



The New Town Crier

Official Newsletter of the Historical Society of Bloomfield



BLOOMFIELD, NEW JERSEY 07003

MAY 2006

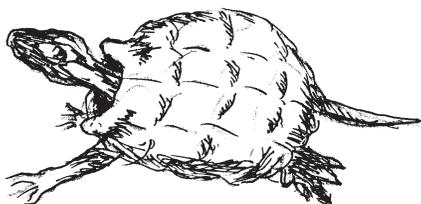
MEETING

TUESDAY, MAY 23 – 8:00 PM
at the
BLOOMFIELD CIVIC CENTER
84 Broad Street, Bloomfield

Dr. Paul Russo

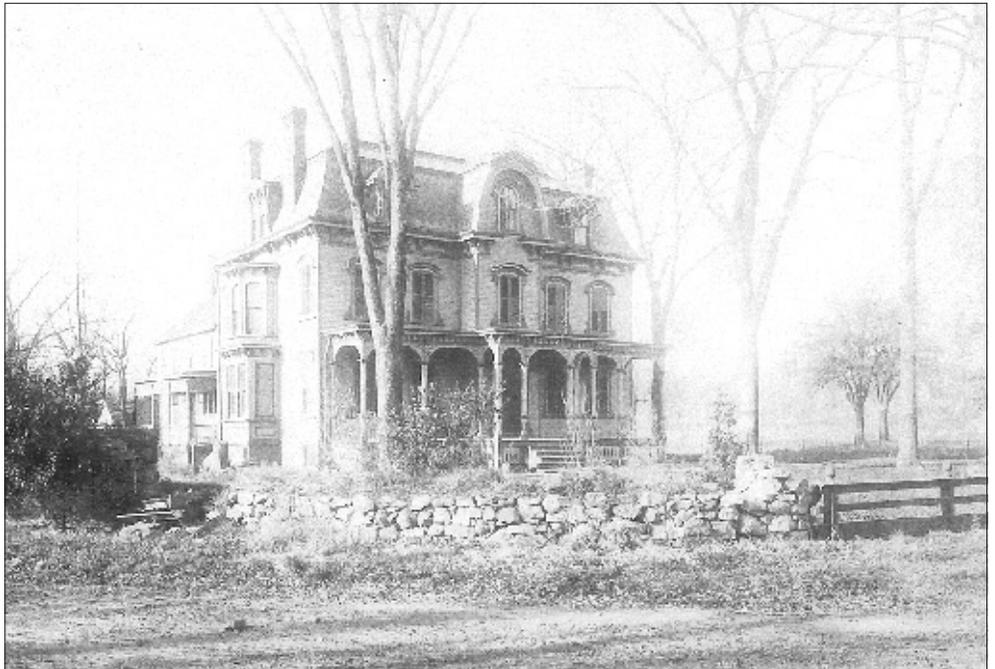
*Member of
Friends of Clark's Pond
will be presenting a
Powerpoint Presentation*

On May 23 at 8:00 PM in the Civic Center, you will hear about something shinningly lovely that has been happening in Bloomfield for several years. Clark's Pond in being restored. Yes, Clark's Pond *IS* historic! Its traceable history begins with the Indians who used its resources, continues through the Morris Grist Mill that served Washington's troops, the children and adults who fished, skated, or swam in its once clear waters, and various industries such as Clark's Thread, which purchased the tract in 1922. This tract ran from a few hundred feet north of Bay to near the present Watchung Avenue along the Third River. This included Clark's pond. The Bloomfield site was chosen because of pure water from the stream and springs. Boilfast dyes were developed and produced there. Clark Thread closed its Bloomfield Plant in 1949 and moved to Amstell, Georgia, where labor was cheaper. By 1961, Bloomfield owned the pond and adjacent land. The Green Acres-Open Space Program of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection has granted Bloomfield Township \$1,000,000. for restoration at Clark's Pond. And the Essex County Green Acres Open Space Trust Fund granted Bloomfield \$250,000. Many individuals and groups brought this about. Eastern painted turtles living in the pond and removed because of dredging will be returned to this site. Great Egrets, a muskrat, kingfishers, the great blue heron, the green heron, a double crested cormorant, and white tail deer



(Continued on page 2)

THE FARRAND HOUSE

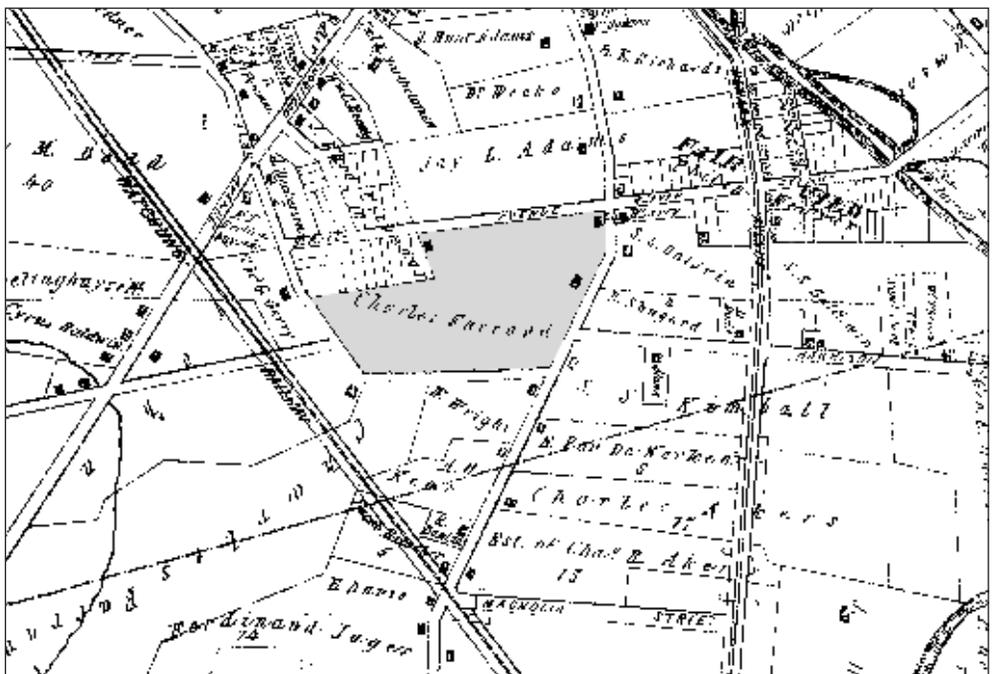


The Farrand House Belonged to Dudley Farrand in 1904.

The Farrand mansion was an impressive expression of the wealth of this family. It had been built in the French Second Empire style around 1870 and stood on the estate just opposite present day Baldwin Place. This photo from the Nathan Russell Realty Company was probably taken when the homestead was put up for sale around 1910 by the last member of the family. By 1920 it had become a tenement occupied by four different families.

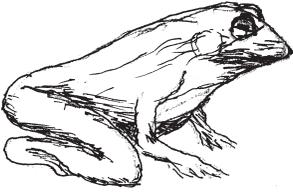
It changed hands many times until the mid 1970's, when it was again offered for sale. A fire caused some minor damage, but the remaining structure was quickly demolished even after a prospective buyer was found. The small serviced wing at the rear is interesting and may be the remnant of an earlier house. We will never know. The area now occupied by Halcyon Park was the garden area belonging to this house.

Some idea of the rural character of Franklin Street as late as the early 1900s can be seen at the lower left of the photo, where a rustic stone fence, possibly dating from the days when this area was still farmed, still remained. And as late as 1950, when the now demolished Bamberger Warehouse was built at the corner of Watsessing Avenue and Franklin Street, there was one farm remaining from the many which once lined "The Old Road To Bloomfield". The name of this French Huguenot family is often pronounced farRAND: they preferred FARRand. (It was originally spelled Farrant.)



1871 Map Ferrands had owned extensive acreage in this area since the early 18th century.

(Continued from page 1)



have been sighted. It will be great for bird watchers.

Friends of Clark's Pond have been photographing progress being made. Dr. Paul Russo is presenting a Microsoft PowerPoint slide program with accompanying commentary by several of the Clark's Pond group at the May 23rd 8:00 PM meeting. This is not only for members, but for all who are interested. The Historical Society of Bloomfield meets on the first floor of the Civic Center, room 1. Refreshments follow the program.

– Artwork By Audrey Moore –

Mrs. Leslie Carter

A rather lengthy article appeared in the Newark Evening News on Friday, January 19, 1923 titled "Though Bloomfield Knows It Not, A Celebrity Resides In Its Midst". A sub-headline continued: "Mrs William L. Payne, Who Lives In Halcyon Park Section, and Belongs To Improvement Association, Known to Only a Few Neighbors as Mr. Leslie Carter."

Past her prime as an actress by the 1920's, Mrs. Carter had been reduced to appearing in shabby local houses in Newark and Jersey City when she resided in Bloomfield. She had been a protégé of the famed David Belasco in the late 19th century, appearing on Broadway in many of his own plays and was famous for her "scenery shaking" performances, which reduced her to hysterics. The audiences of the period "ate it up", but by the end of World War One, such histrionics were considered old fashioned. Unfortunately, the lady continued to perform in her own inimitable and dated style and quickly lost her popularity.

Mrs. Carter, who had been born Louise Dudley, was married to a Chicago millionaire. After a messy divorce, he demanded that she stop using his name. She angrily replied that she hated it so much that she would spread it on theatre marquees across the United States. For the rest of her career she remained "Mrs. Leslie Carter". Although there was nothing her husband could legally do to stop her, he did hire men to tear down posters bearing her name whenever she played in Chicago.

As for the name she used while here in town, "Mr. William Payne" is listed in directories of the 1930's at 444 Bloomfield Avenue as a "laborer", and at 275 Glenwood Avenue as a "janitor". Mrs. Carter was putting us on.

Wartime Activities On The Home Front



(Left to right): Miss Barbara Genin, Mrs. Axel Beekin and Mrs. Florence Robbins in the conference room loaned to them by the Bloomfield Savings Institution.

"Mrs. Axel V. Beekin, Chairman, Mrs. Florence Robbins, and Miss Barbara Genin Look Over Records Compiled By The War Records Committee In The Conference Room Loaned To Them By The Bloomfield Savings Institution."

Documents concerning Bloomfield's participation in World War were filed in this headquarters, where Mrs. Beekin, a descendant of the Davis Family, and her assistants, received information about the War from groups and individuals. Mrs. Roberts was Secretary to Mayor Newell and Miss Genin was a granddaughter of Thaddeus Genin, one of Bloomfield's first volunteer firemen. The clipping from which this information was copied is dated November 5, 1943.

The Wartime Planning Board

A rather frank article published in The Independent Press published on May 12, 1944 described the Planning Boards vision of Bloomfield in "years to come". During World War II, it was confidently expected that, once Nazi Germany and Japan were defeated, the future would bring many improvements to our way of life, and it has, but not quite as envisioned by those now long-gone members of the Board.

One improvement headlined was "Sixty-Foot Lots", while the present trend seems to divide this space into two parcels. Other proposed changes included putting all telephone and electrical lines underground, handsome standards for street lights, and all wiring relocated to the rear of property instead of out on the front street.

The article goes on to elaborate on the above, and states that "all buildings will set back 30 feet from the property line".

In 1942 the war was going badly for the Allies, and it was confidently expected that, following the bombing of London in May of 1941, we could expect similar raids in Bloomfield as the seemingly invincible Nazis rolled on to victory over Belgium, Holland, and France, until it stood on the shore of the English Channel. Windows at the High School were taped to prevent injury if they were shattered in a bombing attack and drills were held, during which the students sat on the floors of the corridors along the walls with their hands clasped over their heads. Air raid headquarters were set up in schools and churches, stocking a supply of stretchers, army blankets and first aid supplies. Blackouts were held and special dark blue low-watt light bulbs with small orange dots at the tips provided minimal light.

On May 12, an "interesting and impressive ceremony was held at the home of Mrs. David Oakes, 240 Belleville Avenue, at which the recent graduates of young women from Montclair, West Essex, Glen Ridge, and Bloomfield, were formally "capped" by Mrs. Martin Vogel, chairman of Nurses Aid Corps, Montclair Chapter. Speakers at this event were Mrs. A. C. Bleeker, Mr. Bagley and Howard Biddulph; the gist of their remarks was that Bloomfield must be prepared for air raid attack at any time.

It seems strange that this activity would take place less than a year before Hitler's death and only 15 months before VJ Day.

WORLD WAR II HONOR ROLL

The only photo of the honor roll in Halcyon Park has been screened for publication in the Independent Press and is, therefore, too coarse in texture to copy with present day techniques. Mrs. Beekins's scrapbook does have an original photo, just one, of the one located on Berkeley Avenue on the west side of the median on Newark Avenue. A long-time local resident remembers the structure at that location during the early 1940's. The cresting at the top and the moldings are so similar are so similar to the one in the Park that it is more than probable that both were made by the same hands. The Halcyon Park Memorial was wider, possibly because of space limitations or fewer names at Berkeley.



Honor Roll at Newark and Berkeley

Among those listed that can be read are Kenneth Schleicher and his brother Charles, both of whom lived at 282 Berkeley Avenue.

Ken was flying over Burma when his bomber was struck by Japanese anti-aircraft fire. Fellow soldiers saw his parachute open and he disappeared into the jungle, never to be seen again.

Another prominent name is that of the late Raymond Schroeder, who served on the Library Board and was prominent in town politics for many years. And there are also other familiar names: John L. Ayers, Harold Buist, George Cool, Peter Bartholomew (marked with a gold star) and brothers John and William Jerew.

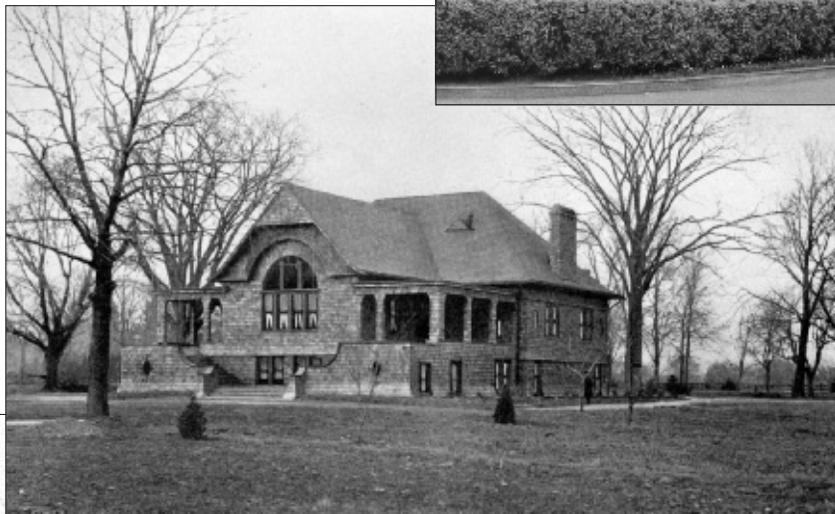
Halcyon Park Improvement Association

Dated October 12, 1928, there is a letter listing the officers of the above organization addressed to Miss Florence E. Roberts at 41 Washington Street, which may have been the temporary address of the Bloomfield Town Offices until the completion of the new Municipal Building. The letter is signed by "L. F. Nichols" of 42 Farrandale Avenue as the Secretary of the Association.

A check with the 1928 Directory lists Leonard [F.] Nichols living at this address. Nichols may have been a student at the General Theological Seminary in New York City or was planning to attend the Seminary. He was ordained as a Priest of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Church of the Ascension on Montgomery Street and Berkeley Avenues in 1937 by Bishop Benjamin Washburn. Reverend Nichols continued as the Rector of this church until 1939, when he was transferred to Saint Mark's Church in Teaneck, New Jersey.



One of the two Gatehouses at Watsessing and Berkeley Avenues. Photo 1974



Halycon Club House, destroyed by fire around 1914.



Mr. and Mrs. Friend pose by the lake, a prominent feature of The Park. The Club House was located at the Eastern end of this open area (see map).



Halycon Park from the Atlas of 1906. The house on page one is at the right margin.



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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BACK COPIES AVAILABLE

Previous issues of this publication can be had by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to the editor at 28 Forest Drive, Bloomfield or the HSOB Museum at 90 Broad Street, Bloomfield. Two different copies will be sent for each envelope received.

Second "Bloomfield Book" To Be Published



JEAN KURAS, President of the Historical Society of Bloomfield, has announced that the Arcadia Publishing Company approached the Historical Society with a request to prepare a second Bloomfield Book, to be published at the end of 2006. Work on the selection of photographs and writing captions for them has been completed and the manuscript sent to the publisher on May 6.

Because of his commitments to his national television program, "Weird United States", seen on The History Channel and now available on DVD, Mark Sceurman has been unable to lend his valuable support to this project, so two of the editors of the 2001 book, Jean Kuras and Frederick Branch have given their best efforts and much of their time to carry on in his absence.

The Arcadia Company has notified the HSOB that the 2001 book is now out-of-print, but some copies may still be found in local bookstores and are for sale in the Museum.

LETTERS TO THE HSOB



From Doctor Nancy Army Pi-Sunyer
Montclair, New Jersey 07043

May, 2006

Dear Fred,

I was delighted to see the story in your newsletter about my mother, Mary Army, and her Christmas Hymn. I was in that old house in Bloomfield where she found the hymnal, which still sits on the bookshelf in the Pine Room at 149 Watchung Avenue in Montclair. I had not remembered that it had belonged to Christian Interest. Thanks for that update.

While the story was adapted...from a previously published piece, I feel compelled to make a number of corrections and additions. It must have been my sister, Mary Katharine...who picked out the song. We sang it at the pageant at the Watchung Avenue Congregational* Church. As my grandfather served as minister of that church, mother served as Director of Religious Education, and my father was a Deacon, the ties to the Congregational faith were strong.

To reassure your readers, the house is filled with life and not for sale, but rather an "apartment" consisting of the entire front half of the house was for rent. Had you passed by in December, you would have seen the cheery Christmas lights along the fence and candles in nearly every window.

Sincerely,

Nancy Pi-Sunyer

**An editorial in the March issue of the NTC has explained the editor's unfortunate confusion regarding these two separate and distinct faiths: Presbyterian and Congregational.*

The editor of the New Town Crier regrets his unfortunate errors in the Mary Army article and extends his sincerest apologies and regrets to Doctor Pi-Sunyer for not being more careful with the facts.

— Frederick Branch

How To Join The HSOB

A short time ago, a young person heard about the Historical Society of Bloomfield and wanted to know if you "had to be old" to join. No, there are certainly no age requirements for membership. In fact, the Society welcomes young people who have an interest in local history and who want to know more about it. Moreover, anyone below the legal voting age who wants to contribute to this newsletter is more than welcome to submit a manuscript to this Newsletter. If you have a special area of interest, please, let's hear about it.

Our address is: Historical Society of Bloomfield Museum, c/o Bloomfield Public Library, 90 Broad Street, Bloomfield 07003