



Newsletter of the Middletown Township Historical Society

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MIDDLETOWN DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE

The three-hundred twenty-five year old Township of Middletown has a rich collection of colonial era housing. The appearance of many of the oldest houses has been altered, generally by expansion. The first structures were erected for utilitarian shelter. Some stand in their expanded state three centuries later. Their beginnings are frequently shrouded in obscurity, from which some may never emerge. Middletown's early houses were shaped by traditional construction practices rather than styled. Indeed, in early America the carpenter was generally his own designer. He typically copied stylistic ideas from architecture books following the design traditions of his homeland.

The house has long been a favorite means for the successful and well to do to show their wealth. A few local eighteenth century examples exist, notably Marlpit Hall. Nineteenth century Middletown was a land of large and prosperous farms. The rich farmer might build a large house in the style of the day. An excellent example is Charles L. Hendrickson's 1832 Locustwood. The nineteenth century saw a succession of European originated styles. However, it was a look back to the young nation's origins that marked the start of an era that would produce some of Middletown's finest residential architecture. The new era began at the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. Early styles were revived, both domestic "colonial" designs and old European styles new to this country. The centennial occurred in the midst of the Victorian period; the transformation would take the balance of the century to complete. The national rediscovery also created an interest in local history with many of Monmouth County's landmark publications dating from that quarter century. Other forces shaped the Township's history, encouraging the building boom. New transportation facilities opened, notably the New York and Long Branch Railroad in 1875 and the long pier for principal steamer service in Atlantic Highlands in 1892. And ease of travel encouraged the breaking up of some farms for large country estates. An overview of domestic architecture follows, citing local examples.

The Dutch settled the Hudson River valley area in the early seventeenth century. They arrived in Monmouth around 1670. Many of their houses are readily recognizable by their flared eaves. Middletown has an excellent example, the Johannes Lyster House in the Holland neighborhood. Its original appearance was changed by the addition of dormers. The illustration (figure 1)



Figure 1. The HABS Lyster House drawing, Holland Rd.

was made by a Historic American Buildings Survey artist from a c. 1860 painting by David Van Brackle. Another built in Middletown Township, now in Holmdel, is the Holmes-Hendrickson House on Longstreet Road. The latter is open to the public and at times features events interpreting early American life. It is owned by the Monmouth County Historical Association, Freehold.

The traditional home of the English settlers was a single cottage with a gabled roof. It was small, typically one and one half stories and one or two rooms wide. Larger examples were two stories. They were often expanded and surviving examples are hard to find in unaltered condition. They may now appear as the smaller "extension wing" on houses where the main block was added later. Some examples are the Dorset House, the McDowell farm (once a Hendrickson house) and the West farm.

The Georgian style prevailed in English settled areas in the eighteenth century. Named for the reigning monarchs, its beginnings in the colonies were c. 1700 in Williamsburg, Virginia. The Georgian is generally a one or two story box, with perfect symmetry of doors and windows. Better known examples are often rich in decorative detail with larger ones possessing wings (dependencies) connected by hallway type extensions (hyphens). Middletown's example is a Georgian main block added to a small cabin, Marlpit Hall. It was built by John Taylor in the years prior to and around 1750. The house reflected his stature



Figure 2. The Georgian section of Marlpit Hall, Kings Highway

as one of the Township's richest men (figure 2). It is another Monmouth County Historical Association house museum. The Township has many fine examples of Georgian Revival housing, a subject covered later, but original Georgian houses from the colonial period are rare.

An America free of England remained influenced by British design. Robert Adam studied in Italy and developed a style that lightened prevailing practice by incorporating Roman and Greek principles. This style in America was known as Federal as it developed in the early years of the new republic. Few, if any Middletown examples reflect pure Federal style.

The major style of the first half of the nineteenth century took inspiration from the classical world. Early Greek Revival followed Roman examples and archaeological excavations. Greece's war for independence in the 1820s stirred a sympathetic response here. Many Greek revival houses have a porch resembling the front of a Greek temple. There is no such example in Middletown. Greek Revival houses also feature wide bands of trim under cornices and elaborate door surrounds. A columnar motif can appear even when not supporting the characteristic porch. The finest Township example is "Locustwood", an 1832 structure located at the foot of The Trail, built by Charles L. Hendrickson in 1832 (figure 3). It's front porch is supported by Ionic



Figure 3. Locustwood, at the end of The Trail

columns. It also possesses the characteristic door surround and six over six windows. Hendrickson was one of the Township's wealthiest farmers. His vast tract dominated the area, extending past the then non-existent Highway 35. Greek Revival motifs also appear on simpler houses such as 109 Kings Highway, an older structure altered during the Greek Revival period.

Many nineteenth century styles overlapped their periods of fashion. The Gothic Revival began during the peak of Greek Revival's popularity. Steeply pitched roofs, often with steep cross gables decorated with vergeboard and pointed arch windows, are common characteristics. The style is often associated with church architecture. An outstanding example is the 1864 All Saint's Memorial Church rectory designed by noted church architect, Richard Upjohn. Another is 59 Kings Highway, the former Baptist Church rectory. Number 82 Kings Highway is late 18th century Federal style, but reflects prominent Gothic Revival alterations, (figure 4).



82 Kings Highway

HONORING THELMA JELLIFFE

Thelma Jelliffe is widely known in the Township for her historical activity and preservation interests. Her renown to posterity is assured by two works, the indexing and reprinting of the Mandeville *History of Middletown*, and publication of *Achter Coll to Zoning*, a dictionary style compilation of local historical notes. Mrs. Jelliffe has had a long and deep career in Middletown history. Her recent retirement from this calling and moving from Middletown village is an appropriate time to recognize her achievements and honor her.

Thelma Klein was born in Jersey City, received a private school education there and graduated from Mount Holyoke College in 1924 majoring in art. Her artistic talents would later promote her new home town. She married Maltby Jelliffe. The Jelliffes raised their family in Middletown village and were active with Christ Church. In the early 1950s they purchased the 1836 Franklin Academy building. It had seen later use as a Township school and library, but

was then in need of major restoration. The Jelliffes tastefully restored the Academy making it one of the highlights of a future landmark historic district.

Thelma Jelliffe was a veteran civic activist from her tenure on the World War II ration board. Civic pride focused on our town's age as the 1964 New Jersey and Middletown tercentenaries approached. Mrs. Jelliffe served on the local tercentenary commission and most history preservation groups since. Her first major work was the organization and design of the Tercentenary Souvenir Program. The title conceals the booklet's major value as a pictorial survey of the Township's old structures.

Mrs. Jelliffe's commercial work as the Applebrook Agency's designer also contributed to promoting the Township's heritage. The mid to late 1950s brought local ordinances to restrict tract housing of identical design on grid pattern streets. The Lefferts organization and the Applebrook Agency responded with outstanding housing. One project was Oak Hill Farm, a large, above average priced development in the southwest part of the township. The other was Hillandale, a smaller and costlier group of homes built around the estate of J. Wright Brown between Fairview and Chapel Hill. Her advertising and design work contributed to public recognition that Middletown was taking an upscale turn within its old historic bounds.

The 1974 Middletown landmarks ordinance was pioneering legislation. Although it was upset in court, its resultant landmarks commission had major preservation gains. Thelma Jelliffe served two terms on the commission and wrote many of its research reports. Mrs. Jelliffe also served on a local civic association that was a forerunner of the landmarks group. Her efforts secured the Middletown Village Historic District listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Thelma Jelliffe retained her modesty while achieving these accomplishments as her name is often omitted from her work. The Society, however, is able to trace their creation through a generous donation from Mrs. Jelliffe and her family, her working papers. They will provide important insight to her work and times.

Mrs. Jelliffe resides with her daughters now. She may be assured that her efforts are seeing recognition in her time and are providing a legacy for future scholars. The Society extends its heartfelt thanks and appreciation for a job well done, as well as for the gift. Thelma Jelliffe was elected an honorary life member of the Society at its January 1989 meeting.

Middletown Then and Now

The intersection of Sunnyside and Crawfords Corner - Everett Road has long been a retailing site. The community straddled the Middletown - Holmdel border and its history is intertwined with both townships. Stillwell's stood on the northwest corner in Holmdel. The spot is now vacant. This store is in Middletown and was known as Mahoney's by the early 1940s when Ed Kemble photographed it.

The "then" picture captures well the spirit of a still rural township. Gas is casually dispensed from a single roadside pump. The bicycle seems in the way of no one and the promoters of Coke display their ability to find even the country corner. The building burned but the date eludes us.

The parking lot is essential to the Sunnyside Deli operation now. Traffic rushes by, especially in peak periods, entering the premises from both roads. Cyclist, travel at your own peril. Gas is now sold from fewer and larger stations, with roadside pumps nearly extinct in what is now suburbia. The simplest differences reflect vast changes in local life.



Mahoney's Store, early 1940s

THE BROWNS DOCK CEMETERY

Michael J. Valentin chose the clean-up of an old cemetery as his Eagle scout project. He selected the Browns Dock Cemetery on the west side of Browns Dock Road, about .15 mile north of Navesink River Road. Its existence was well known as it is listed in Henry McLean's Middletown Township Graveyards and John E. Stillwell's Historical and Genealogical Miscellany.

The cemetery was in run down condition with overgrown vegetation and knocked over grave stones. Mr. Valentin supervised a crew that cut back the overgrowth, refurbished the placement of some stones and recorded the inscriptions of those readable. Several corrections were made in the McLean listings. Their project spanned three and one half months.

Mr. Valentin's findings were organized in report form. Copies were presented to the Society and three libraries. The report was illustrated with photographs and included a description of the project, a diagram of graves, gravestone inscriptions and copies of earlier sources.

The Society commends Mr. Valentin on completion of the project and thanks him for a copy of the report. The cemetery is now in the Huber Woods Park, which may use it for field trips. The final resting place of members of the Brown, Goodenough, Biddle, Johnson and Doughty families have a new dignity. In addition, the public has an example of a worthy project that can be undertaken without history training.

One hopes this project can spur greater study of the Browns Dock area. It was an important 19th century shipping point, serving the farms in the hilly area from Chapel Hill to Locust.

A LETTER FROM SANTA

This letter gives us a glimpse of a non commercial Christmas when gift giving expectations were lower and children were expected to behave well. It is unsigned and undated, but was saved by a prominent, old Middletown family, the Hoppings. The anonymous donor thought the letter may have been sent to James P. Hopping, born in 1850. He seems a more likely recipient than the earlier, better known James Hopping who was born in 1781, became township assessor, a member of the legislature and a judge.

Dear James,

I am getting to be an old man now, and ([I don't] original torn) know as I shall follow this business much longer so I thought I would write a few lines to some of my little friends and James you are getting to be a large boy now and able to know right from wrong and I hope you will try always to do right, and obey your parents who do so much for you and love you so much and you must study your books and learn all you can and when you go to church you must listen attentively to the minister and mind the good things he tells you and thin (sic) if you live I hope you will grow up to be a good man. I have brought you a few things for Christmas as you have been a good boy, but stop, what is this little red thing lying here why it is another little stocking as I live, why so you have a little brother. O James now you have a great and solemn duty to perform, mind you set a good example to that little boy, for he will pattern after you in a great many things try and learn him everything that is good and help your mother take care of him all you can and be kind to your little sister too, never get cross nor punish for that is very wicked and now I must bid you good bye as I have a great many places to visit do not forget what I have told you, I will wish you a happy christmas and if you ar (sic) a good boy I may come again

yours
Santa claus

The letter is charming rather than important. Perhaps we should not infer too much from it. However, it readily conveys the impression that Santa's gift was much appreciated and the advice to be good was heeded. The recipient could infer that if he was not a good boy, Santa might not come again.



Sunnyside Deli, the recent past

ON THE BEACH

Readers searching for a one volume history of the New Jersey shore will find a well-illustrated contemporary survey in June Methot's Up and Down the Beach. The book's fine eye appeal is aided by nearly 500 illustrations. They include woodcuts and engravings from the nineteenth century, historical photographs, conjectured sketches imagining early scenes and the author's recent photographs which depict a shore often abused by man. Ms. Methot's love of the water and shore and willingness to print her adversarial position on over-development distinguish this volume.

A bibliography lists the main literature on the shore. There are no footnotes, but many quotations including some from uncommon sources, are italicized, helping readability. Accounts of early settlers, economic activity, piracy, shipwrecks, lighthouses and the Revolution begin this fast-paced work.

Several topics are of particular interest to Township readers. One is the Revolution's whaleboat warfare. Little documentation exists on the subject. The author embraces the evidence that places the warfare's primary starting points on Middlesex County streams, which are better concealed than our bayshore. The major Township lighthouses, which once included the Twin Lights in Highlands, are well described and illustrated. The lesser ones, including the Conover Beach Beacon and Chapel Hill range lights are also well depicted including the operation of sideboards. Small reference is made to the only two sections to leave the Township during the borough movement of the late 19th - early 20th centuries, Atlantic Highlands and Highlands.

One of the most interesting chapters is XXXVI, Time and Tide. They not only wait for no man, but change the shore according to nature's fancy. Several maps show the changing contours of Barnegat Inlet over many years.

Ms. Methot commented after publication that the writing of the book helped update her thinking on shore issues. Preservation of our shores is one of the crucial New Jersey issues today. Get a better grasp of it by catching up with it's last three hundred years via this volume. It is at the museum for \$27.50 plus 6% tax.

ED KEMBLE, PHOTOGRAPHER

William Edmund Kemble is a man with both vision and the opportunity to apply it in a now historically significant way. Ed applies his keen eye and sense of order to landscape design. His avocational interest in photography has preserved the look of bygone days in New Jersey through an important medium, color slides. Ed was a pioneer with the greatest ever color film, Kodachrome. Some of his early slides are now over fifty years old. One is this issue's Then and Now subject. Much of his work is of major historic importance, capturing scenes and activities that may not exist in other accessible images.

Ed Kemble's landscape work took him throughout the pine barrens. The land is quite fertile, not only in plant life, but in a disappearing lifestyle and culture. Ed's eye preserved much of it. He also sought the history behind the image, making his slide talks informative with an unduplicateable "I was there" quality. His talk on transportation was our best program of 1988. We hope to have Ed back this year. Look for an announcement.

NUMBER PLEASE

Olga Boeckel gave the Society a 1900 telephone book. It gives a useful glimpse into the past via use of this then uncommon device. The issuing company was The New York & New Jersey Telephone Company. Ours is the December, 1900 issue of a then quarterly publication. Numbers must have been changed often, as subscribers were advised not to print telephone numbers on stationery. It was suggested to use the phrase "Telephone Connection" as the company could not guarantee the permanency of call numbers assigned or to be assigned.

Other general notices are interesting. Weather information could be obtained by telephone in two ways. One could call the manager of his Central Office, "where forecasts will be posted morning, noon and night." There was no charge for this call. The second was a call to the U.S. Weather Bureau in New York City for which the usual toll charge applied. Or, one could look out the window. Operators were forbidden to hold unnecessary conversation, of course, with its importance emphasized as the first rule. Fire alarm calls were given precedence over all other business, with callers cautioned to request the fire department in a "moderate tone".

Pay stations had a separate listing, as well as inclusion in the regular list. They were in the care of pay station agents who were guided by a separate, lengthy set of instructions. They were advised to keep a record of all calls to help reduce "irregularities in the records". They were advised to answer calls by announcing their name and location to the caller. Surely the custom ended long enough ago to be beyond the memory of contemporary telephone boors who respond to an unfamiliar answering voice with "who's this?" There were no coin slots and the agent had to secure the correct toll through his tariff card, including a messenger charge for an appointment call. That was a call made by the Central Office operator summoning a person by name to a designated telephone station at a specified time.

Appointment arrangements were inconvenient at best. Advertising throughout the book promotes residence telephone service with reminders that it "Saves Letter Writing, Overtakes Telegrams, Out-runs the Messenger-boy, Lengthens your Life". Or, "If you have Telephone Service at your house you can save yourself many minor worries and are able to cope quickly with serious emergencies." Today the infrequent telephone outage is a serious emergency. The rate structure appears to have been changed as there appears a frequent reminder that "Message Rates make the annual cost very low". There is no explanation of message rates, but many toll rates are listed. A five minute call between Middletown and Red Bank was \$.15. The same rate applied between Red Bank and Leonardville (Leonardo), but a call to adjacent Leonard Station (now part of Leonardo) was \$.25.

Subscribers are listed by the telephone company's concept of community, which likely followed their line network. Many obscure place names are used although not for Middletown Township. One name of note, though, is Shady Side, in the Union area. It became the exchange name for Township phones served by the Red Bank office, or the present 741- numbers. The following numbers are excerpted from 545 pages of subscriber listings including 252 pages of Manhattan and the Bronx. The letter suffix indicates a party line. Some are pay stations, which are not designated herein. The manner of organization is not apparent. For example, the Society's headquarters were owned by Donald MacLeod, listed under Atlantic Highlands, although he was close to Leonard Avenue Station and Leonardville. The Sea Bright number is also excerpted from a list of that town. Some subscribers were listed under two towns.

AtL Hihlds 8-1,
AtL Hihlds 8-a,
AtL Hihlds 5-1,
AtL Hihlds 21-b,

Atlantic Highlands

Andrews Hotel, Navesink Road
Edwards A D, Veterinary Surg, Locust Point
McLeod Donald W, Drynoch Lodge, AtL Hihlds
Washington H S, Residence, Locust Point



P.O. BOX 434

MIDDLETOWN, NJ 07748

PHONE: 291-8739 during museum hours.

EDITOR: RANDALL GABRIELAN

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.

Belford 3-1, Belford 3-a,	Belford Loshen & Willet, Grocers, Walling Luther, Bicycles,	Main Main
Lnr Av Sta 5-b,	Leonard Avenue Station Leonard Chas T, Grocery,	Leonard Av. S
Lnrville 5-a,	Leonardville Leonard Edward W, Grocer,	Middletown Rd
AtL Hihlds 8-a, Locust Pt 8-b, Locust Pt 8-f, AtL Hihlds 4-b,	Locust Point Edwards A D Vet Surg, Mount C A, Grocer, New Amsterdam Hotel, Washington H S, Residence,	Locust Point Locust Point Locust Point Hartshorne Drive
Middletown 1-f, Middletown 1-b, Middletown 16-a, Middletown 1-l, Middletown 1-a,	Middletown Conover J Dey, Residence, Hartshorne Wm, Residence, Lufburrow Richard, Grocer, Swackhamer J F, Agent, Taylor E F, MD Residence,	Conover Av. Middletown Kings Hwy NY & LB RR Sta Middletown
Navesink 21-a, Navesink 21-f,	Navesink Johnson J M, Store, Stearns Hotel,	Navesink & AtL Hihlds Rd. Navesink
New Monmouth 16-b,	New Monmouth Frost H J, P M, Harness Mfr,	New Mon. NJ
Port Monmouth 3-f, Port Monmouth 3-b,	Port Monmouth Griggs Benjamin, Hotel, Seely & Son, General Store,	Opp Dock Main
Wtr Wich Pk 25-a,	Sea Bright Water Witch Club,	Highlands

The Society extends its thanks and appreciation to the donor, Olga Boeckel. A one time society activist, Mrs. Boeckel still has us close to her heart as she engages in a busy schedule of public and community activities.

NEW MEMBERS

Carl Betts	Newton NJ
John R. Boker, Jr.	Scarsdale NY
Lawrence & Jane Cella	Belford
Paul E. Doherty	Riverside Heights
Alexander J. Finch	Monmouth Hills
Frank J. Esposito	Ocean Township
Ruth C. Gauffrau	Oak Hill
Hope Haskell Jones	Rumson
Eli Yablonovitch	Chapel Hill

NEW SUBSCRIBERS

James R. Callis	Oakton VA
John R. Stout	Elkton OR

MEMBERSHIP DUES
PER CALENDAR YR.

Individual — \$5.00
Family — \$10.00

Dues for new members
joining after Oct. 1 in-
clude following year.