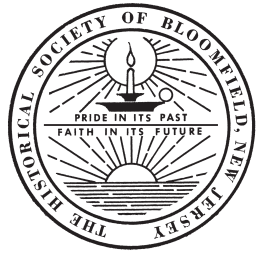




The New Town Crier

Official Newsletter of the Historical Society of Bloomfield



BLOOMFIELD, NEW JERSEY 07003

SPECIAL JULY 2005 ISSUE

Presidential Visit

June 13, 2005 was the 20th Anniversary of President Ronald Reagan's speech on the steps of Bloomfield's Municipal Building. Thousands of citizens attended. There was national coverage by all of the media. The Bloomfield Library has copies of a professional video made by the town as well as print memorabilia.

Mayor John W. Kinder and the Township Council were given but a few days' notice to prepare for the President's coming and all the details that such a visit entailed. The Township Administrator, the Township's Department heads, especially Recreation Superintendent Robert Carter, and all the Township employees cooperated and coordinated to make the President's appearance an extraordinary success. Even the weather finally changed for the better that day.

Bloomfield was the site chosen by the Government for a number of reasons. One was because of its proximity to the media capital of the world, New York City. Another, the President could speak with a traditional municipal building as background. Bloomfield's Fire Headquarters was evacuated to house the White House Press Corps. Security was important and the rigorous requirements of the Secret Service and the Washington Capitol Police had to be met. Speaking of security, the President's limousine could be driven directly into the garages under the municipal building.

It was there, in the basement corridor (freshly painted for the event), that President Reagan personally greeted each member of the Township Council and the Township Administrator. Mayor Kinder and Governor Thomas Kean were part of the President's entourage.



This article for the HSOP newsletter was provided by Mr. H. Joseph North, a Director of the American Savings Bank of New Jersey. Mr. North is the grandson of Teofil T. Daneski, who in 1919, along with other Polish-American businessmen in Bloomfield, chartered the American-Polish Building and Loan Association, of which American Bank of New Jersey is a direct descendant. Mr. Daneski served the bank as Treasurer for at least 25 years after its inception in 1919.



A historic occasion as President Ronald Reagan is welcomed into Bloomfield's Municipal Building by (from left to right) Councilwoman Louise M. Palagano, Councilman Jim Gasparini, and Township Administrator H. Joseph North. Mr. North comments: "President Reagan had the wonderful ability to make each of us in the receiving line feel that our greeting was important to him. Mayor John W. Kinder and Governor Thomas Kean accompanied the President".

(Photo courtesy of Mr. North)

AWARDS PRESENTED

As has been the custom for several years, The Historical Society of Bloomfield has presented cash awards to two graduates of Bloomfield High School who, in the opinion of their teachers, have shown particular interest in History. The winners of this year's awards are: Samantha Gibson of Fulton Street, Bloomfield and James Spieczyski of Irma Place, Bloomfield. Both students are to be congratulated on their scholastic abilities. The awards were presented by Jean Kuras.



One Hundred Years . . . and Counting

Marion Brown, a lifelong Glen Ridge resident, celebrated her 100th birthday on June 21. Mrs. Brown is the founder of and, until this year, was the president of the Animal League of Bloomfield/Glen Ridge. Even before founding the League in 1968, Marion helped countless homeless animals in the Glen Ridge/Bloomfield area find shelter or loving homes. Among other notable accomplishments, she and her League were responsible for convincing the Township of Bloomfield that an animal shelter was desperately needed in the area. When the shelter was finally built and opened, Marion and her League were its first volunteers and managers and also provided the first Animal Control Officer, who was a League member.

Marion celebrated her big day all day long. She received countless phone calls, cards, letters and flowers from animal rescuers and veterinarians throughout New Jersey. Her friends, admirers and League members, past and present, telephoned and visited bearing gifts, cakes and good wishes for many more years of good health and involvement in animal welfare. Mrs. Brown is the role model and mentor of most animal rescue/shelter volunteers in Essex County and beyond. She is an inspiration to all and is an example of what one tiny, determined individual can accomplish when passionate about her mission.

— By Karen Banda

*Happy 100th Birthday, Marion Brown,
and Many More!*



OAKES MILL (OCT. 1894) Taken by G.M. Coit

More than a hundred and ten years ago, a Mr. Coit aimed his camera northwest from a vantage point on Belleville Avenue at the end of Williamson Avenue. Looking over the Oakes cow pasture we see a large tree in the left background: the cottonwood tree brought from Georgia by David Oakes I around 1830. The former Oakes Mill complex, which ceased operations in 1945, stands on the right and just behind these buildings is the millpond, now the site of Memorial Park and Foley Field. All buildings on the left are gone, and the Garden State Parkway obliterated everything in the foreground in 1952.



24 OAK TREE LANE CA. 1905

Some readers of the May Newsletter were disappointed not to see the Marzloff House as it was around the other turn-of-the-century with the operating Morris Canal in the foreground. Unfortunately, the old photo we had of this scene was slightly distorted, but through the magic of fancy computer work, Budget Instant Print of Bloomfield was able to correct the problem. The camera is pointing west toward Broad Street from the east bank of the Morris Canal. The barn on the right no longer exists; Broughton (then Myrtle) Avenue now passes through the background parallel to Broad, once called "The Road to Paterson". The Third River (not visible) flows from right to left between the Canal and Broughton on its way to turn the looms at the Oakes Woolen Mill and, a little further along, the machinery at Davey's Pasteboard Mill.

(All of the many acres of land surrounding 24 Oak Tree Lane were owned in 1906 by a German immigrant, Martin Hummel. More about Martin and his family in a future issue.)

BHS Alumni Association Disbands

Bill Giuliano didn't have much time for idle thoughts. He was, after all, the proprietor of a very busy luncheonette on Washington Street that was also a gathering place for "old" Bloomfield. On certain mornings, you could find Charlie Venner, Ben Spitz, John Kerian, Don Croughan, George Welle and others ensconced in the dining room. But Bill did have one dream. He envisioned an organization that would be a link between Bloomfield High School graduates and the high school and provide support to high school programs. His enthusiasm spread and soon others like Herb and Natalie Miller, Alan and Martha Skinner, Dick and Marge Cantwell, Rich Moore, Betty Langan and Mary Stark joined him in the effort.

In 1990, they incorporated the Bloomfield High School Alumni Association. The group established a four year scholarship for a senior BHS graduate, ran cocktail parties/reunions, set up a membership list of more than three thousand graduates and published "The Link", a magazine carrying news of reunions along with pictures, news from various graduates and other news relating to the high school. It proved to be immensely popular. Activities expanded to include a golf tournament.

In 1994, Bill died and Herbie Miller stepped in as President. Herb tried to keep the organization moving but he was faced with a lack of volunteers. The last "Link" went out in 1996, capably authored by Betty Langan. Shortly thereafter, Herbie became disabled and had to relinquish the post. Several reorganization efforts failed and it became apparent that the Association was dead. It had been a great idea but, without the spark, it couldn't go on.

'Sorry Bill.

— By John Gibson

Memorial Day Parade

Five energetic members of the HSOB, all of them well over the age of 35 (*well over*), stepped out behind the Girls' Gymnastics Team and just a jump ahead of the skirling bagpipes of a Scottish band on last May 30th. The two heartiest members proudly carried the brand-new banner of the Historical Society between them, while the others walked behind, handing out American flags. The weather was ideal – the members enthusiastic. They were Audrey Moore, Mary Wilbert, Ina Campbell, Dolores Dalzell and yours truly. The walk from Bay Avenue to Liberty Street was brisk, so much so that the participants worked up healthy appetites. The entire group adjourned to Willie's Diner for a well-earned brunch.

— By Frederick Branch

Bloomfield Cemetery's First Gatehouse



Photo courtesy Bloomfield Cemetery.

Work is well-advanced on a one-inch to one-foot scale model of the Bloomfield Cemetery gatehouse, (not "Chapel"), designed in 1875 by Alexander Jackson Davis. Although it is considered a very minor work by the world-famous American architect of the 19th century, it was also his last, commissioned by his cousin, Doctor Joseph Austin Davis of Bloomfield. Although none of Davis' usually meticulously detailed drawings of this building exist (because none were made), it is most likely that he considered the crude sketch made on a piece of scrap paper sufficient information to construct this small building (12 feet by 24 feet). However, the Cemetery records say that he did inspect the progress of the building on his visits to his Bloomfield Davis relatives at various intervals. A reproduction of his sketch is shown above.

The sketch, which is preserved in the Davis Archives in The Avery Architectural Library at Columbia University, was obtained from the Library by Cemetery Board Member, Sally Meyer, who made a special trip to Columbia's New York City campus to get it.

Along with his sketch, Davis provided a few notes regarding the placement of the doors and windows on the north side of the basement, which was destroyed when the structure was removed to the State Street side of the Cemetery to make room for the 1909 stone gatehouse that replaced it. A conjectural reconstruction was designed according to his notes for the model by Frederick Branch. The derelict structure was demolished and replaced by a new storage facility in 1965.

It is expected that the model will be completed within a few months and will be on display in the Cemetery boardroom.

(It is believed that the small extension to the east shown in the Cemetery's 1965 photograph was not on the original building, inasmuch as Davis' specifications stated that the tool storage was to be in the cellar. Therefore, it has not been included on the model.)

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The text written by A.J. Davis on his very crude sketch of the proposed gatehouse for Bloomfield Cemetery is as follows:

"Door in both sides. A hood or some other protection for the doors.

The side being to the street (Belleville Avenue) both doors are corresponding.

It was decided to have a cellar under the whole building – this is nearly completed – with a door in the middle of the north side with a window on each side of the door. The foundation shows about 8 inches (brick) above the grading on 3 sides. On the north side nearly three feet."

As far as is known, the building was constructed as described above.

A SMALL SLICE OF HISTORY



A photograph taken last March reveals the back wall of a store formerly at 76 Washington Street, probably demolished by this time. It had been the home of many businesses since that prime residential area had been invaded by commerce in the early 1900's. A newspaper article of 1874 describes:

"...the fine residences of T.W. Langstroth, W.G. Raynor, Jas, A. Heddon, and Wm P. Lyon, all with ample grounds."

By the 1930's, almost all of these Mansard-roofed houses, having seen better days, were gone. The one shown left has been the original home of the Elks Club, which moved to a new building in 1923. Formerly the home of Mr. Unangst, it became a boarding house until replaced by the inevitable parking lot in the 1950's. The upper right corner of the apartment building across the street can be seen in both photos.





General Joseph Bloomfield

THE NEW TOWN CRIER
THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF BLOOMFIELD
90 Broad Street
Bloomfield, NJ 07003

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Pat Post, Assistant Editor
John Gibson, Ad Hoc Assistant Editor

☪ 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 any that you may choose.

Maureen Balogh, Farmingdale, NJ
Karen Banda, Bloomfield, NJ
Noel Patrick Doherty, Interlaken, NJ
Pamela Felton, Reisterstown, MD
Mildred Greenler, Methuen, MA
H. Joseph North, Bloomfield, NJ
MaryKate Simmons, &
Lisa Geraghty, Bloomfield, NJ

E-MAIL

The Historical Society of Bloomfield
at: BloomfHist@aol.com
OR CALL US
at: 973-743-8844

LETTERS TO THE HSOB



TUBALLOY REVISITED

The recent article (May, 2004) by John Gibson about the Westinghouse-Bloomfield Plant's participation in development of the Atom Bomb was mentioned in our sister publication, The Watsessing Heights Newsletter, and has since appeared on the Internet. Thank you, editor Mimi Michalski, for your additional information on this world-famous event. In the meantime, other info has appeared from an unexpected source. It appears below somewhat abridged for lack of space.

DAD'S WAR EXPERIENCE

By Richard Hopkins

"Dear Fred,

Your letter and the copy of May, 2004 The New Town Crier were most appreciated. My mention of the "Bomb" project was almost parenthetical - an effort on my part to establish why I was in Indiana.

Dad's "war experience" was not something he talked about. It seems that DuPont staffed its heavy water plants from key personnel from across the country. How much Dad knew of what they were doing I shall never know, but he was aware that other plants were engaged in the same work because he knew the people working here and there from before the war.

He did tell me one fascinating story of how his plant "went down" because some gizmo got broken. He knew the manager of the same type of operation in Morgantown, W.V., called him, found a spare part, had it railway expressed to him and was back up in operation in less than 24 hours. Then the Army major who was "in charge" of the Terre Haute found out about what Dad had done and really read the riot act to him. Things about security breach, not following supply procedures, etc., etc. Dad said: "I thought we were in a War effort and getting our work done was paramount." The Major had great difficulty in backing down from his position but agreed that it was good that the plant was up and running. Had I not brought up the subject, I am sure Dad would not have volunteered the story.

What I know about the Terre Haute operation was that the heavy water plant was literally built inside an established and running chemical plant, and its presence was unknown to even other personnel who worked in the plant. Mom said Dad's biggest problem was "explaining" his presence on the street during the rare moments he had off the job. People, Mom said, would approach the family and demand to know why a fairly young, seemingly able-bodied male was doing in Terre Haute when all the other men were overseas fighting. Dad was in his early 40's and even if he tried, he would have been stopped from enlisting by both the Government and DuPont. I heard most of this only after Mom came out with a certificate signed by President Truman thanking Dad for his participation in the war effort. Sad to say, I don't know where the certificate got to when Mom died and we broke up the home place."

— By Richard Hopkins

EDITOR'S NOTE: Anyone who missed the original Tuballoy article in the May, 2004 issue of the newsletter may have a copy by sending a stamped, self-addressed #10 envelope to the Editor at 28 Forest Drive, Bloomfield, New Jersey 07003.

— Frederick Branch

ENJOY OUR MUSEUM

LOCATION: Above the Children's Library at 90 Broad Street.

HOURS: Wednesday from 2:00–4:30pm all year. Saturday from 10:00am–12:30pm
September to mid-June and by appointment (973) 743-8844

MEMBERSHIP FOR THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF BLOOMFIELD

Dues: Individual \$10.00; Couple \$15.00; Student (under 18 years) \$5.00;
Organization (non-profit): \$10.00; Organization (commercial): \$25.00

Please send check, payable to "The Historical Society of Bloomfield",
along with your name, address and telephone number to:

Membership Chairman

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF BLOOMFIELD