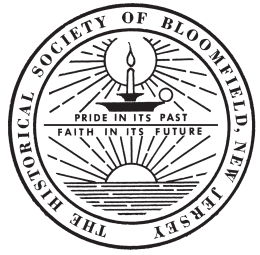




The New Town Crier

Official Newsletter of the Historical Society of Bloomfield



BLOOMFIELD, NEW JERSEY 07003

MARCH 2005

MEETING

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27
8:00 PM
at the
BLOOMFIELD CIVIC CENTER
84 Broad Street, Bloomfield

**Charles McSorley
to Present Program
about Mathew B. Brady,
a cameraman of the
Civil war and first to
systematically
photograph a war.**

On March 22nd, the Historical Society of Bloomfield will host a program reminding us of one of New Jersey's most prominent women, Alice Paul.

Fifty-four percent of voters this past Election Day were women. Yet Alice Paul, who helped them win the right to vote, was herself harassed, beaten and jailed, is almost forgotten today.

Lucienne Beard will make a slide and discussion presentation about Alice Paul at the H.S.O.B.'s March quarterly general meeting. And, as this is Women's History Month, we hope that not only our membership, but the public in general, and the men, too, will come out for the program. We have had many reminders in the last few years of what happens to women and children when they are left out of the political process, and by extension, to a country. Ms. Beard is the Program Director at the Alice Paul Institute, a non-profit organization dedicated to educating the public about the life and work of Alice Paul. She holds degrees from George Washington and Rutgers Universities and works at the Alice Paul Institute in Mt. Laurel, New Jersey (info@alicepaul.org). We understand that Ms. Beard will use a Power Point presentation. That should interest techies.

This program will be held at 8:00 p.m., Tuesday, March 22, at 84 Broad Street, Bloomfield. This is the Civic Center. Parking is available in the rear off State St. The entrance is handicap accessible. The program is offered by the N.J. Council for the Humanities, a state partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities. It is free and open to the public.



NEW JERSEY COUNCIL
FOR THE HUMANITIES

John E. Malague

John E. Malague (1864-1931) was a fireman (volunteer) with the Bloomfield Fire Department. A photograph of him in his uniform by Bloomfield photographer, Frechette (located on 455 Bloomfield Avenue) shows him at about 21 or 22 years old, which would date the photograph as 1886, very soon after the Bloomfield Department was organized. His home address in the 1904 City Directory is given as 233 Spruce Street, which stood, and still stands, near the eastern end of New Street with its back to the Morris Canal and Thomas Oakes' horse barns on the opposite side. He continued to live there until his death on December 6, 1931, aged 67 years. His widow, Catherine, is listed as a resident of this house until her death on March 5, 1936. She was 69 years old.



Malague's occupation is given in different ways through the many directories printed between 1904 and 1931, first as "lab" (laborer?), then in 1908 as "loom fitter". The same occupation is given in the 1912 directory, "loom fixer" in 1912, 1925 and 1931, suggesting that he did not retire from his job until his death. His occupation is never given as "fireman", which probably indicates that he did not continue with the Fire Department very long. Their Centennial



(This photo is of) "John 'Mose' Malague, a Bloomfield Exempt Fireman, in the early 1900's. Someone in the history section of the BFD [Bloomfield Fire Department] may be able to give you a more exact date based on the uniform.

John was a cousin of Edward Crogan of 29 Oak Street. Beyond that, I don't have anymore information." John Gibson

(continued on next page)

FIRE CHIEF JAMES Y. NICOLL: 1862-1954



One of the first benefactors of the new Historical Society of Bloomfield's Museum in the late 1960's was Miss Sadie Nicoll, who presented the Museum with a Peloubet organ and other gifts in memory of her father, Fire Chief James Y. Nicoll. We believe that James Nicoll is shown in the old photograph with his fellow workers at the Peloubet organ factory on Orange Street, Ca. 1882 (shown on next page). A note on the back of the old photo, given to the Museum by Miss Nicoll, says "James Y. Nicoll, 4th from right".

Nicoll was the Chief of the Bloomfield Fire Department from 1903-1905. His complete uniform, (made from Oakes cloth) a lantern used by him, and a brass speaking trumpet are among the treasures of the HSOB Museum. The Bloomfield Town Directory of 1903 lists Chief Nicoll living at 46 Ella Street: his occupation given as "carpenter and builder". He remained at this address until 1931, when the house is listed as "vacant".

When found in a local basement in the 1960's, the organ, one of the few known to have been made by the Peloubet Company, was in very poor condition, sadly neglected by its present owner. The Historical Society, then a very young organization with hardly any funds, was appalled at the thought of repairing the organ, which was covered with dust and cobwebs, its action ruined by dampness, and the case falling apart.** Miss Nicoll paid for a complete restoration of the instrument, including refinishing of the case, replacement of missing ivory on some keys and

(continued on next page)

"JOHN E. MALAGUE" (continued from page 1)

book, published in 1983, does not list his name anywhere in its pages. His address on Spruce Street is within easy walking distance of the Oakes Woolen Mill, strongly suggesting that he was a long-time Oakes employee.

The Bloomfield Fire Department became a completely non-voluntary occupation in 1938, when the Montgomery Hose unit disbanded and sold their fire fighting apparatus to the town. Their building still stands on the corner of Berkeley and Jerome as a printing establishment.

John's other relatives are also listed with him, including, in 1904, Martin Malague at 29 Oak Street, Daniel at 140 Walnut Street, and a Miss Winnifred L. "Maleague" at 29 Oak Street (possibly an alternate or original spelling of the family name adopted by her).

From 1959 until 1963, there is a Donald Malague at 140 Walnut, possibly a son of Daniel. His occupation is given as "clerk, BPO (Bloomfield Post Office). No other persons with the name "Malague" are listed in those directories.



233 Spruce Street as it appears today. The Garden Apartment building in the right background stands on the other side of Kennedy Drive (the bed of the Morris Canal) on the site of the Oakes barns.



The Baldwin Street Bridge

The Morris Canal Basin located just below Plane Number 11 East is shown in the original photograph from the archives of the Historical Society Museum. Although the back of the print has no date, the pencilled estimate of "about 1900" seems close enough.

The old Baldwin residence (demolished) may be seen on the right, and the typical Morris Canal truss bridge in the center. Behind the bridge, the plane itself can be seen in the distance. This is now the site of the uphill grade of Kennedy Drive (a height of 57 feet) as it heads northward to join East Passaic Avenue at the corner of Hoover near Saint Valentine's Church. Just to the left of the bridge is the old Collins house, still standing in 2005.

"FIRE CHIEF JAMES Y. NICOLL" (continued from page 1)

stop knobs, and refurbishing of the bellows, thus putting it back into playable condition.

Miss Nicoll died in 1980, and is buried in Bloomfield Cemetery with her parents, James Y. and Sarah Nicoll.

**It is interesting to find that this old photo, made about the turn-of-the-other century, is a copy of a still older photograph. Evidences of the deterioration of the 1880's original can be seen on the left-hand side.*

***The late Mary Ann Dorn, President of The Society at that time, described it as in deplorable condition, adding that "you could plant potatoes on the top of it." The restoration cost well over a thousand dollars.*



BLOOMFIELD'S TOONERVILLE TROLLEY

The sign of abandoned trolley tracks on Broad Street where repaving work was being done in September of 1966 startled many a Bloomfield citizen. Historians were aware that a streetcar had operated there for a long time, but proved to be a traffic hazard (they ran along the East side of the street) and were already obsolete.

The tracks were used by small one-man cars for many years, and actually date back to the days of the horse cars before the other turn-of-the-century. There was only a single truck (a unit of four wheels) under the center of the car, which made them resemble the trolley in the old comic strip called "Toonerville Folks". The line was abandoned on June 1, 1929 when Public Service busses Number 20 replaced the picturesque vehicles.

The trolley line, known as "The Orange Crosstown Line" originated at Scotland Road and Freeman Street, made a short loop on to Day Street in East Orange, turned at the corner of Dodd into Prospect Street, then on to Glenwood Avenue in Bloomfield, through Glenwood Avenue to Bloomfield Center, then on to Broad, and terminated at Bay Avenue. The cars turned around there for the return trip.

Most of the line had only one track (see photo) and often a car had to wait for one approaching in the opposite direction on a "switch out". One of these was located in front of the Lipton Store (now "Annie Sez").

The late Harold Brotherhood, a founder of the Bloomfield Historical Society in 1962, told this writer that he well remembered, as a youth in the very early 1900's, getting the front wheel of his bicycle caught in the tracks on Glenwood Avenue.



Photographs Courtesy of John Gibson.

The Planting on the Green



The Southeast corner of Liberty and Broad Streets is the site of a large rock. No, it was not left behind by one of the glaciers of the Ice Age that we read about in school, but an impressive monolithic reminder that this is the location of Bloomfield's "Historic District". Just to be sure everybody, whether they have an education or not, can recognize this special place, the extent of The District is shown in outline on a bronze plaque, leaving little excuse for anybody not being aware of its boundaries.

Just last spring, Miss Ina Campbell and Mrs. Mary Shofner of The Historical Society of Bloomfield planted the beds of pink and white begonias and outlined the date "1812" in dusty miller in front of the boulder. Please do not ask what the significance of this date might be.

THE SYDENHAM HOUSE

In the October issue of this newsletter, on page three, we published a drawing of the Sydenham house by artist Richard LaRovere. Attempts to photograph this building were unsuccessful because of the heavy growth of trees and underbrush at the front of this landmark. Mr. Clay Spencer has very kindly sent this photo of the house, which he had taken from a different angle. We are grateful to Mr. Spencer for the photo and are reproducing it here.





General Joseph Bloomfield

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

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Frederick Branch, Editor
Pat Post, Assistant Editor

☞ 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.

W.T. Bell, *Ocean Grove, NJ*

Margaret Falk, *N. Caldwell, NJ*

Dr. Richard E. Hart, *Smithtown, NY*

Bernard McGrath, *Dallas, TX*

Jean W. Oakes, *Locust, NJ*

E-MAIL

The Historical Society of Bloomfield
at:

BloomfHist@aol.com

OR CALL US

at:

973-743-8844

"The Gang" in Magai's Driveway



The Big Depression of 1929-1940 had hardly taken hold when this photo was snapped in the early spring of 1932, probably by Mr. Lloyd Magai Sr., in his driveway at 38 Forest Drive. The kids are still enjoying their expensive toys from the previous Christmas; the bitter economic depths of the era having not yet set in. It would be World War Two that would finally drive the wolf away from many doors after the CCC, NRA, HOLC, WPA and other of FDR's alphabetical nonsense had tried to put the country back on its feet. However, nobody would ever think the worst was yet to come from looking at the smiles on these happy kids. They are, from left to right: George Siver, Lloyd Magai, Barbara Siver, Frederick Branch, Richard Branch, and, behind Richard, Donald Magai.

The old 1920 garage in the right background still stands behind Number 40 Forest Drive. The kids, however, have all grown older and, with one exception, have moved many miles away (Richard Branch died in November 2004).

"Prosperity is just around the corner." – Franklin D. Roosevelt

A joke current in the movie theatres of the time (they put on live acts between films in a desperate attempt to attract audiences) would not be out of place here. A young blonde Jean Harlow type would come onstage in a hurry and ask the emcee where the Ladies Room was located. The answer was "Just around the corner, lady." Her reply, delivered in typical 1930's wisecrack style was: "Hey, Big Boy, I'm not looking for Prosperity, I'm looking for Relief".

The Brookdale Baptist Church

The Brookdale Baptist Church at 1341 Broad Street as it appeared from its construction in 1874 until it was drastically remodeled and "Colonialized" in the early 1940's. It still stands on upper Broad Street but has been superseded by a new brick structure next door at the corner of Broad Street and Mountain Avenues. This area was originally called "Stone House Plains".

The 1912 Centennial History of Bloomfield reports that the church was originally organized as a Methodist Church in 1873. It was bought by Reverend Charles G. Cook, who was at that time the Pastor of the First



Baptist Church at the corner of Franklin and Washington Streets.

ENJOY OUR MUSEUM

LOCATION: Above the Children's Library at 90 Broad Street.

HOURS: Wednesday from 2:00 to 4:30pm all year. Saturday from 10:00am to 12:30pm
September to mid-June and by appointment (973) 743-8844

MEMBERSHIP FOR THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF BLOOMFIELD

Dues: Individual \$10.00; Couple \$15.00; Student (under 18 years) \$5.00;
Organization (non-profit): \$10.00; Organization (commercial): \$25.00

Please send check, payable to "The Historical Society of Bloomfield",
along with your name, address and telephone number to:

Membership Chairman

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF BLOOMFIELD

90 Broad Street, Bloomfield, NJ 07003