



The New Town Crier

Official Newsletter of the Historical Society of Bloomfield



BLOOMFIELD, NEW JERSEY 07003

OCTOBER 2007

MEETING

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25
8:00 PM
at the
BLOOMFIELD CIVIC CENTER
84 Broad Street, Bloomfield

Eyewitness Images from the American Revolution

Historian and Author
Arthur Lefkowitz

Despite the absence of photography, Mr. Lefkowitz asserts that the American Revolution was accurately and visually recorded by a number of artists. He has assembled a color slide presentation using high quality images created by artists of the 18th century found in a variety of museum collections. Using his own artistry, Mr. Lefkowitz has transferred eighteenth century artistry into slides used in this presentation. The images used are taken from history paintings, portraits, and drawings rapidly executed in the field of operations.

Mr. Lefkowitz offers background information on each piece, the artist, and interesting details in the pieces that are often overlooked.

Several portraits of George Washington are included and are central to presentation.

The Historical Society of Bloomfield will present the program "When Artwork Speaks: Original Images From The Revolutionary War" on September 25, 2007 at 8:00 PM. The location is in the Bloomfield Civic Center, 84 Broad Street. The public is invited to this free event.

This program is offered through the Horizon Speakers Bureau of the N.J. Council for the Humanities.



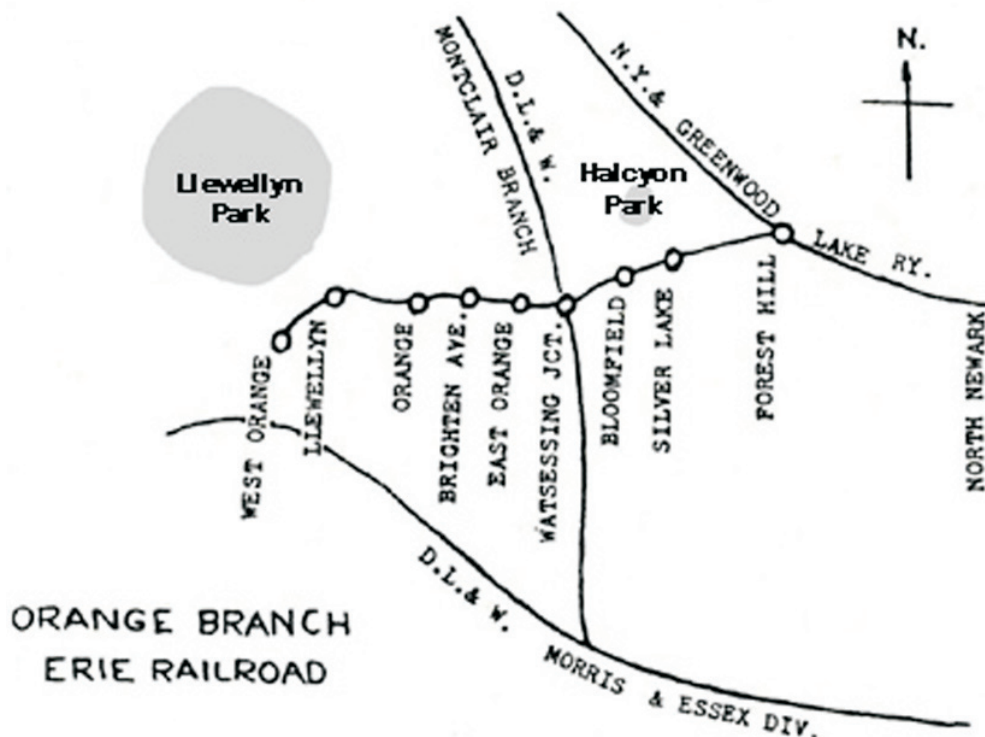
NEW JERSEY COUNCIL
FOR THE HUMANITIES

BACK COPIES AVAILABLE

Previous issues of this publication can be had by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to the editor at 28 Forest Drive, Bloomfield or the HSOB Museum at 90 Broad Street, Bloomfield. Two different copies will be sent for each envelope received.

Was Halcyon Park Inspired by Llewellyn Park?

By Richard Rockwell



(Map adapted from Schneider, 1995¹)

Llewellyn Park, considered the first planned garden suburb² was founded in the 1850's in West Orange bordering on *West Bloomfield* which later became Montclair. Halcyon Park was founded in the mid 1890's. The communities are less than three miles apart, five stops on the Orange Branch of the Erie Railroad when it was in operation. Llewellyn Park was near the Llewellyn station and Halcyon Park was near the Silver Lake and Bloomfield stations. The Orange Branch of the Erie Railroad was abandoned years ago, but today, Halcyon Park residents can use the Silver Lake station and Grove Street station (near the former location of the Bloomfield station) on the Newark Light Rail that uses a section of the right-of-way of the Orange Branch of the Erie Railroad.

Reverend C. Kemper Capron, an Episcopalian minister who founded Halcyon Park, must have visited and admired Llewellyn Park and used it as the basis for his smaller-scale design of Halcyon Park when he started it a few decades later.



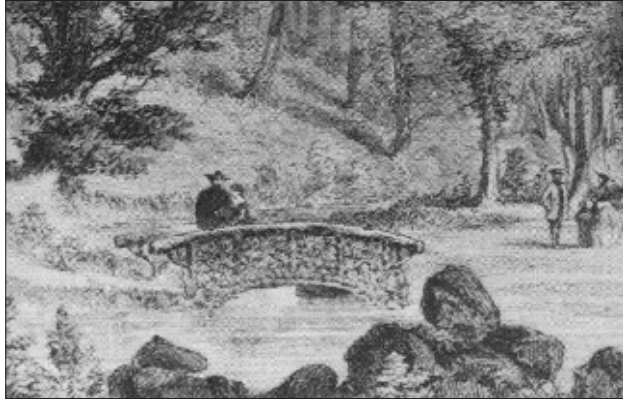
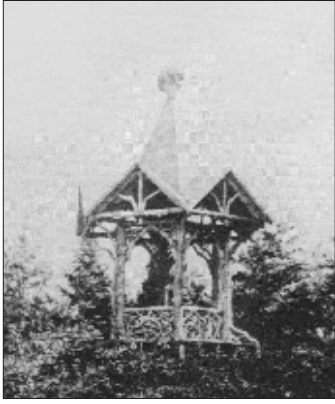
Gate Lodge at Llewellyn Park²



Gate Lodge at Halcyon Park⁴

Both communities were founded by men with visions of creating communities of like-minded people - for Llewellyn Haskell, founder of Llewellyn Park, like-minded Swedenborgians, for C. Kemper Capron, Episcopalian.³ Both men had visions of making country living accessible to the common man. "To contemporary observers, Llewellyn Park was unique; several thought it seemed "like one large estate" akin to the English nobleman's country home, but now brought within the range of the common man."² In Halcyon Park, "you [could] have the comforts of a big country seat at a merely nominal sum; you [could] live the

(Continued on page 2)

Halcyon Park (continued from page 1)Gazebo and bridge at Llewellyn Park²Gazebo and bridge at Halcyon Park⁴

life of a millionaire at a price within easy reach.”⁴

The entrances to both communities are marked by *gate lodges*. Both communities were built around a common area containing ornamental ponds, streams, gazebos, and bridges in an environment designed by landscape artists to look *natural*. Alexander Jackson Davis, Eugene A. Bauman and Howard Daniels designed the Llewellyn Park landscape.² In Halcyon Park “trees and shrubs and flowering plants . . . [were] laid out by a landscape artist, carelessly enough apparently, but carefully studied for pleasing effects.”⁴

A central feature at Llewellyn Park is “the Ramble, a . . . picturesque ravine . . . with paths and bridges that cross . . . the middle of the park . . . and, at both ends, ornamental ponds.”² Halcyon Park has “trees and shrubs and spacious grounds and cottages, picturesque and quaint”⁴ and originally had two ponds.

Both communities encouraged individual owners to choose their own varied architectural styles, while creating common areas of shared open space maintained by the community *association* of property owners. In Llewellyn Park, owners were assessed \$10.00 per year.² In Halcyon Park, “each owner [became] an owner again in all the walks and drives, the lakes and lawns, the tennis courts and gardens, the club-house and the stables.” The live-in janitor/gardener and his assistants will “trim your lawns along with the rest and keep your place in repair; yet you can count your share of the costs in dollars on the fingers of your hands.”⁴

Both communities were designed with irregularly-shaped lots on winding streets. In Llewellyn Park, “most of the sites on the lower terraces were randomly placed on gently curved roads and access drives, and the house sites were asymmetrically arranged.”² Halcyon Park is laid out on an irregular grid . . . characterized by winding narrow streets . . .⁵

When you enter either park, as you pass the gate lodge, you are on a *parkway* – “Park Way” in Llewellyn Park or “Parkway West” in Halcyon Park.

Information

info@HalcyonParkHistoricDistrict.com

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Fredrick Branch and Frank Gerard Godlewski for the inspiration for this topic and for their support and assistance.

References

1. Schneider, Stewart P, *The Erie Railroad's Orange Branch*, Railroadians of America Train Sheet, Winter, 1995
2. Wilson, Richard Guy, *Idealism and the Origin of the First American Suburb: Llewellyn Park, New Jersey*, The American Art Journal, October 1979
3. *Halcyon Park* first Developed By A Very Idealistic Clergyman, Independent Press, 1962
4. *Halcyon Homes*, Promotional Brochure, 1895
5. Drobbin, Lynn, 1995, *Historic Architectural Resources Background Study for the Newark City Subway Extension and Vehicle Base Facility*

STUCK TRUCK

The delivery truck belonging to Barth Florist at 38 Division Street seems have come to grief, possibly on a dirt road across what was left of the old Baldwin farm on Broad Street. Unfortunately there are no landmarks visible and one tree looks like another, so the vehicle could have become mired in the mud elsewhere in town. Division Street was originally named Barth Street; the name was change to Division in the 1912 Directory.

The four-digit telephone number, the appearance of the truck, with its chain drive and acetylene headlamps, point to a very early vehicle, possibly dating from around 1920. The Barths owned and operated an extensive florist business on this property as late as the 1940's, which had been bought by Johanna Barth in 1889. By 1971 there were 19 members of that family living in Bloomfield: current telephone books list none.



Photograph courtesy of Edward Stecewicz.



Photograph courtesy of Edward Stecewicz.



The male members of the Barth family pose in the ample bathing suits of the early 1900's that left very little exposure for a nice suntan. The young Goliath in the front is recognizable in other photos in this collection and may have been Johanna and Joseph Barth's grandson. Can anyone provide us with further information about this Bloomfield family of the early 1900's?

CLUB EVERGREEN [on the] Belleville Turnpike*

Don't bother telephoning; the "Club Evergreen" for your next party: it withered and died back in the early 1940's. The land on which it stood was about 15 feet above the grade of Belleville Avenue and was the southern portion of the old Manley Farm which once bordered on the Third River just opposite the Davey Trunkboard Factory. (See 1906 map) After farming was discontinued, the Manleys had sold most of their property to the Soho Land Development Company and the Forest Hill Field Club, which maintains a golf course and clubhouse there today.

Seating Capacity 500

Phone Bloomfield 2-4434



Club Evergreen, Belleville Turnpike, Bloomfield, New Jersey

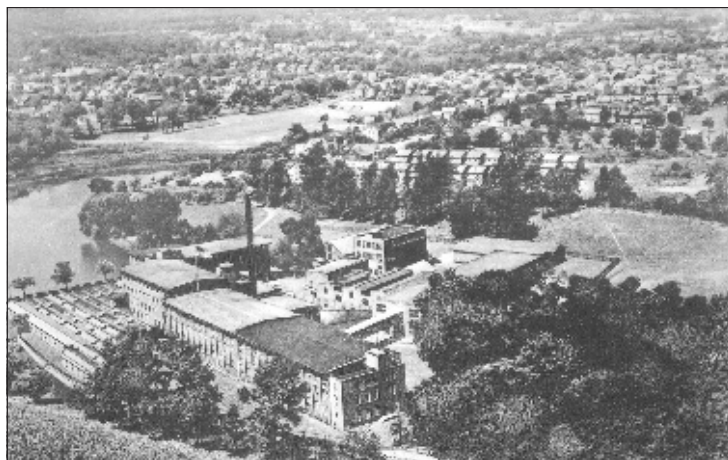
As for the long vanished Club Evergreen, it was notable during its short life for a massive sign on the roof in the shape of an evergreen tree, painted a dark green and outlined with a bright green neon tube; a landmark that could be seen for miles...while it lasted. Unfortunately, the depression or poor management, or maybe the stratospheric climb to the front door put it out of business and it had vanished completely by the end of WW2.

Unfortunately, we have no pictures of either the sign or the building. A resident of Willett Street in 1950 remembers her nephews playing on the long flight of stairs to the top of the hill after the club had disappeared.

Shortly after, both the stairway to nowhere and the hill itself were hauled away in dump trucks, to be replaced by a small shopping center that had a modest supermarket, drug store, hardware store, bank, and Chinese restaurant. Sometime after 1972, a massive A&P replaced the dinky mall, but the restaurant has managed to hang on.

Many thanks to Ed Stecewicz of the Nutley Historical Society for donating this rare postcard to the Historical Society of Bloomfield. At no time was it a toll road.

*"The Belleville 'Turnpike' was and is in North Arlington and forms the boundary between Hudson and Bergen Counties. "Turnpike" denotes a toll road, a misnomer for the old Newtown Road; also called "John Street" at one time in its history.



The Beginnings of Foley Field

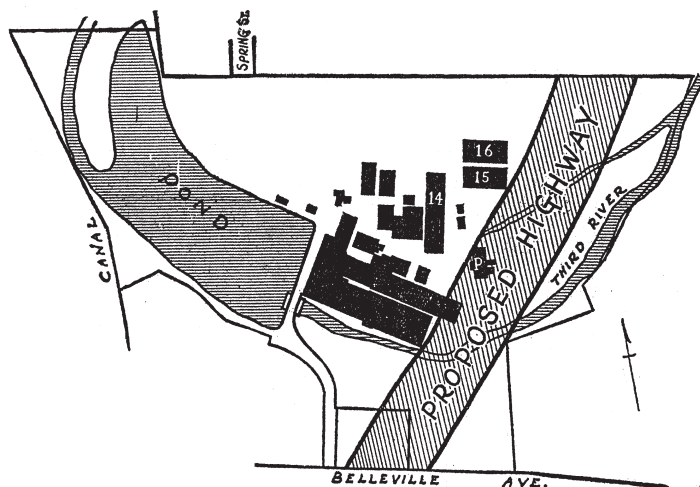
An early aerial photo of the Oakes Mill Complex from the east, taken in the late 1920's or early 30's showing in the upper left the beginnings of Foley Field before the construction of the WPA steel and concrete grandstand (now in poor condition and condemned). The site of the field was once part of the Oakes millpond that had silted up and had become a swamp filled with bulrushes, an area that ice skaters that used the pond during the winter called "the North Pole".

Although a dry and empty ditch at this time, the Morris Canal could still be found along the far side of the pond and field. It is now the site of Kennedy Drive. The canal towpath was used as a pedestrian access to the stadium from Belleville Avenue and James Street.

Brookside School (now condos) can be seen just below the upper left corner. Far in the background is "North Center", part of Glen Ridge, and Upper Montclair. At the upper right are Spring, James, and Baldwin Streets, marked by rows of new houses, a result of the building boom of the early 1900's.

By 1950, the Garden State Parkway was chewing its way through Bloomfield. It crossed Belleville Avenue (out of sight to the left), then obliterated the grassy area* in the left foreground and hundreds of trees in the right foreground, taking along part of the Oakes Woolen Mill (see map).

*The grassy area was the Oakes cow pasture on Belleville Avenue. The bridge at the bottom margin was used to move the cows back and forth from their pasture to their paddock, located next to the low buildings above the trees on the right.



A WASHOUT

The ruins of this substantial stone bridge are believed to be those of West Passaic Avenue over the Third River after the flood of 1903. The view is of the downstream side. The bridge was replaced with a new one about 15 years ago.

The inscription on the back of the photo says: "original stone bridge on West Passaic Avenue", and "Baptists baptized members here". Research has not proved either that this or is not West Passaic Avenue, but the "experts" do not think so. Your guess is as good as theirs. It is printed here as a reminder that both the Second and Third Rivers have very little respect for the works of man.





General Joseph Bloomfield

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90 Broad Street
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How To Join The HSOB

A short time ago, a young person heard about the Historical Society of Bloomfield and wanted to know if you "had to be old" to join. No, there are certainly no age requirements for membership. In fact, the Society welcomes young people who have an interest in local history and who want to know more about it. Moreover, anyone below the legal voting age who wants to contribute to this newsletter is more than welcome to submit a manuscript to this Newsletter. If you have a special area of interest, please, let's hear about it.

Our address is:

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VANISHED LANDMARK



Dodd Street, corner of Orange Street in 1967. Photo by Dorothy Johnson

The Tom Moore Hotel at the corner of Orange and Dodd Streets, looks very solidly built in this photo of 40 years ago, but it yielded to "Progress" at an unknown date and is now a vacant lot. Just behind it are the buildings on Moulter Place, still there the last time we looked. The Erie-Lackawanna Railroad (now Conrail) runs to New York City and back on the tracks located under the bridges to the left and right. Until they were raised in some places and lowered in others (such as here) and electrified in 1912, these tracks were at the level of the street.

James Lee, Morris Canal Expert, Dies at 89

It is sad to report the death last April of James Lee, "expert on Morris Canal", as the obit referred to him. Yes, he was that in spades, writing several illustrated books and actually purchasing part of Incline Plane No. 9 West. With the help of his wife, Mary, he unearthed and restored the water turbine that had powered the plane until it was abandoned in 1922.

The editor remembers with particular pleasure a bus trip made about 30 years ago that explored the western parts of the Canal, many of which were still filled with water and looked much the same as they had for most of its almost century of service. We visited Mr. Lee's restored turbine, a high point of the trip; almost as good as the lunch break (long after noon) at a quaint restaurant in Hackettstown.

Mr. Lee had obviously found his niche and enjoyed it immensely. How many of us can say that?



THE MORRIS CANAL IN ART

Painted by Rachel L. Farrington, West Caldwell

A watercolor of the Morris Canal painted from a photograph taken in the fall of 1912. We are looking south from the north end of the Brookdale section of Bloomfield. Shown in this picture is a part of the canal about 1500 feet south of the Hepburn "change bridge". This area is now part of the Upper Montclair Golf Course. The painting is a part of the collection of the Historical society of Bloomfield's museum collection