

**100 YEARS AGO      MAY 1923**

**BURNING CROSS FOLLOWS CLOSE ON EXPLOSION** *Bernardsville News, May 31, 1923, p 1*

*Bernardsville.* The family of Charles A. Dana, of the local Mountain Colony, was disturbed about 10:30 o'clock last Friday night when some one burned a flaming cross on property owned by Mr. Dana and attracted attention to the burning by setting off a giant firecracker or aerial bomb. The explosion caused considerable excitement in the immediate vicinity and in the village, and people hastened outdoors to investigate. At the Dana estate it was thought that someone was attempting to rob the place and two...servants and other employees of the household started to make a thorough investigation. Upon discovery of the burning cross the chauffeur on the estate brought pails of water and extinguished the blaze. ... Responsibility for the demonstration is placed on the Ku Klux Klan by some while others are of the opinion that the fiery display was the work of others.

**TWO TWILIGHT BASEBALL LOOPS IN SOMERSET** *Courier-News May 31, 1923, p 14*

This year there are so many industries interested in the industrial league activities of the Y.M.C.A. that it is necessary to divide the Somerset County League, so that there will be a Somerville Twilight League and a Bound Brook Twilight League. At Bound Brook, eight shops are already entered. In Somerville six nines will contest. The Raritan diamond, which is so handy to Somerville, will probably be used entirely because of the condition of the roads leading to Altamont field. E.J. Shaughnessey, of the Raritan Woolen Mills, has very kindly given the league permission to use the Raritan field for the twilight games. The teams to play will be the Cott-a-Lap Co., Somerville Stove and Iron Works, Raritan Woolen Mills, Raritan Foundry, Johns-Manville Co., and Chief Matthews, of the Fire Department, has agreed to provide a sixth team by putting in his firemen. In case of any of the other teams withdrawing it may be possible to substitute the Somerville Printers. There will be a meeting of the league managers and captains at the Cott-a-Lap Co. on Friday evening at 8:00 o'clock, at which time further and final arrangements will be made for the starting of the league.

*[ed. note: Raritan Woolen Mills is now River Park Apts, Raritan; Cott-a-Lap became Calco, then Cyanamid]*

**DILL DESIGNATES HEADLIGHTS ACCEPTABLE IN NEW JERSEY** *Bernardsville News, May 17, 1923, p 1*

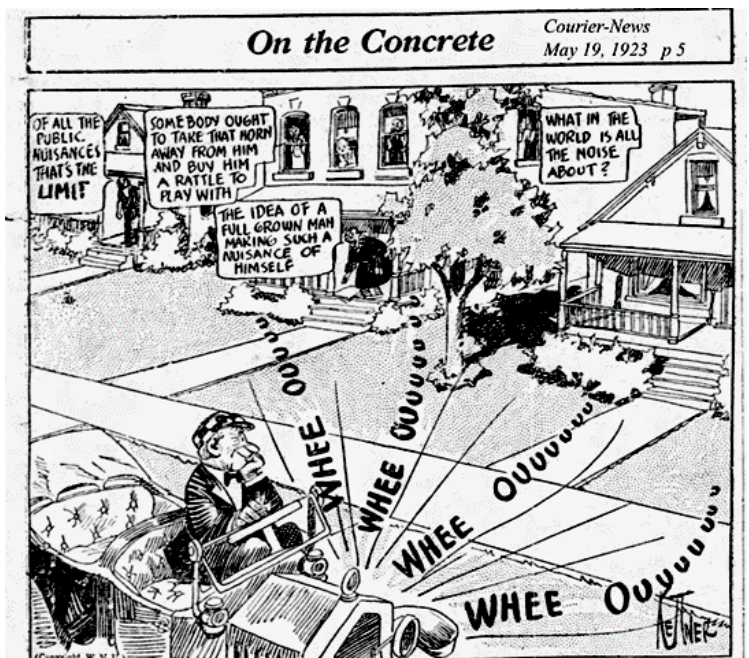
State Motor Vehicle Commissioner William L. Dill has put into effect an order which gives approval to a list of but 22 headlight devices for use by the motorist. Commissioner Dill said that glaring headlights have been the source of many complaints and numerous accidents and lights that were admissible in this state were often frowned upon in neighboring states and subjected to imposition of fines and other penalties. Therefore action was taken at the conference of Motor Vehicle Administrators at Hartford on April 27 to adopt a uniform light. ... The order of Commissioner Dill provides a sixty-day extension to give motorists a reasonable time to make the necessary changes in the light devices, but after July 1, the use of all devices not on the approved list will be illegal.

**AUTOS COLLIDE ON AVENUE**

*Courier-News, May 17, 1923, p 11*

*Bound Brook.* Two automobiles, each occupied only by a driver, gave an amusing exhibition of auto dancing on Union avenue, near the Chimney Rock railroad, yesterday shortly before noon, although the experience was not interesting to the owners. The cars approached from opposite directions. Thinking they were too close to pass, there was a quick turnout by both, with the result that both skidded, turned completely around, faced in the opposite direction and collided. The damage was very slight, and the drivers shook hands and went on their way.

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**HIGH POINT PARK DEDICATED LAST WEEK** *Bernardsville News, May 31, 1923, p 1*

High Point Park in Sussex County, the gift to New Jersey of Col. and Mrs. Anthony Kuser, of the local Mountain Colony, was dedicated Wednesday of last week with elaborate ceremonies and formally became State property. ... High Point was acquired by the late Senator John F. Dryden, of Bernardsville, about a quarter of a century ago, the holding being gradually added to through the purchase of adjoining farms and mountain land. Shortly afterward Colonel Kuser, husband of a daughter of Mr. Dryden, purchased adjoining property. The building on the High Point property, formerly used as a hotel, was remodeled into a residence and a game preserve was started. At the death of Senator Dryden the entire property passed into the possession of the Kusers. The principal events at the opening took place at the Manor House, which dominates much of High Point, giving a view over miles of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York countryside. ... Governor Silzer was on hand to receive the property on behalf of the State. ...

**SPRING FESTIVAL AT MARTINSVILLE** *Courier-News, May 12, 1923, p 5*

These are busy days in the Washington Valley. Spring house cleaning has been hurried through; Spring planting too, and even the building of homes, burned by the recent fire, has not prevented the members of the Martinsville Community Club from taking an interest in the forthcoming Spring Festival to be held May 25-26. The plays, which are always the distinguishing feature of the club's semi-annual affairs, were under way when fire devastated the little village, and the question of abandoning the festival was raised, those who had already put time and work on the production of the plays, unanimously voted to go on with the rehearsals. They hoped too that the other features of the two days would be carried out when the first shock of the fire had passed. ... The women of the house committee are planning a dinner for both evenings of the festival...Dinner will be served between the afternoon and evening performances of the plays. ... the producer has arranged to give the children's show promptly at 4:30 each day. ... Then at eight in the evening, "The Maid from Lorraine" by Stephen O'Higgins will be given ...

**OLD FIRE APPARATUS GOING STRONG** *Courier-News, May 17, 1923, p 11*

*Somerville.* Amoskeag No. 1, the fire engine that has been a stellar member of the local fire department for the past 50 years, was taken out Tuesday evening and given a try-out just to see how it has withstood the ravages of time. It is still hale and husky as was demonstrated by the way the steam shot from the hose nozzle. The engine was taken to High street in front of the High School, and the water was obtained from one of the fire wells. Under the capable direction of Edward Bryant, Jacques Van Derbeek, and George Clarkhuff the pump responded nobly. The pressure was run up to about 100 pounds, and could have been increased if necessary. The engine ran smoothly and gave no trouble. It may be 50 years old in point of service, but it is not old in capability. Somerville residents may rest assured that the old engine is still available if the necessity should ever arise when it would be needed.



(ed. note: visit the Somerville Firemen's Museum to see this steamer engine) <https://somervillefd.org/fire-museum-history/>

**JACK TORPEY AND HIS BLACK CAT** *Courier-News, May 18, 1923 p 14*

*Somerville.* Jack Torpey is not the least superstitious, but he has a black cat which he thinks as much of as he does his twin daughters. When Jack opened his store on Main street one morning this week the cat jumped over the sill, and made herself at home among the electrical fixtures. The incident did not attract his attention at the time, but when he began to open his mail several good sized checks for old accounts dropped on his desk. Immediately Jack began to make friends with "tabby" who was treated to a big saucer of milk. Later in the morning he was advised that he had been awarded a big electrical job, and when he went to Bound Brook later in the day he collected two more old accounts. When the owner of the cat learned it was being tenderly cared for by Jack, he made a demand for the return of his property. "Nothing doing," Jack said, "unless you take her over my dead body." And there the matter rests.

(ed. note: Torpey Athletic Field in Bridgewater is named for Jack Torpey's son who actively promoted corporate baseball in 1950s Somerset Co.)