



The Town Crier.

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER—THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF BLOOMFIELD



VOLUME I, NUMBER 4

BLOOMFIELD, NEW JERSEY

NOVEMBER, 1969



The Morris Canal

By William M. Litvany

Travel on the Morris Canal

Sidelights on the history of the Morris Canal reveal that in the late 1840's an excursion packet, the "Maria Colden," pulled by three horses, made daily runs between Newark and Paterson at 50 cents a head.

Morris Canal Packet Service

During the early years of the Morris Canal, passenger or "packet" service was offered between Newark and Paterson. On June 7, 1831, a local newspaper ran this advertisement:

"The splendid Packet Boat 'Emiline,' Eph. Morris, Master, has commenced running from Newark to Paterson. She will leave Newark every morning (Sundays excepted) at half past 7 o'clock, and Paterson every afternoon at 3 o'clock. Fare through, 37½ cents: to Bloomfield, 18¼ cents. The 'Emiline' will also leave Bloomfield on Monday mornings at 5 o'clock and arrive in Newark in time for the steamboat to New York. She will also leave Newark on Saturday evenings, upon arrival of the steamboat from New York.

"The 'Emiline' is a large commodious boat, and every attention will be afforded to passengers. Two inclined planes, one at Newark and the other at Bloomfield, will afford interest to the learned and curious. N.B. Passengers on board the 'Emiline' who intend to dine at Paterson, will be conveyed in a carriage from the boat to the Passaic Hotel, free of any expense; and again returned to the boat in the same manner."

Cooling Rides on Canal

During July, August and September (late 1840's) the Morris Canal company offered "cool summer rides, accompanied

Valiant Blair Smith Stops Woodman's Ax

The facts surrounding the last-minute battle to save David Oakes' cottonwood tree are so well known to almost everyone it seemed needless to tell them again in your historical society newsletter. Nevertheless, we did want to publish something about this fine example of preservation by a valiant young lady, and what better



The Oakes' cottonwood tree, which stands on Oakes Lane on the site of Memorial Park, now under construction. It is 140 years old, 200 feet high and 21 feet in circumference.

way than in the words of the young lady herself. Here is Miss Blair Smith's account of what happened on that October day.

"... and Mr. Oakes' father carried the small tree up from the south in a suitcase", my grandmother told me time and time again. Her love for the tree made me love it, too: the way the leaves rustle before a thunderstorm; the squiggly things that fall from it in the early spring; the bright

yellow of its leaves against the fall sky. I was always conscious of the tree, in an unconscious way. I will never look at that tree again without remembering:

Saturday morning (October 4, 1969). Awakened by a knock at the door and a request to move the family car. Why? Because the cottonwood tree is coming down. Why? To make room for a road and sidewalk. There seemed to be no time to do anything. The saws could be heard. They had already cut two huge branches off. Our neighbor, Mrs. Devincenzo, and my mother were horrified. I told them we had to do something. We had to try to save the tree. They got on the phone but answering services and busy signals were the only initial responses they could get. Then, somehow, my mother got through to Councilman Cetrulo. After hasty explanations he agreed that perhaps the tree should be saved. As Acting-Mayor he said the sawing should be stopped. But the men who were working on the tree said they had a Thousand Dollar contract for the tree and no one but the police could stop them. I stayed under the tree so no more branches would be sawed off. My mother returned to our house and told Cetrulo what the men had said. Cetrulo called the police. They came. The men went home. The tree eventually was saved. As he was leaving, one of the men said to me: "Don't be mad at me, lady. I'm only doing my job." Some job.

—Blair Smith (Miss)

Both *The Independent Press* (Leonard H. McBain, Editor) and the *Newark Evening News* (Richard Bilotti) published articles relating to the saving of the tree. In addition, The Garden State Paper Company, Inc. (manufacturers of newsprint from old newspapers) placed an illustrated advertisement in *The Evening News* congratulating Miss Blair Smith, The Bloomfield Town Council and The Historical Society of Bloomfield.

by a shipment of ice," as just a way to relax when going to town.

Steamboat on Morris Canal

After the Civil War attempts at encouraging the use of steam-driven boats on the Morris Canal were being made. A steamboat excursion was reported made by officials of the Canal company to try a small steam-yacht called the "Gussie." She is a propeller, 50 feet long, 8½ feet broad, draws four feet of water, and is propelled by a 12-horse engine. The small but select party started from the Canal lock at Jersey City, and passed through

—continued on page 2, col. 1

October

Coming out of sleep I opened my eyes
and saw
Undulating Ochre Leaves Sun Fire
Tinged
Outside my Window:
And I remembered them in the May
sunlight
Sea Shimmering Green Gold.

—Howard Vogt

A Bygone Era



GENERAL JOSEPH BLOOMFIELD

THE TOWN CRIER

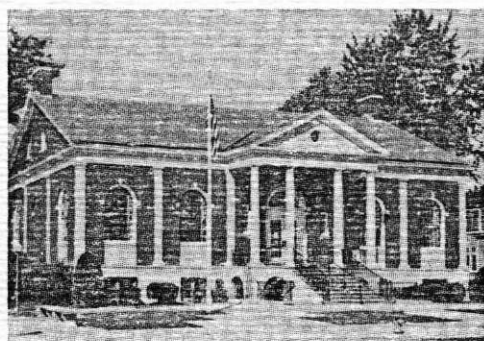
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MUSEUM

90 Broad Street (third floor)

OPEN

WEDNESDAYS — 1:30 - 4 p.m.

DECEMBER

1 - 8 - 15 (Monday Evenings)

7 - 9 p.m.

and By Appointment

The Morris Canal Steamboat on Morris Canal

(continued)

the city (Newark), the bridges being passed by letting down the smoke pipe, which worked on hinges.

The water was so low that progress made was very slow, and as she did not reach here (Newark) till three hours after the prescribed time, some invited guests missed the excursion. Passing through the locks, and over the inclined plane, the "Gussie" steamed a short distance above the city, and then returned home. Passenger service never amounted to more than a tiny fraction of the traffic on the Canal.

Cargo on Morris Canal

The Morris Canal in 1866 carried a total tonnage of 889,220 tons, of this there was 459,175 tons of anthracite coal cargo. Tonnage carried began to diminish until in 1902 the Canal boats carried only a total of 27,392 tons, of which 20,411 tons was coal.

Bargemen on the old Morris Canal were called "Sailors in the Mountains."

Morris Canal Ends Service

The Morris Canal existed as a waterway for over 90 years, from 1834 to 1924, when it was drained. Since that time the

Period furniture, whether it is full size or doll house size, is always in fashion and time merely adds additional periods as the generations slip by. There is nothing that dramatizes the changes time brings to household furnishings as completely as the differences in household appliances and mechanical devices.

Observe the pre-World War I doll house furniture on exhibition in our Museum. The "Mahogany" and the "Pine" could be 1969, but instead of a washing machine of any vintage, there is a clothes wringer mounted between two tubs.

Clothing was washed by hand on a scrubbing board, in a tub, on one side of the apparatus and then run through the wringer into the rinse tub on the other side—then back into rinse water which had replaced the suds. No longer need garments and linens be twisted by hand, and whoever turned the crank that operated the wringer developed fine biceps.



Editors Note: The Museum Committee is expecting you to drop in soon to see the magnificent Demmert display case with its new contents—toys, dolls and miniature replicas of the items mentioned in the foregoing article.



CALENDER JOTTINGS

November 19, 1969 (Wednesday), 8:00 p.m. at the Civic Center. Clayton F. Smith, president of "The Canal Society of New Jersey" will be the speaker at this meeting of the Historical Society. Topic: "The Morris Canal."

This is very a significant meeting as it will honor Mrs. Sarah H. Sherlock, well known author, historian and charter member of the Historical Society. Congratulations to "Sally" Sherlock on her 80th birthday (November 12th).



Membership in the "Canal Society" is open to all those interested with the history of the canals of New Jersey. Write Mr. Smith, president, 7 Samson Avenue, Madison, N.J. 07940.

WELCOME MAT

The Historical Society of Bloomfield welcomes the following new members:

BLOOMFIELD:

William O'Connell
Mr. and Mrs. Frank Soemer
Dr. Alfred and Mrs. Skogsberg
Mrs. Robert W. Vaughan

line of the Canal has been converted for use as a roadbed for a subway to Newark. Many roads, such as the John F. Kennedy drive in Bloomfield has been developed. Some of the roadway of the Garden State Parkway was also part of the Canal.

Instead of a refrigerator there is an Ice Box. Well into the 1920's many homes and apartments did not have electric refrigerators. A horse drawn Ice Wagon went the rounds and men carried blocks of ice to their regular customers. In many cities the drinking water had to be boiled because of possible Typhoid contamination, so the deluxe Ice Box would contain a compartment to chill the boiled drinking water, which would be drawn out of a spigot.

Instead of a Stereo there is a Talking Machine, complete with Morning Glory Horn. This model was popular a bit before World War One, for by that time, new inventions made horns unnecessary. None of them was electric. One merely cranked the Talking Machine every time a record was changed or when the music began to slow down.

Human energy has been replaced by electrical energy. Perhaps that is why obesity is a national affliction.

—Elizabeth L. Coombs

RECOMMENDED

The Bloomfield League of Women Voters, dedicated to the promotion of informed citizenship, publish a soft cover book *Know Your Town* for 50 cents. The revised edition is offered to those who live, work, do business in or visit Bloomfield, in the hope that it will enlarge and enrich their knowledge and understanding of our Community. Call Mrs. D. Zenk (338-5630) for a copy of this book.

JUST A THOUGHT

Think of your own faults the first part of the night when you are awake, and the faults of others the latter part of the night when you are asleep. —Chinese Proverb

Less than 100 years ago no home in America, even if it had plumbing, was considered to be complete without one of these. The Museum has recently been presented with one and it is now being completely refurbished. We are particularly delighted to add it to our collection inasmuch as it was made right here in Bloomfield in the 1880's, and, although it doesn't look exactly like this illustration, this engraving is of about the same period and shows what an elaborate production could be turned out with a lavish expenditure of labor (cheap) and solid walnut (plentiful). You can't guess what it is? Read all about it in a forthcoming issue of THE TOWN CRIER.

