



Newsletter of the Middletown Township Historical Society

VOL. 1 NO.2

OCTOBER, 1985

Ralph Phillips to Speak

THE TALK

Ralph Phillips, a local archaeologist, will give a talk "Treasures of Monmouth County" at the October 28th meeting. The time is 8:00 PM at the Croydon Hall Museum.

Mr. Phillips is president of the Monmouth County Chapter of the Archaeological Society of New Jersey and serves the State body on its Executive Board and as Assistant Treasurer. He has done site work for the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Transportation. Mr. Phillips has extensive experience in the field, both literally and figuratively and has collected Monmouth County artifacts for thirty years. His local archaeological credits include work for the Monmouth County Park System at Turkey Swamp Park.

The talk will tell what we learn about early settlers from what is found in the field. It will focus on the Indians, but will also mention fossils and findings of the Colonial era.

THE EXHIBIT

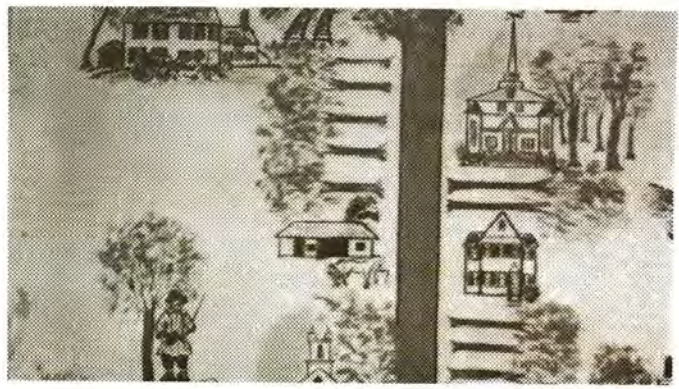
By Barbara Schaflin

Local historical societies generally start their studies with the white settlers. The land was here earlier, of course, populated by cultures that left a record of their social and cultural legacy. There were no municipalities then, but the entire region was long occupied by the red races. The Society's presentation "New Jersey Indians and Their Times" is a travelling exhibit organized by the New Jersey State Museum. It will

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Society Receives Mural by Glenore Coblens

Four Seasons Realtors donated recently the mural "Old Middletown Village" to the Society. The picture was painted by Glenore Coblens on a wall of the former Middletown Library at 78 Kings Highway.



The painting was done in a flat, folk style appropriate to pre-Revolution Middletown. It illustrates scenes of historic places and events on one of the Township's oldest, best known and historic thoroughfares, Kings Highway. Included in the section below are Christ, Old First and the Reformed churches. Also pictured herein are Marlpit Hall, Dr. Taylor's house, The Beekman house, The Inn, The Truex Blacksmith Shop and the Railroad Station. The mural also depicts other events associated with the area including Henry Hudson's ship "Half Moon", pirates and the Hamiltonian Stock Farm.

Mrs. Coblens, better known to her many friends as "Gay" is a native of Johnstown, PA. She came to Middletown when married in 1939 and lived here until moving to Vermont in 1969. Mrs. Coblens works in many media including oil and charcoal. She worked in theater, designing and making costumes for the Monmouth Civic Chorus and producing the entire work

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Mural ... continued

of marionette shows. Gay lived on the old Lentilhon estate on Red Hill Road. She was closely associated with Christ Church, having been organist for over twenty years and having started their Sunday School.

The Township's Library had formerly been located in the basement of the old Town Hall. Facilities were inadequate and the Library was relocated in 1960 to a former private home that housed the local telephone exchange. Gay Coblen's involvement was almost inadvertant. Her friend and library director Marjorie Wihtol disliked a bare wall over the stairway and sought decoration suggestions. A mural seemed likely and since the space was a long rectangle, Gay suggested an illustration of Kings Highway from Marlpit Hall to Route 35. Her intention was for another artist to paint it, but Mrs. Wihtol thought otherwise and Gay accepted the assignment. She sketched the subjects in line drawings. When they were finished, the illustrations, in Gay's words "just sort of fell together". A scaffold was erected, the drawings were traced on the wall and then painted. The perspective was altered for ease of viewing, with the buildings facing the viewer instead of the road.

The library moved to its present location on New Monmouth Road in 1971. Number 78 became a Township office. It was sold at auction this year, having become surplus space to the Township. The owner, Four Seasons Realtors, is renovating the building. They wished to preserve the painting as, in the words of a Four Seasons partner, "It depicts so much of Middletown's history and should be shared with the residents". The Society plans to do that, but the painting was damaged in removal and restoration is required.

The mural is not now on exhibit. Restoration possibilities are being studied by the artist. We look forward to reporting in a future issue the results of the project. The Society extends its thanks and appreciation to Four Seasons Realtors.

Phillips ... continued

be at the museum at Croydon Hall from November 2, 1985 through February 2, 1986.

The exhibit is based on twenty-two pieces of art and twenty-one artifacts from the State Museum. Most of the artificats in the exhibit were made by New Jersey Indians more than 400 years ago. The accompanying artwork, which provides a broad overview of Indian life within Monmouth County and throughout the State, was reproduced from Museum-commissioned drawings done by Monte Crews and Kenneth Phillips during the 1930's and by John A. Lukenda some thirty years later.

Regular museum hours for this exhibit are Saturdays and Sundays from 1:00 - 4:00 PM. Special viewing times can be arranged for student groups. Please contact Barbara Schaflin, Society Trustee and Chairman of the Exhibit, at 747-8256, or write the Society at P. O. Box 434, Middletown, NJ 07748.

New Members

Joining from the museum opening to September 1, 1985 are nineteen new and one reinstated member:

Elaine & Richard Anderson - River Plaza - Red Bank P. O.

Betty Brennan - Middletown

Mr. & Mrs. David Bucko - Belford

Helen M. Carvin - Belford

Mike & Mary Cassone - Atl. Highlands

Gloria Champlin - Middletown

Harry & Beatrice Degen - Middletown

Marcia J. Giger - Middletown

Mr. & Mrs. Frank Gleason - River Plaza, Red Bank P. O.

Virginia Gray - Middletown

Elizabeth Hearn - Laurence Harbor

Bertha C. Heath - Middletown

June T. Hoffmire - Lincroft

Ralph & Janis Jacques - Belford

Carl & Judith Johnson - Middletown

Grace & William Kyle, Jr. - Ogden, Utah

Robert T. Licht - Navesink -

Atlantic Highlands P. O.

John Senkewicz - Belford

Russell & Jenet Till - Middletown

Gloria Woodward - Middletown

"Then and Now" Gives Rise to Two New Shows

The exhibit will continue at the museum in its present format through October 27th. The Indian exhibit will be mounted in the Exhibit Room immediately thereafter. Due to the popularity of "Middletown: Then and Now", parts of it may be remounted in another room later. However, we urge those not having seen the complete exhibit to do so soon. The Society thanks the following who lent pictures for exhibit or copying or who donated them: A. Stephen Anderson, Asbury Park Press, Edwin Banfield, Irving Carol, Mike Cassone, The Courier, Ed Gillespie, Martha Harry, Bertha Heath, Alexander Iler, Peg and Jess Jordon, Clinton King, Tim McMahon, Elmer Meyer, Kenneth Norton, Ole Palludan, Robert Schoeffling and Anonymous.

Work is progressing on the "Middletown: Then and Now" slide show and travelling exhibit. Dates and sites have not yet been selected. The Society is receptive to inquiries for both. The travelling exhibit is well suited for a facility with a large, in-house population or steady public traffic, such as a school, bank, store or similar place. The exhibit panels are compact, taking an approximate floor area of seven feet wide by five feet deep.

The slide show will be presented at meetings of area organizations. It will be shown by a Society representative with a spoken narration.

Both new versions of Then and Now will include many of the views in the museum exhibit, but will be expanded by recent acquisitions. The Society also thanks the following donors or lenders of the new pictures: Helen Anderson, Mrs. Earl De Vesty, Dan Eckert, June Hoffmire, Virginia McCormick, Ruth Ann Morford and Beth and Paul Sully.

It is easy to add to both new shows. The Society welcomes additional loans or donations. Please contact Randall Gabrielan at 671-2645

Melvin A. Rice Memorabilia

Studying the life and career of MELVIN A. RICE and collecting related material has been a special aim of the Society since we obtained a museum lease in his former home. Information about him is slowly accumulating. It is often gathered through the chance location of old articles or through gifts. We thank the following for their donations, particularly Mr & Mrs Gleason, whose generosity was expressed when the museum was just a vision:

ESTHER KAVANAGH - A panoramic view of the Rice property, several small pictures and Rice's greeting card announcing the remodeling of his house.

FRANK & EVA GLEASON - A silver plate handled bowl and loving cup presented to Mr Rice, and a framed photograph of Rice farm activity.

KENNETH NORTON - Access to his news articles on the Bayshore area which included two very important ones on Rice's Drynoch Farm and education.

MARGARET SCHENK - The loan of a photographic portrait. A copy is in the museum and one was the artist's model for the "Tel-News" illustration.

ROBERT SCHOEFFLING - A Drynoch Farm pint dairy bottle.

The Society eagerly seeks other Rice memorabilia, including correspondence, artifacts and pictures. We would like to open a Melvin A. Rice room, but the project depends, of course, on access to material.

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Woolman & Rose: Best Old Guide to Shore Reprinted

The Ocean County Historical Society is preparing a reprint of Woolman & Rose, "Historical & Biographical Atlas of New Jersey Coast", one of the most attractive and costly books about New Jersey. It contains ten fold-out maps, numerous community maps, including one of Middletown Village, and many full page lithographs of well-known scenes from the time of its 1878 publication.

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New Society Logo

Observant readers may have noticed in the August newsletter the unannounced appearance on Page 4 of a Society Logo. It is, of course, a stylized rendering of the front facade of our museum building at Croydon Hall. It was designed by our member IRWIN KAPPES.

Mr. Kappes selected a design that would readily identify the organization and chose a style that would adapt to reproduction in varied forms. Future possible Society promotional objects could include the popular T-shirts, tote bags and notepaper. Surely, though, more imaginative possibilities exist. What is your suggestion for a saleable object with logo? Your comments will be appreciated and acknowledged in the newsletter if the idea is used.

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Woolman & Rose ... continued

Middletown illustrations include Conover's Hamiltonian Stock Farm, Field's Oak Hill Nursery and the Lyster and Beekman houses.

The book will be reproduced in its original 11 1/4" x 14" size on seventy pound acid-free matte paper with a leatherette and linen cover. The price is \$80.00 plus \$3.00 postage. Ordering details may be obtained from the Ocean County Historical Society, 26 Hadley Avenue, Toms River, New Jersey 08753. The entire shore area is indebted to them for their massive, costly project to make readily available this valuable book.

Membership Special

Membership has no obligations, other than annual dues, and even that will be made easier for a brief period. Dues are \$10. or \$5. per calendar year for family or individual memberships. Those joining now will have dues waived for the balance of 1985 and will be fully paid for 1986.

Membership creates opportunities. Ongoing projects include exhibit preparation and museum development, the building of a Middletown Township historical library and this newsletter. The library is a particularly interesting opportunity. Unlike most libraries which consist primarily of books, a municipal historical organization should collect and organize articles and clippings, photographs, personal documents and recollections and similar material.

If you wish to keep your newsletter intact, merely send the requested information with your check to the Society address below.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Meeting Notice

The next two meetings are October 28 (see article) and November 25, both at 8:00 PM at the museum at Croydon Hall. There will likely be no meeting in December, with that month's gathering the members Christmas Party.



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DEDICATED TO RESEARCHING, COLLECTING AND EXHIBITING THE HISTORY OF MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP.

Museum: In the main building at Croydon Hall on Leonardville Rd. between Chamone and Bellevue Aves. in the township's Leonardo section. Open Saturdays & Sundays.

Meetings: 8:00 PM at the museum, generally on the fourth Monday with occasional exceptions for major holidays.

Donations of historical materials: Please see a museum guide or write to the Society.

MEMBERSHIP DUES PER CALENDAR YR.

Individual — \$5.00
Family — \$10.00

Dues for new members joining after Oct. 1 include following year.