



Newsletter of the Middletown Township Historical Society

VOL. II NO. 6

DECEMBER, 1986

Society Publishes Post Cards

The Society's second series of historic buildings post cards was issued in November. The cards picture pencil drawings by Irwin J. Kappes of the Bowne House, Christ Church, Marlpit Hall and Old First Church. The Bowne House, pictured here,



is likely receiving its first post card portrayal. Each of the drawings is on exhibit in "Middletown: Through Artists' Eyes".

A set of four costs \$1.00. The cards are on sale at the museum and at the Middletown Railroad Station. The first series is also available for \$1.00. It pictures our museum, the Murray Farm House, the Shoal Harbor Marine Museum and the old Middletown Railroad Station. Township scenes are rarely offered on post cards now. The Society is pleased to revive them. Of course, many will find them too attractive to mail. Start a collection. We hope to continue the series.

Meeting Notice

The next two meetings are January 26 and February 23, Monday nights at 8:00 PM at the museum. January is likely to be interesting as we open discussion on whether or not to adopt a master plan.

Marion Carlson Gives Oil

Marion Dziezyc Carlson gave the Society an oil painting picturing her farm located at Red Hill and Bamm Hollow Roads. It is signed "Tush", Mrs. Carlson's first married name, and dated 1952, the year following the Tush's purchase of the farm. The painted scene is changed now only by the absence of a barn, which was destroyed by fire.

The farm is smaller now than when purchased by Mrs. Carlson's uncle in 1922. He cleared wooded growth, raised chickens and sold eggs. He built and sold houses on Red Hill Road, reducing the farm to seven acres. The most popular crop today is raspberries, making Mrs. Carlson inclined to call her unnamed property "Raspberry Farm". Let that be the name of our painting. Since life often imitates art, perhaps Mrs. Carlson will attach the name to the land, too.



Mrs. Carlson also grows flowers and shrubs. Her love for the land and flowers is readily apparent to passers-by. That same feeling is captured in oil. The painting is a proud addition to our collection.

Marion Dziezyc Carlson was born in Carnegie, Pa, but spent her early years in Poland. She returned to the United States in 1922 and was a member of the Middletown Township High School Class of 1929. Her artistic skills were expressed early, including the artwork for the school year book as indicated by this numerous example. Marion



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Middletown Quiz



- Where is this well located? Hint: it is next to one of the Township's best known landmarks.
- When, by whom and why was Shadow Lake so named?
- What was the early source of much of the funding for Leonardo's Camp Happiness?
- Who wrote a novel continuing Charles Dicken's unfinished "The Mystery of Edwin Drood"?

Shopping at the Museum

The following are on sale at the Museum. Several items would make attractive gifts. We are willing to mail the atlases for \$1.50 mailing charge per volume.

Atlas reprints - soft cover	
1873 Beers	\$20.00
1889 Wolverton	\$25.00
Monmouth County Bibliography	\$ 7.50
by Robert Van Benthuyzen, one of the most useful books on the county ever published	
Middletown A-Z (Achter Coll to Zoning)	\$10.00
by Thelma Jelliffe, a soft cover dictionary - style compilation of facts	
Steam Vessels Built in Old Monmouth 1841-1894	\$15.00
by Leon Reussille	
Matted Print - Old Middletown Village in color or black and white - members	\$ 2.50
- non-members \$ 5.00	
Maps-hand colored reproductions of 19th century village plans of Middletown, Navesink, and Leedsville - see display in Middletown Library	varies
MTHS post cards - set of four - see article	\$ 1.00
Post card of Croydon Hall Academy	\$ 1.00
Pewter medallion - MTHS	\$ 7.50

Tax Law Change

The recent change in the Internal Revenue Code, to be effected in 1987, makes it advisable to reflect on the timing of gifts to non-profit organizations. Their tax reduction values will likely never be higher than in 1986. This is especially true for objects that have appreciated in value. The Society is eligible for tax free contributions under Section 501(c)3 of the Code. Please call Society President, Randall Gabrielan, 671-2645 if you wish to discuss a possible donation.

Henry T. Gulick - Middletown Folk Artist

Henry Thomas Gulick was an artist cast in the now classic mold of a successful old-timer taking up art in later years and blossoming in a second career. His nearly ninety years of living here, his farmer's relationship with our land and his local subject matter earn him like no other the designation "Middletown's artist".

Henry Gulick was born in Manalapan Township, New Jersey, August 1, 1872. His family moved to the New Monmouth section of Middletown Township in 1874 and to a farm in the Holland district in 1880. He lived here for the rest of his life. The farm today is the site of the American Telephone & Telegraph Company building.

Gulick's early artistic training was minimal. He learned to draw as a youth and enjoyed copying in charcoal. Two drawings hung in the Gulick home for many years, copies of Landseer's "Monarch of the Glen", a stag popularized by an insurance company and Rosa Bonheur's "Horse Fair", an enormously popular picture around the turn of the century, now in the Metropolitan Museum. Perhaps they presaged the talent that would later manifest itself in a different medium. Gulick spent a life crop and dairy farming. He long ran a milk route to Atlantic Highlands. He raised fruit and would plant a new orchard on the birth of a child. Henry Gulick and the farmer Charlotte Emily Wikoff Field had four children. Henry could tell how old each orchard was by looking at its corresponding child.

Gulick turned the farm over to son Joseph by 1946 and was suffering from arthritis. His children gave him a box of paints at Christmas that year with a note urging their use. And paint he did. Gulick sought guidance from local artists. Marshall Simpson, the best known of a "Middletown school" of local artists, urged him to paint on primed masonite. However, he would not tamper with Gulick's native talent, claiming later the best he did for Gulick was leaving him alone.

Gulick's subject matter was the local scene and familiar objects. He painted what he saw, what he recalled seeing or what he would have liked to see. His painting the old buildings of the area preserve images of some that are gone, particularly the Gulick farm. He recalled the past, with an 1888 view of the Gulick farm, painted 65 years later, a notable example. He took license to rearrange the landscape to satisfy his vision. Life imitated art in one instance. A 1954 painting of the Senator Hendrickson farm placed a non-existent pond in the foreground. The property owner liked the view and built a pond. Rail passengers to Middletown can "feel" the approach to the station by passing under the bridge at Red Hill Road. The village is never in view, though it is located only about 200 yards to the north. Gulick created such a scene, however, painting a view of the village under the bridge, which borders the top of the canvas.

Two frequent Gulick subjects are landscapes and interiors. Both exemplify an appreciation for composition and detail. Sections of his greater works are composed with an organizational structure enabling them to stand alone as separate images. Joined on canvas they form a whole that can alternatively be nostalgic, charming, and vibrant. The farm scenes are also affecting. Such paintings include "Edwin Beekman's Apple Packing Shed", portraying busy farm hands moving crops that will not wait, "Will Ely's Sales and Exchange Stable", a humorous portrayal of six horses viewed from the end of the horse that does not stare back and "Fireboard - Apples with Beecher Baskets", an evocative still life. Many interiors were crafted with detailed loving care. No item in a crowded room was too unimportant not to merit exacting placement.

Gulick's best works were painted in the late forties through the mid-fifties, though he worked until the end in 1964. He exhibited in many group shows and had two one man shows in 1964, one in a gallery and the other at Seton Hall University. His work was the subject of a major retrospective exhibit at the Montclair Art Museum in 1974. It consisted of 71 paintings and the two early drawings. Gulick is in at least three museum collections, the Newark Museum, the Montclair Art Museum and the Monmouth County Historical Association. His works are regularly on view at the latter.

The Montclair exhibit was accompanied by a well-illustrated catalog. It is the best guide to the public of

Gulick's output. A copy is in the Society's library. We hope to build an illustration and slide collection to make Middletown's artist more accessible. In the meantime, see one oil and two illustrations in the current exhibit.

Atlantic Highlands Formed From Middletown 100 Yrs. Ago

Atlantic Highlands separated from Middletown Township by referendum and incorporated as a borough in 1887. Its early history, before and after separation, is intertwined with the Township meriting its telling here. The hills forming the northwest corner of Monmouth County were informally known as the Highlands of Navesink from the 17th through the 19th centuries. The designation was not a specific place, but a mountainous region today including parts of Middletown Township, Atlantic Highlands and the borough of Highlands. The latter separated from Middletown Township in 1900.

Prominent among early settlers was Richard Hartshorne, who settled at the protected foot of the hills on the shore of the North Shrewsbury River. Although his settlement has always been in Middletown Township, he may have given it a name often confused with Atlantic Highlands, Portland Point. Portland, also the name of the Hartshorne homestead, is thought to have been brought from Hartshorne's native England, as Portland Bill on the isle of Portland off Weymouth, Dorset County, resembles Sandy Hook and the surrounding hills. This definition of bill is a projection of land resembling a beak.

A "town" here in mid-seventeenth century parlance was nearly always a small settlement. Hartshorne's Portland, Middletown village and Shrewsbury were all settled in the mid-1660s. A locale in the "middle" of Shrewsbury and Portland probably gave Middletown its name.

The Highlands of the Navesink section was a natural subject for resort development. This pleasant confluence of mountains and shore awaited the growth of transportation facilities and a leisure culture. Both came in the post-Civil War period. The first major hotel was located in today's borough of Highlands. Joseph I. Thompson built Thompson's Pavilion in 1852 near the Shrewsbury River. It cultivated a wealthy clientele, which included many well known figures. Thompson's was not easily accessible and stood alone for many years.

The Leonards were early settlers of Leonardo, or Leonardville as it was known in the 1800s. Thomas Henry Leonard was born there in 1843, received his education in the local red school house popularly known as Solomon's Temple or the Cat Briar Academy and became a clerk in his father's store. He bought the Brown farm in 1867, which later became much of downtown Atlantic Highlands.

The growth of leisure time and transportation led to major development of the New Jersey shore in the late 1860s and 1870s. The Methodists founded Ocean Grove in 1869 under a plan where their organization would retain ownership of all land, granting only lengthy leasehold rights to "buyers" who passed their scrutiny. The Methodists' influence was strong elsewhere on the shore and an effort to assume civic control was to be emulated on Middletown's bay shore.

The Raritan and Delaware Bay Railroad opened in 1860. It originated at Fort Monmouth, taking a southerly route towards Long Branch. Passengers reached the railroad by steamers sailing from New York City. The New York and Long Branch Railroad opened in 1875. It was billed as the "all rail route" to the shore, which it was as long as one started his trip in Jersey City or ignored the short ferry trip from lower Manhattan. The Long Branch and Sea Shore Railroad had been serving the Atlantic shore since 1865, receiving passengers by steamer at Candy Hood. The developer of a new town or resort needed a means to transport people. Thomas H. Leonard realized this and organized the Bay View Transportation Company in the fall of 1878 prior to laying out building lots in 1879. His land included the streets surrounded by Bay View Avenue on the north, First Avenue on the west, Mount Avenue on the south, and Third Avenue on the east. A pier was built, but only a close to the shore tide water wharf. Transport difficulties were at least three fold, a lack of business, an unreliable New Jersey landing place which depended on favorable tides and the lack of a New York dock.

Excursions could create transportation and local business. Leonard induced William F. Foster to open a

hotel, "Foster's Atlantic Pavilion." It was established on the temperance principle, to avoid the excesses which resulted from the sale of alcohol in other resorts. Leonard's lease to Foster had three prohibitions on selling intoxicating beverages. His penchant for redundancy would repeat itself often when publishing his history. Foster attracted twenty-nine excursions the first year and forty the second year, statistics recalled by the Red Bank Register on April 25, 1900 when noting Mr. Foster's twentieth anniversary of settling in town. He also served dinners to yachting parties and his pavilion became the meeting place for a number of organizations.

The first year visitors included the Rev. James E. Lake, part of a Sea Bright Methodist Church excursion. He convinced church leaders to form an association for the establishment of a resort. It was organized on February 11, 1881. Rev. Lake secured in his name nearly 400 acres of farm land belonging to Edward Hooper, Thomas Leonard, John L. Patterson, Charles H. Woodward and Nathaniel Roberts and became president of the organization, the Atlantic Highlands Association. Its Methodist control was to be assured by a constitution establishing a twelve member board of directors requiring that four be Methodist ministers and four either Methodist ministers or lay members. Four directors need not have been Methodists. Paid-in capital was a meager \$10,000, while the Association carried a large debt. The first sale of lots by auction was on June 1, 1881. Methodist clergy were prominent among the buyers of the sale which raised \$30,075.

The Association purchased the pier and extended it 1,350 feet into the bay. Proximity to New York City was an important factor in the site selection. Reliable docking facilities not dependent on favorable tides were crucial to maintaining the advantage of the locale. Civic improvement planning was ambitious and early real estate activity vigorous. Optimism prevailed, particularly among the real estate owning directors, who declared a dividend in lots. The result was a steep decline in Association stock and a loss of confidence in the promoters who appeared more interested in their investments than the betterment of the community. Despite a railroad connection made in 1883 and impressive recreational facilities, business activity declined. The president, Rev. Lake, and the secretary, his brother-in-law, Somers T. Champion, were forced to resign. The Rev. Dr. E.C. Curtis was elected president and proceeded to reduce the Association's debt by the sale of lots. Although he progressed, public improvements, particularly street lighting and road conditions, lagged. The public moved toward assuming greater control of affairs by forming a borough. Opinion favoring its establishment was spurred by the efforts of the two young women publishers of the "Atlantic Highlands Independent" Ella S. Leonard and Caroline C. Lingle.

It was fairly simple for a small area to organize a borough in the 1880s. The 1844 New Jersey Constitution required an act of the legislature to create a new municipality. However, an 1878 act permitted areas of no more than four square miles with a population of no more than 5,000 to seek a referendum for establishing a borough by petition of owners of at least ten percent of the value of assessed property within its proposed borders. Borough authority was limited, but it could raise minor taxes for local improvements. There lie one source of opposition. Some voters did not want the burden of an additional tax. In addition, the Association was strongly opposed to this challenge of its authority.

Voters chose a borough on March 7, 1887. The Association took legal action claiming that the legislature conferred upon their corporate body various municipal powers and that it could not be subject to rule by a municipal corporation. The borough prevailed. The litigation would likely produce a fascinating story beyond the scope of this article. A comparison with another Methodist body that retained a semblance of temporal authority until recently, the Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Association, would be interesting. The borough spent nearly \$500 its first year and obtained the support of the populace as road conditions and street lighting improved.

Borough laws changed often in that period. The borough's limited authority kept it an effective part of its township. The Middletown township committee met alternatively in Atlantic Highlands and disbursed road money to its new borough. Funds for roads were a key municipal expenditure and patronage source in the decades around the turn of the century. A better claim on Township road money was a factor in the borough movement.

Atlantic Highlands reincorporated in 1891. An 1894 state law totally separated boroughs from township author-

ity. The town prospered and became the business center for surrounding parts of Middletown Township. The popularity of Atlantic Highlands can be inferred from an 1894 offering of Leonardo real estate on its border. Buyers were offered lots with the same appeal as adjoining Atlantic Highlands, but at lower prices and with no borough tax. The borough name also had appeal outside its boundaries. A development between Belford and Leonardo was named Atlantic Highland Gardens. Name borrowing is a recurring practice from popular towns.

The name of the place was deliberated twice. Atlantic Highlands was adopted in place of Bay View when the Association was incorporated. On one hand the latter was too closely identified with T. H. Leonard's venture, while on the other, Bay View was also taking broader attachment beyond the Association's lands. Change was considered during the borough movement. Despite anti-association sentiment, it was realized the name Atlantic Highlands had been circulated widely and the identity was worth retaining.

An unwitting tie between the Society's land and Atlantic Highlands merits mention in closing. Real estate development was active on both sides of the borough border. The site of our museum was owned by the Burdge family for generations. Edward T. Burdge sold over 100 acres to the Highland Park Association, which planned a fancy residential development. Their grand plans never materialized. They built six houses, selling three to various buyers. The Association sold the other three and the former farm to Melvin A. Rice. Mr. Rice expanded the Burdge house extensively. Most think it was built as a new, free-standing structure. However, the rear kitchen section appears to be the old house. Edward T. Burdge built the first private residence in Atlantic Highlands on Third Avenue.

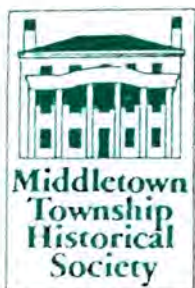


Art Exhibit Opens

Kappes Drawings Featured

The exhibit "Middletown: Through Artists' Eyes" opened October 25, 1986. A members reception was held November 14, 1986. The exhibit will remain through April 27, 1987. The October newsletter described the paintings. We comment on the Irvin J. Kappes series of drawings of notable architecture.

The drawings and paintings are compatible in the exhibit, but they possess some noteworthy contrasts. A key one is number. There are twelve drawings in a consistent style, whereas there are no more than four paintings by one artist or in one style. Their number, dominating the southwest corner of the main exhibit room, command attention. A second is color, or its absence. Their first impression may be subtle, as they are drawn in pencil.



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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.

There is no "prettiness" of color, but a quiet dignity focusing the eye on form and line. The third is that they are works with a message: interesting architecture is plentiful in the Township. The buildings merit a careful look. Many of these notable buildings, for example the several on Kings Highway, are so much in our midst as to be too easy to take for granted. Others, such as the former Chapel Hill Lighthouse and the Bowne House, are virtually hidden from view. See the twelve drawings together, then the buildings individually. One hopes the exhibit heightens awareness and promotes appreciation for these buildings.

Mr. Kappes believes that one "knows" a building only by drawing it. He feels the relationship of eye to hand creates an understanding not otherwise obtainable. Your editor, who, like most readers, does not draw, thinks some of that understanding can be conveyed by viewing drawings. Look at the drawings focusing on composition and building lines. The drawings may change your perception of the buildings and increase appreciation. A "looking aid" for eight buildings can be obtained through post cards. See the Page 1 article.

Quiz Answers

16. Look around town or call the editor at 671-2645 or hope we remember to list the locale in the next issue.
17. In 1929 property owners adjoining the newly built lake selected Shadow Lake from many suggested because it reflected the area's quiet, restful ambience and since the tall trees surrounding the lake would cast shadows whether in sun or moon light.
18. Receipts from a play "Blind Life", written by Frank E. Hall of Highlands who had no playwrighting experience when he became blind. It has a love plot and depicts living conditions of blind people, especially their industrial activities.
19. Henry Morford. Its title is "John Jasper's Secret".

Carlson

also had musical talents, singing second soprano in a young women's choir. Her specialty was Polish folk music, a subject that took her to Poland in 1934 to research Polish costumes at the University of Cracow library. Marion also painted theater scenery.

Marion Carlson studied at the Newark School of Fine and Industrial Art. Her early work was landscapes, with a later abstract period. Marion's early married life was spent in Brooklyn, where she had a portrait studio in her apartment. She returned to Middletown in 1945.

Mrs. Carlson remarked that the present times are among her happiest. She has a productive, fond relationship with the ground, which responds beautifully to her careful, loving touch. She has had an accomplished artistic career. The Society is proud to have one of her works to share with future generations.

MEMBERSHIP DUES PER CALENDAR YR.

Individual — \$5.00
Family — \$10.00

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