

FLASHBACK ~ 100 YEARS AGO JANUARY 1922

Parlor Fire Painfully Burns Woman

Somerset Democrat, January 13, 1922, page 5

At about 8 o'clock Wednesday morning, Mrs. M. Taffen, who lives in the Taffen building on the corner of Main street and Mountain avenue in Bound Brook, decided that she would start a fire in the parlor stove. Wood was secured and placed in it and kerosene poured on to aid ignition. The drafts in the stove were not properly adjusted and when a match was touched to the wood, the flames shot outward toward Mrs. Taffen. Her clothing was ignited and she was horribly burned about the limbs, chest, and face.



Mr. Taffen was in the kitchen and looking into the parlor noticed that the crib of a grandchild was ablaze in the parlor. He rushed in to put out this blaze, all unconscious that his wife had run into an adjoining room, her clothing aflame, until he heard the screams of a daughter. By this time the carpet on the parlor floor was ablaze and the flames were spreading. The Bound Brook fire department was called and made quick work of putting out the fire with but little damage to the apartment. Mrs. Taffen was taken to St. Peter's at New Brunswick, where it is said her condition is precarious.

Image: wood-burning parlor stove, 1922

Somerville Fire Department



The transition to motorized equipment began in 1920 and Somerville was among the first to have a motorized engine, although the horse-drawn vehicles remained in use for several more years.



Somerville Fire Museum

County School Notes

Somerset Democrat, January 20, 1922, page 5

Last Friday evening the people of Martinsville and vicinity assembled in the new school building at that place for its formal opening. The exercises began in a most impressive manner, with flag salute and pledge of allegiance by the school, followed by singing of "America," the recital of the 23rd Psalm and the Lord's Prayer. A program was rendered by the pupils of the school ... after which addresses were made by Supervising Principal Oscar A. Fisher and County Superintendent H.C. Krebs. ... The Parent-Teacher Association has supplied the school with victrolas and steps are being taken to supply a piano. Other improvements to be secured later are pictures, electric lights, and an indoor water supply.

Explains Port Authority

Senator Case Tells What Development Means Locally

Somerset Democrat, January 20, 1922, page 5

Speaking before the Bound Brook Board of Trade Wednesday evening, Senator Clarence E. Case explained the plans of New York and New Jersey for the development of the port of New York, and just what it meant by "The Port Authority," the organization which will have in charge the carrying out of the plans now before the Legislatures of the two States.

The Port Authority will undertake the development of the port of New York by the construction of railway lines connecting the present lines running into Jersey City, Hoboken, and Weehawken. Three of these connecting lines are proposed and one will probably cross the New Jersey Central somewhere in the vicinity of Plainfield. The two other lines will be closer to New York City.

Another plan ... to avoid the congestion of freight and to expedite its delivery in New York and Brooklyn, is the construction of a freight tunnel or carrier under the North river. This will be ... an endless carrier, vehicles being eliminated. It will be in constant motion and freight will be delivered constantly at a station to be decided upon ...

Another suggestion of the Port Authority is the construction of a concrete truck road through the central part of New Jersey and which, when it is constructed, may pass through or in the vicinity of Bound Brook and Somerville ...

Big Elks' Show Tonight

Notable Boxers and Vaudeville Acts

Somerset Democrat, January 20, 1922, page 1

This evening the long planned smoker and vaudeville show of the Somerville Lodge of Elks will take place in the armory.

The program for the evening includes some notable boxers, three of the bouts being by a number of the best in the East. The first 10-round bout will be between Pepper Martin and Al Thomas, the second between Buck Josephs and Willie Spencer, and the third between Willie Ryan and his brother ... The Ryans are from New Brunswick and are well known in the community.

The vaudeville entertainment includes the Jersey City Police Quartet, known throughout the country for their ability. "Lou" Noll, who formerly lived in Somerville, will bring out his famous Phonograph City Trio. There will also be on hand an orchestra, which furnishes the best music to be heard in this part of the State. Two male singers and two female have been engaged and an excellent monologist has been secured.

In addition to the boxing and vaudeville show ... there will be lots of smokes, a good cigar, and a pipe and tobacco.



Image: Somerville Armory, corner of Grove & Main, ca 1922. It was demolished in late 1990's. Current site of County Admin. Building.