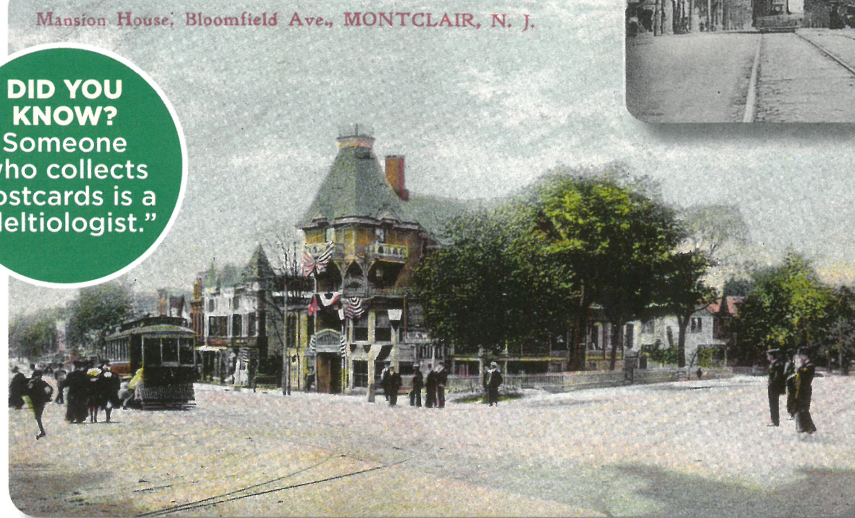


Postcards From the Past

CONTRIBUTED BY JANE M. ELIASOF, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MONTCLAIR HISTORY CENTER

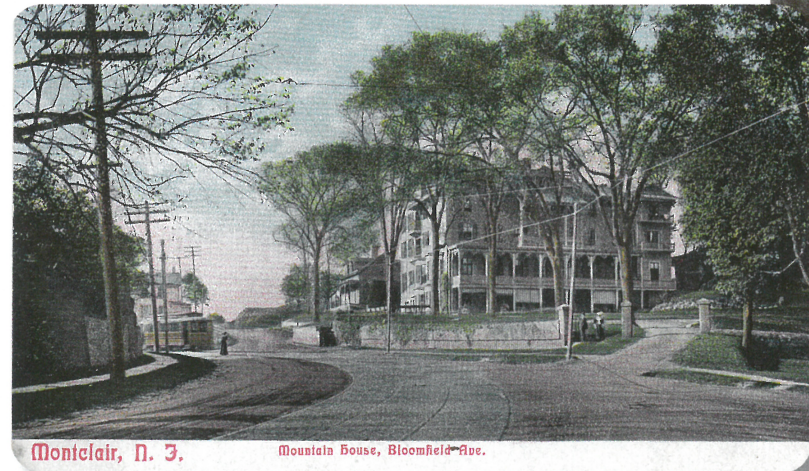


This mixed use building has graced the intersection of South Fullerton Avenue, Bloomfield Avenue, and Church Street since the 1889. Known as the I. Seymour Crane building, it still stands sentry on that corner unlike the other buildings in this article. However, one of the defining features of the building is now gone. The clock on the corner, as shown in this postcard, didn't have numerals to mark the time. They were replaced with twelve letters: **S-E-Y-M-O-U- R-C-R-A-N-E.**

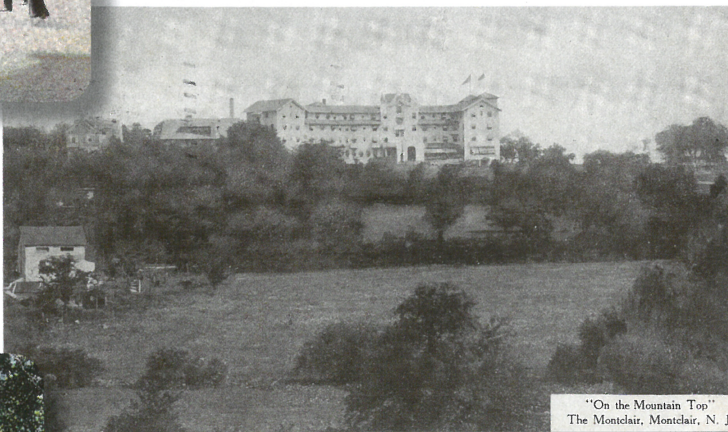


DID YOU KNOW? Someone who collects postcards is a "deltiologist."

On the southeast corner of Valley Road and Bloomfield Avenue, a stone's throw from today's MC Hotel, once stood this beauty. It was originally built in 1802 by Joseph Munn, proprietor of the Munn Tavern, but it was a much simpler building when he owned it. In October 1881, Edward S. Wright purchased the hotel, "fancierd" it, and renamed it "the Mansion House." According to the Montclair Times, it was "one the best places of resort" for ladies and gentlemen." The Mansion House was razed in the early 20th century.



This pretty house, located on Bloomfield Avenue on the way into Verona, began its life as the Mount Prospect Institute, a boarding school for young men and ladies in the 1830s. In the 1870s, Mrs. Mahlon Cooper purchased the property, renamed it the Mountain House, and established it as a popular boarders' residence. In 1934, the Mountain House was razed. In 1959, a 48-unit brick apartment building known as the Dorchester was built in its place. The austere design of the mid-century building stands in stark contrast to the three-story verandas on this old building.



Located atop First Mountains, the swanky Hotel Montclair opened in 1907. A 1916 ad promotes the Hotel Montclair as a "family and transient hotel of the highest standard. Appealing particularly to persons desiring home comforts and environment." With its beautiful views to the east, a solarium with views to the west, an English grill, and taproom, the Hotel Montclair was "the" place to be. It was razed in 1940 to make way for the Rockcliff Apartments.

YOU'RE ON VACATION and want to share the beautiful view with friends at home. Rather than buy a postcard and send it off, as you might have done a few decades ago, today you're more likely to text your friends a photo or post it on social media. A postcard? Well, you might purchase one as a easy-to-carry-home souvenir.

A century ago, postcards were a quick, easy, and inexpensive way to communicate with others. Although the first postcards were printed in the mid-1800s, the postcard craze entered full swing in 1898 when the government made it the same price (1 cent) to mail government-issued postcards and postcards printed by private companies. In 1905 alone,

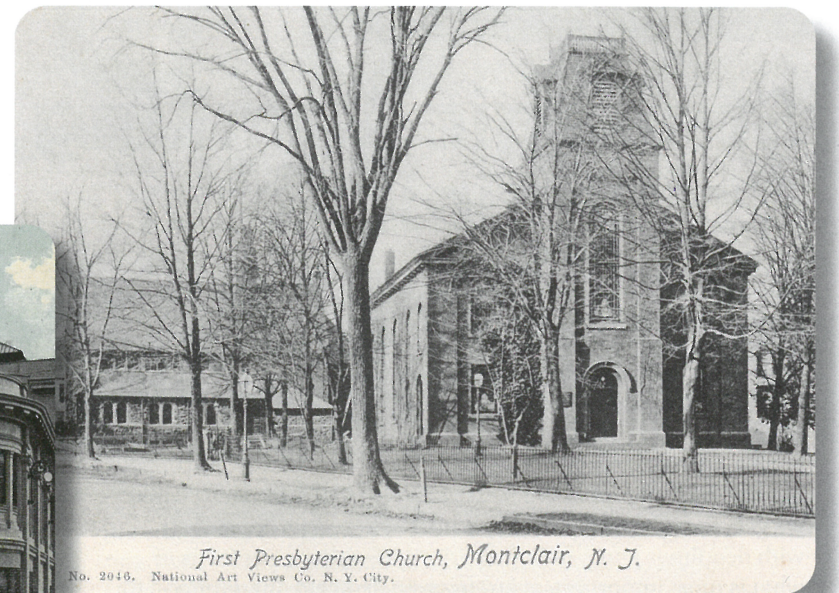
The Montclair Theatre stood on the land previously occupied by the Mansion House. This Beaux Arts building was constructed around 1913 and in its heyday hosted vaudeville shows, plays concerts, silent movies, and "talkies." Mae West even performed there! When the theater was razed, the demo'd building was used as landfill for the parking lot that took its place.



7 billion postcards were sent worldwide.

Postcards were used to let someone know you'd arrived at your destination safely, were having fun, or that you just missed them. Because mail was delivered several times a day and phones were still rare, postcards were even used locally to arrange meetings and get-togethers.

Today, postcards capture a time when cameras had been developed, but their use was not widespread. They also provide



In 1856, the First Presbyterian Church was built straddling Church Street and Bloomfield Avenue on the corner of South Fullerton. Until its construction, the congregation had been using the old school house on the property for their worship services. Made of brownstone from the local quarries, it dominated the corner until a fire destroyed it in 1920. The Mediterranean-style Hinck building, which today houses the Clairidge Theater, took its place on the corner.

us with images of landmarks that are long gone. Here are few of the western half of Bloomfield Avenue in the Montclair History Center's collection. (To browse through other postcards in the collection, go to www.montclairhistory.org, then follow the "Quick Link" to the digital collections). ■

Many thanks to Phil Jaeger and Mike Farrelly for their research.

LIBRARY CORNER

Help Us Write Our Next Chapter

CONTRIBUTED BY MARY PACKER

COMMUNITY SUPPORT has shaped the award-winning Montclair Public Library into one of Montclair's greatest assets. We are proud that the Library has adapted and evolved to meet the needs of current residents and is truly a "Library For All" Before the pandemic, the Library averaged 51 visitors each hour that it was open. Even when the buildings were temporarily closed, Library resources were available online 24/7, with a robust schedule of virtual programs.

Wi-Fi hotspots and home deliveries of books and materials helped keep our neighbors connected and engaged during lockdown. We couldn't have done it without the generous contributions of our community members.

Montclair has a lot to be proud of—we are a diverse and vibrant township with world-class arts and cultural institutions, great restaurants, beautiful parks, and much more. And yet, while similar communities are investing in their libraries and the essential services they provide, the Montclair Public Library has seen dramatic funding cuts.

The Montclair Public Library wants to be there—for the laid-off worker who needs to polish up a résumé, for the high school

student seeking tutoring help, for the toddler just discovering books, for the entrepreneur hoping to start a business, and for the senior citizen looking for volunteer opportunities. While municipal funding provides the basics of staffing and operating hours, gifts to the Montclair Public Library Foundation support the vital programs that keep our Library at the leading edge of access, services, and innovation.

Support is critical, now more than ever, to ensure that programs like Adult School classes, the Open Book/Open Mind series, and robust children's programming can continue. And there is so much more the Library would like to do! Future projects include expanding early literacy outreach, modernizing the children's room, and opening a state-of-the-art technology center.

Visitors may have noticed the Book-o-meter outside of the Main Library or the Bellevue Avenue Branch, measuring our progress towards our year-end goal. We hope to grow that stack of books to the very top.

Thanks to our supporters for making Montclair a better and brighter community for all. Learn more at montclairplf.org. ■

ABOUT THE LIBRARY The Montclair Public Library is located at 50 South Fullerton Avenue (Main Library) and 185 Bellevue Avenue (Bellevue Avenue Branch). The Library's mission is to change lives every day, through words, ideas, and community building. Its vision is to provide unlimited opportunities for lifelong learning, discovery, and community engagement. Visit montclairlibrary.org for current hours of operation and services.