



The Bloomfield Historian

Official Newsletter of the Historical Society of Bloomfield



BLOOMFIELD, NEW JERSEY 07003

MAY 2025

SAVE THE DATE

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, May 27, 2025

BLOOMFIELD CIVIC CENTER

84 Broad Street, Bloomfield, NJ

7:30pm

Lessons from the Dark: A Thoughtful Study of Abandoned Places

Presented by Rusty Tagliareni &
Christina Mathews

Every town has its share of derelict and abandoned buildings—places that many drive by daily without a second thought. Hidden in plain sight, these properties—such as South Juniior High—are often seen as eyesores, if they are even seen at all.

Although husks of their former selves, they are conduits that connect us to the past. Abandoned asylums are not Hollywood haunted houses, rather they are somber places with lessons about our mental healthcare industry. Disused schools and churches stand as monuments to the rise and fall of neighborhoods. Overgrown resorts remind us of simpler times. Even private homes have their tales.

Professional photographer Tagliareni and Mathews are the authors of the award-winning *Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital*, a book in the *Images of America* series by Arcadia publishing. They have also written *Abandoned Asylums of the Northeast* and *Abandoned Resorts of the Northeast*.



HSOB & BFD HONOR FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS

At the HSOB's March 2025 meeting—*The Remarkable History of Bloomfield's Fire Department* presented by James Gardner—BFD Chief Lou Venezia presented proclamations to the descendants of the three Bloomfield firefighters that have died in the line of duty: Archie M. Heath in 1937; John E. Marshall Jr. in 1955 and George Conner in 1971.



Jeannie Bootes Duncan (second from left) and her sister Nancy Bootes Christian (second from right) receive the proclamation honoring their great-grandfather Chief Archie M. Heath from current Chief Lou Venezia (right). Nancy's husband Rob Christian looks on at left.



Chief Venezia presents the proclamation to the family of John E. Marshall Jr.



BFD HQ is the home of Felix the Stone Fireman; he is flanked by the memorials to fallen firefighters at right, and Councilman F. Gardner, who rescued him in 1932.

Photo by Tina Cardad

Photo by Tina Cardad

Photo courtesy of the BFD

Human Engineering in the Westinghouse Lamp Co., 1919

By Richard Rockwell

Commercial Engineering News
Westinghouse Lamp Co.
Bloomfield N.J.
December, 1919

The December 1919 issue of *Commercial Engineering News*, published by the Commercial Engineering Department, Westinghouse Lamp Co., Bloomfield, N.J., featured an article titled *Human Engineering in the Westinghouse Lamp Co.* The article discussed how poorly factory workers had been treated in the past, and how there was much time spent on improvements to machines and processes, when they should have been focusing on the *human machine*.

Westinghouse started a *Labor & Service Department* to focus on employee working conditions, including proper lighting, cleanliness, good plumbing and clean air.

Wise manufacturers and corporate officers came to realize the direct connection between quality and production, and the health and happiness of their employees, the article stated. The Labor & Service Dept. provided a cafeteria, dance floor, Women's Recreation Room and Men's Recreation Room.



Women's Room, slightly larger [than the Men's Room], 1,880 square feet, is more artistically equipped with wicker furniture, writing desks and comfortable chairs of every description.

women. Intricate processes incident to the manufacturer of the Mazda Incandescent Lamps require patience and sensitive fingers of the woman employee. The draping of fine tungsten filament over its various supports on the arbor of the Mazda lamps is a process in which girls far surpass men in their dexterity of operation. Many other small and delicate parts of the Mazda lamps entail an operation involving a care and patience to which the feminine disposition is especially suited, and their working conditions became paramount.



The article continues:

The spirit of true democracy is everywhere apparent. There are no seating reservations in the dining room and the office boy may find himself eating lunch at the same table with the manager of works, according to the conditions of "first come first served." This spirit is evidenced in the cooperation of the various departments during the working hours; each one feels that he has an interest in an organization which is working for the common good of all and is thus inspired to put forth his best efforts, which has been in part directly responsible for the high quality of our product and enabled, the company to acquire and maintain a high position among the leaders of the industry.

Eighty-five percent of the labor force manufacturing Mazda Incandescent Lamps were

Our modern industrial girl worker comes from good stock, is well educated and has a clean and happy home with her parents, and she demands that her conditions of labor be comparable with the atmosphere of her home. This influx of woman into the ranks of labor has added further stimulus to the efforts of the manufacturer to make his employee's work-day a happy and comfortable one.



The Westinghouse Lamp Co. around the time of the article, as viewed from the tracks of the Orange Branch of the Erie Railroad. Westinghouse used this line for freight as evidenced by the freight cars on a siding at the factory. These buildings were on Clearfield Ave, now called MacArthur Ave.



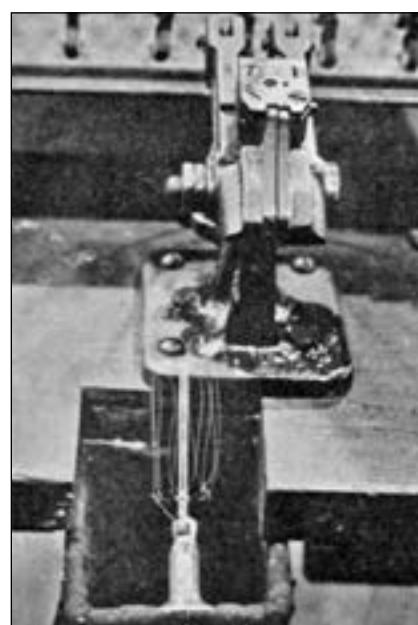
The Men's Room, 1,600 square feet furnished in mission [style]. The chief recreations besides smoking are checkers, shuffleboard and cards.



A light, cheery cafeteria is provided where 500 to 650 people are fed daily, being served in less than fifteen minutes. Food is supplied at cost.



In the bottom of this photo is a lightbulb base with filament strung on it. Threading this filament is the type of work described in the article as *involving a care and patience to which the feminine disposition is especially suited.*



The dining room opens into a large dance hall floor. Music is provided by an electric player piano and twice a week by the works orchestra. Those who do not care to dance may enter the recreation rooms adjoining.



General Joseph Bloomfield

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THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF BLOOMFIELD

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Richard Rockwell

Can You Identify?

In the March 2025 issue, we asked readers if they could place this house. It is located at 67 Mill Street. The photo at left was taken back in the 20th Century; the photo at right was taken on February 26, 2024. Thanks to Karen Eriksen for the submission.



The HSOB participates in Earth Day 2025

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t n i r p t o o f n o b r a c f h w d o

1. Earth Day
2. Greener Bloomfield
3. Grassroots
4. Historical Society
5. Upcycle
6. Reduce
7. Reuse
8. Recycle
9. Sustainability
10. Solar Energy
11. Butterfly Garden
12. Insects
13. Natural Resources
14. Essex County
15. Environmental Center
16. Flowers
17. Plants
18. Biodegradable
19. Climate change
20. Compostable
21. Carbon Footprint
22. Pollution
23. Biodiversity
24. No Litter
25. Conserve Resources