



# The New Town Crier

Official Newsletter of the Historical Society of Bloomfield  
*Celebrating Bloomfield's Bicentennial: 1812-2012*



BLOOMFIELD, NEW JERSEY 07003

MAY 2012

## SAVE THE DATE

### *NEXT MEETING*

**TUESDAY, MAY 22, 2012**

*The meeting will be held at*

**BLOOMFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL**

60 Huck Road, Bloomfield, NJ

**8:00 PM**

*The Photography of  
Charles Warren Eaton*

*Second in a series of  
historical presentations celebrating the  
Bicentennial of Bloomfield*

*Presented by Richard Rockwell*

Internationally acclaimed artist Charles Warren Eaton lived in Bloomfield from 1887



until his death in 1937. Known for his tonalist oil paintings of intimate landscapes, he was also a photographer. The Historical Society of Bloomfield is fortunate to have a collection of negatives of Eaton's photographs given to us by

Priscilla Polkinghorn, who inherited Eaton's estate. Eaton's paintings are exhibited in a number of museums around the country. In Bloomfield, his paintings can be seen at the Bloomfield Public Library, the HSOB Museum and Bloomfield Cemetery. Experience life in Bloomfield around the turn of the century through scenes of the town and Eaton's life, including the Morris Canal, Oakes Pond, Davey's Mill, the Diamond Paper Mill and a number of other Bloomfield landmarks.

**SATURDAY, JUNE 16, 2012**

**BLOOMFIELD HIGH SCHOOL  
AUDITORIUM**

Broad St. & Belleville Ave.

**4:00 PM**

*Repeat performance of*

**The Morris Canal in Bloomfield**

*Presented by Richard Rockwell*

The HSOB apologizes to anyone who was not able to get a seat at our March 27 Morris Canal presentation. Due to an overcapacity crowd at that event, we are scheduling this repeat performance. Take a virtual tour of the Morris Canal from South Bloomfield to Brookdale. Explore Bloomfield's lock, inclined plane, bridges and aqueducts through historical photographs, maps and postcards from the Historical Society's archives, including photos by Charles Warren Eaton and Rev. Wilson S. Phraner. Visit each of the eight Morris Canal sign posts throughout town and compare historic photos to current scenes.

## A TALE OF TWO COUNCILS



**1962:** *The members of the Bloomfield Town Council and Town Clerk are shown re-enacting the charter signing at ceremonies held in the Municipal Chambers on Friday, March 23, 1962. The original town charter was enacted on March 23, 1812 and the town of 3,085 people was established.*

**Pictured are:** *Councilmen Arthur L. Schmidt, Ralph G. Conte, Joseph V. Rossoman, Don Cetrulao, Town Clerk H. Joseph North, Councilman Raymond W. Schroeder and Councilwoman Dorothea C. Jewkes. Mayor Walter S. Steinman was the narrator.*

### **2012:**

*Members of the Township Council performed a re-enactment of the signing of the town charter on Friday, March 23, 2012 at the Bicentennial Opening Ceremony held at Bloomfield High School. From left: Councilmen*

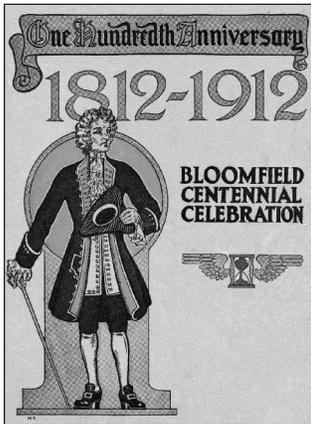


*Carlos Bernard, Michael Venezia, Mayor Raymond McCarthy, Councilwoman Peggy O'Boyle-Dunigan, Councilmen Elias Chalet and Nick Joanow. Photo courtesy of Linda Federico-O'Murchu, Bloomfield Patch.*

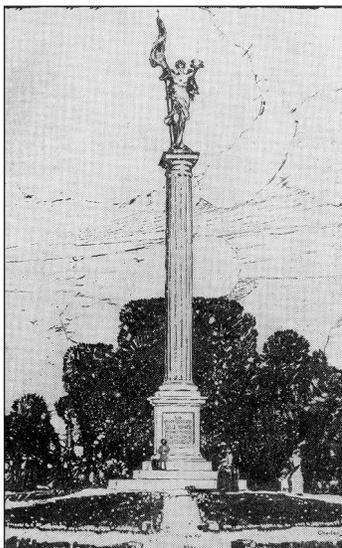
# CENTENNIAL ~ 1912

**Official Slogan: "Stick to Bloomfield"**

To see the complete set of 1912 Bloomfield Centennial Postcards, visit the HSOB museum. For more images of the Centennial, visit <http://bloomfieldhistorical.org/zenphoto/Rev.WilsonSIPhranerCollection/>



The cover of the official Centennial souvenir booklet. Besides the events showcased here on this page, others (June 9-13) include Historical Sermons & Special Music in All Bloomfield Churches, a week-long Industrial Exhibit at Berkeley School and a week-long Historical Exhibit at Center School. Additionally, on June 13, "The National Society, United States, daughters of 1812 in New Jersey, will unveil several bronze grave markers on the graves of soldiers and sailors of the War of 1812, buried in the old Bloomfield Cemetery. Appropriate exercises [and]...a squad of G.A.R veterans will fire the salute." Fireworks at Watsessing Park followed.



June 11 saw the Parade of the Grand Army, Militia, Fireman & Other Uniformed Organizations that began and ended on Broad Street & Belleville Avenue, passing the monument reviewing stand on its circuitous route. Afterwards came the Unveiling Exercises of the New Soldiers' & Sailors' Monument. The monument cost \$3,000 (comprised of five different financial contributions). This was followed by a Centennial Banquet (for both men and women!) in the Jarvie Memorial Hall. If it seems odd that the committee made a point of inviting women, it serves to remember that this was eight years before the 19th Amendment gave women the right to vote, and women enjoyed few privileges at that time.



Bloomfield Centennial WATSESSING SCHOOL 1812-1912. "Stick to Bloomfield"

Watsessing School children dress as Revolutionary War soldiers in the Parade of 3,000 Schoolchildren on June 10.



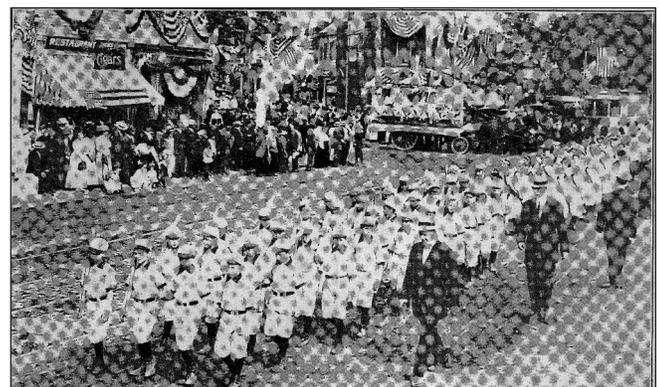
Bloomfield Centennial DUTCH GLIDE 1812-1912. "Stick to Bloomfield"

June 12 saw Folk Dances on The Green. Pictured, children perform the "Dutch Glide." Many other dances included the Hoop Dance, Spanish Dance, Swedish Vasva Vadmal, Indian Camp Fire Dance, the May Pole and the Baby Polka. That night, a Carnival Parade—open to public participation—wound its way around town.



Bloomfield Centennial BERKELEY SCHOOL 1812-1912. "Stick to Bloomfield"

Girls from Berkeley School promote the Town Improvement Association (T.I.A.) in the Parade of 3,000 Schoolchildren on June 10. Boasting "a large number of floats," the parade included kids from each of the Bloomfield schools and was one of three parades taking place that week, all following different routes. The children adopted many themes for the parade, including Farming, Mining, Dutch Settlers and the Military. It was followed at the Old Presbyterian Church (Church on the Green) by a Historical Meeting & Reception for former Bloomfield residents and Historical Addresses "with a chorus of 100 voices."



Bloomfield Centennial BERKELEY SCHOOL 1812-1912. "Stick to Bloomfield"

Berkeley Schoolchildren in baseball uniforms in the Parade of 3,000 Schoolchildren on June 10.

*Amzi Dodd (March 2, 1823-Jan. 22, 1913) was the Honorary Chairman of the Bloomfield Centennial Executive Committee. His obituary in The New York Times (January 23, 1913) reads as follows:*

## AMZI DODD DEAD

**DEAN OF JERSEY BAR; Ex-Vice Chancellor and ex-President of Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company. Republican Party Founder.**

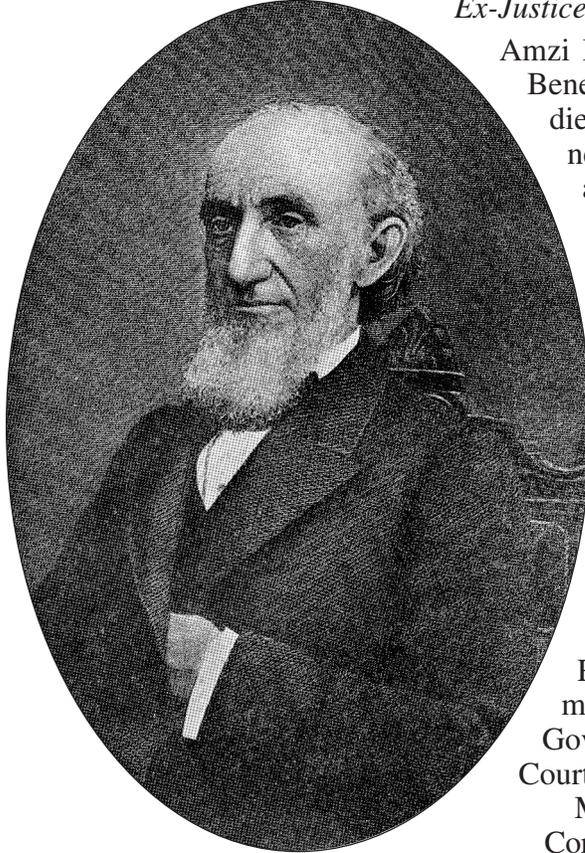
*Ex-Justice of New Jersey Court of Appeals a Victim of Pneumonia at 89 years.*

Amzi Dodd, ex-Vice Chancellor of New Jersey, ex-President of the Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company of Newark and dean of the New Jersey bar, died yesterday at his home, 82 Broad Street, Bloomfield, N.J. after an illness of two days from pneumonia. Mr. Dodd, who was 89 years old, attended the annual meeting of the Mutual Benefit Insurance Company on Monday, and caught cold on that occasion which rapidly grew worse. A son, Dr. Joseph S. Dodd, who had been sitting by his bedside yesterday, left the room for a few minutes only, and on his return found his father dead.

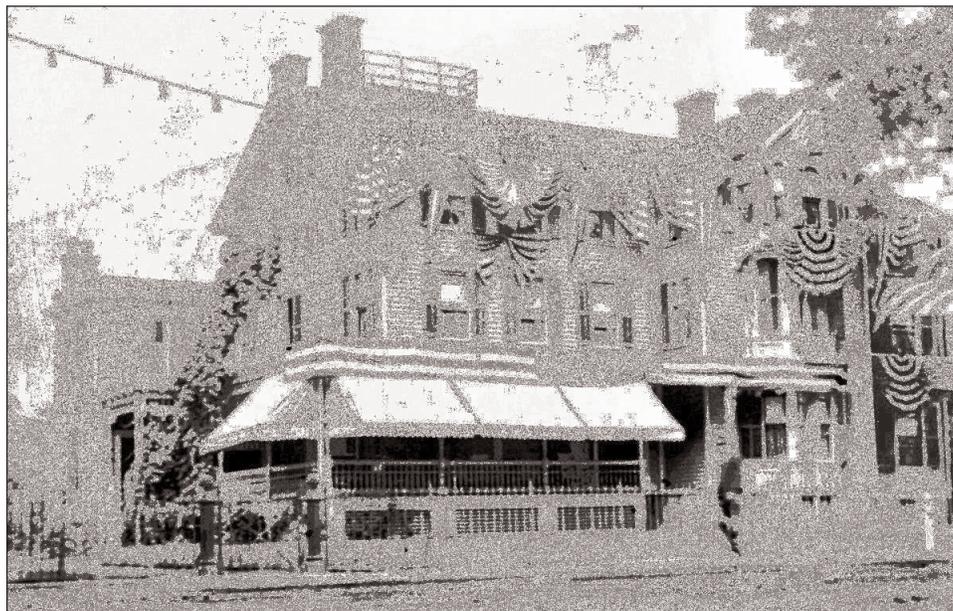
Mr. Dodd was born on March 2, 1823 in Bloomfield. He was the son of Dr. Joseph Smith Dodd, a direct descendant of Daniel Dodd, who came to America in 1646. He was graduated from Princeton in 1841 with special honors. He then taught school in Virginia, and afterward entered the law office of Miller & Whelpley, at Morristown, being admitted to the bar in 1848. In 1850 he became clerk of the Newark County Council.

Mr. Dodd aided in the formation of the Republican Party, and was a leader in the Lincoln campaign. In 1856 he was defeated as the Republican nominee for Congress, but seven years later was elected a member of the Assembly. In 1871 he was appointed Vice Chancellor by Gov. Randolph, and four years later was appointed Special Justice in the Court of Errors and Appeals.

Mr. Dodd assumed the Presidency of Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company in 1882, and remained at its head until 1902, when ill-health caused him to retire. He continued as a member of the Board of Directors and General Counsel of the company. Mr. Dodd is survived by three sons and two daughters.



*Amzi Dodd, Honorary Chairman of the Bloomfield Centennial Executive Committee, died only seven months after the Centennial festivities.*



*All decked out for the Centennial — Amzi Dodd's House at 82 Broad Street. Photo courtesy of the Rev. Wilson S. Phraner Collection.*

# SESQUICENTENNIAL ~ 1962

*Official Slogan: "Pride in its Past—Faith in its Future"*



*The official opening, or "Kick-Off," Dinner for the 150th Anniversary of Bloomfield's incorporation was held Friday, March 23, 1962 at North Junior High School (now the Bloomfield Middle School). With 583 citizens in attendance, it was the largest dinner ever held in the town up to that point in time. Dinner arrangements were coordinated by the Kiwanis, Rotary, Lions, Optimists and Unico Service Clubs. Following the banquet was a two-hour program in the school's auditorium.*



*Mayor Walter S. Steinman (far right) joins the Town Council on March 23, 1962 as the first of 28 Historic Markers was erected on the Municipal Building grounds as part of the Charter Ceremonies. Additionally, an initial tour of sites was held.*



*Mrs. Woodrow LaRue and Mrs. Joseph Kopriva show off their retrospective 1912 outfits.*

## THE OLD DAVIS HOUSE

The “Old Joseph Davis House,” now the Bloomfield Steak & Seafood House (as well as “Proud Mary’s Booze & Bites” in 1976 and “The Franklin Arms Tea Room” in 1962), located at 409 Franklin Street, stands as a monument to the early history of Bloomfield. It is the oldest of the six pre-Revolutionary War homes in town.

The Homestead was built by Thomas Davis in 1669-1670. He was the son of Stephen Davis, who came to Bloomfield from Milford, Connecticut with the original Newark settlers in 1666-67. Thomas Davis had “liberty to set up a saw mill” in the summer of 1695, indicating an intention to build more houses in the area. (It has been supposed that this was the saw mill on a site near the pond above Wheeler’s paper mill, in what is now Montclair).

The home was occupied by Thomas Davis’ descendants until 1903. Built long before the time of cement, the main walls are two feet thick at the base and in the old cellar they are eight to ten feet thick. Over the past two centuries, The Davis Homestead has been a farmhouse, hospital, church and restaurants.



*The Bloomfield Steak & Seafood House (aka the Davis House) today.*

### *The American Revolution*

While occupied by Joseph Davis, at approximately the time of the American Revolution, the home was a meeting place for founders of the Presbyterian Church in Bloomfield, and services were held there for many years before a formal church was built. A tunnel in the cellar of the Homestead runs to the foot of Orange Mountain and was used as an escape from the British for women and children.

A wounded English soldier was taken into the Homestead by the Davis family women and nursed back to health. To show his appreciation, he built the old well and hewed out of stone the basin next to it for the workers to wash. The well curb has now been converted into planter. An antique hitching post, dinner gong and Franklin stove also remain.



*An undated photo of the Davis House. Photo courtesy of the Rev. Wilson S. Phraner Collection.*

In his article in Shaw’s “History of Essex & Hudson Counties,” Dr. Charles E. Knox relates that General George Washington came to the Joseph Davis House looking for entertainment. Finding that General Henry Knox of the artillery and some sick soldiers had already been accommodated, he passed on to the Farrand house beyond Franklin Hill. Dr. Knox thought that this incident may have occurred during the retreat across New Jersey in 1776, and assumed that Washington’s army had come down from Acquackanonck (Clifton) over two parallel roads.

### *Birthplace of Bloomfield*

A group of citizens meeting in the Davis home decided to name the town after General Joseph Bloomfield, New Jersey Governor and Revolutionary War Officer. The Charter of Bloomfield was signed in the “Beam Ceiling Room” by General Bloomfield in 1796. A plaque on the property reads “Davis Homestead—Erected 1676. This tablet placed by Major Joseph Bloomfield Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution. May 11, 1936.”



*“The Birthplace of Bloomfield”—decorated for the Centennial celebrations in 1812. Photo courtesy of the Rev. Wilson S. Phraner Collection.*



### General Joseph Bloomfield

#### *THE NEW TOWN CRIER*

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF  
THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
OF BLOOMFIELD

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#### PHOTO DIGITIZING BY

Richard Rockwell

## REMINDER!

If you haven't already done so, please be sure to renew your 2012 membership. Renewal forms are available at [www.hsob.org](http://www.hsob.org) or can be picked up at the museum or any HSOB meeting. Help keep the Historical Society of Bloomfield strong with your continuing membership!

## DON'T MISS...

The Victorian Society in America, Northern NJ Chapter (VSA-NNJ) will present its annual Preservation, Restoration & Adaptive Reuse Awards at Lambert Castle, 3 Valley Rd., Paterson, NJ. The ceremony will begin at 6:30pm on May 21, 2012.



*Award-winning home of Peter Syak & Marete Wester on Park Place*

Of extreme interest to Bloomfielders will be the award given to the home of Peter Syak and Marete Wester, located on Park Place, facing The Green. It was built in 1887 and was restored with historical colors on the exterior walls and windows. The roof was matched to the original slate in design and color. Ceaseless attention to detail given by the craftsmen involved can be seen in the home's architectural design and construction. The interior of the home exhibits similar details in its staircase hallway, grand fireplaces, leaded glass windows and gliding pocket doors.

Also receiving awards will be the Passaic County Historical Society for its preservation and restoration of Lambert Castle in Paterson, as well as The Tiffany Mansion, located in the Forest Hill Historic District of Newark, on the corner of Delavan and Clifton Avenues. The awards program is free and open to the public, and the VSA-NNJ has graciously extended a special welcome to all HSOB members.

## HOW TO JOIN THE HSOB

The Historical Society welcomes anyone with an interest in local history who wants to learn more. To join, download a membership application at [www.hsob.org](http://www.hsob.org), call 973-743-8844 or email [info@hsob.org](mailto:info@hsob.org) (membership also makes a great gift!)

Additionally, anyone above the legal voting age who wants to contribute a manuscript is more than welcome. Send manuscripts or story ideas to: [info@hsob.org](mailto:info@hsob.org) or mail to HSOB Museum, c/o Bloomfield Public Library, 90 Broad St., Bloomfield, NJ 07003. Please mark submissions *Attention Editor*.

## BORED? FEELING UNINFORMED ABOUT YOUR HOMETOWN? NEED TO RESEARCH FAMILY HISTORY?

Visit The HSOB Museum! Located on the 3rd floor of the Children's Library at 90 Broad Street, the collection consists of furniture, clothing and accessories, tools, household articles, paintings, toys, posters, memorabilia, dioramas, maps, newspapers, postcards, letters, deeds, documents, books and much, much more! Hours are Wed. 2:00pm-4:30pm, Sat. 10:00am-12:30pm and by appointment. PH: (973) 743-8844.



*Bloomfield Children's Library and HSOB Museum*

## PARADE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Historical Society of Bloomfield seeks members and friends to march with us at the Memorial Day Parade on May 28. The Bicentennial-themed parade culminates at The Green, where a town-wide picnic will also be held. Adults, children and well-behaved dogs are all welcome to march under the HSOB banner. Show your civic pride and support the HSOB at the same time! For more info, email [HSOB1812@gmail.com](mailto:HSOB1812@gmail.com). PH: (973) 743-8844.