

## From the Board...

### Hello Members and Friends

**Agriculture** remains one of Michigan's top three industries, so it was fun to see so many of you celebrating this year's harvest at the Corn Roast at the Bloomfield Hills Schools' Farm.



C.DeWeese

The event, presented by Preservation Bloomfield, featured tours of the renovation of the Benjamin-Barton Farmhouse and of the newly-daubed Craig Log Cabin. John Marshall and Dave Bogart answered questions as they shared the history of the two early Bloomfield homes.

Bloomfield  
Historical  
Society



### Drop by our website

The address is the same:  
[www.bloomfieldhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.bloomfieldhistoricalsociety.org)  
 but the look is new — as are some of the features.

Missed one of our Local History programs? There's a link to many of them at the top of the home page. Just click on **Video on Demand**.

Take a look and let us know what you think — or would like to see us add.



## Eight in a Row

[*Editor's note: Board member Katie Kiyo has written several articles on Bloomfield's architectural history and introduced Legacy readers to the work of H. Augustus O'Dell, her favorite architect.* ]



Several years ago I was taken with a charming row of eight homes on the north side of Oak Street, directly across from Quarton Elementary School. Standing side by side the houses were all quite different from one another, but on the whole the designs were harmonious and pleasing to the eye. What was the significance of these homes, and who built them?

When I learned of a local legend that the houses were known as the "Brides' Cottages" I became really curious. I began to research this small stretch of Oak near Chesterfield, and was surprised to learn that they were designed and built by H. Augustus O'Dell, the same architect who built "Inch House" in Bloomfield Hills as his family home, and where my husband and I now live.

Gus O'Dell began practicing architecture in 1903 and, in a career that spanned six decades, was responsible for a large number of commercial buildings and schools as well as private residences in Detroit and surrounding areas. O'Dell's stamp on the character of the Bloomfield area is clear.

From those who knew him, Gus O'Dell was a modest man of exceptionally fine character. In his own words, he was "a gentleman and architect who looks as straight as he is, and is as straight as he looks."



INSIDE  
 info@... answers —  
 or asks

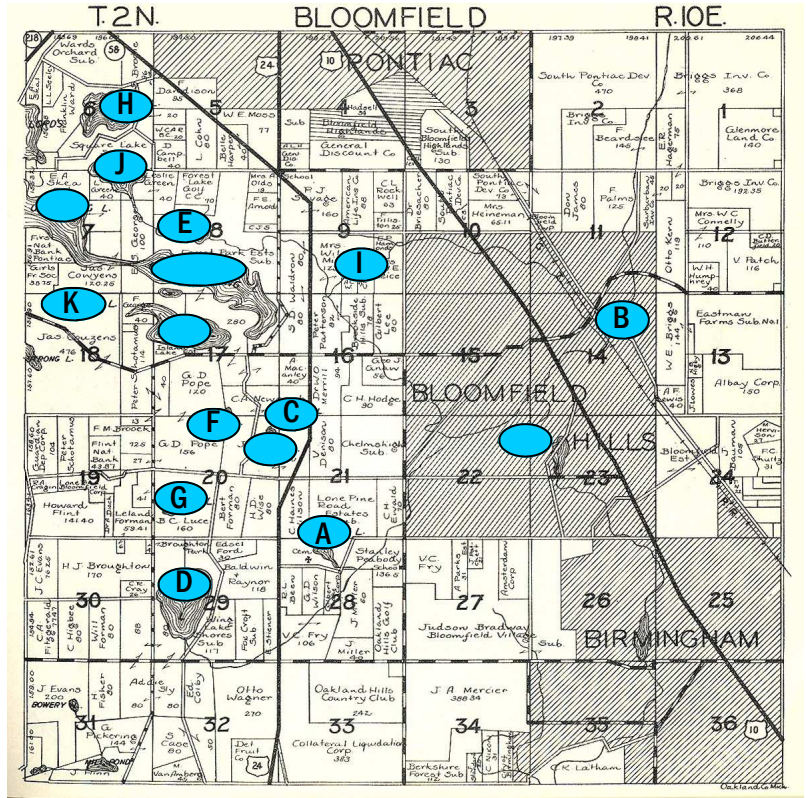
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Society Member John Marshall tackles questions you ask.

Turning the Tables

Usually this space is where I answer questions you send in to info@bloomfieldhistoricalsociety.org. This time I'm going to turn the tables and pose a few questions to you. We have a lot of lakes in the Bloomfield area but do you know why they have the names they do? Below you'll find descriptions of several of them and letters instead of the names of the lakes. Can you match the description to the right letter on the 1950s map? Will you get them all? Ready to swim... or sink?

- A:** Named after the pioneer family on whose land it was located, an old cemetery was on the southwest shore of this lake until about 1917.
- B:** About 1915 a group of neighbors with property bordering a tributary of the Rouge River constructed a dam on the east side of Kensington Road to form this attractive lake.
- C:** This Lake is named after one of the founders of a major department store that flourished in downtown Detroit between 1868 and 1927. The nephew of the founder purchased the land on which this lake is located in 1905
- D:** Local lore has it named after its shape. In fact, it's named after one of a group of leading citizens led by Territorial Governor Lewis Cass who stopped by its shores in 1818 as they sought to open up Oakland County for settlement.
- E:** An adjacent Country Club is named for this lake. On the 1872 Map of Bloomfield Township it is named *Grave Lake*.
- F:** This small lake can barely be seen even when driving in the subdivision in which it is located. It is reputed to be the deepest lake in the Township. It is named for the pioneer who first purchased the land adjacent to where it is located.
- G:** First named Crawford Lake for the original settler, this lake was re-named for the man who formed an automobile company in 1909 that made a valiant, but unsuccessful, challenge to the Ford Model-T. The lake is part of his 1920s estate.
- H:** The shape of this lake is the source for its name. It's also the name of one of the major roads in the Township.
- I:** The Athletic Field at Lahser High School is adjacent to the southeast shore of this lake.
- J:** The presence of this lake near the western boundary of Bloomfield Township caused Square Lake Road to turn to the northwest as it passes by. On the 1857 Map of Bloomfield Township it is named *Greer's Lake*.
- K:** Until about 1950 this lake was known as Cranberry Lake. It was located on the larger tract of land owned by Michigan's U.S. Senator James Couzens



Do you have a question about Bloomfield's past? Send us a note:  
[info@bloomfieldhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@bloomfieldhistoricalsociety.org)



Answers on back page

## What's up at the Benjamin-Barton House?

Over the summer we have seen dramatic changes at the Barton House.

Working from a Master Plan developed by Preservation Bloomfield and preservation architect Gene Hopkins FAIA, restoration of the farm side (north) of the house and construction of the northwest addition and side porch have made it much easier to appreciate the simple beauty of its Greek Revival elements and original farmhouse character. A new, gently sloping pathway to the porch adds easy access for all who will come to visit.



J. Marshall

Funding for this phase comes from the many community members who are supporting the work of Preservation Bloomfield and the events sponsored by the Friends of Preservation Bloomfield.

The stories of the families who made the Barton House their home add to our understanding of how the house evolved and provide direction for the restoration decisions. The farm side of the house now appears much as it would have when Robert D. Heacock and his new bride acquired it in 1905.

*For more on the Heacocks, see below.*

## The Robert D. Heacock family

Nearby the Barton House, up Opdyke Road on a prosperous Bloomfield Farm, Robert D. Heacock was born July 14, 1881. The land had been originally taken up by his maternal grandparents David and Elizabeth Patchett.



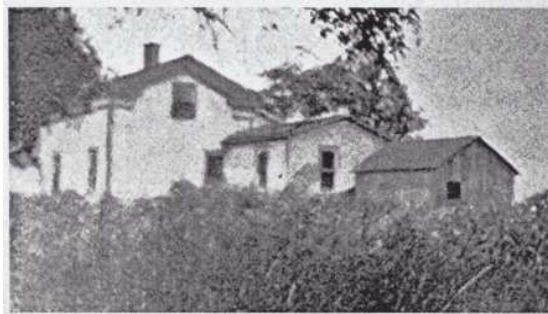
Aaron and Emma Heacock

In 1838 the Patchetts, along with their parents, had undertaken an arduous five-week journey by ship, emigrating from England to New York and then directly by train to Birmingham. Robert's mother Emma was born on the farm in 1850 and, by the time of Robert's birth, she and her husband Aaron Heacock were farming part of her parents' land. Aaron was a widower with two young daughters whom they raised along with their own six children.

At age 22, Robert married Charlotte Riley and began farming as generations of his family had done

before him. He and Charlotte bought the Benjamin-Barton Farmhouse and the 100-plus acres of land surrounding it in 1905.

By then the log houses of Bloomfield's pioneers were just memories and, as the farms that replaced them prospered, a more comfortable lifestyle became possible for this new generation. It is believed that the Heacocks removed the separate summer kitchen and extended the Upright, creating a "modern" kitchen within the house that opened onto a back porch.



Barton House circa 1900

Robert and Charlotte's children - Charles, Winifred, Norman and Willis - were born there. It appears they outgrew the house as they moved on to Troy in 1914, about the time their youngest child Donald was born. Later, they moved further north to Almont where they continued to farm.

*Pam Carmichael*



Two hundred years ago, a small coastal nation, experiencing the growing pains of its recent independence, found itself at war with its former colonial master - the most powerful nation in the world.

For more go to:

<http://www.ourflagwasstillthere.org/>

## Bloomfield Historical Society

The Bloomfield Historical Society is dedicated to fostering an appreciation of the rich history of the Bloomfield area by identifying, promoting and conserving our heritage. We encourage research to educate and engage all generations.

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Macomb Duplicating



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The eight homes on Oak were part of the Belmont Subdivision in the Village of Birmingham [Note: Birmingham was part of Bloomfield, incorporating as a Village in 1864 and not becoming a City until 1933.] All eight were definitely his own creation. Built in 1926, each enjoyed a “distinctively individual design” (ranging from Tudors, to

French country, and a Dutch colonial) with much attention to detail. At the time the homes were said to be set in a “virgin forest” of full grown trees, with shade and seclusion. Each lot was 73x150 ft., which was unusual, and the homes were set well back, with walks and drives that wound effectively through these trees. Each home featured a heated garage designed to be an integral part of the house.

O’Dell explained, “I have tried to produce something here which I think Birmingham needs, that is a group of attractive homes, desirably located, priced moderately and sold on fair terms. It has been my aim to incorporate in our home plans large and ample rooms with every convenience, and at the same time keep our costs as low as possible. To do this we have provided a bath and two large bedrooms downstairs, which arrangement can easily be duplicated on the second floor.”

These homes were originally priced from \$16,250 to \$17,250. The press described them as a “successful home experiment.”

Where did the idea of Brides’ Cottages originate? It has been said they were built with newlyweds in mind. It was even said that O’Dell built one of the Cottages intending to hold it aside for his only daughter Elizabeth. However, in 1926 Betsy was only 12 years old! In 2002 I corresponded with Betsy, then in her 80s, and she put the myth to rest. She did suggest that the idea might have been a marketing description applied by a zealous real estate agent. We may never really know but can imagine that Betsy might have been his inspiration.

**YOUR HOME IS NOW READY**

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BIRMINGHAM

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Hollow tile and brick construction  
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Lots 73 ft. by 15 ft., with many shade trees  
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Birmingham gas, water, sewer, electricity and telephone

Seven additional homes to be ready within two to three weeks.

Priced: \$16,250.00 to \$17,250.00

With small payment down and terms to suit your convenience.

Mr. Loomis will be on property Saturday and Sunday from 2 until 7 o'clock

Katie Kiyo



### Answers to Turning the Tables

**A**= Gilbert Lake; **B**= Vhay Lake; **C**=Endicott Lake; **D**= Wing Lake; **E**= Forest Lake; **F**= Sodon Lake; **G**= Chalmers Lake; **H**= Square Lake; **I**= Orange Lake; **J**= Turtle Lake; **K**= Wabeek Lake