



The New Town Crier

Official Newsletter of the Historical Society of Bloomfield
Celebrating 50 years: 1966-2016



BLOOMFIELD, NEW JERSEY 07003

March 2016

SAVE THE DATE

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, March 22, 2016

**BLOOMFIELD HIGH SCHOOL
AUDITORIUM**

160 Broad Street,
Bloomfield, NJ
7:30 PM

The Morris Canal in Bloomfield
Presented by
Richard Rockwell

This presentation of historic maps and photographs explores why the Morris Canal was important to the development of Bloomfield, why it is an important historic resource today, what remains of the canal and recent developments to interpret and preserve the canal as part of the statewide Morris Canal Greenway effort.



Bloomfield's inclined plane in Scientific American, 1882.

This program was developed by Historical Society Trustee, Rich Rockwell for Bloomfield's Bicentennial in 2012 and has been updated and enhanced with participation from the Bloomfield Recreation Department and the Morris Canal Greenway Committee in celebration of the Historical Society of Bloomfield's 50th anniversary.

The Morris Canal has been on the State and National Registers of Historic Places since 1974 and the Bloomfield section was recently designated Morris Canal Greenway by the Township.

Parking is available in the High School parking lot behind the school on State Street and in the School Administration Building lot on the corner of Broad Street and Belleville Avenue. The event is open to the public and free of charge.

Can you Identify?

The two houses on the right are still standing, but they have been modified. They still have the turret and dormers, but they have been covered with siding and the first floor fronts have been drastically changed. The house on the left behind the tree was demolished for a parking lot many years ago. Where in Bloomfield are we? This is Number 10 and Number 14 Washington Street.

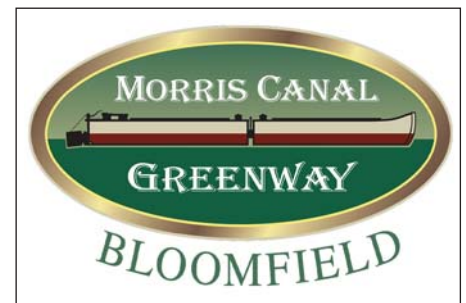


April 30: Morris Canal Greenway Hike through Bloomfield

Join The Historical Society of Bloomfield on Saturday, April 30 (10:00am-2:30pm) for a three-mile hike conducted by Rich Rockwell and Ron Rice following the path of the Morris Canal through Bloomfield and bus ride to additional sites where the canal is still intact. This hike will include a newly reclaimed section of the canal at Oak Tree Lane made possible by Eagle Scout candidate Julian Londono and Troup 22.

Reservations are required. A \$5 donation is requested to cover the cost of the bus and 20-page handout with historic photos and color maps. To reserve a space, email: MorrisCanal@gmail.com

Space is limited. Reservations are required. The excursion will be co-sponsored by HSOB, the Bloomfield Morris Canal Greenway Committee and the Bloomfield Recreation Dept.



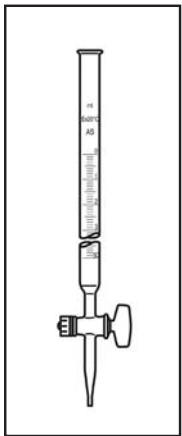
THOSE SCIENTIFIC GEYERS

By John Debold

Scientific Glass Apparatus Company (later Scientific SGA) was a well-known Bloomfield company. Today, we hear its name often regarding the disposition of the 20 acres the company left behind after 35 years at the location bordering Lakewood Terrace, the Glen Ridge Country Club and Broad Street.

Scientific Glass Co. was started by German immigrant William O. Geyer. "Bill" was born in 1893 and immigrated to America in 1910, earning his passage by peeling potatoes.

He began working as a glassblower at Bloomfield's Westinghouse plant for 15¢ an hour. By 1918, he had started Scientific Glass Apparatus Company from his home and in nearby space at 45 Ackerman Street. He worked evenings from a back bedroom in his home to complete the orders for the next day.



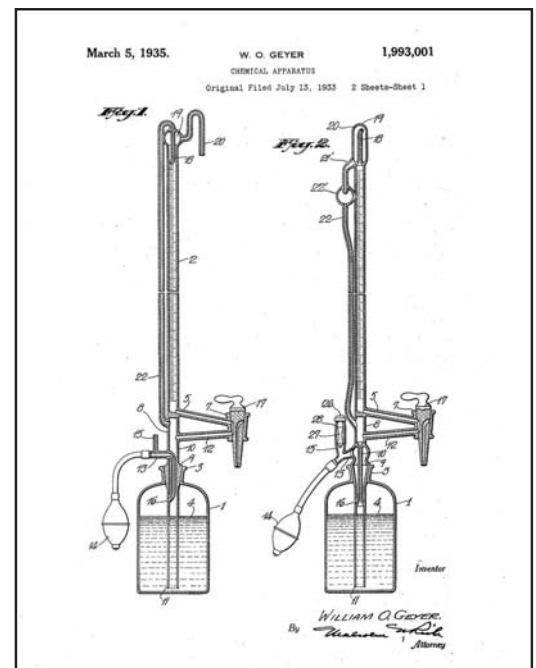
Bill was a pioneer in his field. He patented many scientific instruments, such as the "Burette" shown at left, and eventually employed numerous skilled craftsmen. "Scientific," as it was known, moved to its eventual location after the Bloomfield Works of the Clark Thread Company of Newark vacated its operations from the base of Lakewood Terrace (there was no Lakewood Drive then) to South Carolina. His manufacturing facility eventually grew to 125,000 square feet, selling all types of laboratory supplies and laboratory glassware. He eventually moved his family home to Essex Avenue, near the factory.

A son, William Herbert Geyer, was born October 3, 1919 and became a football standout at Bloomfield High School (BHS), graduating in January 1938. He won a scholarship to Colgate University, where he excelled in football and after graduating, was drafted and played professionally for a brief time for the Chicago Bears. In 1966, he was noted in *Sports Illustrated Magazine's College Standouts* for the previous 25 years. In 1967, Bill was named to the *Sports Illustrated Silver Anniversary All-Pro Team*.

After a stint in the Navy, on March 15, 1944, Bill married BHS June '36 grad Helen Irene Mueller. Helen was also born in 1919, and like Bill, her parents had both emigrated from Germany to the U.S.

Prior to her marriage to Bill, Helen had an interesting career in modeling and briefly in Hollywood. Her modeling career was highlighted by her posing for Norman Rockwell and appearing on magazine covers such as *The Saturday Evening Post*. Helen also appeared in the movie "Cover Girl" with Gene Kelly and Rita Hayworth.

Bill Jr. joined Scientific Glass in 1947 and, under his direction, the company grew to more than 300 employees with branches or offices in eight states. Bill and Helen were involved in numerous charities and eventually endowed a building on the Colgate University campus that bears their names: The Geyer Center for Information Technology. It stands as one testament to their numerous philanthropic endeavors. Additionally, The Montclair YMCA on Glen Ridge Avenue is named the Helen & Bill Geyer Family Center.



William O. Geyer patent—filed in 1933, granted in 1935.



B. H. S. Bengal

WILLIAM H. GEYER

Bill's interest and versatility in sports is shown by the fact that he plays basketball, baseball, and an outstanding game of football. His ability made him the captain of the track team.

Athletic Association Representative; Football; Track.

Bill Jr. and Helen's yearbook photos from Bloomfield High School. Helen graduated in June of 1936 and Bill Jr. graduated in January of 1938.



HELEN I. MUELLER

Remember Mrs. Kalness in *Big Hearted Herbert*? The part was grandly portrayed by the most popular girl in the class, Dutchie to some, Helen to the remainder. As the mother of that wild gang of kids, she certainly had her hands full.

Class Secretary, President—Girls' Glee Club, Senior Gym Team, Feature Editor—*The Champion*, Senior Play, Student Patrol.

RIGHT: In 1944, Helen appeared in the Columbia Studios' film "Cover Girl." with Gene Kelly & Rita Hayworth.



ABOVE: Helen's modeling career landed her on covers of magazines such as *The Saturday Evening Post*. (note Helen on the left in a blue dress).



LEFT: Helen poses for some Hollywood glam shots. In 1943, she dated Mickey Rooney. Some sources report that Rooney wanted to marry her...



General Joseph Bloomfield

THE NEW TOWN CRIER

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF BLOOMFIELD

90 Broad Street
Bloomfield, NJ 07003

Postal address:

PO Box 1074
Bloomfield, NJ 07003-1074

Tel: 973-743-8844

E-mail: info@hsob.org

www.hsob.org

OFFICERS

Jean Kuras, President
Joseph Barry, Vice President/Program
Mary Shoffner, Corresponding Sec./Hospitality
Anne Carlino, Recording Secretary
Emma-Lou Czarnecki, Treasurer
John Debold/Cindi Debold, Membership
Dorothy Johnson, Museum Curator
Ava Caridad, Publicity & Promotion

TRUSTEES

John Debold Richard Rockwell
Mark Scurman Mary Shoffner

PAST PRESIDENT

Ina Campbell

NEWSLETTER STAFF

Ava Caridad, Editor
Nicholas D'Angelo, Layout
Richard Rockwell, Assistant Editor

Bloomfield Female Seminary

The Bloomfield Female Seminary, a school for young ladies, was located at 112 Broad Street, south of the Civic Center. It opened in 1836. Headmistress Harriet B. Cooke ran the nationally-known school for

18 years. Her house was just south of the Seminary, shown here behind the tree. She died in 1862 and is buried in Bloomfield Cemetery. Image courtesy of Van Tassel Funeral Home. *Photo by Richard Rockwell.*



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:

Bloomfield Soccer Club
Bloomfield

**Nicole Colosimo &
Bruce Goodwin**
Bloomfield

Michael Venezia
Bloomfield

John B. Bolland
Bloomfield

Maria Probst
Bloomfield

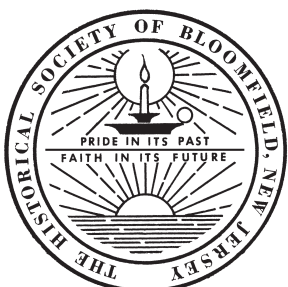
Mark Szep
Bloomfield

Roy Bruns
Jackson, NJ



Reminder!

If you haven't already done so, please be sure to renew your 2016 membership. Renewal forms are available at www.hsob.org or can be picked up at the museum or any HSOB meeting. The HSOB is a non-profit organization, therefore all dues and donations are considered a tax-free contribution. Help keep the Historical Society of Bloomfield strong with your continuing membership!



Historical Society celebrates 50 years...

The Historical Society of Bloomfield celebrates its 50th Anniversary in 2016. Activities planned for our Anniversary include Morris Canal Hikes, Tours of Bloomfield, an Ice Cream Social and more. Local historical presentations will be held on March 22, May 24 and October 25.

The museum, located on the 3rd floor of the Children's Library at 90 Broad Street, is also celebrating 50 years, having had its Grand Opening in May of 1966. It is dedicated to the culture, people and history of Bloomfield. The collection consists of furniture, clothing, tools, housewares, paintings, toys, posters, memorabilia, maps, newspapers, postcards, letters, deeds, documents, books and much more. Located on the 3rd floor of the Children's Library at 90 Broad Street, hours are Wed. 2:00pm-4:30pm, Sat. 10:00am-12:30pm and by appointment. PH: (973) 743-8844.