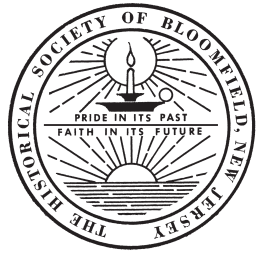




The New Town Crier

Official Newsletter of the Historical Society of Bloomfield



BLOOMFIELD, NEW JERSEY 07003

MARCH 2008

MEETING

TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 2008
8:00 PM
BLOOMFIELD CIVIC CENTER
84 Broad Street, Bloomfield

David Phrayner *The Morris Canal: A Mountain Climbing Waterway*

The program will be on the history of the canal and its relevance as a cultural and natural resource today.

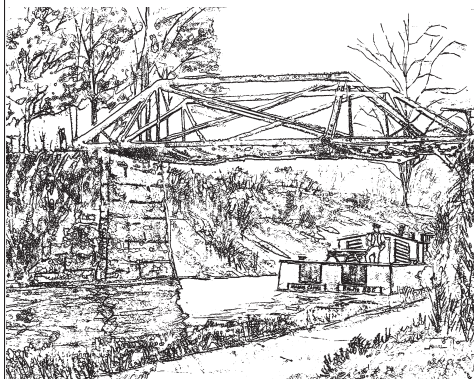
We are pleased and proud to welcome David Phrayner and officers of the Canal Society of New Jersey as our guest speakers. The Canal Society is one of the largest historical societies in the state and promises an informative and exciting program.

The Morris Canal was begun in 1825 and opened in 1831 from Newark to Phillipsburg, then extended in 1836 to Jersey City. There were 28 locks and 23 incline planes along the line of the canal. Many Bloomfield men were involved in the project. All 23 incline planes were built from designs made by Ephraim Morris in his mill located at Bay Avenue and Morris Place. Ira and Caleb Dodd Baldwin constructed the mechanical parts for the canal. Morris ran a packet boat which made daily trips between Newark and Passaic. The fare from Newark to Bloomfield was 25 cents.

The 102 mile waterway sliced through Bloomfield bringing coal from Pennsylvania and opening up new trade possibilities. There were six coal yards along the route.

The canal planes and locks were not operated on Sunday and many canal men stayed over on the Sabbath in Bloomfield at the plane which was between Baldwin Street and Hoover Avenue.

The quiet rural scenic beauty spots along the canal created a greater sentiment than its commercial utility; but, reminiscences aside, the canal was acquired by the Town in around 1950 and deeded to the county for construction of the feeder route to the Garden State Parkway.



The Studio Shop

By Dolores Dalzell

I miss many of the stores that made Bloomfield Center an interesting place to shop, but most of all, I miss Schwacha's Studio Shop on Glenwood Avenue, where he framed pictures and sold art supplies and paintings done by him. I would stop in on Saturdays with my sister,



The south end of the Green (1976)

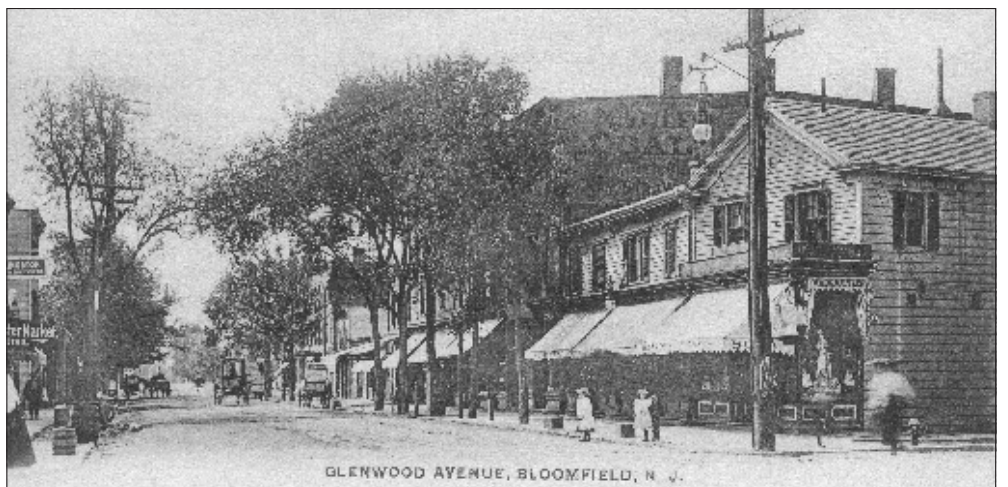
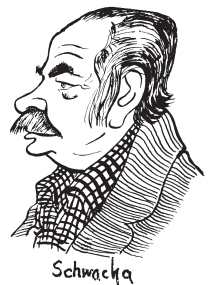
Acrylic by George Schwacha

Jessie, also an artist and fellow member of The Art Center of New Jersey, for art supplies and good conversation. I liked to listen to them, but couldn't contribute very much, so I would look at his paintings for sale. He had small beauties in the window for \$25, and because it was the day after payday, I yielded to temptation many times and enjoyed feeling like Mrs. Havemeyer*. They were so lovely that I felt guilty about the price and would say that they were worth much more. On the back of one George wrote "Worth much more".

George's favorite artist was Renoir, and I was happy to find an old book on Renoir's house for him because I could tell he was genuinely pleased. From my observation, he seemed to be happiest when he was in his workroom at the store, working on a painting and listening to classical music on WQXR. Once a friend of mine brought in a picture to be reframed, but he discouraged it; maybe he wanted to get back to painting.

George had his gruff side, but he was a very nice, kind gentleman with a good sense of humor. Once another fellow artist, a dainty lady, came into the shop and looked at something near the entrance as George was finishing up with customers. He said to them in a stage whisper: "I have to watch that one."

*Mrs. Havemeyer was a wealthy 19th century art collector.



The old Scheriff/Keyler Drug Store at the corner of Glenwood and Washigton bit the dust over the course of several months, finally disappearing in March. There had been a structure on this corner since at least 1856, making it the oldest building in The Center. Card post-marked 1906.

THE SCHUYLER FAMILY



Possibly built in two sections or as a “mother-daughter” house, the Schuyler residence is well over 100 years old and has had the honor of sheltering relatives and acquaintances of both George Washington and Alexander Hamilton. Until shortly after World War Two it had the usual Victorian front porch that extended around the Elm Street side. After this was removed about 50 years ago, there no shelter over the front doors until a more practical owner added the columned porch. The house is being kept in superb condition by its present owners.



“Fairlawn Manor”, the Schuyler mansion in Kearny, said to have been built of local sandstone in 1719 in the Dutch gambrel roof style. The Tuscan style tower was a later addition, possibly made around 1840, by Architect Alexander Jackson Davis, who was working in the area at this time*. The mansion was demolished in 1924 when the estate was divided up into building lots.

* Davis designed Christ Church and “Morningside” in Belleville, and, for Llewellyn Haskell, “Belmont” in North Arlington. None of these buildings exist today. Haskell later moved to West Orange and, with Davis’ help, developed Llewellyn Park.

A HOUSE-MOVING

In the late 19th century, *The Bloomfield Citizen* published a resume of the progress made with street improvements, new houses, and the changes that were taking place. On September 25, 1886, they had this to say about “Bloomfield’s Street and Building Improvements for the Past Few Months:

**On November 12, 1892,
The Citizen has this to say:**

“R. K. Schuyler has purchase the house formerly occupied by Louis Hartmann at No. 25 Elm Street from Halsey M. Barrett, and will have it moved to his lot on Belleville Avenue, where it will be entirely renovated and repaired.”

(The Hartmann house was attached to the south side of the existing residence where it is still in use as a kitchen wing for number 312 Belleville Avenue.) Although Mr. Richards Kingsland Schuyler was the owner of the southeast corner during the period described by Mary F. Barrett, his name is conspicuously absent from her narration. It is not reasonable to think that he was considered as a social inferior inasmuch as he was a cousin of the Schuylers of Albany, the Kingslands of Nutley, and through them to the socially prominent Oakes family.

Mary F. Barrett’s (1878–1972) Reminiscence

“19 Elm Street (my pacing, not accurate). Rear same on Oak Street, where there was a small house quite close to the barn on the adjoining Beach property. The north line of the 19 Elm Street property was about 300 feet long (my pacing). It connected with the James M. Barrett property from Oak Street

to its northwest corner along the Jones line, thus making an L-shaped lot. Originally there was a small house with its little plot between the Jones property on Elm Street and the Barrett’s. People named Barton lived there.”



Before very long Mr. Barrett bought the plot and someone else bought the house [undoubtedly Mr. Schuyler: again his name is omitted] and moved to Belleville Avenue, setting it down on the west side of the J. M. Barrett land. (I think this must have been in the early 1889’s, because Randolph and I tied strings from our house to the picket fence with some intention of moving the former.) Perhaps the Barton house was owned by Mingus. There was also a goat stable on the east end of the Barton plot. This was left and eventually remodeled by our gardener, Matthews, and me as a playhouse.

(Mary F. Barrett’s reminiscence of her neighborhood will be continued in the next issue.)



The Half-House

There are many good-sized houses in Bloomfield dating from the 19th century that were no so large when first built. Their owners were often in modest circumstances and their main priority was to build a shelter for their families, intending to expand as their financial situation improved. There are many of these houses still standing with additions that do not match the original architecture, one of them the home of Joseph Barry on Elm Street; obviously enlarged to the north side and at the back several times in its history.

This one (photo below), located on Franklin Street was almost certainly much smaller when built in the 1800's. Our staff artist has made a sketch of it as it may have appeared when first constructed.

Others include the now demolished Ephraim Morris House at 81 Bay Avenue; the Callin House on Broad Street, which stood on part of what is now the Glen Ridge Country Club; (the Callin farm extended from Broad Street to Grove Street in Montclair); and the Bradbury House on Belleville Avenue at Broad Street with its square 1850's addition.

There are others that were never enlarged: Alan Slaughter's home on Spruce Street, once occupied by the Stiles family, was intended to have a second section to the south which, for some reason, was not built and it is called a "half house". The Greek Revival doorway would have been centered in the façade with twin parlors on the other side of the central hall.

In the case of the Schuyler house, documentary proof exists that another house in Elm as moved to the back of another structure and attached to serve as a kitchen wing with small bedrooms above. When it stood further south, it may have had a lean-to kitchen at the back, since Mary Barrett (1879-1972), who saw the house moved as a child, mentions that part of the house was left beind.



THIRD RIVER STORY

By Richard Branch (1928-2004)

The woods were right at the end of our dead-end street ... Forest Drive. I don't know where the Third River originated, but I do know that it ran from Oakes Pond by the Oakes Mill on Belleville Avenue. Near the mill was a man-made channel [tail race] through which the Oakes Mill drained the blue dye that was left over from their manufacture of police uniforms. We were very careful to stay away from that stuff – but not from the inviting clear (or so we thought) water!

Before we went into the woods, we were always told, "don't come home wet" ... HA! We never intended to get wet ... we just "fell in". How could you not fall in if you walked as close to the flowing water as you possibly could or if you tried to cross the flowing stream on the strategically placed rocks???

I can't remember a time when we came home without being soaked to the skin; however, I do remember that it sure was fun. I remember when Lloyd Magai swung out on a rope that was tied to a tree overlooking the stream and let go! When asked later why he did it, he replied that he didn't remember doing it at all – not even hanging on the rope! I also remember the leech on my brother Fred's back after a dip in the "clean-looking" water!!

But kids will always be kids and those were the good times never to be forgotten!



A scene on the Third (or Yantecaw) River in 1938 showing the late Richard Branch (left) and his neighborhood chum, Donald Magai, "getting their feet wet" on a sunny day in the early pre-war spring. In the background is the wall built by the Oakes Company to keep floods out of their property. This site is now covered by the bridge used by cars entering the northbound lane of the Garden State Parkway from Belleville Avenue.

Historical Marker In Belleville

SECOND RIVER – NOW BELLEVILLE

Battles were fought here September 2 and 14, 1777. Sir Henry Clinton (British) occupied Schuyler Mansion while directing raids nearby. In September, 1777, Troops of both armies encamped here on occasion during the Revolution."

SCHUYLER MINES AFTER THE REVOLUTION

With independence won by 1783, peace returned to the town. But the sounds in industry soon broke the stillness of farm life. In 1789, the year that George Washington was inaugurated as first president of the United States, an old business sprang to new life at Second River. A company called the New Jersey Copper Mines Associates was created to revive the Schuyler copper mines. The company's founders included Philip Schuyler, a Revolutionary War veteran and Nicholas Roosevelt, an ancestor of two United States presidents. The copper industry, thus reborn, grew large and important in Belleville during the next century.



General Joseph Bloomfield

THE NEW TOWN CRIER
THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
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OF BLOOMFIELD
90 Broad Street
Bloomfield, NJ 07003

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John Gibson, Ad Hoc

THE WELCOME MAT

A cordial welcome is extended to the following new members of The Historical Society of Bloomfield. We hope you will take note of our many activities and participate in any that you may choose.

Margaret A. (Barry) Horan,
Bloomfield, NJ
Mary MacDonald, Denville, NJ
Jacqueline Storts, Metuchen, NJ
Willard D. Andres, Lakeway, TX
Richard and Janice Rannou,
Bloomfield, NJ

The editor wants to apologize to new member Joseph Barry Jr. for the many errors that appeared in his article in the November, 2007 issue, despite his best efforts to correct them. The editor accepts full responsibility for this incredible goof-up and expresses his regrets to Joe and the rest of the Barry family. This is a promise that it will never happen again.

Frederick Branch, Editor

The color photograph (a first for the NTC) was a gift from a friend of the Historical Society.

LETTERS TO THE HSOB



Dear Mr. Branch,

I am enclosing \$10.00 for membership in your Historical Society. My mother Helen S. Andrews was one of the founders. Thank you for publishing her poem in your cover.

As a child I often watched the blacksmith shoe horses. My sister Rosemary Frank sent me the Crier.

Thank you, Bill Andrews

— Lakeway, Texas

Greetings from Joyce Koehler

“...As a former Bloomfield resident, I welcome each “New Town Crier”. My greetings to you all, with special best wishes to Dorothy Johnson and Fred Branch, as well as to anyone else who may remember me. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

— Joyce Koehler

The Editor Replies

It is rewarding to see that our newsletter reaches former Bloomfield residents as far away as Texas and California. Older members must surely remember, as I do, the enthusiasm and friendliness of Helen Andrews, who reached her 90th birthday in 1989. Helen worked very hard to establish the Historical Society and gave up her ticket to the opening ceremonies of the HSOB Museum so that my mother could attend.

Joyce will long be remembered as the heart and soul of the Friends of the Library, putting in a lot of her free time to sell tickets to the Performing Arts programs and raising funds to benefit the Bloomfield Public Library.

— Frederick Branch

Distinguished Extinguished Residents
of Bloomfield Cemetery

Griffes, Charles Tomlinson
(1884-1920)

“Charles Tomlinson Griffes originally intended to be a concert pianist, but after study with Humperdinck in Berlin, his interests changed to composition. He became a director of music at a boy’s school in Tarrytown, New York, where he remained until his early death. This position gave him time to write, and his songs, piano pieces, and orchestral works – notably “The Pleasure-Dome of Kubla Khan” and the orchestral version of “The White Peacock” – soon began to appear often on concert and recital programs. For a long time they were out of fashion, but in recent years they have begun to turn up more often – a welcome revival because he spoke with an attractive and distinct musical voice.”

EDITOR’S NOTE: The above information is excerpted from a review of the Connoisseur Society recording of Griffes’ “Roman Sketches, Fantasy Pieces, and Sonata, Opp 5-7,-7”, performed by pianist David Allen Webb, published in the American Record Guide.

Schuyler Plot

The Schuyler gravesites are on the hill overlooking the main grounds of the cemetery: the large gray granite monument belongs to Richards and Lucretia, with some of their children around them. Little or no biographical information has been yet discovered about the birthplace of Richards in 1842: it may have been Fairlawn manor in Kearny. He was a descendant of Arent, who served as sponsor for Mary Kingsland Schuyler when she was baptized in Christ Church, Bloomfield.

