906 Mueller Atlas. It was off of Bloomfield Avenue near a brook across from Berkeley Avenue. The street is still there, across from Wendy’s fast-food restaurant, but it is now called La France Avenue.

Below is what those houses look like today. The three houses on the left—#s 31, 29 and 27 La France—are still standing, but the house that was numbered 17 Brookside Place is gone. I assumed it was demolished to create an entrance to American La France Fire Engine & Automobile Co.'s parking lot. Thanks to some co-sleuthing from Sally Peters Janett, who donated these photos along with her sister Nancy Peters McEntee, we discovered that the house wasn't demolished—it was moved about a block and a half away to 27 Elmwood Avenue. Sally's father



and uncle grew up in the house and it was in the Peters family for about 75 years. In 1920, when her father was three years old, the house was moved from La France Avenue to Elmwood Avenue to create an entrance to the American LaFrance factory.

Sally donated a set of photographs of the building of American LaFrance (see the March 2018 issue of *The New Town Crier* for more info). No one in the family recalls exactly how they acquired the photos, but during the Great Depression, Sally's grandparents took in boarders and her grandmother sold lunches to American LaFrance workers. One of the workers may have given the photographs to her.

Sally's uncle, Andrew Peters, was known in Bloomfield as "Mr. Science." When Andrew J. "Andy" Peters was the elementary science coordinator for the Bloomfield School System, he sponsored the first town-wide Science Fair in 1962 at Demarest School.

Mr. Peters had a long history of involvement in science education in Bloomfield. He was head of the Science Department at South Junior High in 1942 and served of Principal at Demarest School.



27 Elmwood Avenue as it looks today.



Mr. Andrew J. Peters

The Welcome Mat

A cordial welcome is extended to the following *new* members of The Historical Society of Bloomfield. We hope to see you at our next meeting:

Dan Leonard
West Orange, NJ

Katherine Meola
Palm Desert, CA

Philip Perry
Bloomfield

Patricia Smith
Bloomfield



General Joseph Bloomfield

THE NEW TOWN CRIER

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
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OF BLOOMFIELD

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Bloomfield, NJ 07003

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OFFICERS

- Jean Kuras, *President*
- Richard Rockwell, *Vice President/Program*
- Mary Shoffner, *Corresponding Secretary/Hospitality*
- Anne Carlino, *Recording Secretary*
- John Debold, *Membership*
- Cindi Debold, *Treasurer*
- Dorothy Johnson, *Museum Curator*
- Ava Caridad, *Publicity & Promotion*

TRUSTEES

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- Tina Caridad
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- Mark Scurman

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- Ina Campbell

WEBMASTER

- Richard Rockwell

NEWSLETTER STAFF

- Ava Caridad, *Editor*
- Nicholas D'Angelo, *Layout*

Holsten's gets recognition from the National Trust

In February, Bloomfield landmark Holsten's Brookdale Confectionery on 1063 Broad Street, famous for its homemade ice cream and for being showcased as the setting for the final scene of the final episode of HBO's "The Sopranos" TV show, was named one of **The Coolest Vintage Lunch Spots of the Mid-Atlantic** by the *National Trust for Historic Preservation*.



The establishment opened its doors as Strubbe's Ice Cream parlor in 1939. After a number of successful years, the business became Martin & Holsten's, and then Holsten's. It became incorporated as Brookdale Confectionery in 1964 and continued doing business as Holsten's, which was owned and operated by Rudi Stark and Gerhard Kaiser. William Bartels became Stark's partner from 1970 to 1980. Christopher Carley became Stark's partner in 1981. Ronald Stark also became an owner as well in 1990. Holsten's has been owned and operated by Ronald Stark and Christopher Carley since 1999, when Rudi Stark retired.

Nominees for Executive Committee for 2018 election

(Election to be held at the October 23, 2018 Meeting)

- President** Jean Kuras
- Vice President/ Program** Walter Nacnodovitz
- Treasurer**.....Cindi Debold
- Recording Secretary** Anne Carlino
- Corresponding Secretary** Mary Shoffner
- Membership**..... John Debold
- Publicity & Promotion** Ava Caridad
- Curator** Dorothy Johnson
- Trustees** Joseph Barry, Jr.
Tina Caridad
Richard Rockwell
Mark Scurman