



The New Town Crier

Official Newsletter of the Historical Society of Bloomfield



BLOOMFIELD, NEW JERSEY 07003

May 2019

SAVE THE DATE

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, May 28, 2019
7:30 PM

BLOOMFIELD CIVIC CENTER

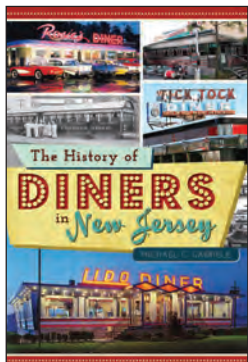
84 Broad Street
Bloomfield, NJ

The Diners of Essex County
Presented by

Garden State author Michael C. Gabriele

New Jersey is universally recognized as the “Diner Capital of the World.” Friendly, familiar beacons on the Garden State’s highways, byways and downtown business districts, diners play an important role in New Jersey’s culture, commerce, mythology and community life, and serve as the ultimate egalitarian dining experience. Michael Gabriele is a lifelong Garden State resident and 1975 graduate of Montclair State University. He has worked as a journalist, freelance writer and author for more than 40 years. Gabriele is a member of the board of trustees for the annual NJ Folk Festival at Rutgers University, a member of the executive board for the Nutley Historical Society and serves on the advisory board of the Clifton Arts Center. He writes an occasional diner blog for the New Jersey Bites website.

Gabriele has written three books on NJ history, all published by The History Press: *The Golden Age of Bicycle Racing in New Jersey*; *The History of Diners in New*



Jersey; and *New Jersey Folk Revival Music—History & Tradition*.

The event is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served. **The author’s three books will be available for purchase.**

BHS Honors Centennial of Memorial Tree

On Monday, May 6, 2019 at 4:30pm, Bloomfield High School (BHS) hosted a celebration on the corner of Belleville Avenue and Broad Street to commemorate the 100th Birthday of a Purple Beech tree lovingly dubbed “Big Red.”

Who is “Big Red”? Under the auspices of the Town Improvement Association (TIA), two memorial trees were planted on the high school grounds on Tuesday, May 6 at 11am. One of the trees was an Oak planted in memory of Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, statesman, politician, conservationist, naturalist and writer who served as the 26th President of the United States (1901–1909). He had died on January 6, 1919, and the country’s grief was still front-to-mind.

The Purple Beech was planted to commemorate “the Supreme sacrifice made by Bloomfield soldiers and sailor boys in the Great War”—honoring those who lost their lives in World War 1, which had only ended six months before on November 11, 2018.

Previous to the planting, there were exercises in the High School auditorium under the direction of the school committee of the TIA. The high school orchestra, conducted by Miss Esther Wolfe, played and the Reverend B.F. Dickisson of the Park Methodist Church made the invocation. The principal address was made by Major Everett Colby of the Tank Corps, “a personal friend of President Roosevelt who paid high tribute to that sturdy American.” The Major had known Colonel Roosevelt ever since childhood and laid particular stress on his fearlessness and courage, saying that while the Colonel never looked for trouble, any fight against evil or enemies of this country found him always ready and prepared.

The ceremony finished on the school grounds with the presentation of the trees. Mayor Frederick Sadler accepted the trees on behalf of the town from Mrs. Alfred B. Van Loo, First Vice President of the TIA, who took the place of Mrs. Harvey Underwood, TIA President, who was detained by illness. The planting was done under the direction of Mrs. J. Erving Taylor. There were about forty Boy Scouts present “and the blowing of assembly and Taps by the buglers added to the impressiveness of the ceremonies.” The public was invited to attend all stages of the ceremony.



Left to right: Mayor Michael Venezia, Councilman Richard Rockwell and Councilman Nicholas Joanow dedicate Big Red’s new plaque.



“Such living, growing emblems of our sorrow and our pride are sitting monuments to our past President and those who sleep in Flanders Field and in other sepulchres after paying the price to the full without discount. These memorial trees will be living testimonials and more fitting memorials than things made by human hands. They will carry their memorial message, not only to the present generation which mourns, but to the unborn generations to come which must be instructed and inspired.”

—from *The Independent Press*, May 2, 1919 and May 9, 1919

HSOB Museum turns 50 this month!

The Museum of the Historical Society of Bloomfield (HSOB) opened its doors 50 years ago, on May 4, 1969 at 3 p.m. It was located then, as it is today, in the gallery or “attic” of the Bloomfield Public Children’s Library.

When Maryann Dorn took office as HSOB President in May of 1967, she had one goal in mind: finding a permanent home for the HSOB Museum.

“There were times during the last two years with a dream of having a museum seemed like it would never materialize into reality,” said Dorn in May of 1969. “However, months of planning coupled with hard work and enthusiastically performed by our members made it come true.

“Many people labored diligently on this project, but there are some who have done much more than others; therefore, I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to praise Mr. & Mrs. John O. Ambler, Frederick Branch, Mrs. David (Dorothy) Johnson, Mrs. Louis (Yolanda) Pangaro, Mrs. Emile F. Portsch, Mrs. Howard E. (Margaret) Riggins and Mrs. Charles A. Sherlock. Without their untiring efforts we would have been in a terrible bind. A sincere thank you goes to them and to all the other members who helped to achieve this long-sought goal of the Historical Society of Bloomfield Museum (*Editor’s note: Sadly, Mrs. Yolanda Pangaro passed away on July 27, 1969).*

It gives me great pleasure to welcome the Historical Society Museum to the gallery of the Bloomfield Public Library. The Board of Trustees and I consider this cooperative venture another step forward in our endeavor to make the Bloomfield Public Library the cultural center of this community ~ Howard S. Vogt, Director, Bloomfield Public Library (May 1969)

“This newsletter—*The Town Crier*—(which debuted in March of 1969)—is the brainchild of Marguerite Elliott. She and Frederick Branch are to be congratulated,” concluded Mrs. Dorn.

How the Museum came to be...

“Many of the exhibit items that are now housed in the HSOB Museum were at one time owned by the Bloomfield Historical Committee,” explained Dorothy Johnson, Museum Curator in May of 1969.

“As early as March 7, 1930, this committee was in operation and collecting material for an exhibit at the Bloomfield Public Library. An article that appeared in *The Independent Press* at the time stated ‘The increasing public interest in lending or giving to the committee any objects or documents that pertain to local history speaks well for the eventual value of the planned exhibit...It is hoped that a sufficiently large collection will soon have been made so that early opening to the public for inspection and appreciation can be expected.’

“When the Historical Committee ceased to function, the various items collected were stored in the Bloomfield Public Library. During the 1940s and 1950s, many school children visited the library’s ‘Attic Museum’ and we’re intrigued by Bloomfield’s old school bell; an early manual vacuum cleaner; a spinning wheel; an ox yoke and many other



HSOB Trustee Fred Branch & his mother(?) hold a program from opening day. Photo from Frank Fabiano.

historical articles. In 1962, when Bloomfield celebrated its 150th anniversary, the library approved the transfer of ownership of the museum collection to the newly-created corporation called Bloomfield's 150th Anniversary 1962, Inc.”

Items stored

“For several months, the museum items were exhibited at Bloomfield College. At the close of this exhibit, the items were stored in Brookside School while the museum awaited permanent quarters (*Editor's note:* This public elementary school on Essex Avenue is now Brookside Manor Apartments). When the 1962 Corporation ceased to exist, ownership of the museum collection was transferred to the HSOB. Near the end of 1968, the museum items were moved back to the gallery of the Bloomfield Public Library, which is now the permanent headquarters of the HSOB Museum.”

New acquisitions

“Through the years, the coordination of acquisitions—the processing and cataloging of the museum gifts—had been handled by the Reference Department of the Bloomfield Public Library, and even today, items still continue to arrive in the office of Mrs. Dorothy Johnson, Reference Librarian at the Library and Curator of the Museum.

“Among the treasures of the Museum are: a doll's cradle made by Jacob Leu, a Swiss cabinet maker, who moved from Newark to Bloomfield about 1857; a foot stove used in the historic Church on the Green long before the days of central heating; numerous costumes and dresses, including an early wedding gown given by Mrs. David Oakes II; a fireman's lantern with ‘Chief, BFD’ engraved on glass; and World War II ration books and stamps.”

150 donors

“The list of donors to this Museum numbers over 150 and includes not only Bloomfield residents but former Bloomfield families and friends who literally found treasures in their attics and recognized the value of giving these items to the HSOB's Museum,” concluded Johnson.

By September of '69, the Museum is in full swing...

According to the September issue of *The Town Crier*, “Mrs. Elizabeth L. Coombs, Chairman of the Museum Committee, is hoping that members from the Historical Society will volunteer to ‘Museum-sit’ occasionally on Wednesday afternoons from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. to release ‘regulars’ Margaret Riggin, Betty Coombs, Maryann Dorn and William Demmert. This will free them to perform other duties. No special knowledge or training is required, just a desire to serve and the liking for people.

“The Museum Committee is grateful for recent acquisitions. These splendid articles will be displayed on a rotating basis.

“Attendance was excellent in the air-conditioned Museum during the summer months the children and adults found the displays very interesting.

The Board of Trustees of the Bloomfield Public Library is pleased to welcome this permanent Museum to the library gallery because it adds an important visual dimension to the community's knowledge of its Bloomfield heritage. We congratulate the HSOB and its hard working committee for the care with which this fine collection of Bloomfield memorabilia was assembled and catalogued and the good taste and imagination with which it is displayed. We are proud to house it and make it available to the community ~ Mrs. Roy E. Sjogren, President, Board of Trustees, Bloomfield Public Library (May 1969)



Visit the Museum! *Wednesday: 2:00pm–4:30pm*
Saturday September to June: 10:00am–12:30pm
and by appointment

assisted by hostesses Miss Maybelle Holmes and Miss Harriet Deane. A tour of the museum was conducted by HSOB members headed by Maryann Dorn, HSOB President.

The HSOB Museum in 2019

Fifty years later, Dorothy Johnson—a 1947 graduate of Bloomfield High School—is still the Curator of the Museum. She is assisted by HSOB President Jean Kuras, volunteer Janis Lee and HSOB Recording Secretary Anne Carlino. Carlino is a 19-year resident of Bloomfield and has been helping out at the Museum since 2010. Her husband, Walter Nacnodovitz, is Vice President of the HSOB.

“My responsibilities are to check the phone messages, answer emails, accession donations, send thank you letters for donations, research any questions received by phone or email and work on projects, i.e indexing the photos or organizing the files,” explained Carlino. “Basically, I do whatever needs to be done.”

According to Carlino, visitors come in to look around and some come in with specific questions. The most common question is information about the house they own.

“I love researching questions and learning about the history of Bloomfield. The museum is a treasure trove of Bloomfield history. I love using the City Directories. They have a wealth of information and have been extremely helpful in answering many questions. I wish we had more visitors on Wednesdays,” she said.

“My favorite exhibit is the case with the miniature doll furniture that is in the entrance by the elevator. I could spend hours looking at all the different items in the case. I also like the Peloubet melodeons and organ we have on display.

“The most popular exhibits/artifacts are the miniature collection I mentioned and the three doll houses. When boys come in they are particularly interested in the antique toys and the firearms we have on display. Many people find the Royal Theater exhibit fascinating. They also ask questions about the Works Progress Administration (WPA) dioramas we have on display,” concluded Carlino.

“The committee is anxious to extend Museum hours. In order to accomplish this, the society needs volunteers.

“When you visit the museum see the many items for sale.”

On September 29, 1969, the friends of the Bloomfield Library, in cooperation with the HSOB, offered a combination tour of the library and Museum. Library Director Howard Vogt personally conducted small groups through the library facilities ending at the Museum, where HSOB members explained the exhibits.

On October 2, 1969 the first meeting of the Major Joseph Bloomfield chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) was held at the Museum. Miss Helen Hunt, DAR Chairman, presided at the meeting,

**For while today we
 are honoring history...
 the Historical Society
 of Bloomfield is, in fact,
 making it! ~ Bloomfield
 Mayor Walter J. Davis while
 participating in the ribbon-
 cutting (May 1969)**

HIGHLIGHTS OF OPENING DAY



(left to right) Mayor Walter Davis and
Mrs. Peter Dorn
Background: Mr. & Mrs. John Ambler



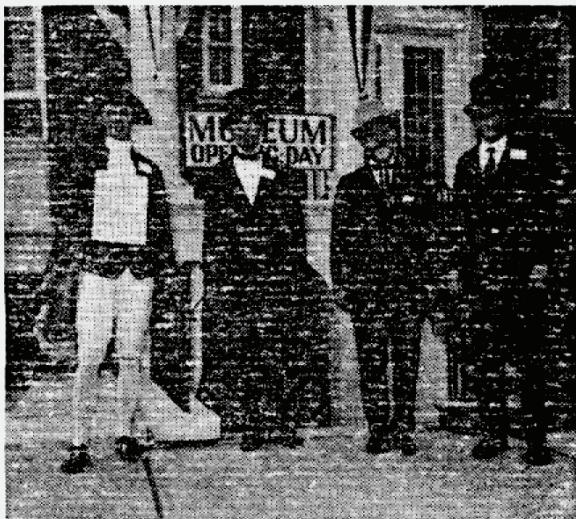
A corner of the
Historical Society of Bloomfield Museum



Mrs. Peter Dorn, Howard Vogt,
Mrs. Roy E. Sjogren



Mrs. Lillian Ports, Mrs. David Oakes II and
the late Mrs. Louis Pangaro



Richard Triemer, Kenneth McCormick,
George T. Boyle, Frederick Branch



Miss Judy Ward and
Miss Cathy Dillon



General Joseph Bloomfield

THE NEW TOWN CRIER

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF BLOOMFIELD

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Program*

Mary Shoffner, *Corresponding Secretary/
Hospitality*

Anne Carlino, *Recording Secretary*

John Debold, *Membership*

Cindi Debold, *Treasurer*

Dorothy Johnson, *Museum Curator*

Ava Caridad, *Publicity & Promotion*

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Ava Caridad, *Editor*

Nicholas D'Angelo, *Layout*

The Isaac Cockefair House



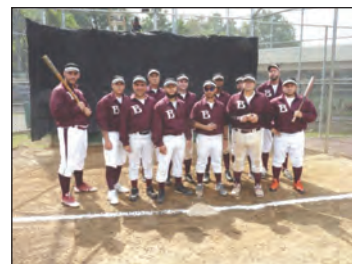
805 Broad Street

The Isaac Cockefair house was built by William Parsons for Isaac Cockefair in 1849. It had a large ballroom and was a well-known social center in its day.

Image courtesy of Van Tassel Funeral Home. Photo by Richard Rockwell..

2nd Annual Vintage Baseball Game at Wrights Field on Saturday, September 28!

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



The Bloomfield Buzzards
*Photo courtesy of
The Independent Press.*



4th Annual Ice Cream Social on Saturday, June 8, 11:00am–2:00pm!

HSOB 4th annual Ice Cream Social—**FREE** ice cream and commemorative Museum 50th Anniversary fridge magnet for all who visit the HSOB Museum (90 Broad St., 3rd fl. Children's Library).

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:

Ruth Ann Allen
Metuchen, NJ

JoAnne Voytac Trygg
Dillsburg, PA

Richard Unnasch
Bloomfield

Mary Lou Bristol
North Chesterfield, VA

Elaina Unnasch
Bloomfield

William Jacunski
Bloomfield

Victoria Larson
Bloomfield