

Gem of the Mountains

November 2008 • Edition II

The Boonton Historical Society & Museum



Cosy Club of Boonton

By Contributing Editor
Joy DeVincenzi

Sometime in the autumn of 1893, Anna Todd and Mrs. Lawrence Corbett met weekly to read together. Sometimes Mrs. Cleary, (Mrs. Corbett's Mother) joined the reading. Gradually, others were invited informally to come. After a few years the meetings were quite well established and it was decided to really organize. So began the history of the Cosy Club of Boonton.

The Cosy Club functioned from 1893 to 1978 keeping detailed membership listings as well as a record of the yearly readings and events of the club. The Club not only maintained detailed membership listings but also tracked marriages, births, who moved from Boonton, and deaths. Pictures were provided to the Historical Society for the years 1933 through 1938. The 1923-24 year was the first year their program appeared in booklet format. The Club's records include copies of these program booklets beginning with the 1932-33 year through the 1975-1976 year.

The general idea of the Club was improving the mind and for sometime it was the custom to read a book



(From left to right) **Back Row:** Hazel Heinrichs, Mabel Smith, Winifred McCain, Grace Brennake, Anna Wootton, Julia Dawson, Edith Kitchel. **Middle Row:** Eleanor Dixon, Helen Baldwin, Margie Gosline. **Front Row:** Isabel Igleheart, Marion Carpenter, Gladys Kingsley, Bertie Condit

from beginning to end, which of course was not accomplished in a week or two. The club had one officer, a Duenna, whose responsibility was the running of the club. The membership was limited to fifteen, no dues were to be imposed and the rule of no napkins and no elaborate refreshments was made so that the hostess might not be embarrassed by a large number or the serving of refreshments becomes a burden. No one was to be asked to

be a member unless the vote was unanimous and once a member always a member.

The Club may have started as a monthly meeting to read and discuss books but through out its history the club held many social activities. It had three musical programs, as well as other topics including Robert Louis Stevenson, Rudyard Kipling and Henry VanDyke as part of its 1904-1905 year. In the 1908-1909 year, the club took a "delightful outing, for some of us our first experience in riding a bus". The trip lasted 5 ½ hours that went through Morristown, Madison, Afton, Essex Fells, and Fairfield, stopping at a dairy for a "drink of milk" and

Continued on page XI

Investigating History



Photograph courtesy of M. J. Hartmann, Boonton

Did you get to see the beautiful High Victorian Queen Anne style house on Fanny Road before it was torn down to make way for yet another development? This magnificent home which had been allowed to fall into gross disrepair, provoked the interest of our Vice President, Jennifer Coultas, and Kathy Fisher, President of the Montville Twp. Historical Society.

Listed in the 1986/1987 Cultural Resources Survey NJ Historic Sites Inventory as being built in 1900 for Charles Kramer, this was a distinctive structure which seemed to beg an interest in its history before its final demise. Featuring a 4 story tower, conical roof, wrap around porch and a porte-cochere (seen partially collapsed on the following picture), the house sat on the hillside of a 5 acre parcel. A carriage house was built at the rear of the house. Spurred on by several inquiries from members of both societies, our curious researchers unearthed an article from the January 6, 1898, issue of the Boonton Times which seemed to describe this house:

“The handsome house which Mr. Kramer is building in the park for Mr. Eugene Zaiss, of Zaiss and Weraba, cloak

manufacturers of New York, is nearing completion. It is to be heated with steam, lighted with electricity and supplied with city water. There is to be twenty-two rooms in the house. A fine stable with all the latest sanitary improvements is also being finished. Mr. Theodore Ringlieb and his son William built the puddingstone walls and a Staten Island carpenter the building. The house and stable, it is said, will cost \$10,000. Mr. Kramer proposes to build two more houses in the park on lots recently purchased of the Lord Estate.”

This was a distinctive structure which seemed to beg an interest in its history before its final demise.

Searching for owners ...

According to census records from 1895 Mr. & Mrs. Zaiss were residents of Boonton, and in 1900, they did indeed reside on Fanny Road with their family and servants. However, Mr. Zaiss is listed as renting the home and not as the owner. By 1910, Mr. Zaiss and his family could not be found on searches of census records (they were in New York in 1920) and Mr. & Mrs. Kramer, Sr., who were described as restaurant owners, were living on Fanny Road.

The property was passed to Anne Kramer Heide (daughter of Charles Kramer), her husband Joseph Heide and Charles Kramer, Jr., in 1924. Later that year

the new owner of the property was Mr. Gustav Hietmann of Staten Island, his wife and his three daughters, Emma, Elizabeth and Hilde.

Emma married Ernst Schmidt of Ridgewood; Hilde married Otto Braunohler and lived in Mountain Lakes and Elizabeth married William Geiger and lived at 406 Fanny Road. The Geigers had two children, Elizabeth and William, who was a minister.

In an oral history from Mountain Lakes, Robert H. Braunohler of Washington, D.C., states "My parents, Otto and Hilde Heitmann Braunohler, moved to Mountain Lakes from Boonton, where they had lived since their marriage in 1935. Hilde had grown up at 406 Fanny Road in Boonton and attended Boonton High School. Her sister, Elisabeth Heitmann Geiger, owned 406 Fanny Road until her death in 2002. She had lived there since my grandfather (Gustav Heitmann) bought it 1920. It appears that Elizabeth Heitman Geiger, who died in 2003, outlived her daughter Elizabeth by one year

Claire Hance, Trustee of the Boonton Historical Society, remembers Elizabeth Heitmann Geiger when she was her Sunday school teacher at the First Reformed Church in Boonton. She also remembers Mrs. Geiger's children Betty and Billy (Elizabeth and William). Claire's sister also attended the First Reformed Church with Hilde Heitmann Braunohler and her family.

Tracing the past is often difficult, confusing and frustrating. It is easy to make assumptions when records are inadequate, incorrect or nonexistent. The above represents our research thus far and we would welcome input to help us to explore paths we never thought of or add an interesting sidebar to the story of this old house. For example, we discovered this story about Fanny Road:

"Fanny Road took its name from Fanny Thomas whose energy and executive ability at the time of the American Revolution was prominent enough to leave her name thus honored.

Fanny brewed a beer, ginger beer, and baked small cakes which she took to Parsippany on training days. These found ready sale among Revolutionary soldiers who were stationed there. Fanny delivered these goods in a wagon drawn by a

donkey. Whether the wagon was too small, or the donkey not strong enough to pull the load is not known, but Fanny always walked beside the donkey on her journey.

All that remains of the site of Fanny's former home are some stones which were used to build a fine stone wall, and an attractive home now stands on the site which was built several years ago. The property has changed hands many times, about seventy years ago it was owned by Pat Butler. The old road which is one mile in length is a boundary line between Mountain Lakes and Boonton,. One portion of the road has been improved, the remaining portion overgrown, with only a path"

January, 1939

Gertrude Grimes

Historian of the Parsippany Chapter of the DAR

From the Boonton Times – April 25, 1906

EARLY SPRING WEDDING

Miss Kramer of Boonton the Bride

The Church of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, of this town, was the scene yesterday forenoon of the most brilliant and impressive wedding that has taken place in Boonton. The occasion was the marriage of Miss Anna Cecilia, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Chas. Kramer, to Joseph Heide of New York City in the presence of an audience completely filling the church. The Rev. Conrad Schotthoffer, rector of the church, officiated, assisted by the Rev. J. T. Posis, rector of St. John's Church Newark, and the Rev. J. J. Owens of St. Andrews Church of New York.

Very high class music was rendered by an orchestra of violinists from New York, the boy choir of the church and by a lady soloist from New York.

The bride, as she approached the altar on the arm of her father, presented a charming and beautiful appearance, gowned in a handsome dress of white satin of Princess style, trimmed with real lace, and a wearing a bridal veil with a wreath of real orange blossoms. She wore a pendant of diamonds, the gift of the groom, and carried a magnificent bouquet of lilies-of-the-valley.

Continued on page XI

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The old Boonton Times Building on Main Street - 2008

Read All About It: Pages From the Past

A Collection of Memories from the Pages of the Boonton Times Bulletin

By Contributing Editor Pamela Hance

Do you remember the freak April snowstorm that hit Northern New Jersey in 1956? Or the time heavy rain caused the canal to overflow onto Kanouse, Roessler, Wilson, and Wootton streets, all the way down to Vreeland Avenue? It happened on August 5, 1954. And what about the fire in September of '54 that badly damaged Boonton Molding Plant 2?

These and other stories were included in a program with the above title held at the Senior Center on January 18, 2006. A popular recap of Boonton's past, this program provoked a lot of memories of times past and we thought we would present it once more for your reading enjoyment. Since this was a lengthy program and space is short, we have decided to serialize this program in the current and upcoming editions of Gem of the Mountains.

The Boonton Times of 1941 offered readers glimpses into the early history (circa 1830) of the town:

"With the building of the Morris Canal and the vast improvement in transportation it gave, from carrying ore in bags on horseback from Succasunna to Boonetown and by the same method the manufactured article over the Orange

Mountains to Newark, came the decline of the old village. An English company, the N. J. Iron Company, was incorporated and they purchased 200 acres of land from William Scott and a smaller parcel from Daniel L. Peer and built iron works in the valley below the falls. This settlement was a first called Boonetown Falls to distinguish it from Old Boonetown.

The company sent an agent, Mr. Asten, to England for skilled workers in iron. He was empowered to offer good wages, free transportation of families and household goods and so effectively did he tell the story of the advantages of the new country that a sufficient number of men to start the new project was soon secured. It was a slow sailing vessel of course on which they embarked. A cow was on board to furnish milk for the babies and sheep to furnish meat for the voyage. There were 58 passengers on board.

When these pioneers ended their long voyage and landed in New York there remained the journey by stage over rough roads to Boonetown. And what a picture the new home must have presented to the weary travelers, how wilds and dreary after the cultivated fields of England and how insignificant the rude beginnings of the iron plant. The houses were not all completed and at first they were cramped for room. But hearts young and hopeful made light of inconveniences and Mrs. Wootton used to tell her children that first winter was one of the happiest of her life.

By 1851 the Boonton Ironworks employed 118 men and boys, while women were raising children and taking care of the home.

No machines of any kind lightened housework then. Most housewives raised or bought a pig, salted their pork, made lard, sausages, relishes and head cheese. The English made much of the celebration on Christmas and on birthdays, when plum puddings were always part of the feast. Closets were stored with home-made wines which were often served to callers with fruit cake. Shelf after shelf was filled with preserves and pickles. Servants so admirably trained in such a variety of household work made themselves excellent housewives when they married.

The classified columns of the next decades offered many positions for women:

Opportunity!

Girls . . . Learn A Well-Paying Trade

We will teach you how to operate a sewing machine. Skilled operators always in demand.

GOOD PAY WHILE LEARNING

Health and Welfare Benefits Paid Vacations

APPLY

BEVERLY BAG COMPANY, Inc.

MONROE STREET BOONTON

The Boonton Times, 1948

Help Wanted—Female

NEW FRIENDS
NEW INTERESTS
NEW JOB
**TELEPHONE
OPERATORS**
ARE NEEDED

●

Start at \$32.00 for a 5 day week.
Get 4 pay raises the first year.
Meet friendly people your own age.
Work in pleasant surroundings.

●

Call Chief Operator
or
Apply 614 Main Street
Boonton
NEW JERSEY
BELL TELEPHONE
COMPANY

*The Boonton Times,
May 23, 1941*

Help Wanted

INTELLIGENT woman with pleasing personality who can meet people easily. Able to devote full time or part time on expansion program of well-established company. Business training not required. Address Box 30, Boonton Times-Bulletin. M13t2p

WANTED—Girl or woman for housework. 5½ days a week. Inquire Solco Market, 502 Myrtle Avenue, Boonton. A22tfnp

GROCERY clerk wanted—Must be over 18 years of age. Good pay. Steady position. Solco Market, corner Myrtle avenue and Wootton street, Boonton. np

WANTED—General housekeeper. Experienced. Good home, family of 3, boy 14, and business couple. Fair salary to conscientious person. If interested please communicate. P. O. Box 772. Denville. M2tfnp

The Boonton Times, December 19, 1957

Help Wanted—Women

WANTED

Women for production sewing on fine lingerie. Women who have had home sewing experience would be ideal for this work.
Pleasant working conditions, company benefits.
CARTERET MILLS, INC.
Myrtle Avenue, Boonton, N. J. N25tf

WAITRESS WANTED, day shift, 8 A. M. to 4 P. M., no Sundays. Apply at Whippany Grill, Route 10, Whippany. D12t3np

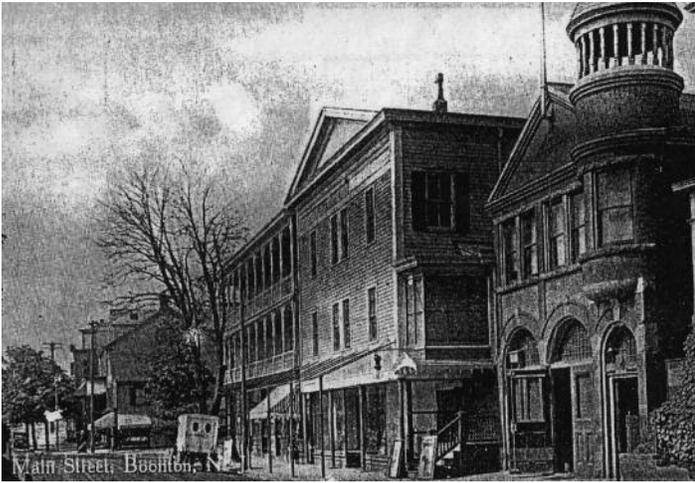
BOOKKEEPER WANTED for auto dealership. Apply to Box 4H in care of this newspaper. N28tf

WANTED—Experienced counter girl-waitress. Hours 8 A. M. to 4 P. M. five days. Apply in person, Whitmore's Sweet Shop, Del's Village, Boonton. No telephone calls. D5tf

HOUSEWORKER. two days a

Before and After

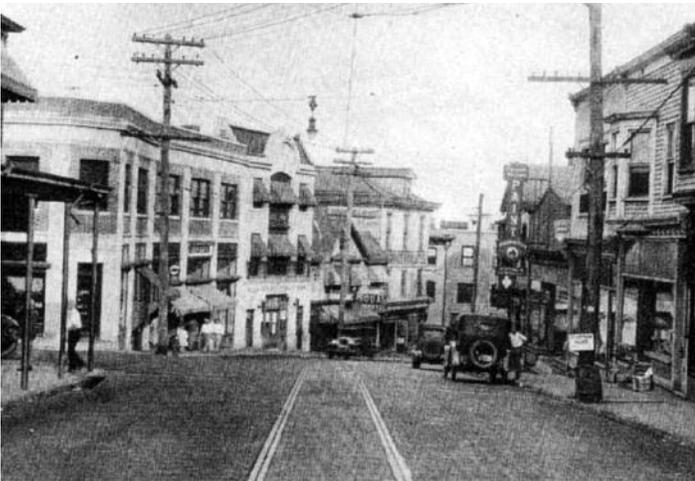
By Lloyd and Terry Charlton



Main Street, Boonton, N.J.



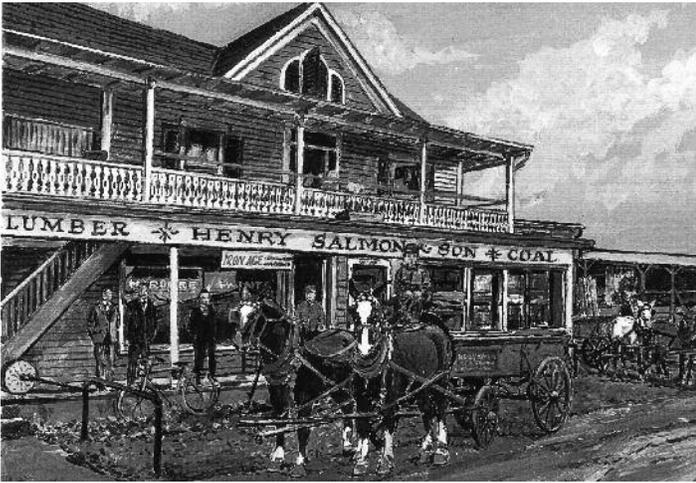
Boonton Main Street



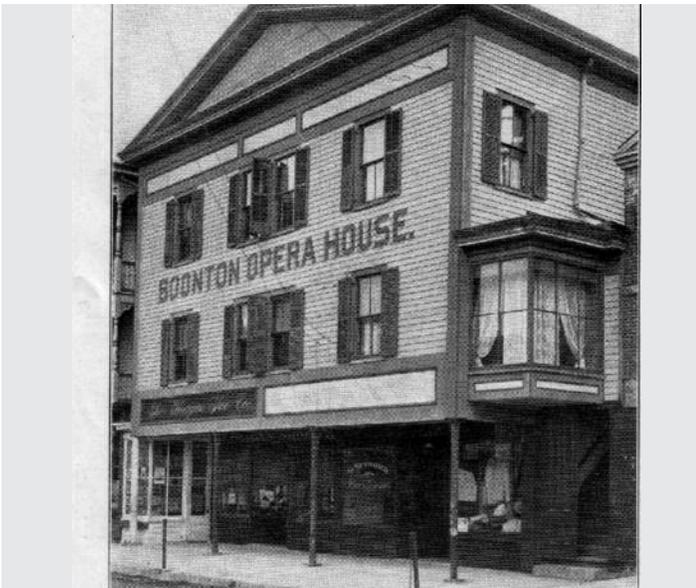
Boonton Main Street



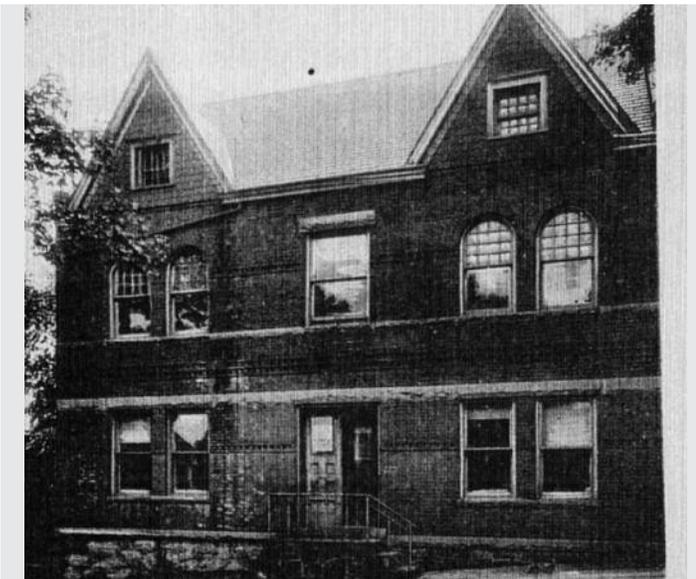
Daress Theater



Henry Salmon Store, Myrtle Avenue



Boonton Opera House



Boonton Historical Society and Museum (Dr. John Taylor House)

Our Year in Review - 2008

Afternoon Tea at the Museum

This is the fifth year of our Afternoon Teas at the Museum. Costumed hosts and live music as well as excellent food and tea selections, make this a quickly sold out event. In 2009 we plan on a Spring Afternoon Tea, featuring Easter bonnets.

Cemetery Tour

Another of our successful events is our annual cemetery tour. We held our fourth tour at the Boonton Avenue Cemetery in October. Costumed hosts told the stories of our Town fathers and their contributions and accomplishments. It was estimated that 60+ people attended. In 2009 we intend to hold our tour at the Greenwood Avenue Cemetery with new characters talking about the memorable people and events in our town.



Walking Tours

We continued our series of summer walking tours again this year. Always popular events, we repeated the Historical Residential District tour in October. Participants on this tour, many from our of town, are treated to anecdotes and historical facts connected with the houses, churches and buildings constructed between the 1830's and 1890's for workers and officials of the New Jersey Iron Company in Boonton.

Christmas Parade 2007

For the first time members and trustees took part in Boonton's annual Christmas Parade. Members Joe and Wayne Burcham-Gulotta led our group in their antique Model A car as we all paraded up Main Street dressed in period costumes. The parade is televised on local cable and so it was a great opportunity for us to promote the Historical Society and let the public know about some of our programs and events.



On-Line News Bulletin

Our monthly news bulletin is distributed to all our members and member organizations, other New Jersey historical societies and libraries. Featuring upcoming events of historical interest in Boonton and in New Jersey, our news bulletin contains pictures of our various speakers and programs held at the Senior Center. We also have a link to the New Jersey Points of Interest Web Site and have our program schedules published on the Town of Boonton's web site. Send us your e-mail address and join our expanding on-line mailing list.



restaurant in April. Over 40 volunteers were recognized.

Volunteer Dinner

We are continually grateful for the contributions of all our volunteers and as a token of recognition we hosted an appreciation dinner at Roma's

Requests for Research

Thanks to our e-mail address on the internet (Boontonhistory@Boonton.org) we receive numerous requests to assist members and others research their family history, learn more about Boonton's history and discover more about historical events in our town's history. We receive and respond to an average of five requests a month.

Clean Up Day at the Museum

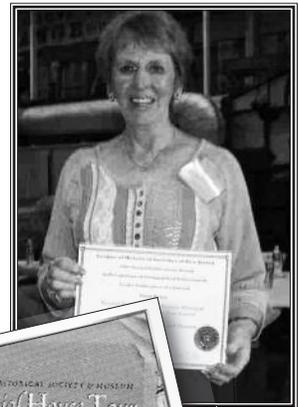
Each year members and trustees gather at the museum for a clean up day. We dust and vacuum, we change light bulbs, we tidy up our storerooms and in general prepare for another busy year. Pictures of this year's activities will be published in our December news bulletin.

League of Historical Societies of New Jersey

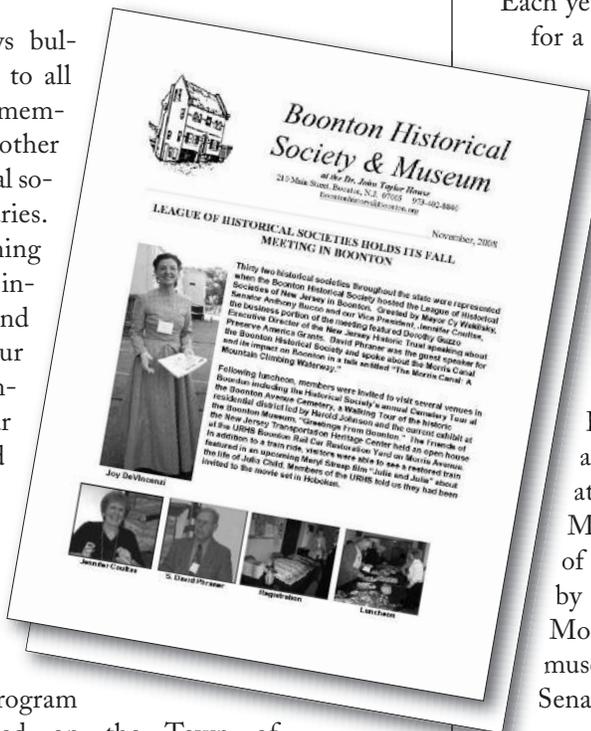
We were pleased to host the Fall Meeting of the League in Boonton. Following the meeting we arranged various events to show off our town to attendees who came from as far away as Cape May County. Our Cemetery Tour, Walking Tour of the Historic District, an open house sponsored by the United Railroad Historical Society at the Morris Avenue restoration yard and visits to our museum were featured events. Mayor Wekilsky and Senator Bucco welcomed our guests to Boonton.

Publication Award

The League of Historical Societies of New Jersey, who has a member organization of over 230 historical and historical related groups, representing 52,000 members throughout New Jersey, presents awards for excellence in publishing each year. We were pleased to be recognized this year with a first place for our Biennial House Tour Brochure.



Continued on next page.



Summary of Events - 2008

Monthly Programs

- January** Famous First Ladies
February Morris County Traction Company
March 19th Century Photographers
March Appraisal Evening
April 18th Century Tea – history,
music & poetry
May William Meadowcroft &
Thomas Edison
October The Gibson Girl
Meets
the Victorian Lady
November Ben Franklin

Walking Tours

- April** Ironworks Historic
District
May Historic Residential
District
June The Park
July Historic Main
Street
October Historic Residential District

Exhibits

- Boonton Panthers & the South Boonton Field Club
- Greetings from Boonton – Postcards from the Past
- Ladies Gowns Through the Centuries (Upcoming exhibit)

Special Events

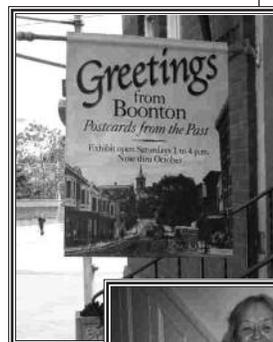
- Afternoon Tea at the Museum
- Cemetery Tour
- Holiday Open House (December 12 at the museum)

A Victorian Lady at Our October Program

We often use the phrase “You’ve come a long way baby” referring the modern woman. But just how far have we come? And from where? Costume historian and designer, Barbara Meyer Darlin shed some light on this topic at our October program when she presented “The Gibson Girl Meets the Victorian Lady” at the Boonton Senior Center. Ms. Darlin demonstrated what it was like for Victorian women to go to work every day wearing corsets and layers of tight, restrictive clothing. Then she compared that life to a society lady’s leisurely lifestyle and glamorous, but torturous fashions as seen above.



Barbara Meyer Darlin



Preview our December On-Line Bulletin.

Sign up to receive your copy each month: Boontonhistory@Boonton.org

Continued from page I:

Cosy Club of Boonton

having their supper on the grass at Two Bridges. Through out its history, the Club didn't hesitate to discuss some of the hot topics of the times.

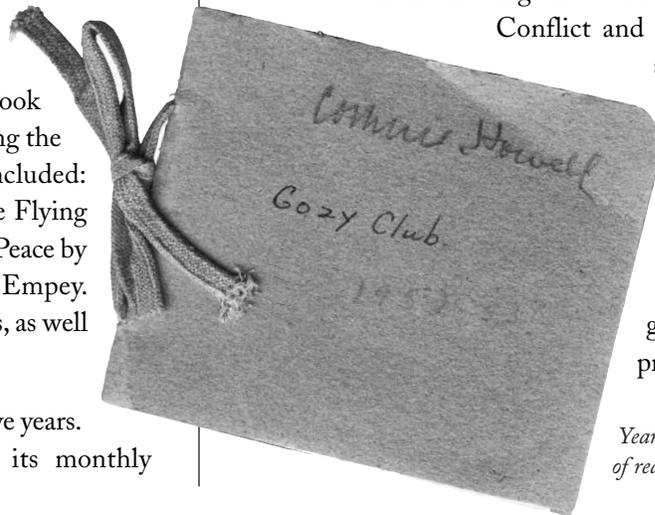
For example, Anti Suffrages at its November 19, 1912, Germany & The Next War at its October 1914 meeting (book was published prior to World War I), during the 1918-1919 year, the war books included: Somewhere in France by P. H. Davis, The Flying Fighters by J. E. Roberts, and Fighting for Peace by Henry VanDyke, and First Call by Guy Empey. It also helped raise funds for the Red Cross, as well as other missionary needs.

The Cosy Club functioned for eighty five years. For the most part, it maintained its monthly

meetings (except in bad weather) offering the opportunity to read and discuss the great books and current topics of their day. These years saw many changes for its members, i.e., women obtaining the right to vote, cars and learning to drive, two world wars, the depression,

women entering the work force, the Korean Conflict and the Vietnam War, and much more.

These changes were reflected in their readings and discussions enabling its members to meet the general goal of improving their minds.



Yearly record of readings, 1957

Continued from page III:

EARLY SPRING WEDDING

Miss Kramer of Boonton the Bride

The bride was preceded by the Maid of Honor, Miss Marie Streble of Hoboken, who carried a bunch of roses, and the little flower girls, Miss Nellie Bowden and Miss Helen Nealon of Boonton, who carried baskets of sweet peas and were gowned in pink radium silk,

She was followed by the bridesmaids, Miss Anna Kietcher, Miss Bertha Heide, sister of the groom, Josephine Weitz and Rose Streble, elegantly dressed in white radium silk and each carrying a handsome bunch of pink roses.

Arriving at the altar the bride was met by the groom, who was dressed in the conventional black, and accompanied by the best man, Mr. Harry Heide, a cousin of the groom.

The ceremony, performed in Latin, was most affecting and impressive, full sacrament being administered. All during the ceremony the orchestra and choir rendered the sweetest strains of instrument and vocal music, which, combined with the soft accents of Latin verse, chanted by the

Celebrant, contributed to make the occasion one of proper solemnity.

The church was artistically and beautifully decorated, the center aisle arched with greens and lilies, and in the middle of each arch hung a wedding bell. The altar, thickly studded with calla lilies, was illuminated by candles below, and above electric lights formed a halo over the image of Christ; the side aisles were illumined by candles and decorated with pink carnations; below, and in front of the altars, two beautiful white doves, suspended in air below a myriad of green leaves, held in their beaks white silk ribbons supporting a large white wedding bell, midway between the altars. Altogether the church presented a grand and imposing appearance.

The ushers were Messrs. John Fagen, Fred Unger, Herman Heide, and Carl Heide.

The Boonton Times of April 19, 1906, noted that 700 invitations had been mailed and that a special train of ten coaches would bring guests from New York. After visiting Washington, the bridal pair were to spend the summer in Europe.

**All during
the ceremony
the orchestra
and choir
rendered
the sweetest
strains of
instrument and
vocal music ...**



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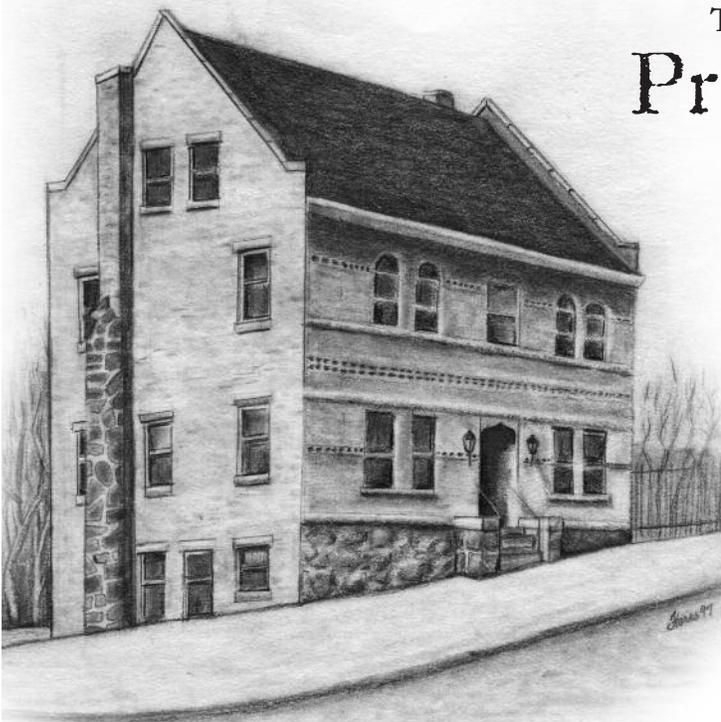
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- Claire Hance Treasurer/Refreshments
- Lloyd Charlton Tour Guide
- Joy Devincenzi Special Events
- Candace Grant Flyer Designer
- Andy Barlak Museum Building
- James Kuhnert Graphic Design

Opinions expressed in the Gem of the Mountains are not necessarily those of the society.



The Boonton Historical Society & Museum
President's Message

2009 will bring us new challenges in historic preservation and in our efforts to keep history alive in our town. The Historical Society's mission statement charges us with encouraging preservation and restoration of Boonton's historic landmarks. While we can promote awareness of issues concerning our local historical environment, we cannot bring about substantive changes on our own. We need your help in this endeavor. Please join us in our commitment to preserve history – your input counts!



Jayne Januszanis
 President

Art work by Melinda Sinatra