

MIDDLETOWN  
TOWNSHIP  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY  
Monmouth County, New Jersey

*Monthly  
Messages*

## Middletown Township Historical Society: May Happenings

This newsletter keeps you updated on the latest events and news of the Middletown Township Historical Society. Also, be sure to follow us on social media for even timelier news and for historical items of interest.



**Monmouth County's Most Famous Commune:  
The North American Phalanx**  
(1843 - 1855)  
*Presented by Jayme A. Sokolow, Ph.D.*

**Monday, May 17 at 7:00 pm**  
**Free Virtual Event - Registration Required**

*Hosted by*  
**Middletown Township  
Historical Society**

[www.MiddletownNJHistory.org](http://www.MiddletownNJHistory.org)

This program is made possible in part by the Monmouth County Historical Commission through funding from the New Jersey Historical Commission



**Online Presentation - Monday, May 17 at 7:00 pm:**

**Monmouth County's Most Famous  
Commune: The North American  
Phalanx (1843-1855)**

*Presented by Jayme A. Sokolow, Ph.D.*

Inspired by the French philosopher Charles Fourier, a group of like-minded people formed a utopian community in the mid-19th Century near the Colts Neck/Lincroft border. Author Jayme A. Sokolow will trace the evolution of this commune and reveal its successes and challenges.

Jayme Sokolow was born and raised in Perth Amboy and attended Trenton State Teachers College (The College of New Jersey) as an undergraduate. He has been a teacher, federal employee, and, for the past three decades, a businessman. He is the author of business and history articles and four books, including *The North American Phalanx (1843-1855): A Nineteenth-Century Utopian Community* (2009). This book is based on over 25 manuscript collections, especially the collections of the Monmouth County Historical Association Library & Archives in Freehold.

This will be an online-only event. Please [register for the event](#) and you will be emailed with the link to join via Zoom.

**Register for the FREE Event!**

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**Your Membership Matters . . .**  
**Support Us in 2021!**  
**Join or Renew Today!**

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## **Become a Member in 2021!**

The Middletown Township Historical Society gets the bulk of its revenue from member contributions, so your support is vitally important. Your contributions make our initiatives possible, and are also essential for paying our administrative costs.

You may [join or renew online](#) or via our [print form](#).

If you have already joined or renewed for 2021, thank you!

[Join or Renew Online](#)

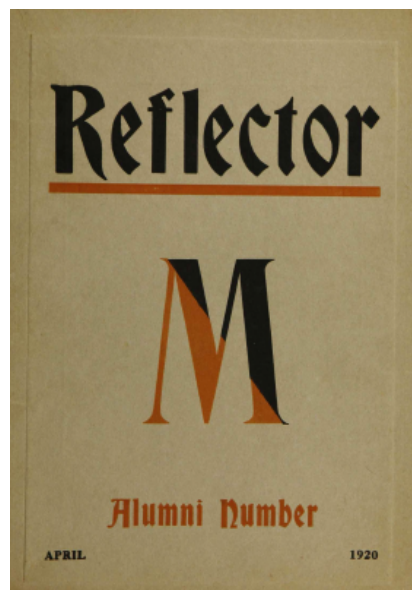
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## Event Recap: The Middletown Farms of Percy & Herbert Straus

The Middletown Township Historical Society hosted Joan Adler of the [Straus Historical Society](#) last month. We learned not only about the historic complex known as Cobble Close, but also about the industrious Straus family. Thank you to Ms. Adler, and to all who attended! Also special thanks to Cobble Close resident Jeff Mindham for answering some questions.

If you would like to watch a recording of the presentation, please visit our [YouTube channel](#).

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## Yearbook Digitization is Underway!

As promised, we have begun scanning the yearbooks and student publications of Middletown Township High School (also known as Leonardo High School). We will begin to make them freely available in the coming months via our

website. The books go back to 1920 and are an interesting read, even if you do not have ancestors appearing in them.

We thank the Investors Bank Foundation for financial support, and also all who have donated yearbooks to us throughout the years.

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## MTHS 2021 Speaker Series

Our Speaker Series runs through November on the third Monday of each month at 7:00 pm. For now, all events will be held through Zoom, and registration is always free. The following speakers have been confirmed:

- **May 17:** "[\*Monmouth County's Most Famous Commune: The North American Phalanx \(1843-1855\)\*](#)" by Jayme A. Sokolow
  - **June 21:** "Mad Hatters, the Radium Girls, and the Asbestos Hotel: Stories of New Jersey Industrial Toxins" by Dr. Sandra Moss
  - **July 19:** "Characters of Sandy Hook" by Mark Stewart
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## A Call for Graphic & Video Artists!

We could use some assistance with creating graphics and also with video creation or editing. If you have the interest and skills, [please let us know!](#)

MTHS is run by volunteers, and if you'd like to become more involved as a trustee, chairperson of a committee, or as a lending hand on anything else, please let us know. We are working on a few different projects and could always use help from those willing to dedicate some time and talent. [Contact us here.](#)

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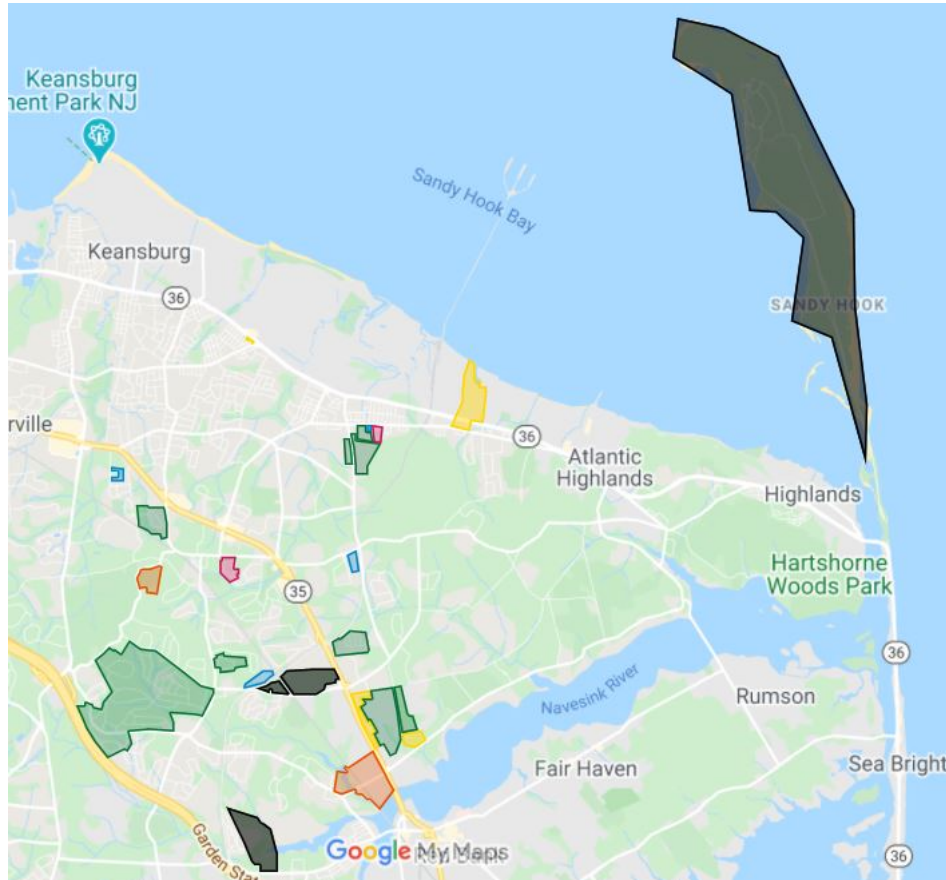
## Thank You to Our Newest Community Sponsors!

Two local businesses have signed on to become Community Sponsors of ours. We are grateful that [McCormack Farms](#) and [This Day in Monmouth County History](#) have decided to help further our mission.

If you run a local business or organization and would like to support our work, let us know. We will show our appreciation by adding your logo to the bottom of

these newsletters and also on our website. *And* you'll be able to let your customers know that you proudly support a local organization! If you are interested, [please see our website](#) for more info or to get started.

## Community Sponsorships



## Middletown Land Development Map

If you are curious about when/why/how your housing development or local park was constructed, take a look at our [interactive map](#)! Just click on a shaded area to read the history and see the images. The entries are color-coded so you can see when the various pieces of land were developed. Please note that the map is best viewed on computer or tablet.

Given Middletown's size, this map is a work in progress, so check back in the future if you don't yet see an entry for the land you are interested in. Our goal is to fill the entire map. If you'd like to contribute any entries, [please let us know](#).

### Contribute to Our Archive!

Our Society has a collection of items and documents related the history of Middletown and the surrounding area. Do you have anything that you'd like to add? Please don't let a treasure be forgotten or thrown away!

[Contact us](#) and let us know what you would like to donate.

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### Support Us When You Shop at Amazon!

Now, when you purchase most items from Amazon, they will donate a portion of the sale to us! It costs you nothing! Here's what you need to do:

First, you must [connect our organization to your Amazon account using this link](#). Then, if you shop using a computer, you must go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) for us to receive credit. If you use the Amazon mobile app, be sure it is updated to the latest version and then go into settings to see that Amazon Smile is turned on and that our name is listed.





*This Month's Question:*

What might be said to be Middletown's connection to the construction of the Empire State Building?

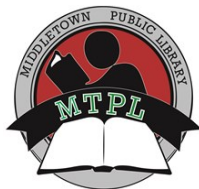
Answer will be supplied in next month's newsletter!

*Answer to Last Month's Question:*

Middletown voters, in a 1920 referendum, opted to establish a public library that opened the next year. In New Jersey, once a library is established by referendum, it can be dissolved only through public referendum. The Navesink Library that opened as a private association library in 1914 was later operated by the Middletown Library until it and all branches were terminated by Middletown.

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In Addition to Our Members, Thank You to the Following for their Assistance and Support:



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Thanks for reading! The Middletown Township Historical Society will be in

touch again soon! If you know others who would be interested in receiving communications from us, please forward this email and ask them to [join this list!](#)



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