



Bloodgoods'—The Old Swimmin' Hole

Bloodgood's mill pond—that inland retreat at the bend of the Rahway River, in Clark Township—was the swimmin' hole for many generations of small boys, before the automobile brought the seashore to their front door. Minute Men and soldiers of the line bathed in its cool waters, in Revolutionary days. The first mill was built about 1770. Here grain was ground and woolen yarn manufactured for the Continental Army. Later, one Philip Trussler had a bleaching and calico works here which was destroyed by fire.

The name Bloodgood has been associated with the place since 1847. William Bloodgood built a new mill on the foundation of the old and added several larger buildings for the manufacture of felt—the only business of its kind in New Jersey at the time. He was a solid, tenacious man. When misfortune overtook him, in the form of a devastating fire, he set about rebuilding immediately and within the year the new mills, modern in design, superior in workmanship and equipment, were going full tilt.

When the old gentleman died, a prosperous and honored citizen, his son, William, Jr., succeeded to the business and formed a partnership with W. J. Taylor. New buildings

were added until the mills and tenements occupied several acres. The partners built fine mansions on the high ground opposite the mill; one old Colonial house, near the entrance to the ground, is said to have been built by Trussler, early in the last century.

The mills turned out feltings and all sorts of fabrics, including goods of many hues for ladies' underskirts and petticoats—long since outmoded but then an indispensable accessory to every lady's wardrobe. (They wore them in layers of three, usually.) The annual production was over 2,000,000 square yards, and the firm paid out \$75,000 in wages. Revenue from taxes was the chief support of the township. The mill pond provided good swimming and fishing from spring to fall, and good skating in the winter.

The old mill house is still there by the spillway, and the mill, none the worse for the wear and tear of eighty years, continues to turn out goods—furniture, now!—though the Bloodgoods left these parts for 'York State a generation ago. And the mill pond?—well, it looks as crystalline clear and inviting as ever. How about a date for a dip in the old swimming hole, the first, warm summer afternoon?

