



# The New Town Crier



Official Newsletter Of The Historical Society Of Bloomfield

Editor: Fredrick Branch

Design: Mark Scurman

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## Presidential Message

On behalf of the membership, I have three "thank you" messages.

Thanks are due to Barbara Vydro and Fred Branch for the *New Town Crier*, a revival of the *Town Crier* which started in 1969. It is great to have a newsletter which will again tell of programs, new projects, and interesting facts from our town's past.

Our thanks are also due to Fred Branch, Jean Kuras, and Mark Scurman, the authors of the Arcadia Publisher's book, *Bloomfield*. They chose the historic pictures and wrote the captions after much research. This book is an important addition to the recorded history of the town.

As Lucy Sant Ambrogio becomes our Curator Emeritus, this last "thank you" must cover almost 20 years of appreciation for all her volunteer years. She completed the Museum Certificate Program at Seton Hall University, researched local history and genealogy of local families, and graciously shared her knowledge with all. She was honored at a luncheon on March 22, 2001, where she received citations from Assemblywoman Marion Crecco, from Mayor John Crecco, and from the Historical Society of Bloomfield.

*Ina Campbell, President*

## Cemetery Gate House Restoration



The gatehouse of Bloomfield Cemetery, now close to its century-mark, has just undergone extensive repairs and redecoration. A joint effort of several of our leading citizens of 1909, it replaced an 1875 structure by the noted American architect Alexander Jackson Davis, who is buried nearby.

by Barbara Vydro

I first became aware of the deterioration of the exterior of our office building when in 1998 one of the crew presented a section of mortar that he found at the front door. Upon investigation we discovered that it had dropped from the tower—not good! I reported it to David Allen, President of the Board, and George Webster, Chairman of the Grounds Committee, and we all agreed that something major had to be done.

Going through our records, I began by contacting the company that re-pointed the building during the 70's and

found they were "out of business." After a great deal of investigation, one contractor was highly recommended—but, they only worked on church restorations. I took a chance and called Imhoff Restorations and spoke with David Imhoff (in the process of retiring) and explained what while we are not a church, we are a cemetery that has been here for 200+ years and will continue to be here in perpetuity! His son Scott (now President) came to give me some advice as to possible contractors. One look and I knew he was "hooked." His first comment was that "it was a jewel of a building that had not been treated kindly" (now I knew why the 70's company was out of business).

He explained that Imhoff was booked solid and they couldn't get to it until summer of 1999. He agreed to send a crew to make the tower safe—they took out two arms-length of mortar sections! At the June 1999 Annual Meeting of the Board of Managers the contract to restore the exterior of the building from roof-to-base-ment was unanimously approved.

The work began in July 1999 and was completed in November 1999. It included a total inspection and repair of the slate roof, new copper flashings, coated-copper capping of the granite gables, rebuilding the crickets around the base of the tower, practically rebuilding the tower (a good wind would have done substantial damage), removing the "neon red" mortar from the building and the gate columns (at one point I had ten jackhammers in various sections of the building all operating at once, with me inside—talk about an "Excedrin headache") and replacing it with mortar that matched the original color which was found behind the "neon." This work was completed with a triple acid wash that revealed the true beauty of this "jewel."

We are extremely fortunate to have a Board of Managers who accept the responsibility to keep our cemetery—grounds and buildings—in the best possible condition and the means to accomplish this thanks to good management since 1853.

Naturally, the exterior problems created interior problems. We are presently in the process of restoring the interior and will report on it in a future issue of "The Town Crier."

## Notice Of May Meeting

MAY 14, 2001, 8PM

## OCEAN GROVE AND THE BLOOMFIELD CONNECTION

Wayne T. Bell, curator of the Historical Society of Ocean Grove, N.J. will be the guest speaker. He will present a slide-lecture covering the development of the Ocean Grove Camp Meeting and its 19th century architecture.

Mr. Bell is the author of the book *Ocean Grove*, published by Arcadia, and is now in its second printing. (Note photo below). Light refreshments will follow the meeting.

The public is cordially invited. Come and bring a friend.

CIVIC CENTER, 84 BROAD STREET



The Great Auditorium at Ocean Grove, NJ. Why is this photograph in the Historical Society Newsletter of Bloomfield when the building stands 50 miles to the south? Does it have anything to do with Bloomfield? Come to the meeting at 8pm, May 14, in the Civic Center and be enlightened by Mr. W.T. Bell, Ocean Grove Historian, author of *Images Of America: Ocean Grove*, and our speaker for that evening.

