



LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP, NEW JERSEY

Places in Time

WINTER 2019

Uncle Sam's Aviators

World War I saw the birth of many new forms of combat, but none more revolutionary than the war in the skies. America needed pilots capable of defeating the veteran German air force. To do just that the Princeton Aviation School opened in the spring of 1917 on a farm rented from William S. Schenk between Province Line Road, Princeton Pike and the D&R Canal. University students learned basic maneuvers like banking, climbing, and ascending, and how to take off and land. Though the hangers and planes were gifts from alumni, the flying school operated independently of Princeton University. Not long after, Princeton was one of seven university-based ground schools established by the government to offer cadets a crash course in aeronautics and the military. Several World War I aces and medal winners learned to fly over Lawrence Township.

The Flyboys of Princeton Lecture - March 13

The Lawrence Historical Society and the Friends of the Lawrence Library will host historian and photographer Erik L. Burro for a presentation on the role of the Princeton University military flying school during World War I at the Lawrence Headquarters Branch Library on March 13 at 6:30 p.m. The presentation, The Flyboys of Princeton, will outline the role of the Princeton University military flying school during World War I.



Princeton Aviation School, 1917-18

(U.S. National Archives and Records Administration)

Just 13 years after the Wright Brothers proved man could fly, the Great War erupted. Hobey Baker, Princeton's former star athlete was among the first American volunteers to fly for the French, before the US entered the war. In Princeton, several alumni financed a military flying school for its students. It had two aircraft, mechanics and an airfield. When war was declared, the school was part of the University, under contract to the Army. It was no longer restricted to Princeton students. After training in the skies of New Jersey, many served with distinction above the battlefields of Europe. Evidence of their participation can be found on campus. A monument to 42 aero school pilots that perished was rediscovered 10 years ago. An ice rink and NCAA award honor Capt. Baker, who fatally crashed just before returning home.

Upcoming Events

Annual Meeting - February 24, 2:00 p.m. Lawrence High School

Join us for our annual business meeting and lecture featuring Lawrence Township Historian Dr. Brooke Hunter. Dr. Hunter will give a presentation on immigration in Lawrence. Refreshments will follow the lecture.

Prior to the lecture, a short business meeting will take place. On the agenda are the nominations of three board members and a proposal to raise membership fees starting in 2020. The nominees to serve three-year terms ending in 2022 are Lea Kahn, Paul Larson, and J. Sean Gilligan. The proposed membership fees for 2020 are \$20 for students and seniors, \$40 for individuals, \$60 for families, \$100 for Captain Lawrence sponsors, \$175 for Colonel Hand sponsors, and \$250 for David Brearley sponsors.

Photography Reception - March 3, 2:00 p.m. Lawrence Headquarters Branch Library

“Legacy of Remembrance: Photographs by Erik L. Burro,” presents a series of large format black-and-white photographs of over two dozen WWI monuments around New Jersey, plus a few from neighboring states. Burro is a historian and photographer who has many years’ experience with historic character portrayals and historic site multimedia productions, mostly since the 1976 bicentennial celebrations.

This WWI series has been a passion project he’s pursued on his travels around the state in the past two years, ever since he became intrigued with a WWI monument in his adopted hometown of Burlington, New Jersey. After researching its history, he started noticing more of these largely forgotten monuments, leading him to document as many of them as possible, in tribute to the 1917-1918 centennial of America’s involvement in the Great War.

The exhibit opens on Sunday, March 3, 2019 with a reception starting at 2:00 pm. The photos will remain on view through the month of March during library hours.

Conard Family Donates WWI Items

The Charles Crozer Conard Collection was generously donated by Sam Conard in honor of his great uncle, Crozer Conard, on Veterans Day. The donation was made after Sam and Barbara Conard attended the Lawrence Township Veterans Day Observance at the Lawrence Township Municipal Center. The Collection is now archived in the Lawrence Township Historical Collection.

Included in collection are original photographs and copies of documents and other photographs. The Collection enhances the story and memory of Private Charles Crozer Conard, who made the ultimate sacrifice on October 23rd, 1918 while serving as a litter-bearer during heavy fire near Molleville Farm during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. In one of his last letters home, Crozer stated:

“I am very happy in the knowledge that I am trying to save life instead of taking it.”

Places in Time is published four times a year by the Lawrence Historical Society. Back issues are available at the LHS website -www.TheLHS.org. We can be contacted at the following address: webmaster@thelhs.org This program is made possible, in part, by a grant from the Mercer County Division of Culture and Heritage, in partnership with the New Jersey Historical Commission, Division of Cultural Affairs/ Department of State.

Lawrence High Senior Mei Lai Costa Wins Nash Scholarship

Each year, the Lawrence Historical Society presents an award to an outstanding student who has demonstrated excellence in history, as determined by the faculty. The 2018 award was presented to Mei Lai Costa.

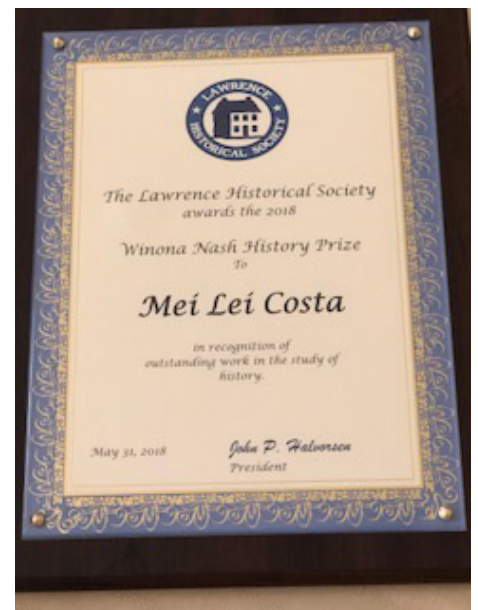
Mei is a dynamic young woman who displays a passion for both academic and extracurricular activities. She is an above average student and ranked in the top ten percent of her class. She consistently took honors and AP courses in History, English, and Science at Lawrence High School. Mei attends Brown University and plans to major in communications or global studies.

Mei serves as co-team captain on her club gymnastics team and has achieved level 10 -- the highest attainable before elite competition. She qualified for Junior Olympic Nationals four times and placed in the New Jersey State All-Around Championships in 2015, 2016, and 2017.

Mei also serves others in her community. Every September, she participates in a 2-day fundraiser for the Lynn Perrot Memorial Scholarship Fund. Working with friends while training gymnastic skills, Mei helps raise funds to help those in the gymnastics community pay for college. Mei also worked at Gymland Gymnastics a few hours each week teaching level one gymnastics to children ages 6-8. She also worked one day a week assisting a baker by decorating and baking cookies and cakes.

Mei's award includes a mounted certificate, a book on history and a check for \$300.00.

The Winona Nash award is given in honor of long-time Township Historian and LHS member, Winnie Nash. Nash was instrumental in establishing the Society and worked tirelessly in collecting and archiving thousands of documents, photographs, and artifacts as part of the township's historical collection.



LHS President John Halvorsen presents the Winona Nash Award to Mei Lai Costa at Lawrence High School's Senior Awards Night in June 2018.

The Ultimate Sacrifice, Part 2

by Paul Larson

Lawrence Township lost four sons in the Great War – Austin P. Carter, Richard Bloor, Charles Crozer Conard, and Jasper Hughes Allen, Jr. Austin P. Carter and Charles Crozer Conard were previously discussed in the Fall 2018 Places in Time newsletter.

Richard Bloor, DCM

Richard was born May 12, 1877, in Staffordshire, England to Thomas and Martha Bloor. The family immigrated to the United States in 1902. The Bloors lived on Lawrence Road and were active in the Slackwood community having resided here for a number of years. Both Richard and his father, Thomas, were potters as shown in their 1905, 1910 and 1915 entries in the New Jersey and Federal Censuses.

Richard was active in local athletics, particularly soccer football. He was known for his athletic prowess and was a member of the Elite Pottery soccer team that dominated the local Pottery League. Elite Pottery was located on Enterprise Ave. on the creekside of the Assunpink Creek and just south of the Lawrence Township border. Not surprising due to its English roots and players, the Pottery League often provided some of the best soccer football in the Mid-Atlantic area.

When King George V issued the Commonwealth's decree for men to join the war effort, Richard was one of the first to leave the Trenton area and traveled to Toronto, Ontario to enlist in the Canadian forces on September 24, 1917. At the time of his attestation, Richard was 5' 7-1/2" tall and had brown hair and blue eyes.

Richard trained in Canada as a member of the 1st Depot Battalion, 2nd Central Ontario Regiment, and was stationed at the East End Barracks, Hamilton, Ontario. He had just returned to his post after spending a ten-day furlough here in Slackwood when a local newspaper article in January 1918 played on his soccer accomplishments with the headline ***'Bloor Training to Boot Kaiser : Former Soccer Player Now Member of the Canadian Forces.'***

Bloor and his unit were shipped overseas embarking from Halifax, Nova Scotia on the SS Scandinavian on February 2, 1918 and disembarking at Liverpool, England on February 16, 1918. Upon arriving, Bloor was transferred to the 8th Res. Bn. at East Sandling Camp near Folkestone. Richard proceeded overseas (France) for Service with 102nd Bn. from Witley Camp, Witley Commons, Surrey and subsequently transferred to the 50th Bn. (Alberta) in the field the end of August.

The 50th Battalion participated in the Battle of Canal-du-Nord and it was here that Richard became a war hero. When the battalion was pinned down by fire, Private Richard Bloor leapt to his feet and charged the enemy. So ferocious was his one-man attack that the Germans fled to nearby dugouts. For his heroic efforts, Private Bloor was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal, the second highest award for valor in the Commonwealth. His award citation read:

3030643 Pte. R. Bloor, 50th Bn., Can. Inf.

In front of Bourslon, on 27th September, 1918, for marked gallantry and devotion to duty. On approaching Quarry Wood when considerable rifle fire was met with, he went forward ahead of the attack alone and engaged the enemy single-handed and eventually drove them into their dugouts, which he guarded until some help came.

When the dugouts were emptied of prisoners 146 were counted, including a battalion headquarters. He set a splendid example of courage and determination.

After his heroic efforts, Richard was badly wounded in a second attack the next morning in the Battle of Canal du Nord suffering a massive G.S.W. (gunshot wound) to the head, neck and spine. He was initially treated at the 30 C.C.S. (Casualty Clearing Station) and was transferred 'dangerously ill' to the No. 20 General Hospital in Camiers, France where he succumbed to his wounds three days later on October 1, 1918.

His fellow soldiers in the 50th Battalion held much bitterness when he was not awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross, the highest medal of valor in the Commonwealth. A notation in the Millom Gazette WWI Soldiers Index from his wife's hometown in Ireland suggests a possible reason: "Received by his widow, Gertrude Agnes (nee Coady, of Millom), now of Trenton, NJ, USA. He died 1/10/1918 aged 41 (3030643). The Distinguished Conduct Medal was awarded for capturing 140 prisoners – if all the witnesses had not died he would have received the Victoria Cross – he was born 12 May 1877 in Staffordshire."

Bloor was buried at Etaples Military Cemetery in Etaples, Pas de Calais, France. The cemetery is administered and maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, a U.K. governmental agency.

Private Richard Bloor has been memorialized locally on the Men of Slackwood Monument (1924) with a star designating Killed In Action and the Lawrence Township Roll of Honor – World War I.

This research will be used to support an application for Richard Bloor to be recognized and inducted into the Mercer County Soccer Hall of Fame.

Jasper Hughes Allen, Jr.

Jasper was born in 1897 to Clifford P. and Kate J. Allen. He was active in the Lawrence Station/Bakersville communities and grew up on Lawrence Station Road where there was a flourishing "industrial complex" at the intersection of Young's and Baker's Basin Roads. The complex contained among several businesses Clifford Allen's general store. In the 1915 NJ Census, Clifford Allen was listed as a merchant as was Jasper H. Allen, who was likely working in his father's store at the time.

A surprise party for Jasper Hughes Allen, Jr. was held at his home in Lawrence Station in early March 1918 with more than 50 attendees from Monmouth Junction, Trenton, Mercerville, Port Mercer, Lawrenceville, Clarksville, and Lawrence Station. "The evening was spent with games and music." Two of his future fellow local soldiers were in attendance – Raymond Arrowsmith and Austin Carter.

Jasper Hughes Allen enlisted in the Army on April 4, 1918 - the same day as Raymond Arrowsmith -- suggesting the friends enlisted together. They were two of "**Today's Honor Roll** -- Five recruits [who] were received by Uncle Sam today." As part of a detachment of unassigned engineers (256 privates), he was sent overseas overseas on the Dante Alighieri, a converted Italian ocean liner, embarking from Hoboken, New Jersey on June 14, 1918. The Dante Alighieri was part of the Newport News Division of the Transport Force.

Jasper served in the "A.E.F. from June 6, 1918 to May 6, 1919" and was involved with activities in the Marbache Sector ("Aug. 23 to Sept. 12, 1918") and participated in the crucial Battles of St. Mihiel ("Sept. 12, 1918 to Sept. 16th") and the Meuse-Argonne Offensive ("Oct. 6 to Nov. 3, 1918") per his younger brother, Clarence L. Allen.

The latter action was part of the final Allied offensive of the Great War that brought an end to the War and was fought from September 26 to November 11, 1918, when the Armistice was declared and signed. The Meuse-Argonne offensive was the largest operations of the AEF with over a million American soldiers participating. It was also the deadliest campaign in American history, resulting in over 26,000 soldiers being killed in action (KIA).

After serving in France and surviving the war, Allen returned home with his unit, Co. E., 307th Ammunition Train, 82nd Div., leaving from Bassens Docks, Bordeaux, France on the U.S.S. Black Arrow on April 24, 1919. He was mustered out in May 1919.

Not long after his discharge, Jasper was diagnosed with spinal meningitis and died at his home on June 30, 1919 in Lawrence Station. He was “in the 23rd year of his life” at the time of his death. In a letter dated August 27th, 1967 from his younger brother, Clarence L. Allen, “the doctors said he contracted the germ while in the service.” His funeral was held July 3rd at the Hamilton Square Baptist Church. Arrangements were made through SS Mather Funeral Home. He was interred that afternoon in Greenwood Cemetery, Hamilton, NJ and his name can be found along with that of his parents on the family gravestone.

Interestingly, his gravesite is not marked in any fashion indicating his military service perhaps related to the emotional impact of his death on the family. Also, no mention of his military service was noted in the brief obituary for Jasper H. Allen, Jr. in the Trenton Evening Times dated July 2nd, 1919. The pain was still evident a year later with an “**IN MEMORIAM**” in the Trenton Evening Times, July 4th, 1920, reading:

ALLEN -- In sad but loving remembrance of Jasper H. Allen Jr., who departed this life June 30, 1919.
With a saddened heart of sorrow,
One year ago today,
We watched you Jasper darling
Sadly pass away.

Private Jasper H. Allen, Jr. has been memorialized locally on the Lawrence Township Memorial Plaque (1967), the Lawrence Township Roll of Honor – World War I, and the Lawrence Township Veterans Memorial (1995).

For more information on the role Lawrence Township played during World War I, please visit our website, www.thelhs.org. You will find our Fall 2018 newsletter that covered the WW I Armistice Centennial, as well as a page of material that we were unable to fit into the issue.

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The Brearley Oak Today. The Brearley Oak is the New Jersey Champion Black Oak tree (*Quercus velutina*) and one of the largest trees in the state. It has a circumference of 258 inches and stands 110 feet in height. Its crown is the largest of any New Jersey tree at 146 feet (almost half a football field).

Source: 2019 Champion Big Tree Register, NJDEP

Photo: Laura Nawrocik

The Brearley Oak: A Historic Witness

by Judy Salcewicz

"I think that I shall never see a poem lovely as a tree," Joyce Kilmer wrote in 1913 as the first stanza of *Trees*, a poem that captured the imagination of generations. Kilmer, a New Jersey native was not writing about The Brearley Oak but, perhaps, a stately tree not unlike Lawrence's renowned tree.

The 275 year-old Brearley Oak stands on the property along Princeton Pike bordered by Lewisville Road. King George II was the British Monarch when the seedling broke ground. The oak would be well established before the Brearley House was built in 1761. Did any members of the five generations who lived in the 1761 Brearley House until 1918 picnic under its leafy spread or climb its spreading branches?

What do the Brearley Oak and the U.S. Constitution have in common? David Brearley, one of New Jersey's signers of the Constitution, was born at Spring Grove Farm, just across Lewisville Road from the tree.

Did students from the neighboring Maidenhead Academy study under the shade of its branches? The Academy, founded in 1810, would soon become known as The Lawrenceville School.

The Brearley Oak stood tall in 1816 as the town's original name, Maidenhead, was changed to honor Captain James Lawrence. Captain Lawrence was a naval hero of the war of 1812 and commander of the frigate *Chesapeake*.

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The Brearley Oak grew in size and stature along with Lawrence township in the early 1900's as Lawrence's population increased four-fold and the transition from an agricultural to a suburban community commenced.

In May, 1963, Union Bag-Camp Paper Company opened a facility in Lawrence on the land that was once part of the Brearley farm. The building was constructed to accommodate the tree. The company assumed responsibility for the tree that grew on their property and even built a viewing corridor that framed it. In April, 1984, Union Camp received a certificate of appreciation from the New Jersey Shade Tree Federation for its contribution to the tree's preservation. The Union Bag-Camp Company merged with International Paper in 1999 and closed its Lawrence Township facility.

The Brearley Oak would have been proud, on June 13, 1950, when the red oak was named New Jersey's official state tree. Another source of pride for the tree and township residents occurred in 1997 when Lawrence Township was named a "Tree City USA," by the National Arbor Day Foundation. The oak appears on the "Treasure Our Trees," license plate that was developed in 1996 to help fund and implement community forestry projects.

Bristol-Myers Squibb became the latest caretaker of the Brearley Oak when it opened its facility on the tree's site. The company has built a connector section to the Lawrence-Hopewell Trail that connects a 3,100-foot stretch on Bristol-Myers' land to a 1,900-foot section of The Lawrenceville School property, making it a wonderful hiking destination. Visit the tree, visit the Brearley House and take pride in our township's heritage.