

# Gem of the Mountains



Spring 2012 • Edition I

The Boonton Historical Society & Museum

## Recent Gifts and Donations

### BOONTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY RECEIVES GIFT FROM HELEN DIXON KUNZELMANN

On December 19th of 2011, the Boonton Historical Society received a substantial gift from the estate of Mrs. Helen Dixon Kunzelmann who passed away in Bennington Vermont last year. Mrs. Kunzelmann was a native of Boonton, born here in 1917.

Trustees of the Boonton Historical Society are honored to accept this generous gift from Helen Kunzelmann. These funds provide an endowment that will serve to perpetuate the history and heritage of Boonton through its Historical Society for many years to come.

Throughout her life, Mrs. Kunzelmann remained a friend to the Historical Society as well as many other local organizations. We are forever grateful that she chose to remember us in this way. Although Mrs. Kunzelmann lived in Vermont for 57 years, she remembered Boonton with fondness and affection.



### JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY DONATION TO THE MILLER-KINGSLAND HOUSE

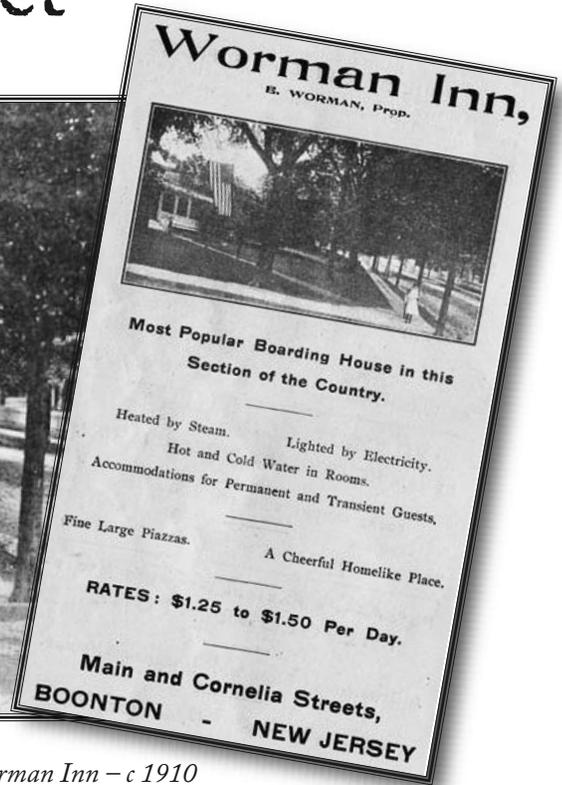
We were pleased to welcome members of the Jefferson Township Historical Society to our Pathways of History event. Museum Director and Vice President, Carol Ann Keppel asked us if we would like a spinning wheel for the Miller-Kingsland House. The wheel is believed to be contemporary with the older section of the house and we are hoping that we can see it being used as part of our Pathways of History event later this year.

We are forever grateful that  
Helen Dixon Kunzelmann  
chose to remember us  
in this way.



If you know someone who would like to give spinning demonstrations at one of our events, please have them contact us.

# The Evolution of a Building on Main Street



1. *The Worman Inn - c 1910*

One of several hotels in Boonton, the Worman Inn welcomed guests at the corner of Cornelia Street and Main Street from 1870 to about 1915. An advertisement in the 1910 Boonton Directory boasted hot and cold water in each room, electric lighting and room rates ranging from \$1.25 to \$1.50.

The building faced Cornelia Street and had a spacious front lawn. You can see that lawn and just a corner of the decorative, front porch of the Worman Inn in photo #1. Remember the look of this porch as you view the rest of the photos.

In time, two additional buildings filled what had been the front lawn of the inn, but they faced Main Street. The first building was built sometime after 1915. It was the Times Bulletin Building as seen in photo #2. The inn now

appears to the left of the new building, and its distinctive porch railings and posts and peaked roof can be seen in this photo.

Later, the Lehman Department Food Store was built between the Times Bulletin Building and what had been the Worman Inn as seen in photo #3. By this time, the Worman Inn was no longer operating as an inn, and its residential-looking façade disappeared beneath the front addition of a new business. See Zucker's Department Store façade in photo #3. Despite the addition, you can still see parts of the decorative, front porch of the old inn.



2. *Times Bulletin Building*

Subsequent to Zucker's Department Store, J. M. Towne was the proprietor of the building. From the 1950s to 1980s, the space was occu-

ped by The Laurie Shop as seen in photo #4. Although it is hard to see in this photo, the peaked roof of the inn is on the side elevation between the two buildings. If you were able to see inside the building, you would see a grand staircase between the first and second floors that was evidence that the now commercial building began as a residence.

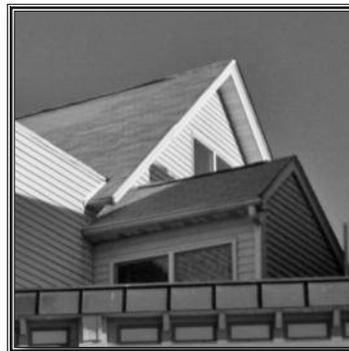
Within the past five to ten years, the façade of 611 Main Street has been renovated yet again, but the peak of the old inn is still there as seen in photos #5 and #6.

The next time you are on Main Street, take the time to notice that bit of the old Worman Inn that just refuses to go away.



3. *Lehman's Department Food Store*

4. *The Laurie Shop 1950-80*



5. *611 Main Street 2012*

6. *Detail of the peak roof of the former Worman Inn 2012*

*Photographs: Archives of the Boonton Historical Society*

# Looking Back At Boonton's Industrial Past

Boonton is a community which is grounded in its historical past. A town built on industry with a rich cultural background which has been passed down the years from immigrants who came to Boonton to work in its Iron Industry. Boonton has been home to abolitionists, a stop on the underground railroad, the home of the world famous Boontonware and a host of industries which have thrived here over the years. Trolley cars, vaudeville theatres and hotels thrived on Main Street at the turn of the century. The Boonton Directory of 1920, detailed some of the industries in town at that time.

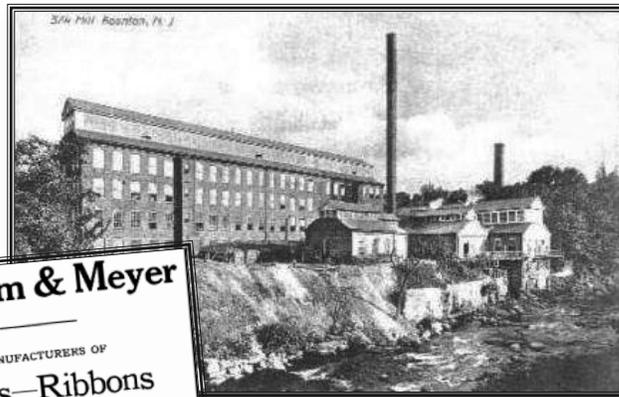
## THE BRONZE WORKS

George Benda started manufacturing bronze powder in Boonton in 1824, and bronze powder has continued to be manufactured under the name "Bendalin" ever since, although there have been several changes in the ownership of the factory. Fifty men are now employed in powdering the bronze which is made from material purchased from New Jersey distributors who have obtained the metals from the western part of the United States. Hydroelectric power is used, the water from the canal serving as the propelling force for the turbine. The finished product is sold in small cans mainly through salesmen, while auto trucks and the railroad are used for transporting it. This powdered bronze when mixed with a suitable liquid is used for gilding radiators, etc... The industry is purely local.

ESTABLISHED 1824  
**GEORGE BENDA**  
 MANUFACTURER AND ORIGINATOR OF  
**BRONZE POWDERS, BROCADES  
 AND FLITTERS**  
 SIX FACTORIES IN EUROPE  
 AMERICAN FACTORY: BOONTON, N. J.  
 OPERATED BY WATER STEAM - ELECTRICITY  
 HEAD OFFICE: NUREMBERG, GERMANY  
 NEW YORK OFFICE: 90 WEST ST.

## THE SILK MILL

In 1880 Pelgram and Meyer located a factory in Boonton for the purpose of manufacturing silk in skeins and in cloth. They are doing practically the same kind of



work today in a factory that they have been occupying since 1882. Their capitalization is not of a public nature, but it does well to note that their annual sales run into the millions. One hundred and seventy persons are employed here.

Pelgram and Meyer buy silk directly or indirectly from Japan, China, Italy, France and Spain, and manufacture under the power of steam generated in their own plant. The D.L. & W.R.R. and trucks carry the finished product to the company's salesrooms in New York City, to which rooms the product from their seven other factories is brought.

## THE PAPER MILL

Old, dirty rags are brought from all parts of the world to the mill of Field, White and Co., where they are sorted, cleaned, mangled, and pressed into excellent roofing paper. Contrary to general belief the men who handle the rags are quite healthy, and in many years there has not been a serious sickness resulting from infection from the rags. Steam is used for running the various machines in the factory and 30 persons are

given employment here. Wagons and trucks are used to carry the product to the railroad – two miles distant – and a New York agency receives the product for purposes of distributing it.

## THE RUBBER WORKS

With a patented process for reclaiming rubber from scrap rubber, the Loando Rubber Co., started in 1899 in a small building in the mill section of the town. Commercial vulcanized asbestos was made per order to various firms. In 1912 a large factory was constructed along the railroad where a siding could be obtained. The company's business continued to increase until another large building was erected. This rapid growth was due to the automobile industry, which created a demand for ignition parts. These parts were then made according to the Bakelin formula and the product was termed "Bakelite". In 1918 more enlargements were made and a large office was constructed. The number of employees jumped from 20 in 1912 to 200 in 1919. After being taken over by the Alien Property Custodian, the whole property was purchased by Mr. R. L. Seabury, who had been with the company from the beginning, and he capitalized it at \$300,000, calling it the Boonton Rubber Mfg. Co.

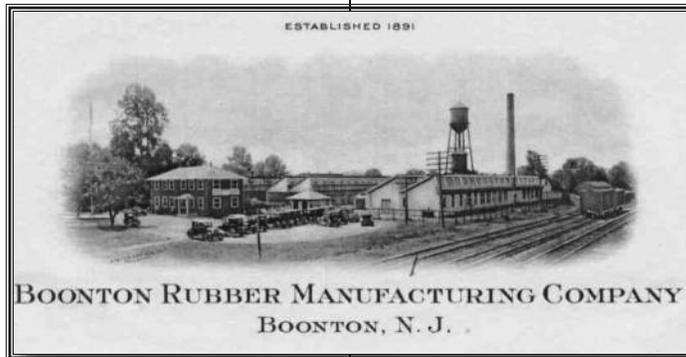
Bakelite from Perth Amboy, asbestos from Erie, Pa., and wood from Maine provide the raw materials from which, under the company's own and local electric power, insulator parts for many of the foremost electrical insulator concerns are made. These products are distributed directly from their one factory according to jobbing contracts.

## THE FOUNDRY

Thirty men are now employed in Louis Sack's Iron Foundry where iron lasts for shoemakers and repairers are made in comparatively large quantities under steam power. Scrap iron of all descriptions along with coke is dumped into a small furnace, the melted product poured into sand moulds, and the resulting show lasts are polished and made ready for their New York market. Capitalized at about \$20,000, this industry

has never been very large. It is one of the industries in the town, however, that uses scrap material to make of it something useful.

## THE HOSIERY



Under the name of the Boonton Hosiery Co., Mr. George E. Fichtner, formerly with Paul Guenther, Inc, caused ground to be broken along the railroad in the eastern part of the town in October, 1913, for the purpose of erecting a hosiery factory there. The factory was built and additions

were made shortly afterward, and three years later a large factory across the street was purchased and used. Since then another large building has been erected. Several months ago the Van Raalte Co., which owns similar factories in sixteen other places, purchased this business and is now producing goods with the "van Raalte" stamp on them. Work is supplied to 400 persons, most of whom live in Boonton.

The silk used by the Van Raalte Co., is transported from Japan to the Pacific coast and to New York by rail to brokers, from whom the silk is purchased by the Van Raalte Co.,. The finished product is carried by rail and truck to purchasing dealers.

Editor's note: In 1937 the Van Raalte factory in Boonton manufactured the first fully fashioned nylon stockings as part of the testing process for Dupont's new nylon fiber.

## ED BOWERS' FACTORY

The E. H. Bowers Mfg. Co., started in 1916 with practically no capital, but through the perseverance of Mr. Bowers a market within a hundred mile radius was found for flags of regular and special design. Handkerchiefs were then turned out in any quantities bargained for, and the little business grew until during the war fifty girls were employed in making primer protector caps for the U. S. Army. After the war a new factory was started and here better working conditions

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# Kenilworth Hall And Tally Ho

*Recollections by Boonton resident Jacqueline Costello and Florida resident Maureen Madine, who as employees of Equitable Life, vacationed at Kenilworth*

The Kenilworth property was owned by The Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States, headquartered in Manhattan, and originally housed in a building located across the street from Penn Station. It is now a diversified company located at 787 Seventh Ave., NYC. The Kenilworth was sold in 1960 and became Sara Francis Nursing Home and a residence was built on the river property across the street from Kenilworth and Tally Ho. More recently it became known as the Merry Heart Nursing Home.

The Kenilworth was used strictly for female employees of Equitable, either as a retreat, a vacation spot or to recuperate from surgery, illness etc.. The main house was known as the Kenilworth and the building in the back was known as Tally Ho. There used to be tennis courts on the property between the Main House and Tally Ho. For a nominal fee you had a room and three meals a day. Tally Ho had dorm style quarters, but you could also stay in the Main House All meals were served in the main dining room. Tally Ho was originally a stable There was a large room that contained Ping Pong tables, a juke box and a player piano, Thus is where we socialized. The bedrooms were located in the horse stalls. Each stall contained a cot type bed and a dresser. Maureen remembers the big brown furry spiders all over the stalls and remembers we moved the cots to the large recreation room to sleep. City girls could not handle spiders.

The front lawn was full of large trees, and one of the trees had a swing which we always used. The majority of the trees have been removed.



*Photo Courtesy of Boonton Postcards Web Site*

The property across the road, on the river, was used for swimming, canoeing and rowing and sun bathing. We also ice skated up river in the winter The canoes and row boats were owned by Equitable. There was a dock and every Saturday morning we rowed up river. Our goal was to reach Lake Hopatcong, but I don't think we reached the Boonton Wells.

There was a curfew, between Sunday evening and Friday evening you had to be in by 9:00 PM and Saturday was 10:00 PM. Usually on Saturday evening we walked to the Darress Theater and walked back just getting in on time. Grace Rathgaber was the Equitable employee in charge, she lived in the main house full time. Sunday mornings we took cabs to our respective churches and then returned for the main



meal of the day. At the end of the day we usually took the late afternoon train back to NYC.

We have many fond memories of Kenilworth, usually in the summer or fall a group would hop the train on Friday night and head to Kenilworth. On any given weekend there would be 15 to 20 women in residence. We had fun filled weekends, and always lots of laughter



1) Jacqueline Costello canoeing on the river.  
2) Ping Pong at Tally Ho.  
3) Pajama Party at Tally Ho (Jacqueline bottom left, Maureen top left).

*Photographs courtesy of Boonton Holmes Library and Jacqueline Costello.*

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# Soup's on at The Boonton Museum

*Photographs courtesy of Eric Wallin*



*David Henderson introduces and leads our tour*

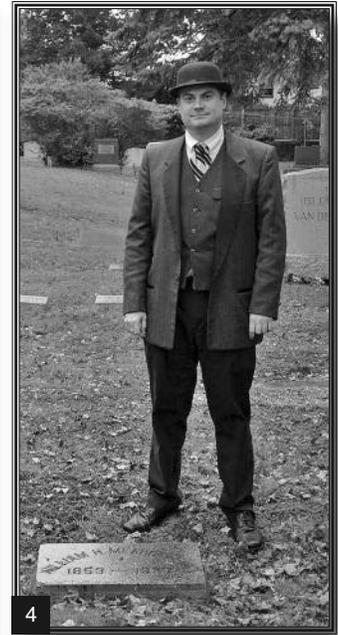
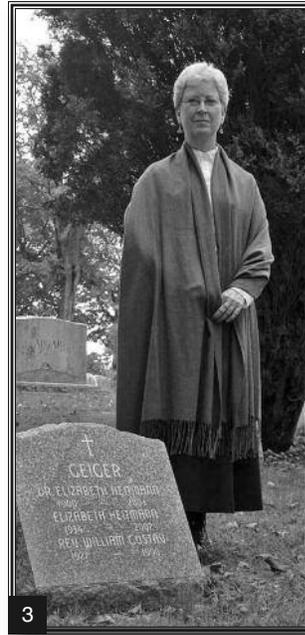
The Boonton Historical Society and Museum sponsored a Cemetery Tour of the Greenwood Cemetery, Washington Avenue, Boonton, Ten costumed hosts portrayed local residents giving a glimpse into the daily lives and times of Boonton past.

In addition to portraying some of the town's outstanding gentlemen, the Society highlighted the stories and contributions of some of its ladies. Dr. Elizabeth Geiger (1900-2003), a proponent of naturopathy, had a practice in New York City and opened her home on Fanny Road as a health resort; Dr. Marietta Crane Woodruff (1861-1912) served the people of Boonton as a general practitioner and obstetrician for over 38 years; She also had an interest in alternative therapy and served as vice president of the NJ State Homeopathic

society. Hannah Wootton (1810-1892) came from England at age 20 with her husband and three month old baby. She describes the arduous journey by sea to the new world with a goat for milk and sheep for meat. Hetty Hopkins tells the story of her husband Charles, who was a survivor of the infamous Andersonville prison, was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, and, as a young man, was involved with the underground railroad.



Immediately following the cemetery tour, guests were invited to a soup tasting experience at the museum. For a minimal cost, a selection of soups, served in Boontonware bowls, (which guests got to keep) together with crusty breads were available to sample.



1) Paula Scerbo reprised her role as Hetty Hopkins, wife of Charles. 2) Anne McDonald told the story of Adelaide Kanouse Taylor. 3) Margaret Gilmer recalled the life of Dr. Elizabeth Geiger. 4) Gibson Knott as William Meadowcroft. 5) Wayne Burcham-Gulotta portrayed William G. Lathrop. 6) Harold and Delores Johnson told us about the lives of Nathan and Maria Caroline Jennings. 7) Jennifer Coultas & Hank Gundersen as Hannah & Phillip Wootton. 8) Barbara Busch as Dr. Marietta Crane Woodruff.

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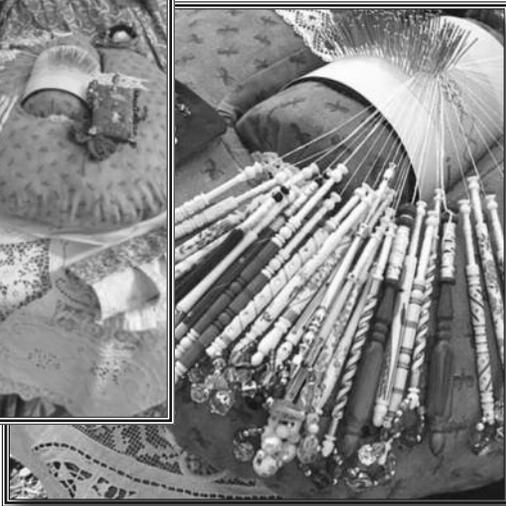
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# The Pathways of History Museum Tour

*Links to Each Other and to the Past*



33rd. Regiment  
New Jersey Volunteers at the  
Miller-Kingsland House



*Photographs courtesy of Jennifer Coultas and Pamela Hance*

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# Everyone loves a parade...

... and we are no exception. The Boonton Holiday parade welcomes the holiday season to town. Local groups, both young and old, participate in the parade which features a float competition, marching bands and gives a huge welcome to the star of the parade – Santa.

Ring in the changes for the Historical Society, our parade coordinator, Jayme Januszanis, organized our group into a display of antique cars dating from 1920-1960 with members of the Society dressed according to the ages of the cars.





- 1) George Hill's Studebaker – 1960's.
- 2) Claire Hance
- 3) Tammie Holloway
- 4) The Kohut's 1940's truck.
- 5) Our lead 1920's car driven by Wayne Burcham Gulotta.
- 6) The Evans' 1950's car.
- 7) The 1938 car owned by Dick Seabury
- 8) Paula Scerbo
- 7) Joy DeVincenzi & Jayme Januszanis.

Photographs courtesy of Eric Wallin

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*Continued from page 5:*

## Looking Back at Boonton's Industrial Past

are enjoyed by the employees. Mr. Bowers has never been troubled by strikes. Under local electric power this factory is now turning out pajamas, boys shirts and girl dresses, which are sold in Northern New Jersey and New York City. The raw material for these goods comes from Passaic mainly by truck and the finished product is transported in the same way.

### **THE BUTTER WORKS (See also GEM OF THE MOUNTAINS – Fall 2010)**

E. A. Stevenson and Co., Inc., located in Boonton in the autumn of 1917 on the site of the old Knox factory, and in the spring of 1918 started the refining of cocoanut and other vegetable oils and the manufacture of nut margarine. Since this company came to Boonton over \$400,000 has been spent on the installation of machinery and the erection of new buildings.

In view of the fact that this industry is one which is not commonly appreciated it will not be amiss to state briefly some of the more important steps in the manufacture of nut margarine.

The cocoanuts used mainly in this industry are grown in Ceylon, Java and the Philippines. Cocoanut oil is either pressed from cocoanuts at the place of origin or the copra (meat of the cocoanut) is brought by 3,000 ton tank steamers to the Pacific coast of the United States or to New York. Factories are located from coast to coast in which the copra is crushed and pressed to extract the oil. The crude oil from these factories is shipped in tank cars to the company's plant in town where about ten tank cars of crude cocoanut oil are refined weekly. This refined oil is either shipped to other nut butter manufacturers or made into nut butter in the Boonton plant.

Under steam and electric power the crude oil is refined to remove impurities; it then goes through filter presses in which the oil is filtered and bleached by charcoal, thus removing the last trace of yellow tinge

and leaving the oil water-white. From the filter process it next passes into deodorizing stills and comes out an edible product. The cocoanut oil is blended with peanut oil and is churned and ripened with fresh milk from Jersey farms to make nut-butter. The nut-butter is cut into proper sizes, packed for shipment and sent to distributors in New York and elsewhere. Almost one hundred and twenty persons are employed in the Boonton plant.

### **THE VARNISH FACTORY**

The Paige and Jones Chemical Co., which also has a factory in Hammond, Indiana, took over the old Acme plant near the bronze works in August, 1919, and started to manufacture varnish which is used in printer's ink. At present, in addition to printer's ink varnish, Paige and Jones also makes Clarion core oil and Clarion cutting oil. Mr. Weinburg, superintendent of the plant, is responsible for all the formulae used in the manufacture of the various products. The oils are shipped only in carload lots and are sold to some of the largest manufacturers in the United States. The

basic oils are imported from Japan but the finished product is sold exclusively in the United States. The D.L. & W.R.R. and trucks are used for transporting the products.

As most of the work is done by machinery only

twenty men are employed. Electricity and steam supply the power for carrying out the work. The capitalization of the company is over a quarter of a million. The sales office is at 248 Fulton Street, New York City.

### **THE OVEN WORKS**

A branch of the Hubbard Oven and Mfg. Co., of Chicago was opened in Boonton in the place formerly occupied by the old rolling mill. Work was started in the latter part of 1919. This company manufactures portable baker's ovens which are used by many of the

*Continued on next page*

Come when you will to Boonton –  
‘Twill be twice if you come at all –  
In every season has beauty reason,  
For her sweet insistent call.

— Unknown

large hotels and bakeries in New York. The ovens are especially good because of their performance in holding hat,, because they maintain an even temperature, and because they are so constructed as to permit raising and lowering the hat easily.

Over thirty men from Boonton are employed by the Hubbard Oven and Mfg. Co., and an open shop is maintained. Local electric company power is used in the factory. He company's own siding is an aid in getting the ovens to the main tracks of the D.L.& W.R.R. just a few blocs away. Mr. Jack Watkins is superintendent of the Boonton plant. The sales office is at 260 West Broadway, New York City.

## THE DOLL FACTORY

The American Doll and Toy Company started to manufacture dolls as their main product in Boonton in May, 1920. These dolls are made of wood pulp and are especially strong and good looking. The dolls are made in the place formerly known as the Morse Garage and are dressed under the same roof. Under normal conditions about thirty persons are employed by the company. This factory was taken over in May of his year (1920) by Mr. Bernstein who will continue to run the factory and manufacture "Kewtie" (sic) dolls.

*Continued from page 9:*

## Soup's on at The Boonton Museum



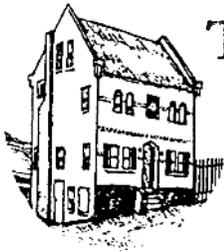
1) Olga Dennett & Ellen Bomser greet guests at the Cemetery gates.  
2) Soup to Die for at the Boonton Museum. The perfect ending to a Cemetery tour on a gloomy day!  
3) Our serving ladies: Margaret Gilmer, Claire Hance and Joy DeVincenzi.



**The Boonton Historical Society & Museum**

210 Main Street  
Boonton, New Jersey 07005

**Reminder** Please remember to let us know when you have changed your address and/or your e-mail address. Many of our announcements are now e-mailed to save on postage.



**The Boonton  
Historical  
Society  
& Museum**

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Web site: [www.boonton.org](http://www.boonton.org)  
E-mail address: [Boontohistory@boonton.org](mailto:Boontohistory@boonton.org)

Open Sundays from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.  
and by appointment.



- Andy Barlak . . . . . Museum Building
- Jennifer Coultas . . . . . Editor
- Daniel Clark . . . . . Exhibit Coordinator
- Jenny Darlington . . . . . Recording Secretary
- Herb Goldenberg . . . . . Volunteers
- Claire Hance . . . . . Corresponding Secretary
- David Henderson . . . . . Publicity
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- Jayne Januszanis . . . . . Special Events
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- Eric Wallin . . . . . Membership

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