

# Gem of the Mountains

Winter 2014 • Edition 2

The Boonton Historical Society & Museum



## A 1916 Walk Around The Block *Part 1*



By Ernie Piscitello

My interest in the railroad lines that operated in Boonton's industrial Hollow in the past, led me to a website where I could look, online, at old maps of Boonton, made by Sanborn, a fire insurance company, and on file at the Library of Congress. That allowed me to also

look at the maps for other places in Boonton, and I thought that other people might like to look at the maps, too. Sanborn has maps of Boonton, including Montville, going back to 1886.

The following was taken from a 1916 Sanborn map, the most recent. Note that the house numbers on the 1916 map may have changed.

### Main Street

Growing up on Division St, I knew the red brick building on the corner of Division and Main streets, as the Giant Building. It housed a food market on the ground floor, and apartments on the 3 floors above.

It was destroyed by fire in 1954, and was replaced by a single story building which first housed Marcello Brothers Sporting Goods, and later, a cabinet store. On the 1916 map, the building is listed as a 4-story building, with the right side of the first floor, looking from Main St (301), shown as a hardware store, and the left side (305) as a grocery store. There was a boxed symbol "E" at the back of the hardware store. Was that for an elevator?

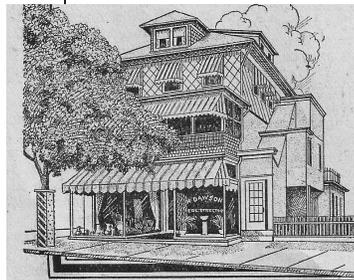
In an 1892 map, a building in this location is labeled, "U.S. Hotel." The 2 story building at 307 Main St was labeled "Sal" and "Bowling". I take that to mean a saloon and a bowling alley. I remember it as a newspaper store.

At 309 on the 1916 map, the 3 story building was labeled, "Drugs", which I take to mean a drug store. I worked with Pharmacist Ed Maraziti at State Pharmacy at 716(?) Main

Street near Boonton Ave, and have been told that when starting out, Ed had worked at a pharmacy in this area. I remember this store as Smith's, which sold sporting goods, bicycles, and hobby models.

There is a narrow alley on either side of this building. 311 Main, a 2 story building, was marked,

"Conf'y", (Confectionary?) on the map. The 3 story building at 313 Main St was a post office. I remember Ratti's ice cream parlor there.



No indeed! All canned goods are NOT the same quality. There is a difference between silk and cotton; there is a difference in canned goods. Our "Can" goods you can eat. Buy them; try them; and you'll come again for them. Buy from US.

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**C. S. CASE**

305 Main Street Tel. 250

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Jacob H. Kanouse - Proprietor

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HOTEL HACK MEETS ALL TRAINS

Livery Attached Fine Stabling

The next building, 315, also 3 stories, is set apart from its neighbors, and is shown as, "Undertaking". I remember Taylor's flower shop being there, and then Zangara's grocery.

On the corner of Mechanic St, at 317-321, was the 3-story City Hotel, with a 2-story extension in back. The map also noted for the hotel, "heat : steam--lights: keros & electric". The ground floor, 317 side of the building, is labeled, "tobacco & pool". I remember Willie Frankel's Men's Shop, at 321, and Morris Marrone's Shoe Repair at 317.

*continued on page 10*

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# The Kingsland Marionettes

by Pamela Hance

Typically, Boonton's Miller-Kingsland house evokes the pre-Revolutionary War era, as well as an image of George Washington who is said to have marched past the house with his belabored troops scouring the countryside in search of provisions. Striking as these scenes may be, they pale somewhat to the surreal picture of hundreds of marionettes dangling from the rafters of the property's barn; however, that is just how history unfolded at the Miller-Kingsland Farm. And this is exactly what Jennifer Coultas discovered as she researched the Kingsland Marionettes, a topic which had been suggested for this newsletter of which she is the editor.

The marionettes, owned by Cedric Head and Mabel Kingsland-Head were billed as "The World's Greatest Traveling Marionette Show". The talented couple originated the Kingsland Marionettes in 1930, making their headquarters in the Miller-Kingsland House on the property of the Kingsland farm. Mabel was the last of her family's line to reside in this, Boonton's oldest recorded residence, c.1740. In 1939 Mabel and Cedric, who spent most of the year on the road performing and teaching, moved into a smaller house on the property.

The big barn, now located on adjoining property, was used as the Head's studio and storehouse for myriad marionettes, as well as stage equipment. Over 700 puppets are said to have been residents of the barn, including Cedric's private collection of antique and rare marionettes and books from around the world, thought to have been one of the most outstanding in the country at that time.

Jennifer notes that as a child she had marionettes. "Dad built a stage and I gave shows to anyone who would volunteer themselves as an audience. I had Pelham puppets, postwar English marionettes, including a dancing girl, and

Disney's Pluto. A favorite is a homemade red-headed sailor I constructed as a gift, made, like most puppets, out of wood, paper mache and fabric scraps".

Her childhood history with marionettes merged with her more recent interest in the Kingsland Marionettes. So be-



*Kingsland Marionettes Puppet School, Brandon, VT. Cedric & Mabel Kingsland Head far left.*

*Photo courtesy Malcolm Allen Head, III*

gan her discovery of the far reaching and ancient art of puppetry. "At first, I focused specifically on the Kingsland Marionettes, contacting Su Fowler-Lum who grew up in the Kingsland House and well remembers the interesting couple.

"The puppeteers were the highlight of my rather boring youth. When the Heads would roll in from their winters on the road and their summers at their camp on Lake Dunmore in Vermont, I was in heaven. Cedric would burst in with presents of maple syrup or antiques he thought my parents would like, always laughing his hearty laugh and telling off-color jokes ("Now Ceddie," Mabel would say), lighting up our whole house. I spent as much time up at their house as I could. Mabel was quiet and a little scary but Cedric was like the Wizard of Oz. Other puppeteers came to visit--I remember Bill Percy and his wife and their daughter Patsy who didn't have to go to school, lucky kid. And Les and Ellie Heath of the Lesselli Marionettes who did risque shows in Reno and were hilarious." Ellie Heath remembers "when Mabel and Cedric played some shows



*Original advertising sketches for Kingsland Marionette performances of Shakespeare's As You Like It and Hans Christian Anderson's The Tinderbox with photograph of Kingsland Marionettes performing The Tinderbox.  
Photo courtesy Su Lum*

in the San Joaquin Valley for several weeks or more, they stayed with us in Madera and taught us to make puppets. We, (Mabel, Cedric, Les and I) took to one another at first glance and Cedric, with his usual penchant for promoting protégés, had us all set to come to New Jersey and learn the puppet business – all this took place in less time than it took to say Lesselli Marionettes. In looking back, as we often do, we always agree that our happiest times were spent at Boonton. It was the beginning of a wonderful new life for us and Boonton became a second home.”

Su's on-going recollections provided enticing facts about the Kingsland Marionettes, igniting a greater interest in the topic. In continuing her research, Jennifer learned about and even communicated with many American artists of this theatrical genre. Although Cedric's collection has been absorbed by other collectors and museums across the country, her efforts resulted in an exhibit that illustrated, not only the contributions of Cedric and Mabel Head to American puppetry, but the fascinating cultural variety that has emerged over the centuries. The exhibit was part of the Pathways of History weekend tour in October.

Although only photographs of Cedric's puppets were on display at the exhibit, visitors saw a spectrum of puppets from around the world. At least 20 Pelham English Puppets, and even the red-headed sailor, were displayed. Puppets from Thailand, India and China added an exotic flare with their unique characterizations and archetypal

costumes. Puppetry executed with strings, rods and even shadows illustrated the various modes of performance. Carrying on Cedric's love of fun and puppetry, marionette demonstrations were performed by Penny Rapicano who invited members of the public to participate, evoking great enthusiasm in adults, as much as in the children.



*Dancing marionettes greeted visitors to the Miller-Kingsland House Exhibit.*



*Indonesian Rod Puppets of the kind collected by Cedric Head*



*The Handmade Sailor Pupper*

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# Articles Clipped from Old Papers Tell a Story.

By Monica Scozzafava

All roads lead to home. No matter how far I am from there Reading old newspapers is a good way to learn old history. No one is a better proponent of this than Arline Dempsey. Arline is a past president of the Boonton Historical Society.

In the past two years, Arline has donated three boxes of files to the museum. The files are labeled: theaters, trolley, post office, fires, Tourne, railroads, The Station, organizations, etc. Each file is bulging with articles clipped from the Boonton Weekly Bulletin newspaper. Each clipping has a handwritten date to note when it appeared in the paper. Some of the articles are dated from 1870s, 1900s and most from the 1920s-1940s.

By itself, each little snippet is a bit of history, just one moment in time, but when joined with a host of clippings on the same topic, a complete history of the topic unfolds. Arline, herself, used this method of history telling when she compiled the clipped articles into three different books.

She compiled the book, *Memories of the Morris Canal*, in 1980. It is 72 pages of clipped and dated articles arranged in chronological order. In the forward of the book, Arline wrote,

"...the Boonton Bicentennial Committee wanted...to give something lasting to the town for the benefit of future generations. Seventy years of the Boonton Weekly Bulletin (1872-1942) were put on microfilm and copies were donated to the Holmes Library and Boonton High School. The negatives were given to the Boonton Historical Society.

While working on this project, which took one year, I came across many fascinating newspaper articles and thought, 'How interested youngsters and adults would be if they only knew the contents of these newspapers. How could I reach the public?' Here are the newspaper articles about the Morris Canal exactly as they appeared years ago---and the happy and sad stories of the Canal almost come alive to those of us who do not remember."

In 1982, she compiled a second book, *Old Boonton and the Jersey City Reservoir*. It is 174 pages of clipped and dated articles. In the forward of the book, Arline wrote,

"Through actual newspaper accounts from the days when the town thrived,...we are able to recreate the town and begin to paint its picture with a true and colorful brush."



Arline Dempsey

She compiled the third book in 2010. It is 50 pages and titled, *Dan Padovano: Artist, Sculptor, American Patriot, Boulder Stone Mason*. This book was compiled to convince the National Park Service at Ellis Island to accept Dan's painting of Ellis Island into its collection. Dan was a resident of Boonton for 80 years after immigrating from Italy in 1911.

Now, to get back to those three boxes and dozens of file folders filled with thousands of loose articles... The question for the museum archivists was what do we do with them? The easiest way to handle them would be to leave them in the folders and put them in a

filing cabinet. But would the wealth of information there be used? Would there be easy access to the saved history? We decided if Arline took the time to clip and date them, then we would take the time to paste them in chronological order.

As we do this time-consuming work of pasting yellowed pieces of fragile newsprint, we think of Arline on her end having spent a like number of hours reading and clipping and filing. Actually, the more we think about it, Arline must have spent more, unending, continuous hours on her end of the project. Think of it, a single newspaper issue contains hundreds of articles about innumerable topics. Arline would have to read the paper from cover to cover and clip all the articles that fell into her areas of interest and then divide the saved articles into the corresponding folders. Can you even fathom the painstaking effort that was involved?

Anyone who asks why bother with all this work; why not just google it, misses the point of all the lost details. Any information reduced to a wikipedia article has lost its heart and soul.

Just to prove our point that there is history to be learned from these clipped and saved articles, I have written an article about the old trolley in Boonton based on the clippings that Arline found in the old Boonton Times. Look for this article in our Spring edition.

# A Busy Year At The Boonton Historical Society...

**Spring:**  
Afternoon Tea at Miller-Kingsland House



**Spring:**  
New Exhibit – Boontonware



*continued on page 10*

# A Busy Year (Continued)...

**Summer:**  
Volunteer Appreciation



**Summer:**  
Group Tours



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# A Busy Year (Continued)...

**Fall:**  
Mad Hatter's Tea Party



**Fall:**  
Lecture Series

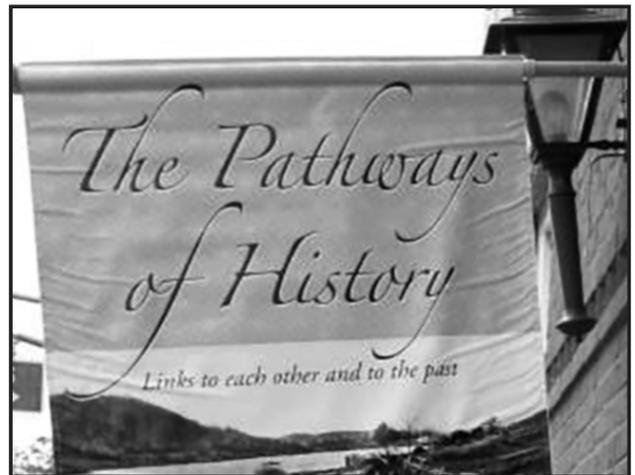


# A Busy Year (Continued)...

**Fall:**  
New Exhibit



**Fall:**  
Pathways of History Tour



# A Busy Year (Continued).

Photo credits this edition:  
Jennfier Coultas  
Jenny Darlington  
Jayme Januszanis  
Veronica Jelic

**Fall:** Dog Daze of Summer;  
Railroad Heritage Day; Boonton Day



**Walking Tours:**



continued from page 1

# A 1916 Walk Around The Block

Going back to the corner of Division St and Main St, and crossing Main St, Division St becomes Morris Ave. The first building on the map on our left, 304, is marked, "Milly" (millinery?, Ladies' hats). An undertaker is at 308.

## Good Chance to Buy a Pool Table.

For sale, a Pool Table at Vermont's pool room, under City Hotel. Also, for sale, a four year old family horse.

**NICK VERMONT,**  
Prop'r Pool Room, under City Hotel,  
April 4-4t

The buildings on the 1916 map at 304 and 308 were later torn down to make it easier for vehicles to turn that corner. On the map, 310 was a bakery

I remember Frankie Hall's newspaper store, and a diner run by Al Marrone's father in this area.

Next, 312 is labeled "plumbing".

**New Department**  
Shoe Repairing and Shining

All work guaranteed durable. We also specialize in Ladies' and Gents' HAT CLEANING and BLOCKING. Bring in your old hats and we assure you that we will make them look like new. Hat refinishing our specialty. Our parlor is equipped with modern electric and steam machinery and the work is done systematically by a practical hatter.

**Morris Marrone**  
405 Main St. Boonton, N. J.  
1929

Starting some time before 1930, my grandmother's brother and sisters, the Lambiases, ran a meat and grocery store there. After WWII, my uncles Tony and Joe Marcello ran the meat and grocery briefly, and then opened a Strauss Auto Parts store, with sporting goods as a side line. Joe and his family lived in the apartment above the store at 312A. I also remember 312 later being a sewing machine store. There was a grocery on the 1916 map at 314. I remember Alster's Deli there, and there was a meat market at 316, where I remember Alster's liquor store.

**John I. Kopp's Sons,**  
ESTABLISHED 1870.  
Perfect Plumbing,  
Heating and Tinning.  
FORTY YEARS IN BUSINESS.  
Telephone Call 48-J.  
312 Main St., Boonton, N. J.

## C. CONCILIO, The Tailor,

RETURNED FROM ITALY,

Is prepared to show a fine line of samples of goods for

### SPRING SUITS

and to begin custom work for the men of Boonton and vicinity.

Also, will do repairing, cleaning and pressing, and guarantees satisfaction.

STORE IN LATHROP BUILDING.

Crossing Plane St, the first building is called the Lathrop Building. The Lathrop Building is across Main St from Dawson's Hardware (403 Main Street) and is 3 stories high when viewed from Main St, but 4 stories high from Plane St. The first store in the Lathrop Building, at 324 Main St is on the map as a barber shop. I remember Smitty's Barber Shop being there. The lower level on Plane Street is labeled "meats."

Next, at 402, is a tailor. At 404 was a "paint and paper" store. At 406 was a harness shop, and 408 is labeled, "Gas Office & S". I don't know what the S means.

A LARGE and NEW ASSORTMENT OF  
**WALL PAPERS!**  
NEW DESIGNS and COLORS  
Painting Decorations, &c.  
**WINDOW SHADES**  
PLAIN AND DADOED.  
**Spring Rollers,**  
ALL TRIMMINGS AND FIXTURES.  
KALSOMINE, BRONZE POWDERS  
OIL COLORS, BEST GRADE,  
DISTEMPER COLORS, HARD OIL  
FINISH, LIGHT AND DARK,  
OILS, VARNISH, BRUSHES, WOOD  
STAINS &c., &c.  
**WM. A. ELLIOTT,**  
Lathrop Building,  
MAIN STREET,  
BOONTON, N. J.  
Nov. 21st. 1889.

This concludes Part I of Ernie's walk around the block. Part II starts with Mechanic Street in our Spring 2015 edition.

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# Letters To Our Editor

Our article on Shultz Park (Gem of the Mountains Spring 2014) generated a lot of interest, not the least of which came from our member and contributor, Ev Hughes.

Good for you and Monica for making Schultz Park (or better known to me as the bandstand) the lead article. I had forgotten that it was really Schultz Park, by the way. I also wonder if that was the same family for which Schultz Street was named before it became West Main Street from Hawkins Place to the end and what was the end of West Main street became Hawkins Place?

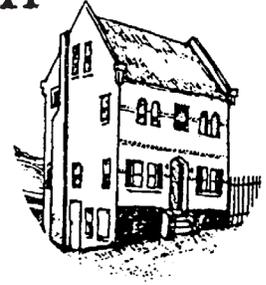
Back to the bandstand---it brings back fond memories for me as a small child. As you may recall, I grew up in my grandparents house at 615 Church. My grandfather was a retired puddler in the iron mills. His father (my great grandfather) came from England in the early 1850's to be a puddler in the iron mills in Boonton and my grandfather had followed in his footsteps.

In the early 30's my grandfather would take me on daily walks all over Boonton. He was an inveterate walker and I toddled along. My grandfather was well known all over Boonton so it was a great introduction for me to the townspeople. Anyhow, the final stop of the walk before trudging up six blocks of Church street was the bandstand. Always there was a group of older gentlemen who would sit and talk and talk and talk. I remember playing on the bandstand while they talked. There was a metal pole what went from the middle of the roof/ceiling down through the center of the floor--I'm sure it was for support, but for me it was something to climb on and slide down.

Great memories of a simpler but rewarding time for a child.

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# Membership Application



Boonton Historical  
Society and Museum  
210 Main Street  
Boonton, NJ 07005  
Attention: Membership Chairperson

Please make checks payable to the Boonton Historical Society and mail to the address above.

Annual Fees (Renewable in January)

- Individual \$20.00
- Family \$25.00
- Seniors/Students \$15.00
- Business/Professional \$30.00
- Lifetime \$200.00
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\_\_\_\_\_



The Boonton Historical Society & Museum

210 Main Street, Boonton, NJ 07005

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