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Middletown - History



Newsletter of the Middletown Township Historical Society

VOL. I NO. 3

DECEMBER, 1985

Give Dues their Due

Society dues are collected on a calendar year basis. They are \$10.00 Family or \$5.00 Individual memberships. Please remit promptly for 1986. Those joining in September or later already have paid for the coming year. Thank you.

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Slide Show at Jan. 27 Meeting

A slide show titled "Middletown: Then and Now" will be presented at the January 27, 1986 meeting. It is based on the Society's first museum exhibit and presents a similar format of comparing older and current pictures of the same places in the Township. The slide show contains many views different from the museum exhibit and some familiar ones. Mark your 1986 calendar, come and bring a friend. There will be no December meeting.

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Indian Exhibit Continues

"New Jersey Indians and their Times" opened November 2nd and will continue through February 2, 1986. The State Museum's traveling show is attractively installed in our Exhibit Room. The artifacts and art work announced in the October newsletter have been supplemented by a collection of locally dug Indian artifacts lent by Elizabeth Martin and a large map showing New Jersey Indian settlements lent by Monmouth College's Guggenheim Library. Group visits may be arranged through Barbara Schaflin, Chairman of the Exhibit, telephone number 747-8256.

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Society Publishes Historic Buildings Postcards

Page 3 is a poster illustrating and offering for sale a set of four historic building postcards. Each is a Township owned property. Three are museums and the fourth is the old railroad station. The cards were based on sketches by local artist and Society member Irwin J. Kappes. They were printed on quality coated stock by Gateway Printing Co. in Atlantic Highlands.

The set is for sale at the Museum at Croydon Hall during open hours, Saturdays and Sundays from 1:00-4:00 pm. Individual cards may be offered at each pictured site. The postcard back includes a brief description of the picture.

A signed set on an uncut sheet was given to Mayor Maher for the Township at a Pride in Middletown week event November 15th. The Society hopes local merchants will also sell the cards. There lies a problem and an opportunity. Postcards are less frequently sold and used now. It has been some time since we have seen a card picturing a Township scene. Thus, as Township views become available, there are fewer sources selling cards.

One may wish to keep a set as a Township souvenir, as well as use them for correspondence. Public awareness of the Society, our goals and membership opportunities are as much a part of the publishing venture as is the selling of cards. We hope you buy them and like them.



A Centennial Look at Ellis

Most would agree that the Franklin Ellis History of Monmouth County, is the single work on the subject of greatest reknown and value. 1985 marks the 100th anniversary of publication. A sampling of opinions from 1885 is interesting.

Little information about Franklin Ellis is readily available. He was born in 1828 and died in 1885. His works include History of Berrien and Van Buren Counties, Michigan, 1880, History of Shiawassee and Clinton Counties, Michigan, (1882?), and History of Fayette County, Pennsylvania, 1882. He may have written others, as Ellis' entry in Allibone's Critical Dictionary of English Literature does not list the Monmouth County work. One could infer that Ellis was not a Monmouthite and that his history of this county was his last book.

The post-Civil War period saw a rise in sectional pride. Many local histories were written, particularly in the 1880's. They were generally extensively illustrated with portraits of the locally prominent, resulting in the genre's nickname of "mug books". A few of those pictured may have been inserted by the publisher for their historic merit, giving the book stature. Most of the pictured men subscribed for their entry, thus supporting publication. Not a single female portrait appears in Ellis, neither unusual nor unexpected for the times. Subscribers paid \$12. for the book, \$100 for the woodcut portraits and \$250 for steel plate engravings. One expected a lot for such payment. The critics carped considerably over errors.

In Middletown, complaints were made over the book's map showing Navesink Post Office and Riceville as adjacent, when the former was the current name for the latter. Perhaps Ellis was mis-led by a major New Jersey reference, the 1882 Industries of New Jersey, stating that Riceville adjoined Navesink. Perhaps that reflects a major pitfall in an outsider writing a local history.

The Thomas Leonard store and post office was erroneously stated as having been

moved from Leonardville to Atlantic Highlands. Perhaps Mr. Ellis could not contemplate Mr. Leonard being a major figure on both sides of the Township line. The postmaster of Chapel Hill was stated to be Alexander Waters, though it was actually Alexander C. Wastrous. Mr. Wastrous probably had his unusual name mis-spelled as often as your editor, but he deserved better for posterity. Another dispute was over the height of the Township's then Highlands section. The list could go on.

Some refused to pay; one publicized his dis-satisfaction with a facetious poster offering his copy. Litigation for non-payment was threatened months later. In retrospect, one may concede such a work could not be assembled without error. On the other hand, historical work errors are particularly vexing and such writers have one of the highest standards of care to the admonishment "if you get it in writing, get it right".

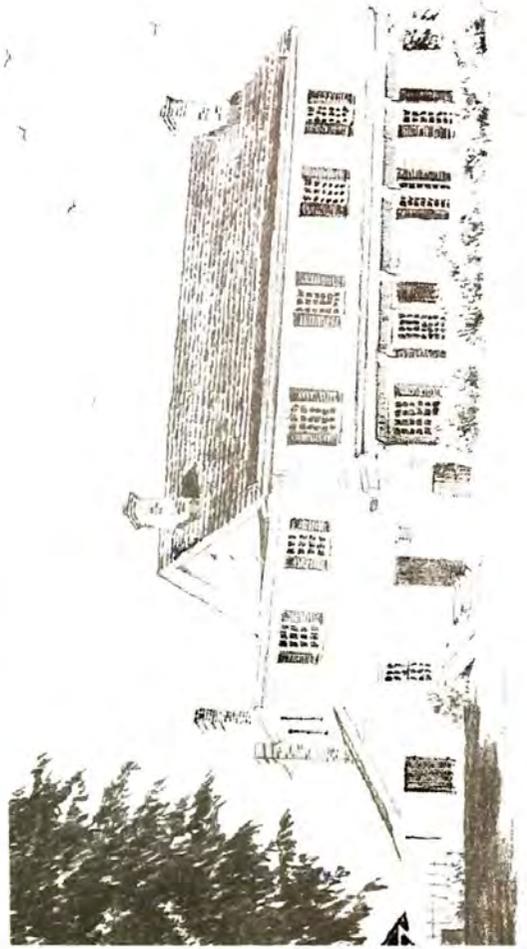
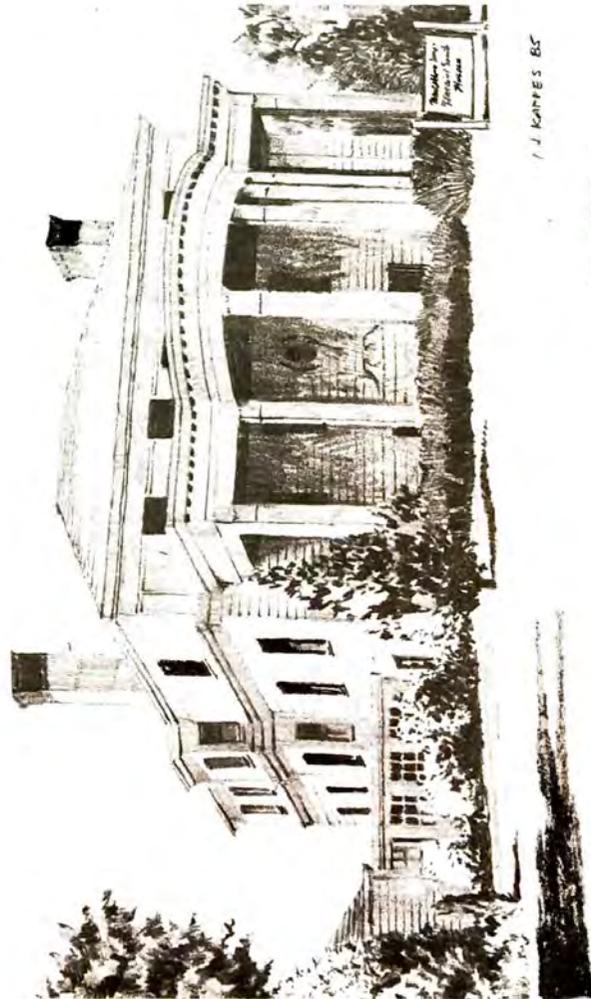
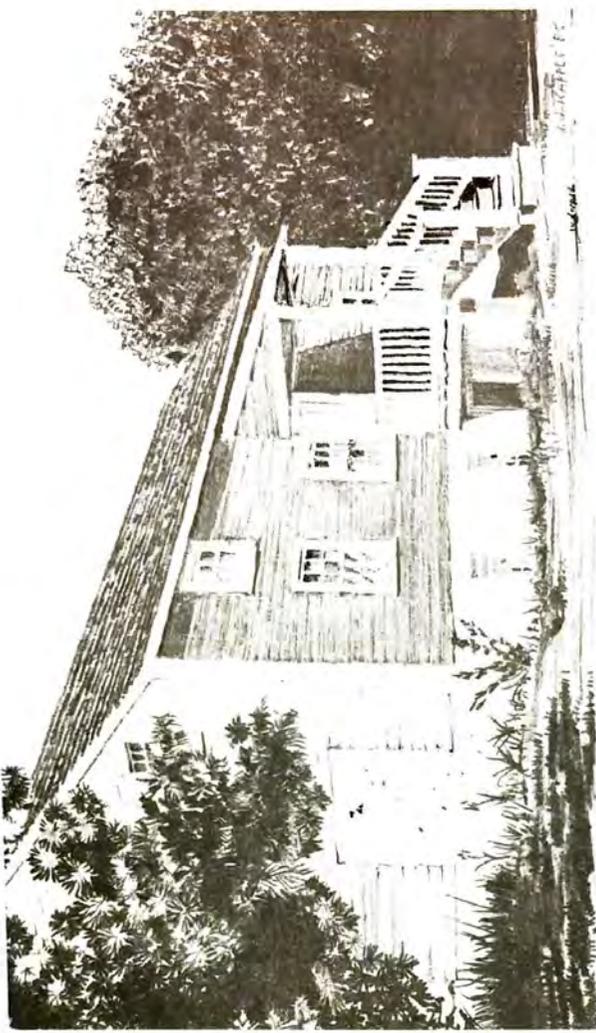
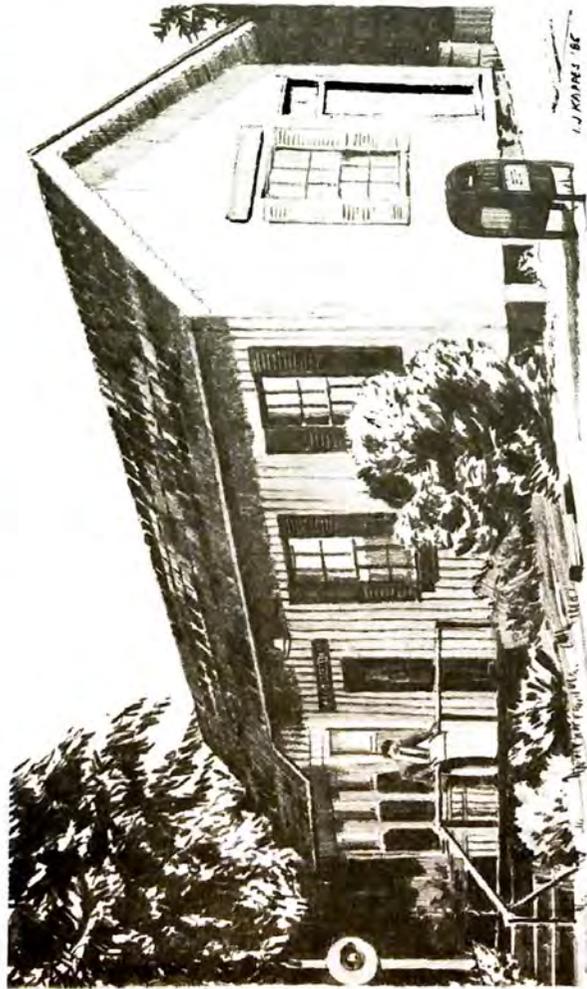
The cost of the illustrations appears extraordinarily high if considered with the value of today's dollar. However, it may be a reasonable price for immortality in an incomparable reference that will never be equalled.

The Middletown entries include many well-known, 19th century historically important figures. Absences of some prominent men must be justified by personal perceptions of cost and value. Middletownites in steel engravings include: John S. Applegate, George C. Beekman, Joseph Dorsett Bedle, and George Crawford Hendrickson. Pictured in woodcuts are Dr. James H. Patterson, Joseph Field, Charles J. Hendrickson, Azariah Conover, Rev. William V. Wilson, Capt. Charles Morford, Richard A. Leonard, William V. Conover, William H. Grant, Sidney McClane, William M. Smith, Joseph I. Thompson, Thomas Leonard, Thomas Roberts, William B. Hendrickson, George Morford, Benjamin Griggs, Capt. James H. Leonard and Edward Hooper.

Editors Note: The Society lacks a copy of Ellis and would greatly appreciate a donation of one and the Ellis Index.

Set of 4 Middletown Township Post Cards - \$1

Available at Middletown Township Historical Society Museum, Croydon Hall,
Leonardville Road, open Saturdays and Sundays 1-4.



Producing the Society's Cards

by Irwin J. Kappes

A trial was made in pen and ink, but pencil was chosen as the ideal medium to render the four sites selected for the first series of Middletown Township landmark postcards. This technique is ideal in capturing the texture of trees and old buildings. In pencil sketching, lights and darks are achieved not by light and heavy pressure, but by using pencils of varying hardness. The entire range available consists of thirteen pencils, extending from 9H (hard) to 7B (black), although these sketches were achieved using only five. The original sketches are twice the size of the post cards.

Although every artist begins a sketch with a mental image of the desired result, surprises often emerge. For example, sketching the Murray House was initially considered a hopeless task because the restoration was so complete that it presents the viewer with what appears to be a recently-built house. There are few of the uneven lines and rough textures of a building such as the Shoal Harbor Marine Museum, which looks the part of a 16th century house. However, the textural problems receded by patiently revisiting the site a number of times and awaiting the correct lighting.

Most Middletownites know these four local landmarks at a glance and a caption is hardly necessary for us. However, the artist always discovers something new when forced to study the lines of a building in detail. One example is the rich ornamentation of the Croydon Hall portico. Another is the pattern of the clapboards of the newer, main section of the Shoal Harbor Marine Museum. They appear uniform to the casual observer, but are actually nearly as irregular in width as those of the original house. One could say that perhaps the best way to really "know" a building is to draw it, for

only in the process of drawing does true concentration occur. One need not be discouraged if the result is less than professional as it is the effort that brings awareness of a building's uniqueness and special charm. Careful observation and repeated viewing will help the "knowing" process. May we suggest purchasing the cards and visiting the sites.

The views on the reverse side are clockwise from upper left, the railroad station, Murray Farm House, Shoal Harbor Marine Museum and Croydon Hall.

Mark these Meeting Dates on your Calendar:

JAN. 27 - FEB. 24

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Shopping at the Museum

Several items are on sale at the Museum in addition to the new postcards. Some make attractive gifts. All are of interest to Middletown history. Shop during regular open hours, Saturday and Sunday from 1:00 - 4:00 PM.

Print, Kings Highway circa 1840 - A full view of our masthead illustration. The contemporary hand-printed picture measures 2" x 4½" and is matted for an 8" x 10" frame. Offered either hand-colored or in old-appearing black for \$2.50 for members or \$5.00 for non-members.

Post Card version of above - only 25¢ or 5 for \$1.00.

Achter Coll to Zoning - by Thelma Jelliffe, a dictionary type compilation of historical facts, stories and people. It contains more information about Middletown than is available in any other book. Soft bound. \$10.00.

Post Card - Croydon Hall Academy - school-time scene showing the front of our museum. Circa 1950. \$1.00.

Pewter Medallion - 2" round with stylized rendering of the museum. \$7.50.

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Thanks

The Society thanks the following for their generous donations:

EDWIN F. BANFIELD - Seven editions of ODRANOEL, the Middletown Township High School Year Book, with the oldest 1931, and two nineteenth century text books.

MIKE AND MARY CASSONE - A pint bottle from Melvin A. Rice's Drynoch Farm.

MRS. CARLYLE FIELD - Fifteen Croydon Hall Academy yearbooks, several photographs and a program.

FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLETOWN LIBRARY - 22 yearbooks from four Township schools.

DAVID W. HIRST, SR. ASSOC. EDITOR, THE PAPERS OF WOODROW WILSON - Copies of their Wilson-Rice correspondence.

JUNE TRUJEX HOFFMIRE - An 1851 Lightfoot Map of Monmouth County, a truly outstanding and valuable donation of this first detailed wall map of the county; photographs and paper memorabilia.

PEG JORDAN - A Middletown Dairy bottle; a 3 volume set of Woodrow Wilson's speeches.

ELIZABETH MARTIN - The 1925 and 1929 ODRANOEL, and two slides of the old mill.

ALICE S. MAXWELL - A copy of "Virago! The Story of Anne Newport Royall".

ROBERT PELLEGRINI - several items of paper ephemera, a type of material extremely important to our library.

THELMA REISS - A watercolor painting of the Navesink Avenue store, when it included the Post Office where she served as Postmaster.

ALICE ROBINSON - Christ Church memorabilia including a 1952 250th anniversary booklet, a 1977 275th anniversary program and several articles.

ROBERT SCHOEFFLING - A framed 1748 deed of a bayshore property and "New Homes Mean New Schools", an important 1955 educational study outlining school needs at a crucial time for their expansion.

Ann Hirst - Oak Hill.

Mary Ann Kiernan - Middletown.

Gerald H. and Marie Landau - Leonardo.

Dr. and Mrs. Richard Levine - Middletown.

Elmer E. Meyer - Atlantic Highlands.

Karen and Leonard J. Nowak - Belford.

Ralph Phillips - Brielle.

Dorothy McComb Senk - Lincroft.

Mr. & Mrs. William C. Stevenson - River Plaza, Red Bank Post Office.

Ellen B. Talbot - Middletown.

Dr. Irving and Florence Wallace - Middletown.

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Not Trivial Trivia

Four Township PTA's have assembled a Middletown Township edition of "Trifles" an educational trivia game. "Trifles" is a trade mark of Henco, Inc. a Tennessee firm that manufactures the game. "Trifles" features a customized game board of local businesses and organizations and questions stemming from an area's history, geography and municipal organization. The game costs \$13.00 and is available through Debra Dilworth, 20 Erie Road, Atlantic Highlands, NJ 07716. Please tell Ms. Dilworth you saw the Society's announcement. Or, you may place an order through the Society. The game will be distributed through the schools with the approval of Dr. Sconzo. Delivery is expected for late January. However, Ms. Dilworth will be pleased to give a gift certificate for paid orders.

The word trivia appears to trivialize the possession of a large, well-rounded body of information. Your Editor recalls trivia games or quizzes arising around 1960. They focused on stage, screen and sports, admittedly less important pursuits in the game of life. Not so Trifles. Knowledge of local history and geography is not widespread. There appears no better way to instill it than to combine education with challenging entertainment. The Society was pleased to support the Trifles project by submitting over 100 questions.

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New Members

Joining in September and October are:

Hon. and Mrs. Lawrence A. Carton, Jr. - Locust
Glenore Coblens - Milbridge, Me.

Virago! The Story of Ann Newport Royall, 1769-1854

Anne Newport Royall was a journalist and travel writer, whose greatest activity was in the decade 1825-35. A female in that role was a rarity then. Her journalistic contributions are significant, with the first use of the direct quotation credited to her. Marion B. Dunlevy, a resident of the Township and researcher of this book, received notoriety as a housewife engaged in well-publicized neighborhood disputes in the early 1970's. Both were charged in court as common scolds. Mrs. Royall was convicted and received nominal punishment. Judge Patrick J. McGann, Jr. dismissed the Dunlevy case, ruling that being a common scold is not a crime in New Jersey. There lies the Middletown connection for Alice S. Maxwell's biography of the fascinating Mrs. Royall, whose struggle for that most precious civil liberty, freedom of expression, took an ugly twist in court. Mrs. Dunlevy, indicted as common scold reminds one of the vigilance often needed to preserve civil liberties and cautions the law not to create offenses to fit the unpopularity of the defendant.

Space does not permit here a full portrayal of Mrs. Royall. She was a relentless searcher for truth. However, her penchant for bluntness and a barbed pen used for settling scores in her books, may have made her as obnoxious as her detractors claimed. Read her story in Mrs. Maxwell's book. Alice Maxwell was a local columnist, who fervently advocates Mrs. Royall's case in a well-documented work quoting extensively from Mrs. Royall's writing. We have no

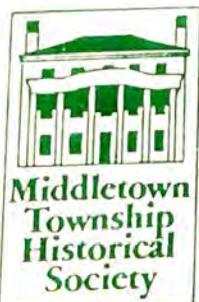
intention of examining the Dunlevy case, but Mrs. Maxwell promises another book on the subject.

The book should be in local stores now. The price is \$19.95. Autographed first edition copies are available from the authors for \$25.00 postpaid at 27 Monroe Street, Red Bank, NJ, 07701.

A word on the title. Virago was Adam's name for woman in the Vulgate Bible. The authors state "Virago was a woman, mirroring man in her vigor, her boldness, her ability to speak...a name (which) could define the extraordinary woman of any time (and) her ability to move the world with her presence...". Webster's 1847 University Edition Dictionary defines virago as a bold masculine woman or a termagant, (a boisterous, brawling woman). Current dictionaries give alternate, more complimentary definitions, too. Royall as a virago comes from John Quincy Adams' diary in a less than favorable context. Noah Webster was a target of Royall animosity because he cited her case as a usage of scold. Perhaps she did not understand the lexicographer's role of recording usage. The authors give virago a turn to a positive image. Usage will determine its definitions in dictionaries of the next century.

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**Next Issue:
Croydon Hall's Herald**



P.O. BOX 434
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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.

MEMBERSHIP DUES
PER CALENDAR YR.

Individual — \$5.00
Family — \$10.00

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