



The Bloomfield Historian

Official Newsletter of the Historical Society of Bloomfield



BLOOMFIELD, NEW JERSEY 07003

MARCH 2025

SAVE THE DATE

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, March 25, 2025

BLOOMFIELD CIVIC CENTER

84 Broad Street, Bloomfield, NJ

7:30pm

The Remarkable History of The Bloomfield Fire Department

Presented by Michael Helbing

Join lifelong New Jersey resident James Gardner for a journey through the history of the Bloomfield Fire Department, from its founding in 1883 to the present day. The presentation will feature stories of famous fires, remarkable firefighters and the intriguing tale of "Felix the Stone Fireman" statue, including his origins and Gardner's family connection to Felix's story. Gardner is a local historian and the host of "Your History Your Story," a podcast he has been producing with his wife, Kelly, since October 2020. Gardner has deep family roots in Bloomfield and is passionate about bringing history to life through compelling storytelling.

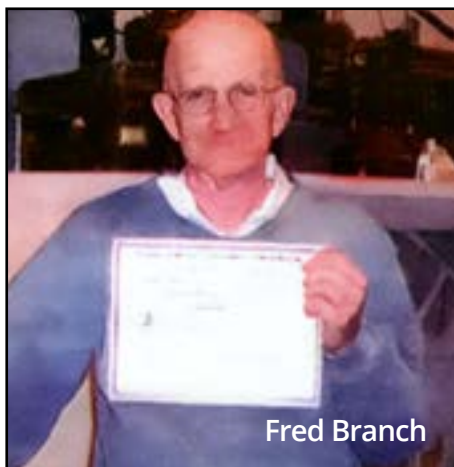
Join us on March 25 for a blazing good time as we learn more about Bloomfield's finest. The program is free and open to the public.



That which we call a newsletter by any other name would read as well...

The Historical Society of Bloomfield newsletter debuted in March 1969 as *The Town Crier* with the late Fred Branch—official Town Historian of Bloomfield—at its helm as editor. Its fifth and final issue was in January 1970. The 1990s saw two random issues pop up, but the newsletter re-launched in earnest in May 2001, once again with Fred as the Editor. *The New Town Crier*, as this 21st C. version was dubbed, has remained a valued staple of HSOB membership ever since. Fred stepped down as Editor in 2011 and passed away in 2018, but his legacy is palpable in everything the HSOB does to help preserve the history of our beloved town.

As we steamroll into the second quarter of the new century, the HSOB newsletter is once again getting a new name, carefully chosen by the Board to reflect Fred, his vision for the newsletter and his love of history. *The Bloomfield Historian* debuts with this issue and looks forward to edifying and entertaining members for many decades to come.



Fred Branch

Readers will notice that the official logo of the HSOB has been modified, as well. The logo, also designed by Fred Branch, was unveiled in the 1960s and has been updated by HSOB VP Mark Scurman, with help from Nic Luciano.

We hope you enjoy this inaugural edition of *The Bloomfield Historian* and we thank you, as always, for your continued support. Visit the newsletter archive at:

hsob.org/newsletter.htm. Please send comments, questions or story ideas to info@HSOB.org, marked "Attention: Editor."

Date this Photo: Bloomfield Academy

From the files of the late Fred Branch:

This editor thinks two or three points in this very old photo of the Bloomfield Academy building, still standing at the south end of The Green, place it between 1884—when the Mansard roof was added—and 1893, when the original 1860 Christ Episcopal Church building on Liberty Street (the rear of which can be seen ever-so-slightly on the right margin) was destroyed by fire. Another clue is the ornamental cresting at the top edge of the roof, a feature no Victorian building in this style was without. Postcards from 1902 do not show this cresting, so shall we say 1890?



Bloomfield Private Hospital

By Gloria Fulton

Few people know that at one time, we did have a hospital in Bloomfield! It was called Bloomfield Private Hospital. The building that housed this hospital is still located at 156 Washington Street (162 Washington Street back in the early 20th C.). I was born there on November 22, 1936.



Dr. Harry E. Montero, owner of the Bloomfield Private Hospital

I have lived in Bloomfield all my life and I am now 88 years old and am happy to share the following information about Bloomfield Private Hospital.

Dr. Henry (Harry) Ernest Montero, the son of a former consul in Costa Rica, was the owner of the private sanitarium (hospital)*. The doctor’s office was on the first floor and the hospital was located on the upper floor. My parents lived close by on Thomas Street. The hospital was very small. My mother had to bring baby clothes for us to wear in the hospital after my brother and I were born.

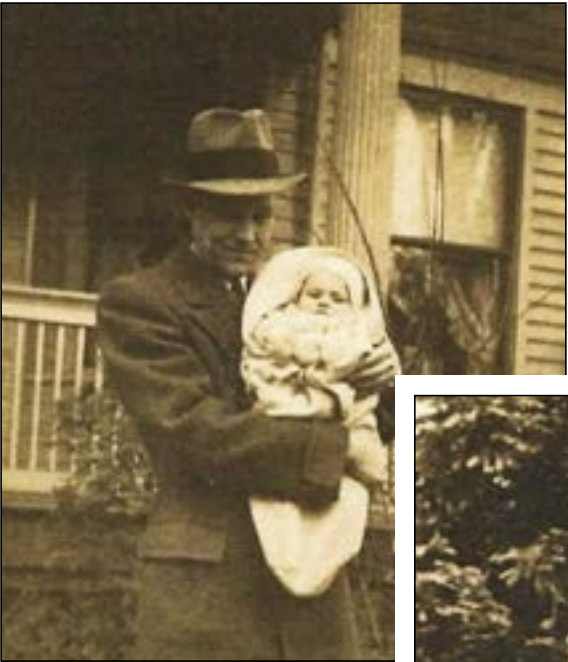
My brother, Richard, was born there on May 20, 1939. I know several other people who were also born there, including James Fielding, who was in my 1954 Bloomfield



The Marigold Academy, a day care center located at 156 Washington Street, was once home of the former Bloomfield Private Hospital.



The author with her mother Allene



The author with her father Emil



Gloria Fulton, née Vogt, with her parents Emil & Allene in 1938.



Baby Gloria Joan Vogt

High School class, several of his siblings, and Charles Churchill and his brothers, who lived in Glen Ridge. This all occurred before Mountainside Hospital was built. ** I have been able unable to find information about when Bloomfield Private Hospital closed its doors.***

The property is now Marigold Academy day care center on the corner of Thomas Street and Washington Street. I have visited there but could not find any additional information about the hospital.

So take a drive down Washington Street and pause in front of the site of Bloomfield Private Hospital!

**Editor’s Note:* In North America, the word “sanitarium” meant a clean place to convalesce. The similar word “sanatorium” meant the same thing, but evolved to pertain mainly to a place for the treatment of tuberculosis. “Sanitarium” eventually evolved to mean a place to treat mental illness. The Bloomfield Private Hospital was indeed, at this time, a clean place to convalesce.

*** Editor’s Note:* Mountainside Hospital was established in 1891. Read a short history here: montclairlocal.news/2024/08/then-and-now-mountainside-hospital/

**** Editor’s Note:* Many thanks to Lisa Cohn, librarian at Bloomfield Public Library, who was able to ascertain—via town directories—that Bloomfield Private Hospital was in operation from 1935–1961.



General Joseph Bloomfield

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OF BLOOMFIELD

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Fairview School, 1914

Reminder!

If you haven't already done so, please be sure to renew your 2025 membership. Visit www.hsob.org to renew your membership online or to download a snail-mailable membership form. A form can also be picked up at our museum or any HSOB meeting. The HSOB is a non-profit organization, therefore all dues and donations are considered a tax-free contribution. Help keep the Historical Society of Bloomfield strong with your continuing membership!



Can You Identify?

Where in Bloomfield is this house? Email your answer to info@hsob.org and put "Can You Identify?" in the header.

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:

Marianne Abbasso
Cedar Grove, NJ

Karen M. Eriksen
West Orange, NJ

Daphne Margeotes
Columbus, NJ

Laura & David Cohen
Glen Ridge, NJ

Peter W. Kessler
Sparta, NJ

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