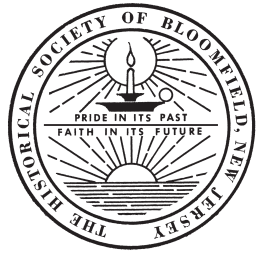




The New Town Crier

Official Newsletter of the Historical Society of Bloomfield



BLOOMFIELD, NEW JERSEY 07003

NOVEMBER 2008

MEETING

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2008

8:00 PM

BLOOMFIELD CIVIC CENTER
84 Broad Street, Bloomfield

Molly Pitcher

Molly Pitcher was the name given to a woman who fought in the Battle of Monmouth in the Revolutionary War. Her real first name was Mary. Her last name, which may have been Ludwig, is still in dispute. Mary married William Hays, a young barber who lived in the village of Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Her husband enlisted as a gunner in the First Pennsylvania Artillery in 1775 and spent the winter of 1777 and 1778 at Valley Forge. Like many other poor women of the time, Mary traveled with her husband. She received half-rations in the Continental Army in return for cooking, washing, sewing, and doing other work.

The Battle of Monmouth was fought on June 28, 1778 on the hottest day of a hot summer. The great heat and fighting made the soldiers very thirsty. Thus began the legend of Molly, a legend we invite you to share with us on the evening of Tuesday, November 25 when the cries of: "Molly! Molly! Pitcher!" will be heard once again.

Our speaker, Stacy Roth, is an accomplished performer, and will bring this heroine of our nation's War of Independence to life. Come join us and enjoy a fascinating program.

This Horizon Speakers program is offered by the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, a State partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities.



NEW JERSEY COUNCIL
FOR THE HUMANITIES

How To Join The HSOB

The Society welcomes anyone who has 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. Our address is:

Historical Society of Bloomfield Museum
c/o Bloomfield Public Library
90 Broad Street, Bloomfield 07003

BLOOMFIELD'S BOWERY



The interesting and informative 1906 atlas of Bloomfield has much information about the town as it appeared a century ago. Street numbers, property owners, buildings still standing and those long (and recently) gone are shown in incredibly detailed outlines.

One such group of now demolished buildings was located on Washington Street parallel to the one track (at that time) of the Lackawanna Railroad's extension to Montclair on a five-sided lot containing seven buildings, all shown as the property of Mr. Cornelius Van Wagoner who owned five or six cabins strung out very much like slave cabins of the South. And like these cabins, the tenants were black and crowded together. Plumbing? Forget it.

Nothing much has yet been found about Mr. Van Wagoner, but one thing is certain: he was a slumlord. The buildings on his land were not old ones that had fallen into disrepair, they had been built of what looked like packing-box lumber in the sleaziest manner, and were probably rented for a pittance...still too much. These eyesores were high on the hit list of The Town Improvement Association to whom we are indebted for these revealing photographs. This group of public-spirited ladies, knew bad housing, dumps and eyesores when they saw them, and went around town between 1907 and 1932 taking photographic records of what they didn't like. Without their dedicated efforts, we would probably have never seen these pitiful shacks. The last of these shacks, the one nearest Washington Street, was finally torn down around 1937.

The site of Mr. Van Wagoner's "Colonial Village" is now a parking lot and is probably the only spot in town that can be said to have been improved by a layer of blacktop.



I Opened The Window and In-Flew-Enza

It has been just 90 years (and a couple of months) since the above doggerel was chanted in the streets by kids who had little idea about the seriousness of the epidemic of 1918 that gripped the world... unless it struck their own homes. In ten months, a half-million victims died in the United States. The insidious disease sometimes masqueraded as a simple cold or headache, and very often these people were dead within 24 hours. Bloomfield histories do not make much of it, probably because it was not as serious here as in Newark and other large crowded cities. Nobody of great note died and its most insidious work was done among the poor who were crowded together in unheated shacks.

1918 Burials			4/11/18
155	Adult Plot #4 Row C 4 1/2 g	Louis Hagan Lobar Pneumonia	28 5 11 ✓
5 1/2	Henry P Bush	Bub. Pneumonia	31 ✓
156	1/2 Plot # 825 4 1/2 g f N	Comp. Infl.	23 ✓
5 1/2	Philip Bowdler	Tuberculosis	✓
157	Adult Col Plot #3 Row V 12 1/2	Spinal Meningitis	18 9 - ✓
5 1/2	Ralph Worthington	Scarlet Fever	✓
158	SW 1/4 Plot #1185 M. g. with atten	Bacterial	5 - - ✓
6 1/2	James Howard West	Myocarditis	✓
159	Plot #577 S 1/2 1 1/2 g f N	Inf. Infl.	67 - - ✓
7 1/2	Hannah Jackson	Gastric Enfer.	✓
160	Childs Col Plot #4 Row A 10 1/2	N	- 4 3 ✓
8 1/2	John Perry Peacock	Influenza	✓
161	Plot #338 E 1/2 1 1/2 g f N	Pellagra	21 11 1 ✓
8 1/2	John Francis Henderson	Dr. Lobar Pneumonia	✓
162	Plot #1163 N 1/2 1 1/2 g f E		30 - 9 ✓
8 1/2	Samuel Henry Lynees	Influenza	✓
163	Adult Plot #4 Row C 5 1/2 g	Ex. Infl.	34 11 5 ✓
9 1/2	James Bob Baxter	Lobar Pneumonia	✓
164	Adult Plot #4 Row D 3 1/2 g	S & K	27 - 14 ✓
9 1/2	Stell Birth	Unknown	✓
165	Plot #397 E 1/2 M. g. with sister	B	- - - ✓
9 1/2	Jane E Baird	Valv. Heart Disease	✓
166	Plot #818 E 1/2 2 1/2 g f N	Heart	71 11 21 ✓
10 1/2	Mildred Long	Lobar Pneumonia	✓
167	1 1/2 Plot #571 3 1/2 g f W	Ex. Infl.	17 9 23 ✓
10 1/2	Eldridge Miller	Influenza	✓
168	Childs Col Plot #4 Row A 11 1/2		1 0 13 ✓
11 1/2	Wesley R Hedden	Influenza	✓
169	S 1/2 Plot #875 W 1/2 1 1/2 g f N	Heart	21 - - ✓

Bloomfield Cemetery has preserved the burial records for August-November of 1918 in a separate ledger. The worst months were September and October, a page of which is shown here. The cause of death is sometimes given as "Influenza", but various other names for that same disease are often used.



• ICE COLD LEMONADE •

These three high-pressure salespeople are on Forest Drive (where they lived at the time of this photo of 1939 or 40). They are on their carefree way to busy Belleville Avenue to set up their soft drink stand on a hot summer pre-air-conditioned-car day. It will probably be their obvious lean and hungry (but charming) looks that will coax pennies (or even a nickel) out of the pockets of sympathetic motorists rather than the lukewarm liquid they have to sell.

They are, from left to right: Mary Irene Kingston (MacDonald), James Richard Branch (1928-2004), and Mary Elise Magai (Mutter). The 17 children of the ten families who lived there at that time have, with one exception, long since moved far away. Although Forest Drive is an ideal place to grow up, there is nobody under the age of 60 who lives there today.

Many thanks to Mary Irene Kingston MacDonald of Denville for her contribution of this nostalgic view of almost 70 years ago.

DODD DESCENDANT

The Dod/Dodd family genealogy that was co-authored by the late Allison Dodd of Bloomfield and the Reverend Joseph Fulford Folsom, secretary of The New Jersey Historical Society. It was published in 1940, and has long been a treasure trove for historians who are interested, not only in the Dod/Dodd families, but in the many other distinguished families to which they are related. Unfortunately, the book cuts off the many other descendants born after the date of publication, but it still comes in handy very often, this time in tracing a descendant whose father had been born in 1920: David Lee Dodd. He was the son of David Wallace Dodd, number 616 in the book. His daughter, unborn in 1940, is Barbara Dod Anderson, who was in the news back in May of this year when she made a staggering gift of 128.5 million dollars to the George School, a private educational in-

stitution just south of Newtown in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Mrs. Anderson is an alumna of this Quaker affiliated boarding school, which she first attended in 1941.

Barbara Dodd Anderson, now 75 years old, was an economist and longtime professor at the Columbia University Business School. To say that she comes from distinguished forebears would be to understate the case. Her grandfather, David Wallace Dodd (616), was a doctor at the Veterans Administration in Nashville, Tennessee. Dr. Dodd married Ann Marie Miller, daughter of Leo Franklin and Birdie Witherington Miller of Dresden, Tennessee on March 20, 1920. He was a son of Granville Moody Dodd (476) of Vevay, Indiana. His father (295) Thomas Moore Dodd was the son of Jeduthun Dodd (147) (1780-1847).

Epilogue

By John Gibson

On a gritty corner of Orange Street, just before it goes into the Home Depot parking lot, there is a street sign with a commemorative plaque. It is one of a number of plaques* that the Township has placed on some of its streets to honor residents who were killed in combat in Korea and Viet Nam. This particular one is for Corporal Robert Toole, USMC.

The Toole family grew up on Orange Street when it still continued through to Watsessing Center. In 1950, Robert, one of four sons, was the proud member of a Marine Reserve unit and was a student at Seton Hall College. In June of that year, the North Koreans invaded South Korea and Bob's unit was called to active duty. Bob was killed and his body was buried in an unmarked mass grave. The war continued on until 1953 and ended pretty much where it started.

For half a century or more after the war, the family assumed that his body was still in North Korea. But that was not the case. Some years after the cessation of hostilities, a deal was made with the North Koreans and the bodies in that mass grave were exhumed and sent to Hawaii for identification.

Efforts to identify Bob's body were hampered by the fact that, when he enlisted, he was too young. So he lied about his age and where he lived. The birth date that he gave was the same as one of his brothers, who had subsequently died. Efforts were stalemated until the Marine Corps enlisted the help of the genealogy arm of the LDS. They located his only surviving brother, Richard, who provided a DNA sample. Testing will take some time, but when Bob's remains are identified, he will be laid to rest in the "Punch Bowl" Military Cemetery, "along with his buddies", as his brother Richard said.

**As a point of interest, in a one-block stretch of Orange Street there are three such plaques. "LDS" is an abbreviation for "Latter Day Saints", the proper name of the Mormon Church. It maintains several centers of genealogical data (one in North Caldwell) that have detailed and accurate family records that are a welcome and well-used source of information to anyone doing family research. These families do not necessarily belong to the LDS Church, but the database includes everyone, regardless of their faith.*



ALLISON DODD 1864 – 1949

The home of Allison Dodd on Belleville Avenue, photographed with a two-dollar Kodak "Brownie" camera in 1945, when it still had its classical balustrade around the porch roof and was still the residence of Mr. Dodd, who had apparently just returned from a drive. His black Lincoln limo has been driven under the porte cochere by the chauffeur so that he can enter his impressive 1890's Colonial Revival style mansion, even on a sunny day, without getting wet.

Don't look for it now. After being used for a few years as a medical library, the house was bulldozed in May of 1974. The late Russell Rommele spearheaded a fight through the pages of the Independent Press, to preserve the house, but Bloomfield is Bloomfield and the residence was replaced by a housing development. Another sad loss during construction was the large elm tree that stood next to the driveway. *Photo by F. Branch, 1945.*

Depression Jokes

Regardless of how you might feel about the results of the recent election, here are some remarks about Depression Era elections that might give you a smile:

During the contest between Kansas Governor Alfred Landon and President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1936, the Republican Club of Bloomfield, confident in victory for their side, erected a large banner over Broad Street that was supported at both ends by large lamp posts. The morning after, some town Democrats had dubbed the posts "Maine and Vermont".

An old saying had it that "As Maine goes, so goes the Nation." In 1936 it was revised to: "As Maine goes, so goes Vermont."

And one final comment on the 1930's. In Mr. William Murphy's eighth grade class in Fairview Grammar School, he asked the class if anybody knew what "WPA" stood for. One little girl raised her hand and, when called upon, delivered this rather surprising answer: "Work Prevention Association". Of course, the class howled with laughter. When Mr. Murphy was able to be heard, he corrected his pupil by giving the expected answer, which was "Works Progress Administration", then asked his pupil where she got her interpretation. "Well", she replied, "That's what my father calls it." (He was not alone in that respect.)

And, as some veterans of that unfortunate period in our history might claim, the only initials that brought back prosperity were "WWII".



General Joseph Bloomfield

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THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF BLOOMFIELD

90 Broad Street
Bloomfield, NJ 07003

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John Gibson, Ad Hoc

From the Mailbox

Dear Jean:

I want to thank you and the Historical Society for hosting the Girl Scouts of Bloomfield during the Harvest Fest on September 20. The program you ran helped the girls to get a feel for earlier days in town. The speakers were very interesting and brought the past to life for the younger generation. I also know the adults who came to chaperone learned as much as the girls. I find myself trying to picture what the town looked like as I drive around. The girls were also able to earn a badge about history.

I hope we can do another similar program sometime this year. There are other troops that wanted to participate, but could not on that date. As we approach Bloomfield's 200th anniversary, I also hope the Historical Society will keep the Girl Scouts in mind. Perhaps we could assist you in some way.

Again, thank you for sharing your time and knowledge with Bloomfield's girls.

Sincerely,
Eileen Larkin
Bloomfield Girl Scout
Service Unit Manager

In Memorium

The Historical Society mourns in sorrow the passing of
two of its great friends:

Dorothy Greenfield and Kenneth McPherson.

I have vivid and pleasant memories of the days when the Historical Society raised money by selling chrysanthemum and poinsettia plants. Out on the Library esplanade on a chilly autumn day, Dorothy would handle the cash box surrounded by dozens of pots of chrysanthemums which we fervently hoped would be gone by the end of the day. And, usually on a freezing and blustery December day, huddled in the Library foyer, (this time with gloves on), Dorothy would handle the dimes and dollars collected during a day of selling poinsettias, crafts, and cookies. Exhausting work became bearable because we cheerfully worked together, drank coffee from a thermos, and found lots to talk and laugh about. Dorothy generously gave her time to serve as Treasurer of the Historical Society for many years.

Kenneth McPherson was a native of Winnipeg, Canada. He graduated from the University of British Columbia in 1947 and the McGill Graduate School of Library Science in 1949. He came to New Jersey to join the staff of the Bloomfield Public Library as Assistant Director, and, by 1959, he advanced to become its Director.

Kenneth was very active in the community. An Elder of the Church on the Green, he served as Chairman of the Historical Committee of Bloomfield's Sesquicentennial Celebration and was instrumental in making that event very successful. Ken was a charter member and first President of the Historical Society.

The Historical Society of Bloomfield extends its deepest sympathies to the families of Dorothy and Ken.

Praising what is lost makes the remembrance deorable.

George Innes

1825 – 1994



This snapshot was among a batch given to the HSOB Museum a short time ago. On the back is written: "Jan. 24, 1913, Geo. Inness Studio, Montclair, New Jersey". The 1906 map of this area (pictured below) shows the Inness property just over the Glen Ridge line on Walnut Crescent, and directly in the center there is a small rectangle marked with a diagonal cross. Is this the building in the photo? The editor thinks it could very well be. The photo shows the building in an abandoned state and may have been taken just before demolition.

